



Independent Higher Education Annual Conference

Tuesday 12 October 2021

No.11 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0AN

Agenda (subject to change)

09:15 Registration, refreshments, and exhibition

Session One – Plenary – Burdett Theatre

10:00 Welcome from Independent Higher Education

- **James Pitman**, Vice Chair, Independent Higher Education

10:05 UK public perceptions on the big issues and what this might mean for higher education

As both the epidemiology and the perception of Covid-19 start to shift from the epidemic phase to an endemic new normal, what is the British people's mood? What are their priorities for the next few years? How supportive are they of the current Government and its agenda? What might this mean for higher education? This fascinating session will draw on BritainThinks' own research as well as published data to provide an overview and pose some key questions for the sector to consider.

- **Viki Cooke**, Co-founder and Chair, BritainThinks

10:30 Higher levels everywhere: is lifelong learning the key to unlocking opportunity across the UK?

- **Jonathan Simons**, Director of Education, Public First

chairing a panel discussion with:

- **Tom Richmond**, Director, EDSK
- **Sharon Watson**, CEO, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, and Board Member, Northern Powerhouse Partnership
- **Rachel Nicholson**, Head of Institution, Backstage Academy
- **Joy Elliott-Bowman**, Director of Policy and Engagement, Independent Higher Education

The past two years have challenged our economy, social and cultural norms. The pandemic has exposed dividing lines in our country for all to see, both geographical and generational. But while the impact of Covid has made the diagnosis more clear, the economic damage it has inflicted risks putting the policy prescription only further out of reach.

The Government has made Levelling Up its number one post-pandemic priority, and has identified a turbocharged lifelong learning system as one of the main drivers in this mission. How should the higher education sector, and independent providers in particular, answer this call? How can they best support the industries and communities in every region of the UK to build back better, and support the aspirations of people young and old? What else should the Government do to make lifelong learning a reality which is truly accessible to all?

11:20 Ministerial Address from the UK Government

- **Alex Burghart MP**, Minister for Skills, Department for Education

11:35 Refreshments, networking, and exhibition

Session Two – Plenary – Burdett Theatre

12:00 Industry collaboration and community engagement in higher education

- **Dr Joe Marshall**, Chief Executive, National Centre for Universities and Business

chairing a panel discussion with:

- **Dr Michelle Groves**, Director of Education, Royal Academy of Dance
- **Beatriz Pizarro-Aparicio**, Partner, Counterculture LLP
- **Jonny Persey**, Director, MetFilm School

For many independent providers of higher education, collaboration is how it all began – the brainchild of a community or industry movement with a specific goal in mind. Often these collaborations have evolved over time, with institutions outgrowing their initial template to meet the changing needs of learners and prevailing pedagogical models. As independent providers gain access to research and collaboration funding for the first time, many are looking back to their roots and working out how best to fuse their role in their industry, geographical or subject community, with established higher education frameworks.

This panel will explore how independent providers can get the most out of their current collaborations and demonstrate their value with the least burden possible, and identify the best strategies for achieving greater industry and community collaboration, especially for smaller providers or those with limited resources.

12:45 An update from the Office for Students

- **Susan Lapworth**, Director of Regulation, Office for Students

The Office for Students has been responsible for regulating higher education in England and protecting the interests of students and taxpayers since 2018, and Susan Lapworth has been at the regulatory helm for these formative years, leading their work on the design and implementation of the central registration process.

The OfS is currently consulting on reforms to its regulation of quality and standards and will be mindful of the Government's desire to see a more flexible and diverse system of lifelong learning, including modular courses, higher technical qualifications and apprenticeships, as well as online and blended degrees.

13:15 Lunch, networking and exhibition

13:30 Lunch and Learn - Many Hands Project – Burdett Theatre

- **Gordon Sweeney**, Director of External Partnerships, Academy of Contemporary Music
- **Lynn Blackadder**, Project Manager Many Hands Project
- Chaired by **Sophie McCarthy**, Student Member of the Board, Independent Higher Education

The Many Hands Project was awarded OfS funding this summer to support undergraduate mental health in smaller or specialist providers by creating a digital hub for students. The project is being led by the Academy of Contemporary Music, in collaboration with SAE Education, Futureworks, Point Blank Music School, Matrix College of Counselling and Psychotherapy, Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, and Regent College London.

It will allow students from multiple institutions across the UK to easily access a peer-to-peer mental health mentoring service and it is hoped that the collaborative approach will address the barriers to developing and accessing these services in smaller providers.

This lunch and learn will provide an outline of the project and its aims, and hear the perspectives of members involved in this milestone collaborative project for IHE.

Session Three – breakouts (14:00-14:40)

A. Putting the new IHE Code of Governance for Independent Providers into practice – **Edwards Room**

- **Joanna Forbes**, Legal Director, Shakespeare Martineau
- Chaired by **Joy Elliott-Bowman**, Director of Policy and Development, Independent Higher Education

Effective governance is vital for any higher education provider, and the role of governing bodies has never been more important as we enter a period of significant change across our sector in relation to student expectations, labour markets, and in the role that institutions play in their local communities, nationally and globally.

This new Code of Governance was developed in partnership by IHE and Shakespeare Martineau, and will support institutions to be effective and accountable in this new landscape. It is designed as a foundation on which institutions can develop their own values, specialisms, and effective structures for the students and communities they serve.

This session will cover the principles and structure of the Code, and give attendees an opportunity to discuss their views on the Code, how it might apply to their institution, and governance issues facing higher education more widely.

B. Building a Sponsorship system fit for the future of work and study – **Burdett Theatre**

- **Owen Metcalfe**, Acting Head of Student Migration Policy, Home Office
- **Victor Okafor**, Senior Policy Adviser – Student Migration Policy, Home Office
- Chaired by **Oli Selwood**, Director - Regulatory Compliance, INTO University Partnerships

The UK's exit from the European Union and the end of the transitional period in 2020 have given the Government the opportunity to reshape how our immigration system

works, and make sure that it serves the needs of the modern economy and the different sectors within it. Following the introduction of a new Points Based System for economic migration, and a number of dedicated new routes including the much heralded post-study Graduate Route, the Home Office is now busy on a programme of work to bring about comprehensive improvements in the sponsorship and visa application processes, using technological advances to deliver a simpler and more streamlined experience for employers, educational institutions and all users of the immigration system.

In this session the Home Office will set out the roadmap for these improvements specific to study and give delegates the opportunity to feed in their wish list for reforms, and ask questions directly.

C. Managing regulatory requirements and delivering a great student experience

– Maxwell Room

- **Selina Watmore**, Account Executive, Ellucian
- **Rebecca Bushell**, Associate Solutions Consultant, Ellucian
- Chaired by **Marie Clark**, Director of External Relations, Independent Higher Education

The transition to blended learning models and effective digital administration during the COVID-19 pandemic required extraordinary flexibility and speed of action on the part of higher education providers. As we look toward a new landscape for independent providers, we'll provide a case study of experiences, providing valuable insight into how institutions have managed digital transformation and delivered an excellent student experience.

Session Four – breakouts (14:50-15:30)

A. Data driven Higher Education

– Burdett Theatre

- **Michelle James**, Senior Customer Success Advisor, Jisc
- **Steve Hoole**, Head of Analytics for Learning, Teaching and Wellbeing, Jisc
- **Alison Berry**, Head of Operations and Performance, HESA
- Chaired by **David Howell**, CEO, Met Film School

Never before has student, staff and financial data played such a significant role in risk management for higher education providers. Data-driven decision making features in all regulatory systems across the UK, from education quality to visas and immigration. But what if instead of just reacting to the regulators view of data, we started making this same data work for us?

This session will update providers on changes to the data we submit to the HESA, which forms the bedrock of many regulators decision making processes. All data submitted is stored in a centrally accessible database, which is telling some very interesting stories about the last few years of higher education. While HESA will tell the story of how the data is changing, Jisc will share insight on what this and other data can tell HE providers about the past, and how we can use this data to manage risk and create new opportunities. Jisc will also share new tools for collecting and analysing data including attendance monitoring and Covid-specific resources.

B. Five things shaping the future of Admissions

– Edwards Room

- **Andy Frampton**, Customer Success Director, UCAS
- Chaired by **Hema Tank**, Associate Dean, The London Institute of Banking & Finance

This session will look at how the Higher Education landscape has developed over the last 12 months, and question the five key challenges shaping the world of Admissions for the year ahead. Changes in student demographics, admissions regulation and the way higher education is being delivered will all be playing on the minds of admissions professionals and senior managers. This session will offer important insight at all levels into the way students and providers may be changing their approach to higher education.

C. Protecting academic integrity and combatting the threat of essay mills

– Maxwell Room

- **Gareth Crossman**, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- Chaired by **Dr Janet Rose**, Principal, Norland College

The recent government announcement that essay mills are to be criminalised in England has been welcomed across the higher education sector. However, legislation has been introduced in other countries and essay mills remain a problem. How much help will the new law be? What other action is needed? Will other forms of academic misconduct be affected? In this session Gareth Crossman, QAA's Head of Policy and Communications, will explore what this latest development means, and what else needs to be done to protect academic integrity.

Session Five – Plenary – Burdett Theatre

15:45 Unleashing British education's export potential

- **Rupert Daniels**, Director, Creative, Lifestyle and Learning, Department for International Trade

joining a panel discussion with:

- **Christopher Payne**, Registrar and Director of Professional Services, University of Buckingham
- **Dr David Lefevre**, Director, Imperial College Edtech Lab and Founder, Insendi
- **Vivienne Stern**, Director, Universities UK International
- Chaired by **Lil Bremermann-Richard**, Group Chief Executive Officer, Oxford International

The Department for International Trade and the Department for Education have joined forces to deliver a cross-Government and sector-wide International Education Strategy for the UK with ambitious targets for growth both in overall export revenue and specifically in the number of international students who choose to learn here every year.

The recent update of this Strategy was released in March 2021, very much in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic which has disrupted like never before the global connections and

mobility we take for granted in the 21st century. As international students begin to return to the UK and our competitor countries, this session will explore how the business of exporting education may have changed for good, and what this means for the UK's strategy and our position at the forefront of global scholarship, collaboration and knowledge exchange.

What are international students thinking now? Where are the new export markets? What should the UK be doing to make itself the education destination and partner of choice?

16:30 Independent Higher Education – our Strategy for 2021-2024

- **Alexander Proudfoot**, Chief Executive, Independent Higher Education

16:45 Drinks, reception and networking