



INDEPENDENT  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# Covid-19 Update: 8 July

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# IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

## **IHE Covid-19 Information Hub**

<http://independenthe.com/activities/covid-19-hub>

Bringing together information and resources from across government, sector and commercial partners

## **FAQs**

<http://independenthe.com/activities/covid-19-hub/faq>

Collated from questions at Weekly Update and Member Drop-in sessions

## **Themed information and resources**

- Admissions and recruitment
- Finance and Human Resources
- International students and visas
- Regulation and the OfS
- Student welfare and support
- Teaching and learning



# Weekly Covid-19 comms schedule

**Wednesday** – a general update webinar with Q&A for all independent providers (members and non-members)

**Friday** – an email rounding up the week's essential information

... and we continue to update the IHE Covid-19 Information Hub on our website with all the latest information.



# IHE Covid Essentials

## Financial stability through transformation

**When: 9 July 2020**

**Overview:** The impact of Covid-19 creates new challenges and opportunities for all providers in achieving sustainable growth. This session will consider how senior managers can lead their institutions in redefining their strategic intent, reshaping their business model and delivering transformation to create value and improve their operational and financial performance.

**Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ihe-covid-essentials-financial-stability-through-transformation-tickets-108960513830>

## Strategies for student recruitment

**When: 16 July 2020**

**Overview:** This session will consider how providers can best engage with two groups of students both at the foothills of higher education: those who had their sights set on this horizon but are now fogged with uncertainty; and those whose paths led them here unexpectedly in the aftermath of pandemic and recession.

**Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ihe-covid-essentials-strategies-for-student-recruitment-tickets-108960670298>



# Last week's essential news

29 June – 3 July 2020



## Top issue from last week

### Government guidance for education re-opening

- Government has provided more extensive guidance for HE institutions including specific exemptions to restrictions on social gatherings
- Vulnerable students and staff: request to consider PHE review of the disparities in the risk and outcomes from COVID-19 and international students
- Information on how to form new permanent or semi-permanent households in student accommodation
- Specific guidance for performing arts, including restrictions on live audiences, concerns about singing and suggestions more guidance is forthcoming.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>



## Top issue from last week

- Guidance for FE was also released for the start of the 2020 autumn term, relevant for those who teach under subcontract from an FE College but also wider reach for vocational courses and helpful suggestions.
- Useful suggestions on forming groups to reduce risk of transmission including block release models and measures for arriving and leaving different settings, especially practical spaces.
- Specific guidance for those running services as part of courses including hairdressing and sport – with wider implications for allied health and other vocations.
- FE colleges have a responsibility to report COVID-19 cases to local health protection and anyone working with these colleges may have the same responsibility.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>



## Top issue from last week

### Office for Students has announced a new temporary condition

The condition is limited to specified activities in the admissions process only and no longer considers actions which pre-date the publication of the condition today. It is time limited until 30 September 2021.

- From today OfS registered providers should not:
  - Use unconditional offers where they come with requirements such as making the provider their first or only choice for higher education. *Unconditional offers outside of these circumstances are permitted.*
  - Make false or misleading statements (including comparative claims) about one or more higher education providers with the object or effect of discouraging a perspective or existing student from accepting offers made by or registering with those higher education providers.
- No mention of action against universities who reduce student recruitment for their subcontract partners due to DfE's reinstatement of student number controls.  
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-5-condition-z3-temporary-provisions-for-sector-stability-and-integrity/>





## Top issue from last week

- OfS have also made clear that they consider unconditional offers acceptable and useful and have taken pains to assure providers that certain activity is permissible in all circumstances:
  - Use of unconditional offers for students who already have level 3 qualifications
  - Use of unconditional offers for admissions with practical elements such as auditions, performances, portfolios etc. (there is a list of examples)
  - Unconditional offers for APL or APEL applicants
  - Unconditional offers for private A-level candidates to study this academic year who are unable to take A levels
  - Using unconditional offers for promoting equality of opportunity.
- Removed references to contextual offers, English language for international students, activity aligning with other providers and other admissions practices have all been removed.
- They have also removed at our request any reference to OfS regulating the use of government schemes.



# Government Statements

- Government has announced new Office for Talent based in No.10 with delivery teams across government departments. One of the Office's key roles will be to improve the visa system for international students including sweeping changes announced last week, many part of IHE's proposals to government.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-fires-up-rd-across-the-country-to-cement-the-uk-as-science-superpower>

- On Wednesday the Government published an R&D roadmap which sets out a £300 million commitment to upgrade scientific infrastructure across the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-fires-up-rd-across-the-country-to-cement-the-uk-as-science-superpower>

- New guidance for returning sports coaches was released.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>



# Finance and Human Resources

- Updated guidance on the CJRS was published, including new information on eligibility for claims before 1 July 2020, and confirmation that flexibly furloughed employees can be recorded as on furlough during time spent on holiday.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#history>



# Regulation and the OfS

- OfS announced the first registration decisions in over four months, and since the suspension of new applications due to Covid-19.
- Dyson Institute of Engineering & Technology was approved.
- 4 providers were refused registration.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/registration-decisions-june-2020/>



# Teaching and Learning

- QAA has published a new blog on achieving consistency when talking about digital learning.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/blog/what-is-a-lecture-and-other-mysteries>

- QAA has launched a toolkit to support providers developing their own language around quality assurance of digital learning

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>



# Admissions and Recruitment

- Exam boards must make autumn exams available in all GCSE, AS and A level subjects. Exact timing of autumn exams will be announced soon.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-an-additional-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series-in-autumn-2020>

- UCAS has asked providers to extend the deadline for students to meet the academic conditions of their offer from 31 August to 7 September.

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/supporting-you-through-confirmation-and-clearing>



# Student Welfare and Support

- Student Minds introduced an FAQ on Student Space.

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/studentspace.html>

- IHE continues to contribute to the Jisc/Advance HE/UUK/Emerge Education initiative – rethinking teaching and learning.

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-reimagined>



# International Students and Visas

- IELTS confirmed it will phase in the opening of test centres across China.
- UKVI continues to re-open visa centres around the world following an initial group at the beginning of June and more throughout the month.

<https://www.ielts.org/news/2020/covid19-information-for-our-global-test-taker-community>

<https://www.vfsglobal.co.uk/in/en/news/re-opening-of-selected-uk-visa-application-centres-in-india>

- UK NARIC published the findings of its annual members survey.

<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/News%20Story.aspx?NewsID=1085>





# Parliament

- In the House of Commons, Caroline Ansell MP led an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on ELT and Covid-19 recovery.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-07-01/debates/EF0BE2CE-7AA3-412D-B98E-6BFB04C125A1/Covid-19InternationalLanguageSchools>

- In the House of Lords, Lord Bassam of Brighton called a motion to regret on the legislation to re-introduce SNCs.
- Several peers made use of IHE's briefing to highlight the problems SNCs posed for subcontracted and other independent providers, and the impact on widening participation students and specialist institutions in particular.

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-07-02/debates/1BAE2905-653C-4721-A9A3-157554BFD7C2/HigherEducation\(FeeLimitsAndStudentSupport\)\(England\)\(Coronavirus\)Regulations2020](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-07-02/debates/1BAE2905-653C-4721-A9A3-157554BFD7C2/HigherEducation(FeeLimitsAndStudentSupport)(England)(Coronavirus)Regulations2020)



## HE Sector news and opinion

- HEPI released a survey of students' views on the impact of Covid-19 on their HE experience.

<https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/06/30/new-poll-finds-students-want-better-communication-about-the-next-academic-year-but-have-realistic-expectations-of-what-is-to-come/>

- Universities UK launched 'Proud to help', the next phase of the #WeAreTogether campaign.

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/covid19/supporting-national-effort/Pages/we-are-together-campaign.aspx>



# New this week

8 July 2020



# Government Statements

## Today's Summer Economic Update from the Chancellor

- Furlough scheme will wind down. New **Job Retention Bonus** incentive scheme will pay employers £1000 for every furloughed employee they bring back and continue to employ in January 2021.
- New **kickstart scheme** will encourage employers to create jobs for 16-24 year olds by covering minimum wages up to 25 hours per week for six months.
- Extra funding for National Careers Service and expanding traineeships – employers will now receive £1000 per trainee.
- Boost apprenticeships in the next 6 months with £2000 extra payment to employers for every apprentice they hire aged under 25 and £1500 for every apprentice aged 25 and over.
- £101 million to fund “targeted high value Level 2 and 3 courses” in 2020-21 for school and college leavers in England (18-19 years old).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-jobs-documents>



# Government update

## **Travelers exempt from border rules in the UK**

- New guidance has been issued on the different categories of exempt travelers, including documentation requirements.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules>

## **Restrictions on self-isolation lifted**

- The Government has removed the 14 day self-isolation requirement for certain countries, beginning on 10 July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/self-isolation-lifted-for-lower-risk-countries-in-time-for-holidays-this-summer>

- The full list of countries can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors#travel-corridors-countries-and-territories-exemption-list>



# Finance and HR

## Youtube videos on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

- A YouTube video has been published on the Extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and flexible furloughing.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-is-affected-by-coronavirus-covid-19#history>



# Finance and HR

## SLC and finance during the pandemic

- The CEO of the Student Loans Company has set out her views on reliable student and provider finance during the pandemic including the organisation's expansion of online customer service, as well as the SLC's ongoing consideration of deferrals, transfers or withdrawals.
- The article considers the anticipated increase in current-year income assessment applications.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/student-finance-through-the-pandemic>



# Finance and HR

## Update on PPE for employees

- If your employees require PPE you must provide this free of charge.
- If you are unable to provide PPE you must reimburse the actual expenses of employees who purchase PPE themselves.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-treat-certain-expenses-and-benefits-provided-to-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19#personal-protective-equipment-ppe>





# Teaching and learning

## QAA guidance for small and specialist providers

IHE are providing QAA with case studies from providers focused on:

- Strategic planning: how SSPs created and operationalised action plans
- Management of space: How SSPs are returning to face-to-face teaching – lessons learned
- Management of learning and teaching space: how SSPs plan to maximise its use following a return to campus. Could include innovative teaching methods to make best use.
- Plans for assessment in 2020-21
- Plans for communication: how SSPs are planning to provide clear and consistent information for all their students including use of platforms and media, utilizing staff, managing getting consent for course changes.

If you would like to volunteer a case study please get in touch [joy@independenthe.com](mailto:joy@independenthe.com)



# Student support and wellbeing

## Department for Education - Creation of new households

- DfE has published updated guidance yesterday which includes information on accommodation and the creation of new homes. The ‘Higher Education: reopening buildings and campuses’ guidance, states:

*“There is no prohibition on moving home and anyone in England who wishes to move home can do so, including forming new permanent or semi-permanent households by moving into shared student accommodation and houses in multiple occupation.”*

- The Department emphasizes the importance of **‘permanent or semi-permanent’** as public health advisers have stated there would be much a higher risk if students were frequently moving between households.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>



# Admissions and recruitment

## UCAS – Clearing is now open

- For further information visit the UCAS website.

<https://www.ucas.com/events/2020-entry-clearing-opens-348886>

## UCAS – ‘All about quals’ webinar

This session will consider Level 3 awards and is designed for admissions staff. It will consider:

- deep-dive into the awarding processes across the UK
- explore appeals and other information requests
- understand considerations around specific cohorts of students
- share feedback and considerations for the assessment of grades in 2020

If you have any specific questions you’d like answering during this session, please send them to [b.jordan@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:b.jordan@ucas.ac.uk).

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ycK4KOoSQ2edBZDZnzC9JQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ycK4KOoSQ2edBZDZnzC9JQ)



# Admissions and Recruitment

## Ofqual updates guidance: Summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths

- Now includes 2020 consultation decision outcomes and 2021 exam series consultation proposals

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/897425/Summer\\_2020\\_grades\\_for\\_GCSE\\_AS\\_and\\_A\\_level\\_Extended\\_Project\\_Qualification\\_and\\_Advanced\\_Extension\\_Award\\_in\\_maths\\_020720.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897425/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_Extended_Project_Qualification_and_Advanced_Extension_Award_in_maths_020720.pdf)

- Also consulting on proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021 - closing date is 16 July

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>



# Admissions and Recruitment

## **Tribal – Free Webinars**

### **The Socially Distanced Enrolment Day**

Tuesday July 7th, 10:00 – 11:00

Registration Link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2471187975338119694>

### **Engage for Education: Supporting Virtual Freshers**

Thursday July 16th, 11:00 – 11:45

Registration Link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7783556470401415952>



# International Students and Visas

## **1 million foreign students risk being ‘frozen out’ of US colleges**

- USA - Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has said that individuals could face deportation unless they change to an institution with in-person tuition.
- In the UK, former Minister Jo Johnson called on the Government’s new Office for Talent to produce an ‘emergency scheme’ for any students that cannot stay in the US.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/08/americas/international-student-visa-united-states-intl-hnk/index.html>



# International Students and Visas

## QS: New research shows that 1 in 5 EU students plan to start their studies in the UK early following the Government's announcement on home fees

Over 600 students from the EU asking them about their plans to study abroad. From the 84% of respondents who said they were considering studying in the UK are as follows:

- **20%** of students said the announcement meant they now intended to start their studies in the UK earlier than planned.
- **64%** of respondents said they were not aware of the Government's announcement that EU students would no longer have access to home fees from next academic year 2021/22.
- Only **17%** of those surveyed were planning to defer their entry to a later date because of COVID-19.



# International Students and Visas

## **Blog from Cater Thomas**

- New academic year immigration tips for education providers

[bit.ly/3e2E7dj](https://bit.ly/3e2E7dj)





## HE Sector news and opinion

### **Million Plus proposals for the Government's financial statement**

- Million Plus focuses on the need of boosting public services, regional economic growth, and R&D.
- The Government should also consider reforming the student loans system in England to rocket boost re-training and up-skilling opportunities by allowing individuals to access loans for short HE courses, including modules at level 4 and level 5.

<http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/news/press-releases/boost-public-services-rd-and-regional-economies-says-millionplus>

### **New Jisc survey on cyber security during pandemic**

- Follow the link below to take the survey.

<https://jisc.researchfeedback.net/s.asp?k=159065658049>



## Contact IHE

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