

New international student immigration routes open early

New routes for international students to apply for visas will open early delivering on the government's commitment to introduce a new points-based immigration system.

As detailed in the immigration rules laid in Parliament today (10 September 2020), the Student route and Child Student route will both open on 5 October 2020 to the best and brightest international students from across the globe.

International students play a key part in the government's agenda to unleash the UK's potential now that we have left the EU. They make important contributions economically, academically, and financially. We recognise that as a result of coronavirus, some overseas students are choosing to defer their entry onto courses in the UK until the spring semester of 2021. Introducing these new routes now means that students will be able to benefit from the new streamlined process whilst still giving sponsors time to adapt after their autumn intake.

The routes treat all students equally, with international students, including those from Europe coming to study after the transition period ends, using the same, simplified route when it opens for applications.

It will ensure our world-leading education sector can continue to welcome talented and high potential students to our globally renowned universities, further education and English language colleges, and independent schools.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

Now we have left the EU, we are free to unleash this country's full potential and implement the changes we need to restore trust in the immigration system and attract talent to drive our economy forward.

Launching the Student route early sends a clear message to the world we want the best and brightest to come to the UK to study at our globally renowned education institutions.

There will be no limit on the number of international students who can come to the UK. This will help to increase the total number of international students choosing to study in the UK higher education system each year to 600,000 by 2030, as set out in the International Education Strategy published in March 2019.

Chief Executive of the Russell Group Dr Tim Bradshaw said:

The UK is a global leader in higher education, research and

innovation. As we look to the UK's future place in the world, we want to protect our hard-won status and the opportunities it provides to help with the economic recovery of towns and cities across Britain – as well as finding solutions to the wider challenges that face our society.

We welcome these changes to the immigration rules, which will help to ensure the UK remains an internationally attractive place for the best and brightest students to study. We will continue to work with the government to ensure our visa system remains flexible and responsive to developing issues, such as those emerging from the coronavirus pandemic.

Cardiff University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Colin Riordan said:

Given the continuing uncertainties arising from the global pandemic, it's even more important that the UK is seen as open and welcoming so we can retain our hard-won status as a global leader in higher education, research and innovation.

That's why these changes are welcome. The new arrangements will send a clear message that we have the support of our government to welcome talented students from across the world to come and study with us.

The new Student route improves on the previous Tier 4 route by making it more streamlined for sponsoring institutions and their students, creating clearer pathways for students, and ensuring the UK remains competitive in a changing global education market.

Students will require a total of 70 points to be granted leave. They will achieve the required points if they can demonstrate that they have an offer from an approved educational institution, speak English and are able to support themselves during their studies in the UK.

We also want to ensure we retain the brightest and the best students to continue to contribute to the UK post-study, which is why we are launching the Graduate route in the summer of 2021. This additional new route will allow those who have completed a degree at a UK Higher Education provider with a track record of compliance to stay in the UK for two years (three years for PhD graduates) and work at any skill level, and to switch into work routes if they find a suitable job.

The government is on track to deliver its new points-based immigration which will attract talent and take back control by treating people from every part of the world equally and giving us control of our borders.

Helping the fishing industry transition to independence

From 1 January 2021, the UK will become solely responsible for our seas and begin new trading relationships with the EU and the rest of the world.

For some fishers and merchants, there will be big changes required to ensure they can still compete successfully in the international market place.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is helping the fishing and seafood industries prepare for the transition to take on these new opportunities and responsibilities together.

The MMO is raising awareness of the vital role that timely submission of catch and sales records will play in enabling the industry to thrive after the UK leaves the EU.

“This data submission awareness campaign is very much in the spirit of ‘help us to help you’ It is a legal requirement to submit accurate landing declarations, logbooks, sales notes and app catch records on time, but not everyone is yet aware that these records provide the traceability data evidence needed to allow industry to operate from 1 January,” said Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of the MMO.

“This data now has additional importance in fish exports, as catch certificates required for sales to EU destinations will be validated through the data provided by the fisher and merchant. And knowing the origin of the catch ensures customers have confidence to buy the product.

“The records and statistics on what is taken out of the sea, where and when, are also used by MMO and government to make decisions on the future sustainability of fish stocks and the seafood industry. This includes managing fishing opportunities, conservation measures and in very recent times, awarding grant funding.”

Barrie Deas, Chief Executive Officer of the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO) said: “We now have sole responsibility for our waters and it is up to us to ensure we all do the right thing to make sure our industry has a profitable and sustainable future.

“Parts of our industry have been disadvantaged by poor data for too long. We should all recognise good management decisions and good regulation depends on access to good information. The catch records necessary to make vital decisions and fight our industry’s cause – on quotas, negotiations, area closures, environmental legislation, funding and grants, port developments, export approval and more, all depend on good data. The rapid financial support during the Covid lockdown crisis was only possible because of the data held.

“There is an immediate need for everyone to begin now to change practices

where this is needed to ensure that their records are submitted within the legal deadline – if you wait until 1 January, it could be too late.”

UK exporters will have to comply with the EU’s Illegal, Unreported or Unrecorded (IUU) fishing regulations and supply catch certificates and other documents in order to continue to export fish and fishery products to customers in the EU. Accurate records – logbooks, landing declarations, catch app records and sales notes – must be submitted within the legal deadline to enable catch certificates to be issued.

Fishers and merchants should submit all logbook, landing declarations, catch recording and sales notes accurately by the legal deadline:

- Vessels under 10m – record on the catch app in accordance with your licence condition.
- Vessels 10-12m – submit paper logbooks within 48 hours; electronic logbooks within 48 hrs
- Vessels over 12m – submit electronic logbooks and landing declarations within 24 hrs of landing
- Sales notes must arrive within 24 hours of first-sale via the Electronic Reporting System or within 48 hours if submitting by post.

Records submitted on time enable the following benefits:

- Provide a stronger evidential base to negotiate better outcomes for England’s fishers and help stabilise and grow the industry
- Improve fisheries management with potentially more localised opportunities to fish
- Provide a record of traceability which assures customer confidence in UK products
- Provide the evidence for grant funding
- Improve the evidence base for environmental management and legislation changes
- Support the industry voice in marine development and conservation
- Establish track records for individual businesses to support MMO decision-making on licences to fish pressurised stocks when restrictions are required
- Facilitate trade and prevent obstructions in export trade from 1st January 2021

This initiative is just part of the MMO’s continuing commitment to engage with the seafood industry to better understand the needs of these businesses, the impact any impending changes will have on their ability to trade with the EU in 2021, and how best we can support them. The MMO is already engaging with fishers, merchants and seafood processors via online surveys and one-to-one calls, and will shortly launch its fortnightly email bulletin and ‘one-stop-shop’, offering essential support and guidance for the industry.

You can learn more about getting ready for 1 January 2021 and [sign up](#) to get the latest updates relevant to the fishing and seafood industries.

Learn more about how to [report sales information](#)

UK leads multi-national task group of warships above the Arctic Circle in demonstration of freedom of navigation

HMS Sutherland, supported by RFA Tidespring, commanded a task group comprising the United States Navy's destroyer USS Ross and the Norwegian Frigate Thor Heyerdahl on a deployment to the Barents Sea.

The ships undertook training with each other to further develop their Navies' interoperability while asserting our nations' commitment to upholding peace in the region.

The High North is witnessing a change in its security environment and represents a key area of interest for the UK. Recent Russian attempts to control freedom of access and navigation in the region are of concern to the UK and our partners.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK is the closest neighbour to the Arctic states. In addition to preserving UK interests we have a responsibility to support our Arctic Allies such as Norway to preserve the security and stability of the region.

It is vital to preserve freedom of navigation when melting ice caps are creating new shipping lanes and increasing the risk of states looking to militarise and monopolise international borders.

Over 1,200 military personnel from four nations took part, supported by US P-8 Poseidon and Danish Challenger Maritime Patrol Aircraft along with RAF Typhoons and a RAF Voyager refuelling tanker.

This multi-domain operation is the first time that the UK has operated Typhoons in the High North. RAF aircraft conducted an air defence exercise to improve integration between air and maritime assets.

It is also the first time the UK has operated so far north alongside Denmark and Norway, both of whom are part of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Through groupings such as JEF and NATO, we demonstrate the UK's commitment to peace, security, and freedom of access and navigation in the High North. These organisations are vital in setting the conditions for international security and it is crucial we all play our part in an increasingly unstable world of persistent challenge and competition.

Norwegian Minister of Defence, Frank Bakke-Jensen said:

Flights, operations at sea, and exercises are important contributions to Norwegian and European security as part of a larger cooperation on the defence of the Alliance. In order for allied forces to reinforce the defence of NATO's northern part, they need to have the knowledge to operate there. For this reason, Norwegian and Allied military personnel, groups, aircraft and ships need also to train and exercise in Norway and the High North in peacetime. Training together with US, British, and Danish forces strengthens the operational value for both our own and their forces, and enables us to operate seamlessly together.

HMS Sutherland led the ships through a demanding series of exercises, testing their abilities to conduct surface and anti-submarine warfare in one of the world's most challenging of environments. Conducting routine tasks, such as replenishment at sea, in conditions close to freezing and in unfamiliar waters becomes a vital training exercise to ensure effective integration between allies.

More than 1,200 personnel are taking part in the exercise. Crown copyright.

Our activity was completed in a considered manner that demonstrated each nations' continued determination to ensure stability and security in the High North.

Commander Tom Weaver RN, Task Group Commander and Commanding Officer HMS Sutherland:

It has been thoroughly rewarding to operate in the High North. This operation has been an amazing opportunity to hone the skills of my Ship's Company not only in this challenging and demanding environment but also to work more closely with key allies in an incredibly important region.

[Civil/crime news: launch of 'help us say yes' online training](#)

News story

We're launching online 'webinar' training events in October 2020 to 'help us say yes' when we receive your applications and claims.



A series of online 'webinar' training events are starting in October which are designed to 'help us say yes' first time when providers submit work.

The first two webinar events will be on civil topics and will look at means and merits tests:

- civil means – 7 October, 10-11am
- civil merits – 14 October, 10am-11am

Other events are being planned to take us through the autumn and winter, including a number for crime providers.

How do I book a webinar?

You can book tickets for our online ['help us say yes' webinars](#) on Eventbrite.

Why is this happening now?

We've looked at the issues that lead you to contact us and think we can help with your submissions and avoid delays.

The webinars will cover your common enquiries and 'help us say yes' when we receive your work.

Your chance to meet our experts

This is your opportunity to meet our experts, better understand our processes and ask questions directly. Each event will be run on a 'first come' basis and will be limited in number to encourage conversation.

We know that you're busy so all webinars will be recorded and posted on YouTube. We'll also re-run popular ones.

Looking forwards

We're also looking at developing a longer-term programme. We'd appreciate your support if you'd like to:

If you'd like to take part just email us at:

CommunicationsDepartment@Justice.gov.uk

Further information

['help us say yes' webinars](#) – to reserve online tickets

CommunicationsDepartment@Justice.gov.uk – to send suggestions for future webinars

Published 10 September 2020

[Education Secretary sets out aims for higher education](#)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today at the UUK conference.

I want to start by giving my sincere thanks and praise to the Higher Education sector for the way in which it has responded to the challenges of the past few months. I will then go on to talk about the role of the sector in supporting economic growth, nationally but also regionally.

We are grappling with unprecedented economic challenges and Higher education has a key role to play in helping us overcome these.

I know that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on students, universities and other higher education providers.

But the resilience, innovation and dedication from staff and students over the last few months in dealing with the issues the pandemic has created have been truly remarkable.

For example, it was wonderful to hear that despite the national lockdown, Natural Science students at Bangor University still managed to go on a virtual fieldtrip around Anglesey, using social media platforms to follow an actual tour undertaken by a senior lecturer prior to the lockdown.

And students at Warwick University, like many across the country, have been writing blogs to provide tips and support on subjects such as mental health during the COVID outbreak. Students have also been instrumental for many

universities in helping and co-producing re-opening plans and communications.

And let's not forget scientists, researchers and technicians in universities across the UK who are supporting our Vaccines Taskforce by working tirelessly to research a vaccine for coronavirus. It is thanks to their valuable medical and research expertise that vaccine candidate clinical trials are now taking place at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London.

Universities have also offered vital services such as lab space and accommodation, applying research expertise to develop medicine and equipment needed to combat the virus.

Many have also repurposed their facilities to carry out testing on those with coronavirus symptoms and have collaborated with industry partners on producing ventilators, PPE and testing equipment.

This is truly remarkable, and what makes our university sector truly world class.

With 4 higher education providers in the world's top 10 and 18 in the top 100, I am so proud that the UK's higher education sector has such a well-established reputation for high quality and world class research and innovation.

Just as importantly, UK universities are renowned for choice and flexibility and I am delighted that thousands of international students choose to study here each year, contributing to the UK both culturally, socially and economically.

Working closely with Universities UK, the British Council and others, Minister Donelan has been spearheading communications, reassuring current and prospective international students that the UK higher education is 'open for business', remains world-class and is a safe, welcoming and tolerant place to study.

As part of this, Government has also committed to an additional £1m in marketing spend delivered through Study UK.

I want to say again here today that for those seeking an excellent education and an unforgettable UK student experience, we are ensuring existing rules and processes are as flexible as possible and better than ever.

Not only have we confirmed that distance learning will be permitted for the 2020/21 academic year to respond to the circumstances we find ourselves in with COVID.

But, in addition, this time last year I spoke to you about the new 2 year post study offer in the form of the Graduate Route, and since then we have improved it further through announcing to offer 3 years for those on PhDs.

I hope you agree that we now have a world-class student visa offer befitting our world-class higher education sector – this will only improve once the Student route is launched later this year, and student visa processes are

further streamlined.

In June I was happy to appoint one of your own, Sir Steve Smith, as the UK's new International Education Champion, who has already begun assisting with opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector.

And we intend to publish review of the International Education Strategy this Autumn in order to ensure we retain laser-like focus on increasing the number of international students we host to 600k by 2030.

For those planning to study in the UK from the Autumn, I know that our higher education providers are consistently doing their utmost to ensure international students are supported and feel welcome on university campuses.

For all this good work and world class prestige, I do acknowledge that the pressures providers are facing as a result of COVID-19 are substantial and some may face serious financial difficulties as a result.

That is why my department is working closely with the sector, the Office for Students and across Government to monitor and fully understand the financial risks that providers are facing and help them access support where necessary, and have established a restructuring regime to support universities as a last resort, if it proves necessary.

I fully recognise that the decision on exam results a few weeks ago has not only impacted students and their families, but also universities and the admissions system. As I said at the time, we took this decision in the best interest of the students.

I have been incredibly impressed with the sector's response and I know that it is striving to be to be fair and flexible in its approach to admissions.

Despite the uncertainty over what the coming year will look like on the ground, demand for higher education places has been great this year and universities have taken fantastic steps to reassure incoming students.

Government have removed the caps on medicine and dentistry courses this year and we are providing additional Teaching Grant and capital funding to support increased capacity.

Beyond this, the sector has excelled in adapting to take on as many students as possible, whilst of course taking responsibility and ensuring COVID-19 measures and precautions are adhered to.

I want to take this opportunity to land three key messages with you. The first is to keep going.

I've acknowledged some of the great work already done by the sector – but this will need to continue as we work through this uncertain period of time together.

To support with and solidify this progress already made, we have recently published new guidance for Higher Education providers on reopening campuses

and buildings in a COVID-secure way.

We have used the evidence and recommendations set out in the HE SAGE report, as the corner stone of this guidance, in addition to input and advice from the sector. We expect this guidance to feed in directly to the plans HE providers are putting in place to reopen their doors safely, and I look forward to working with all stakeholders as the situation evolves across the autumn term.

And this brings me on to the second key message which I want to convey, the importance of collaboration. Specifically, providers working with their local authorities to develop plans for local outbreaks.

My department has worked with the Joint Biosecurity Centre, other government departments and local communities to establish best practice for providers to implement an integrated approach for tightening measures in areas subject to local restrictions.

I encourage universities to refer to this guidance on engaging with their local authority.

And finally, the key message of the government to the public is clear – we all must stay alert in order to control the virus and save lives and as part of this, students need to act responsibly on and off campus.

This is why working with the sector to develop a communications campaign and strategies has been pivotal to ensuring students have the information they need to make responsible choices, to keep themselves and those around them safe and their environments COVID-secure. We are asking you to also deliver clear messages to students about the measures you have in place, and how important it is that they follow them – to protect their own health, and the wider community.

We know that students travel from across the country and indeed across the world to attend our world-class universities. So we are also asking you to support and encourage students to stay at university if restrictions are imposed locally which limit their ability to enjoy face to face teaching – as you did when restrictions were first in place in March – to help manage the risk of students transmitting the virus back home.

This pandemic has resulted in a myriad of unprecedented challenges for the Higher Education sector to contend with.

However, knowing that the sector can rise to these and with such creativity, gives me faith and conviction that our institutions will continue to hold their place and represent the UK on the world stage.

It is this innovation, strength and adaptability which will ensure the sector can play a central role in economic growth.

Universities and other higher education providers play a key role in the national economy as well as in regional and local economies, not only by providing students with the skills they need to go into graduate jobs, but

also by being at the forefront of applied industrial research and by working closely with hundreds of businesses.

They are a crucial part of the post-16 education landscape, that includes further education and apprenticeships, all of which give young people a real opportunity to enhance their career pathways and options after they leave school.

So today, I want to talk about the role all higher education providers play in delivering this essential mission.

Too often, there can be an implicit narrative that every university needs to measure itself against Oxbridge. That if a university isn't winning Nobel prizes and taking in triple A students it is somehow second rate.

In reality, it is the diversity of our sector which will drive the levelling up agenda that is central to everything this Government does.

Take my own university, Bradford, which can trace its foundation back to the town's Mechanics Institute in 1832. Or the University of Birmingham, founded by Joseph Chamberlain to underpin the growing industrial and economic strength of Britain's second city.

These regional missions are as important today as they were then – and will only increase in importance as the nation recovers from the impact of COVID-19. Jobs, industry and regional growth must be at the heart of our education strategy – and universities must be a key part of that.

And there have been some fantastic examples to date. I was speaking to a businessman in my constituency recently, a locksmith who spoke glowingly of the support he had received from the University of Wolverhampton. The University of Wolverhampton is rated as one of the best universities in Europe for product design. And at London South Bank University, approximately 80% of students, as advisors to local businesses, helping their community whilst simultaneously gaining vital employability skills.

These are excellent examples of successful integration with local business. However, we must acknowledge that we are not quite there yet in achieving our goals.

There are still pockets of low quality. One only has to look at the Guardian subject league tables to see there are too many courses where well under 50% of students proceed to graduate employment.

But more fundamentally, in order to create a fairer, more prosperous and more productive country, we need to reverse the generational decline in higher technical education.

We have already announced that, over the next few years, we will be establishing a system of higher technical education where learners and employers can have confidence in high-quality courses that provide the skills they need to succeed in the workplace, whether they are taught in a further education college, a university or an independent training provider.

Of course, a large proportion of this will be delivered in our great further education colleges, but what I also want to see is for universities to end their preoccupation with three-year bachelors' degrees and offer far more higher technical qualifications and apprenticeships. These would be more occupation focused and provide a better targeted route for some students, and benefit employers and the economy.

Universities and other higher education providers are already an important part of this market, but I want to see their technical offer expand.

Only 10% of all adults aged 18-65 hold a higher technical qualification as their highest qualification, compared to around 20% of adults in Germany and as much as 34% in Canada.

And, as a nation, we must be honest that have gone backwards here. Well over 100,000 people were doing Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in the year 2000; that has reduced to fewer than 35,000. And within Higher Education Institutes, total participants in foundation degrees have declined from a high of 81,000 (in 2009/10), to approximately 30,000 (28,760 in 2018/19).

Yet the economic case for studying these qualifications is inarguable. I want to capitalise on the potential of further and higher education providers to deliver excellent higher technical education and apprenticeships.

My vision is for a system which learners and employers have true confidence in for providing the skills they need to succeed.

As I set out in my Further Education speech on 9th July 2020, we will not see growth in the economy if universities do not play their part. And of course, they will play their part, as they have always done. I believe the join up with Further Education through increased flexibility so that study fits with the needs of students with busy lives, is key in ensuring these two sectors work cohesively together.

While good work has already been done, I am motivated to see us go further to achieving excellence. But, knowing that our providers and institutions are fantastically placed to deliver on these aims, gives me full confidence in our collective ability.

And I want to say here today, to each and every institution, you are part of the solution.

I hope each of you recognise your value and will work with me to achieve these ambitions.

Thank you.