



INDEPENDENT
HIGHER
EDUCATION

Covid-19 Update: 22 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)

***Next Wednesday will be our last general update**

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.



Upcoming Webinars

Webinar: COVID Essentials: Supporting new Graduates (2020 and 2021)

When: 23 July

Overview: This session is essential to anyone working with or supporting students graduating in 2020 or 2021 as they navigate the impacts of the COVID recession.

Register: <http://independenthe.com/archives/30-june-2020-cma-workshop-3>



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

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

15 July 2020



Top issues from last week

The new Points Based Student Route

Government has released a policy statement on the new Points Based Immigration system which has implications for students applying in 2020 under the COVID-19 concessions. The proposals include:

- Confirmation of the graduate route for Spring 2021
- Extension of application window to 6 months (addressing COVID concerns)
- Confirmation that students will be allowed to switch and extend in-country from most migrant routes (excluding short term routes)
- Removal of time limits for study (PG only)
- Streamlined application system

The proposals have addressed some of the Covid-19 concerns that IHE included in our proposals to government for COVID-19.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-points-based-immigration-system-further-details-statement>



Top issues from last week

Government restructuring scheme for higher education

The Government announced a restructuring scheme for HE providers in England facing financial difficulties due to COVID-19, as the primary route for individualised support.

- Applies to Approved (fee cap) providers only
- Three conditions to be met:
 - Clear economic and value for money case for intervention
 - Problems are related to COVID-19
 - Failure of the provider would cause significant harm to the national or local economy or society,
- Any public funding would come with conditions to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-restructuring-regime>

IHE issued a statement in response:

<http://independentthe.com/archives/ihe-response-to-he-restructuring>



Top issues from last week

Government restructuring scheme for higher education

- Financial support would be in the form of a repayable loan
- Government commissioned Independent Business Review (IBR) conducted within 6-10 weeks
- DfE will work closely with OfS
- Three policy objectives:
 - Protecting the welfare of current students
 - Supporting the role HE providers play in regional and local economies through the provision of high-quality courses aligned with economic and societal needs
 - Preserving the sector's internationally outstanding science base (noting specific support is being made available for research activities)
- Providers can contact the DfE Restructuring Unit on HE.RestrictingRegime@education.gov.uk to initiate discussions about restructuring



Top issues from last week

OfS new condition on student protection

- OfS announced that it is consulting on proposals to strengthen student protection regulation, specifically for providers most at risk of market exit.
- Part of existing work on student protection started before COVID-19 but narrowed due to pandemic to just market exit. Will return to broader principles at later date.
- Review of key themes found providers plan overly optimistic, not student facing, and focused on business risk not student continuation among other issues.
- **New condition that requires compliance with student protection directions from OfS.**
- **Introduction of “Market Exit Plan”**
- **Expand definition of student protection to include: teach out, exit awards, IAG for students, complaints, amongst other new areas.**
- **Deadline 11 September 2020**

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-student-protection-directions/>



Government Statements

- Updated guidance to confirm that from 13 July providers can welcome back 19+ apprentices into educational settings, that the flexibility to suspend level 2 functional skills for level 2 apprentices has been extended, and more information on support for redundant apprentices.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response?utm_source=6afd8180-d3e9-4688-bdb4-085b119b15af&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

- There were updates to guidance relating to transport for schools and publicly funded sixth form and further education colleges, independent training providers and special post-16 institutions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

- The Government updated its guidance or higher education providers in relation to reopening buildings and campuses for performing arts, transport and international students, and self-isolation.

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



Teaching and Learning

- AdvanceHE will be running an event 'Practicing safer flex' on 30 July which will examine structured flexibility for learning post-Covid and consider good practice that goes beyond simply 'choice' in learning.

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/calendar/practising-safer-flex-why-structured-flexibility-might-be-solution>



Admissions and Recruitment

- Discover Uni has launched a new set of resources to help students consider their options when they receive their results and enter clearing this year.

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/how-do-i-choose-course/downloadable-resources/>

- Our commercial partners the Access Platform are offering three months free usage, of all features, for all new partners in their peer to peer communications technology.

https://share.hsforms.com/1YEs_w4vrT2ahjMBYvLBgGg1fc7h



Parliament

- The Petitions Committee released a report on tuition fee refunds, calling on the Government to take urgent action in the face of what it calls the “greatest challenge [universities] have faced for generations”.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/326/petitions-committee/news/147325/report-petitions-committee-calls-for-government-increase-support-for-universities-and-students-amid-huge-covid19-disruption/>



HE Sector news and opinion

- UCU and YouGov have surveyed on attitudes to government funding to protect universities from the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis in 30 battleground 'university constituencies'.

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/10888/Voters-in-marginal-seats-fear-local-damage-from-university-cuts-and-want-government-to-intervene?list=1676>



New this week

22 July 2020



Devolved nations

The Welsh Government announces additional funding of more than £50m for providers

- This forms part of the Welsh Government's actions to support students and Wales' major education institutions and provide the skills and learning in response to the economic impact of the coronavirus.
- It allocates £27 million for higher education institutions, with £23 million to support students in FE colleges and sixth forms including provision for equipment and mental health services to students.

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



Government updates

Department for Education – Student Number Controls

- The Government has confirmed that providers will be notified about any applications which they have made for the additional 10,000 student places by 31 July.

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

New advice for local lockdown

- Government has published new advice for social distancing in a local lockdown. Useful for providers in planning what a local lockdown could look like in your area.

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



Admissions and Recruitment

Ofqual Summer Symposium

- Covered the exceptional arrangements in place for awarding qualifications this summer.
- Preliminary analysis - generally be no widening of the gaps in attainment between different groups of students.
- Detail on standardisation - A substantial number of students will receive at least one grade that has been adjusted as a result of the standardisation process. And while some will be adjusted upwards, on average, centres have submitted grades that are higher than would be expected.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-summer-symposium-2020>



Teaching and Learning

New guidance for Initial Teacher Training

- DfE has issued new temporary guidance for assessing those on ITT courses including revised criteria and supporting advice.
- Further guidance on programme design to meet revised Criterion.

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



Student Support

New guidance for Student Accommodation for children and young people

- New guidance on track and trace in accommodation with children and young adults
- New guidance on staff use of PPE including disposal
- What to do if someone in student accommodation falls ill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#how-to-work-safely-in-specific-situations-including-where-ppe-may-be-required>



International Students

Changes to guidance for migrants and visitors

- New process for replacing expiring 30-day visas now that VACs are re-opening
- Includes clarification that 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>



HE sector news and opinion

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 – including further education and apprenticeships, particularly in the context of economic reforms following Covid-19.
- The speech also covered the importance of innovation, and flexibility in provision and the need for the sector to ‘upscale its flexible offering to support upskilling and reskilling.’

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



Contact IHE

Email info@independentthe.com

Phone 020 3929 3370

Website www.independentthe.com

Twitter @independent_HE



This week's expert

Julie Mercer, Partner, Cairneagle.
julie.mercer@cairneagle.com