



Student panel update

Purpose

1. To update the board on the work of the student panel.

Recommendations/Decisions required by the board

2. The board is invited to note:
 - a. The updates in this paper.
 - b. The minutes from previous panel meetings which have been approved by the panel and will be published on the OfS website.

Paper publication date

3. This report will be made available on the OfS website.

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Update

4. The student panel met on 27 October 2022, where they discussed:
 - a. Initial findings of the evaluation undertaken on the statement of expectations on harassment and sexual misconduct.
 - b. The OfS's external communications strategy.
 - c. The OfS's approach to market exit.
 - d. Impact on students of the rising cost of living.
5. The discussion on the statement of expectations focused on sharing the findings from the evaluation undertaken by SUMS consulting, and the upcoming consultation and prevalence survey that will be conducted as a result of the findings.
6. The discussion regarding the OfS's external communications strategy focused on how traditional student media is changing, how the OfS works with the media, and the OfS's relationship to government.
 - a. The panel discussed platforms the OfS could use to communicate with students, student awareness of the OfS, and how the OfS captures topical comments, conversations, and trends related to the sector on social media.
7. The discussion on the OfS's approach to market exit focused on the role of the OfS in requiring providers to protect the interests of students in the event of a market exit, and the OfS's approach to exercising these powers.
 - a. The panel discussed the timescales for students being given an opportunity to transfer their credits and find alternative places to study or receive evidence of academic achievement, the impact of market exit on offer holders and the current risks facing providers.
8. The final discussion focused on how students have been impacted by the rising cost of living, how providers have responded, and what else they could be doing.
 - a. The panel fed back that:
 - i. There may be differential impacts on first-generation immigrant students, those who cannot rely on family support, and commuter students regarding transportation costs.
 - ii. There are issues with students accessing funding due to unclear information from providers, hardship funding being targeted towards undergraduate students, and students paying high rent, but not being able to access energy rebates.
 - iii. Actions providers could take include:
 1. Developing a community that encourages students to ask for help and support if they need it.
 2. Providers reviewing reading lists to ensure that learning materials are affordable.

3. Offering asynchronous lectures so that students can manage work and study at the same time.
 4. Identifying 'at-risk' student groups and create tailored support for these groups. An example was a provider offering free printing for neurodiverse students as it's a necessary learning aid that can become costly.
 5. Introducing employment strategies that offer jobs to students before external applicants and working with local job fairs to advertise study friendly employment options.
- iv. A panel member raised that the OfS should record the challenges and solutions that were successful for future learning.
9. Other work and events the panel has been involved with include:
- a. Attending a UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) student advisory council meeting to learn more about international students.
 - b. Panel members spoke on panels at the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) conference. The topics related to what the sector should be focusing on as we move out of the pandemic, and blended learning.
10. Minutes from the October student panel meeting have been submitted to the board for information. These will be published on the OfS website.
11. The next student panel meeting will take place on 26 January 2023, where Dayo Olukoshi will join as the board member invitee.