

Programme of events and publications, September 2019 to April 2020

5 September 2019

Introduction

This note contains:

- contact details for the Office for Students (OfS)
- an overview of OfS events, publications and data submission deadlines over the next six to eight months
- a month-by-month timeline summary.

Contacting the Office for Students

Please get in touch if you have any queries about this note or anything else. There are a number of ways of doing this:

- **General enquiries:** 0117 931 7317 or email info@officeforstudents.org.uk
- **Specific enquiries:** OfS contact details are on [our website](#).

Please check [our events page](#) for news of upcoming events.

We invite you to [sign up to OfS email alerts and our monthly e-newsletter](#) to keep up-to-date with our work.

Overview: OfS events and publications, September 2019 to April 2020

The overview is not exhaustive. Our full work programme is set out in our [business plan 2019-20](#), which covers the second year of our [three-year strategy](#). Please note that timings are subject to change.

Ongoing monitoring of registered providers

On 1 August 2019 the OfS took on its full regulatory powers under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. From late September 2019 we will be publishing new regulatory advice covering our approach to ongoing monitoring and intervention, reportable events, student protection plans, and financial tables and guidance.

We will be running a series of events for accountable officers in October and November 2019 at which we will explain the way ongoing monitoring and intervention activities will operate, and listen to questions and feedback. Invitations will be going out next week. We will also be in touch about a new online system for providers to report information and data to the OfS that we will be rolling out over the next few months. In time, this will replace our existing systems for collecting information and data from you.

Admissions review consultation

A fair, reliable and inclusive admissions system is essential in ensuring students from all backgrounds are able to apply for and gain admission to the best possible course and provider for them. This November we will launch a review of the admissions system which will consider the extent to which it is working in the interests of students. Working closely with students, higher education providers, employers, UCAS and others, we will explore improvements that can be made. More context for this can be found in the [Insight brief](#) we published in January 2019.

Beyond the parameters of this future-looking review, we will continue to use our regulatory powers to challenge individual providers where we find evidence of recruitment and admissions practices that we consider constitute pressure selling.

Access and participation plans

The OfS's new approach to access and participation plans is designed to encourage providers to be more ambitious in reducing gaps in access, success and progression between the most and least advantaged students. It places increased emphasis on evaluation of activity and investment, and on improving practice.

Our assessment of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plans is underway. Providers with early student application deadlines received the outcomes of our assessment of their plans last month, including any ongoing monitoring requirements.

On 9 September 2019, the OfS Register will be updated, and approved plans published on the OfS website. All other registered providers that submitted their plans by the deadline will receive

outcomes letters by the final week of September. The OfS Register will be updated, and these plans published, on 7 October 2019.

We will be writing to providers with more information about arrangements for monitoring the implementation of access and participation plans for 2020-21 and beyond. The arrangements will build on the guidance in [OfS Regulatory notice 1](#), which requires all registered providers to publish and submit an annual access and participation impact report. We will be asking providers to send us their reports (covering the previous academic year) each January.

Supporting effective practice in access and participation

We are continuing to develop our role in supporting effective practice in access and participation. We are undertaking (and will publish) a qualitative analysis of access and participation plans to help us better understand the approaches providers have highlighted as contributing to successful practice. Over the next couple of months we will be publishing new case studies on the attainment of black, Asian and minority ethnic students on the OfS website's [A-Z effective practice pages](#), and sharing emerging findings from our funding call for projects to address barriers to student success.

Later this year we will be announcing the establishment of a new independent Disabled Students Commission with a focus on sector effective practice. We will also be publishing research on support models for disabled students.

We recently awarded funding of £5.6 million to a range of projects focusing on boosting opportunities for local graduates who seek work close to home, and will be bringing the project teams together for an introductory workshop later this month.

National Collaborative Outreach Programme

The Office for Students is investing £60 million each year in 29 local higher education outreach partnerships as part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The programme has recently expanded to support the development of outreach hubs across England. Each hub will host a website and provide a point of contact for outreach activity for all state secondary schools and colleges in their area. NCOP practitioners will be meeting in October 2019 to discuss the new approach, and the OfS will be funding a campaign to support hubs in raising awareness of NCOP activities.

Student welfare and wellbeing

The second in our series of Insight events, to take place in November 2019, will focus on student mental health, and hate crime and harassment in higher education. Invitations for this event will be sent out next week.

From this autumn we will start to disseminate early findings from the 10 large-scale projects on improving mental health outcomes for students, announced in June 2019 following our £6 million Challenge competition. This autumn we will also be publishing a report on religious-based hate crime on campus linked to our £7.4 million Catalyst safeguarding fund.

Prevent

The OfS monitors implementation of the Prevent duty by higher education providers. Next month sees the completion of a first round of Prevent review meetings with providers. We will share findings from these meetings, and from the findings of two thematic reviews on Prevent-related welfare approaches and training. We will also be publishing an evaluation of the first year of the new Prevent monitoring framework which will be informed by our engagement with providers and other stakeholders over the past year.

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)

We are currently awaiting the publication of Dame Shirley Pearce's independent review of the TEF. We expect to provide an update once the review, and the government's response, has been published.

Teaching funding

Our 2019-20 business plan signalled our intention to review our approach to teaching funding. In October 2019 we will publish a consultation on specialist institution funding from academic year 2020-21. During the autumn we will be working with provider and student representative bodies to scope high-level principles and approaches to teaching funding more broadly. A consultation in spring of next year will seek views on the design and delivery of a new funding methodology for academic year 2021-22 onwards.

Supporting digital skills and promoting flexible provision

We are working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Office for Artificial Intelligence on a new competition call to develop postgraduate conversion courses in artificial intelligence (AI) and data science. We will be holding two events this month to disseminate learning from an earlier pilot covering engineering and computing conversion courses in advance of the competition launch next month.

We are also beginning to plan for a Challenge competition call in spring 2020 to incentivise new ideas and approaches to flexible learning.

Joint projects with Research England

New funding for student-related knowledge exchange

The OfS and Research England are working to raise the profile of student engagement in knowledge exchange activities. We will be issuing a call later this month to better understand the ways that students benefit from, and are engaged in, knowledge exchange activities with businesses and local communities.

Diversifying the postgraduate research student pipeline

We are also working with Research England on the design of new initiatives to help diversify the talent pipeline moving into postgraduate research, with a focus on ensuring that these opportunities are open to students from all backgrounds.

Student information

On 12 September 2019, the OfS, in partnership with the UK funding and regulatory bodies, will be launching a new, UK-wide student website. 'Discover Uni', which will replace the Unistats website, will support students to make informed decisions about whether, where and what to study, in particular those without access to good information, advice and guidance.

The site is designed to be simple and easy to use. It seeks to reflect the diversity of higher education provision and the student body, and to present data responsibly. We hope it will help to dispel misperceptions – not least, around the implications of student finance loans – and encourage students to reflect on the things that are important to them, and to understand how to get the support they need.

Over the next year we will work with students, providers and others to further develop the Discover Uni website, including exploring new approaches to the data that we publish for students.

National Student Survey

The National Student Survey (NSS), which the OfS carries out on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies, captured the views of over 330,000 students across the UK this year, with 72 per cent of eligible students from over 400 universities, colleges and private providers taking part.

This autumn we will be announcing plans to further develop the survey through a series of pilots to expand the survey population. Over the course of the next year we will be consulting with higher education providers on these plans, and will welcome your thoughts on our proposals. We will be seeking participants for the first of these pilots, which will take place to coincide with NSS 2020, and we will be writing shortly with more details.

In spring 2020 we will be publishing the results of our postgraduate taught survey. We received around 13,000 responses, with 70 providers participating in the early pilot phase. Our thanks to those of you who took part.

Student engagement

The OfS Student engagement strategy, to be published in the new year, will describe how we plan to involve students in our work. It will reflect extensive consultation with students, staff and sector experts. We invite you to share your views by [taking part in our survey](#).

Research and analysis

Over the next six months we will be publishing [Insight briefs](#) on support for disabled students, student mental health, and the National Student Survey.

Our annual review of English higher education, due to be published in November 2019, looks at a range of developments in higher education over the past year, the OfS's response to them as the sector's regulator, and our priorities for 2019-20.

We will be publishing research defining new measures to capture the intersectional nature of disadvantage later this month, and in October we will update our work on the impact of unconditional offer making on student retention.

We have a regular cycle of statistical publications. Details can be found at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/producing-statistics/.

Timeline of OfS events, publications and correspondence for higher education providers

This list is not exhaustive and dates are subject to change.

Please [sign up to our alerts](#) via the OfS website for regular notifications.

Events

For more information, please see the [events pages](#) of the OfS website.

Date	Event
2019	
12 September	Widening access to postgraduate conversion courses for underrepresented groups: workshop (London)
September	Learning from postgraduate conversion courses pilots: briefing events 19 September (Newcastle) 25 September (Birmingham)
30 October	National Collaborative Outreach Programme conference
September and October	Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) seminars 10 September (London) 1 October (London) 8 October (Manchester)
Late October	Prevent Accountability and Data Return (ADR) surgeries (Leeds and Birmingham – invitations to follow)
October and November	Regional briefings for accountable officers on monitoring and intervention 22 and 23 October and 21 November (London) 7 November (Bristol) 12 November (Birmingham) Review of specialist institution funding: consultation events (dates and venues to be confirmed)
6 November	Insight event: Improving student lives: hate crime, harassment and mental health in higher education (London)
18 November	Addressing Barriers to Student Success conference (Birmingham)

Publications and guidance

For more information on OfS statistical and data releases, please see the [statistics release schedule](#) on the OfS website.

Date	Release details
2019	
9 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Early recruiters' access and participation plans
26 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating what works for students (Joint Research England/OfS knowledge exchange funding competition)
Mid-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration: Key themes and analysis • Publication: Accounts direction (Guidance on preparing and publishing financial statements) • Guidance: Degree awarding powers
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) survey • Guidance: Prevent monitoring
Late September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Funding assurance statement
Late September/ early October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance: Annual financial submissions (Details of format and content of provider annual financial submissions to the OfS) • Guidance: Making applications for exempt charity status • Guidance: Monitoring and intervention (How to comply with OfS requirements and approaches to monitoring from the end of the transition period in August 2019) • Guidance: Student protection plans • Guidance: Reportable events
Early October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of remaining access and participation plans • Postgraduate data science and AI conversion course programme: guidance and application information
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Evaluation of safeguarding students Catalyst fund projects: religious-based hate crime (Round three interim report) • Consultation: Review of specialist institution funding from academic year 2020-21
17 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Updated 2019-20 grant allocations for providers registered in the Approved (fee cap) category
18 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: OfS value for money strategy
30 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of NCOP publications (OfS report; national evaluation report (phase one); report on perceptions of outreach among teachers and parents/carers)

Date	Release details
End October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: Sector overview of access and participation plans
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of Prevent publications (Year one evaluation of new Prevent monitoring framework; Prevent review meetings report, including outcomes of welfare and training thematic reviews)
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation: Admissions review
End November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: English higher education 2019: The Office for Students annual review
2020	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation: Teaching funding
March/April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual release of analysis of degree classifications over time • Publication: OfS student engagement strategy • Monitoring of 2018-19 access agreements
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OfS Challenge competition: flexible learning • Publication: Financial sustainability of higher education providers in England • Publication: Results of OfS PGT survey research activity • Consultation: Teaching funding

Data submission guidance and deadlines

Deadline	Submission or publication
2019	
Mid-September	Guidance: Prevent accountability and data returns 2018-19
End October	Publication of HESES workbooks (ahead of submission deadlines in November and December)
November	Guidance: Transparency return 2020
14 November	Submit HESES19 survey – further education and sixth form colleges and academies
2 December	Submit Prevent monitoring return
10 December	Submit HESES19 survey – all other providers

Deadline	Submission or publication
2020	
31 January	Submit TRAC data
28 February	Submit TRAC(T) data
April	Submit Transparency return 2020