



INDEPENDENT  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# Covid-19 Update: 29 July

*Joy Elliott-Bowman, Marie Clark, Alex Proudfoot, Chris Hall, Independent Higher Education*



# IHE Covid-19 Information Hub

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

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

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

## **FAQs**

<http://independentthe.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)

**\*Today is our last general update before a summer break**

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

**\*This week will be the last before our summer break**

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



## Upcoming Webinars

### Webinar: The Government's proposals for Higher Technical Qualifications

**When:** 30 July

**Overview:** This session will examine the Government's plans to introduce a new system of sub-degree technical qualifications at levels 4-5.

**Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/114321438500>

### Webinar: The new Points Based System – Coming to Study

**When:** 4 August

**Overview:** This webinar will be key opportunity to get up to speed with the latest on the new Points Based system so you can start to prepare staff and students with leading immigration lawyer Nicola Carter.

**Register:** <http://independentthe.com/archives/04-august-2020-pbs-webinar-3-2>



# Last week's essential news

22 July 2020



Top issue  
from last  
week

## **Michelle Donelan speech – ‘there should be no one size fits all policy’**

In a speech to the Festival of Higher Education, the Minister discussed the need for multiple paths in higher education and emphasised the importance of innovation and flexibility in provision.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/universities-minister-speech-at-festival-of-higher-education?utm\\_source=7d29b362-0cf0-45a9-9a4e-b42c46f0e9d2&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/universities-minister-speech-at-festival-of-higher-education?utm_source=7d29b362-0cf0-45a9-9a4e-b42c46f0e9d2&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)



# Government Statements

- The Government confirmed that providers will be notified about any applications for additional Student Number Control places by 31 July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-number-controls#history>

- New advice was published for social distancing in a local lockdown, important to providers planning for that possibility.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-lockdown-guidance-for-social-distancing/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-guidance-for-leicester>



# Labour

- Emma Hardy MP, the Shadow Minister for Universities and Further Education, published 7 key tests for the Government to meet in order to protect universities and ensure that a degree course is available to any individual with the aspiration to study one.

<https://labour.org.uk/press/labour-to-launch-7-key-tests-for-higher-education-and-calls-on-the-government-to-help-uk-universities-and-students/>



# Devolved nations

- The Welsh Government announced additional funding of more than £50m for HE and FE providers. While some will go to the providers funded by the Welsh Government, a significant portion will go to students for equipment and mental health services.

<https://gov.wales/over-50-million-support-welsh-universities-colleges-and-students>



# Teaching and learning

- DfE has issued new temporary guidance for assessing those on ITT courses including revised criteria for assessment and supporting advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria#history>



# International students

- The Home Office made changes to the guidance for migrants and visitors. This includes a new process for replacing expiring 30-day visas now that VACs are re-opening and a clarification that a new replacement will be valid for 90 days

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents#history>



# Admissions and Recruitment

- OfS published its own analysis which showed that unconditional offers risk pushing students onto courses that are not ultimately in their best interests.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/lower-a-level-grades-from-unconditional-offers-lead-to-higher-dropout-rates-warns-regulator/>



# Student support

- New guidance was released on student accommodation for children and young people. This covers track and trace, use of PPE, and what to do if someone in student accommodation falls ill.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education>



# New this week

29 July 2020



# Government updates

## **SAGE releases new information on Higher Education**

The government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) discussed education in this month's round of meetings and have recently released the minutes and papers. They note:

- Concern over potential transmission of virus with move of 1 million students at beginning and end of terms
- Creation of new households and return to family households in each term
- Additional pressure on public transport and healthcare infrastructure
- Impact of commuter students and international students on transmission

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-scientific-evidence-supporting-the-uk-government-response>



# Government updates

## **SAGE releases new information on Higher Education**

- DfE has produced data on the student and staff characteristics most at risk, and on how many students may require face to face teaching
- DfE has been working on autumn plans to bring in testing, contact tracing and additional physical distancing to contain outbreaks
- DfE also considering on and off lockdown measures to control outbreaks
- The guidance also discusses the effectiveness of bubbles and other measures to limit or disrupt the transmission of COVID-19
- Specific concern on performance based courses, libraries, and student behavior off campus.



# Government updates

## New schools guidance suggests resources for mental health

- Updates to the guidance for schools identifies free resource for young people mental health - free MindEd learning platform (<https://www.minded.org.uk/>)
- Includes materials on peer support, stress, fear and trauma, and bereavement. MindEd have also developed a coronavirus (COVID-19) staff resilience hub with advice and tips for frontline staff
- Also includes tips on managing visitors and contingency planning which can be transferred to tertiary education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>



# Finance and HR

## **CJRS – New guidance on if you’ve claimed too much or not enough**

- Delete claims with 72 hours
- If you’ve made an error tell HMRC as part of your next claim or via contact details if you’re not making another claim
- If you’ve over claimed you must tell HMRC within 90 days of receiving the grant or 20 October whichever is latest.
- After 31 July you can no longer amend claims made for period to 30 June to add an employee. Amendments for other errors can be made after 31 July
- Government have now published a notice on the penalties for claiming when not eligible or claiming more than eligible for.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-youve-claimed-too-much-or-not-enough-from-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

## **CJRS – Complain about a decision to HMRC**

- Guidance has been updated with information on how to complain about an HMRC decision about the CJRS

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-hmrc>



# Finance and HR

## New Blog on HR

- Joanne Marshall of UHR has written a blog reflecting on the toll Covid-19 has taken on university staff
- Examples of what Universities are doing to support staff across campus
- Supporting staff with the 'new offer'
- Importance of finding space to talk to staff and co-create strategies

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/university-staff-have-moved-mountains-during-covid-19/>



# Admissions and Recruitment

## **New student guide to post-16 qualification results**

- New guide for students published ahead of results day, includes vocational qualifications as well as A-levels
- Students with concerns about grades should go to their school.
- Only schools can make appeals
- Overview of the autumn exam process

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-guide-to-post-16-qualification-results-summer-2020#history>

## **And a parent, carer and teacher guide**

- Importance of integrity in system
- How to appeal against school decision not to appeal

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>



# Teaching and Learning

## Government call for courses to be added to new “Skills Toolkit

- New Skills Toolkit launched 28 April 2020 now open to new providers offering **fully online, free courses**
- Courses can be any level (1-6 or unbenchmarked) but should focus on digital, adult numeracy or work readiness or employability
- Examples include:
  - practical courses in artificial intelligence, programming and coding
  - accounting and bookkeeping
  - Statistics
  - Self-management, social intelligence
  - Innovation – critical thinking, problem solving, analysis
- Courses must be currently on offer – no courses in development
- **Deadline 17 August for applications**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-skills-toolkit-submit-a-new-course>



# Teaching and Learning

## **QAA guidance delayed**

- QAA has delayed guidance on Complaints and Appeals to 31 July and Small and Specialist providers to w/c August 3rd

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

## **QAA publish report on PSRB response to COVID**

- Using the results of their recent survey of Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) QAA have published a report on how these bodies have adapted their practices to fit the realities of COVID-19.
- Accreditation which relies on work placements and practical assessments most impacted.
- More communication between PSRB and providers needed
- Collaborative approach to addressing the issues of COVID and finding solution needed
- Addresses subject areas including architecture, allied to medicine, business, and creative arts.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/survey-report-how-have-professional-bodies-dealt-with-covid-19>



# Teaching and Learning

## **Jisc releases new guide on digital induction**

- Jisc has pulled together a guide on digital induction models following a roundtable Jisc members.
- Outline of importance of peer connections in induction
- Importance of allowing students to step out and listen or observe
- Digital skills for home are not digital skills for a learning environment

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/technology-helps-deliver-blended-inductions-for-new-learner-cohort-17-jul-2020>



# Student support

## Student Space

- Student Space is a collaborative mental health programme to support students through the unique circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic, led by Student Minds.
- IHE attended a governance meeting of the Student Space scheme, run in partnership with Student Minds.

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



# Student Support

## **Advance HE Scotland Update case studies on COVID-19**

- Advance HE Scotland have included more case studies from Universities on how they are coping with COVID-19 including
  - Creating a sense of community
  - Hardship funds
  - Mental Health helpline
  - Supporting staff through days off and opening counselling services

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/advance-he-scotland-good-practice-sector-response-covid-19>



# International Students

## Update from UKVI

- 154 Visa Application Centres are open world wide with only 56 left to open. Remaining open is still subject to local circumstances.
- New centres from 27<sup>th</sup> July include Seattle, Mexico City, Tehran and Karachi among others.
- Priority and Super Priority Visa services continue to be paused for now in all locations, but this will be kept under review
- Significant decline in visitor and business visas has freed up space for student visas.
- From within the UK - now re-booking those who had appointments between 1 June and 30 June
- Where possible UKVI will re-use biometrics
- New App launched to aid biometrics collection

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-immigration-and-borders>



# International Students

## Updated guidance for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents

- Those whose leave is expiring and have not yet applied for an extension in the UK are expected to take all reasonable steps to leave or apply to regularize their stay
- Those leaving given a month's grace period until 31 August
- Those unable to leave by 31 August must request 'exceptional indemnity' via the coronavirus immigration team (CIT).
- Those intending to stay can apply in-country until 31 August including those who have already extended
- Tier 4 can start studies if they have a valid CAS for the course they want to start and their application is/was submitted before current visa expired
- Tier 4 students "there is no longer a limit on the number of hours you can work or volunteer each week"

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents#history>



# HE sector news and opinion

## Million Plus briefing on initial teacher training

- MillionPlus and the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers have proposed a cross-sector advisory group to lead on the development of a DfE National ITE Response Plan for the years ahead.
- The briefing focuses on the importance of collaboration, improving guidance, school involvement in training, and expanding mentoring.

<http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/policy/policy-briefings/the-future-of-initial-teacher-education-living-in-the-age-of-covid-19-and-beyond>



# HE sector news and Opinion

## Beyond Covid – Reassessing your institution's technology priorities

Commerical Partners Ellician are running a free webinar on digital transformation.

- Key business focus points to support your institution going forward
- The operational “backbone” to support agile business capabilities
- The adoption of a digital transformation framework to underpin change

More information click [here](#).



# HE sector news and opinion

## Event - Employability in a global market during the pandemic and recession

- The Centre for Global Higher Education is holding an event on the crisis of employability and how higher education can help to broaden expectations about individual graduate agency and the wider public good.
- Speakers: Golo Henseke, UCL Institute of Education; James Robson, University of Oxford; Anna Vignoles, University of Cambridge; CHAIR: Simon Marginson, CGHE Director & University of Oxford
- Thursday, 30 Jul 2020 14:00 - 15:00

<https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/what-does-employability-mean-amid-global-pandemic-and-recession-covid-19-higher-education-and-the-graduate-labour-market/>



## Contact IHE

**Email** [info@independentthe.com](mailto:info@independentthe.com)

**Phone** 020 3929 3370

**Website** [www.independentthe.com](http://www.independentthe.com)

**Twitter** @independent\_HE



## This week's expert

Nichola Carter, Head of Immigration, Carter Thomas  
[ncarter@carterthomas.co.uk](mailto:ncarter@carterthomas.co.uk)