

**HELOA Best Practice: Covid-19 Webinars**

We recently ran two online webinars for our members to come together and share best practice around some of the most prominent topics that have been affecting us across the sector during the Covid-19 outbreak. We know that some members were unable to attend or would like to share the findings within their teams and institutions, so we’ve created this summary document from breakout rooms and collated the key points discussed.

We are hoping to offer more specific sessions over the next few months and some online training to support members during this time. Keep an eye on the Digest and our social media channels for dates and further information.

# Virtual Delivery

The Virtual Delivery breakout rooms were the most popular with 9 breakout rooms across the 2 webinars. The groups were at various stages of developing online resources and events. While some had well established virtual offerings, most people were still finding their feet and adjusting their ways of working now in-person delivery isn’t an option. Most universities were looking at hosting some variation of an online open day and sessions for school groups.

**Challenges and positives of the current situation**

* Internet connection
* Approval of things – i.e. marketing
* How to use software
* How to manage Teams
* How to run residentials
* How to get in touch with teachers and parents
* How to keep in touch without being too much
* Managing the volume of emails
* One university ran an application week, and this has great online attendance
* Positive to work more with other teams i.e. events teams, institutions have been buddying up to help support this.

The application week that was ran had subject sessions, live Q&A as well as generic sessions. This was ran by the events team using Tech Smith and snagit. Contacted applicants directly – found more engagement that face to face events.

**Keeping in touch suggestions**

Daily SMT meetings which then feed into daily team meetings and then individual meetings as needed.

Setting up an ambassador Teams page - one institution also sending a thank you email to all ambassadors, with a key focus on the financial impact of not working shifts.

**Ambassadors have been used for**

* Uni Buddy
* Proof reading to get a student point of view
* The Student Room
* Live Q&A
* Student life talks
* Webinars
* Vlogs
* Instagram

**What software is been used?**

[Camtasia](https://www.techsmith.com/video-editor.html) (potentially has particular facilities for safeguarding)

[Gecko Chat](https://geckoengage.com/chat/)

[Padlet](https://padlet.com/)

[Tidio](https://www.tidio.com/)

[Pubble](https://www.pubble.io/)

[Adobe Connect](https://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html)

[Ivent](https://www.ivent-uk.com/?keyword=ivent&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIifLG9N_q6AIVNYBQBh1iwgEtEAAYASAAEgJP_fD_BwE) - ivent being used by several universities. One has been using it for PG open days before COVID-19.

[Blackboard Collaborate](https://www.blackboard.com/teaching-learning/collaboration-web-conferencing/blackboard-collaborate)

[Tech Smith](https://www.techsmith.com/)

[Snagit](https://www.techsmith.com/screen-capture.html)

[Go to meeting](https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-gb/lp/easy-online-meetings?cid=g2m_emea_ggs_cpc_brand_go%20to%20meeting_e&gclid=EAIaIQobChMInJfQsuDq6AIV8IBQBh1HtQEbEAAYASAAEgLnH_D_BwE)

[Teams](https://products.office.com/en-gb/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software)

[Cisco WEbex](https://www.webex.com/)

[Sway](https://sway.office.com/)

[Revolution viewing](https://www.revolutionviewing.com/)

[Zoom](https://zoom.us/)

[Unibuddy](https://unibuddy.com/) - New video features coming to Unibuddy toward the end of April – something to watch out for and Various institutions using staff profiles on Unibuddy as a means for teachers to get in touch

Endless Fairs

[Meet & Engage](https://meetandengage.com/)

[Livestorm](https://livestorm.co/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIkfDjvcv26AIVCLrtCh0xKQyzEAAYASAAEgJq1vD_BwE)

[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/)

[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/)

[Google Classroom](https://classroom.google.com/)

[Vfairs](https://www.vfairs.com/?utm_campaign=Search%20-%20Global%20-%20EN&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=328645287764&utm_term=vfairs&hsa_mt=e&hsa_ver=3&hsa_kw=vfairs&hsa_tgt=kwd-358806330867&hsa_ad=328645287764&hsa_grp=61428458090&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_src=g&hsa_acc=6191550310&hsa_cam=1690901237&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI_svftIX36AIVGODtCh2cDARHEAAYASAAEgKf4PD_BwE)

[Unitastersdays](https://www.unitasterdays.com/)

[Workcast](https://info.workcast.com/products-virtual-events?utm_source=CPC&utm_medium=Google&utm_campaign=MW%20-%20UK%20%26%20IE%20-%20Brand&utm_campaign=MW+-+UK+%26+IE+-+Brand&utm_term=workcast&utm_medium=ppc&utm_source=adwords&hsa_kw=workcast&hsa_acc=8742445125&hsa_tgt=kwd-302926307220&hsa_cam=1534244067&hsa_ad=341213052405&hsa_ver=3&hsa_mt=e&hsa_src=g&hsa_grp=61402208867&hsa_net=adwords&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7YT-yIX36AIVwrTtCh1aUAlfEAAYASAAEgIEq_D_BwE)

[Articulate](https://articulate.com/)

Hijack

[Aula](https://aula.education/)

[Rise 360](https://articulate.com/rise-articulate-360)

[Channel Talent](https://www.channeltalent.co.uk/)

[Google hangouts](https://hangouts.google.com/) for speaking to students in schools. Schools tend to use Gmail so easy to link into hangouts.

**A tip was to look into the software academics are using to deliver online and that the institution might already have a licence for.**

Food for thought: Are people creating subtitles for videos? How to run residentials is a real concern.

The application week that was ran had subject sessions, live Q&A as well as generic sessions. This was ran by the events team using Tech Smith and snagit

Contacted applicants directly – found more engagement that face to face events.

**From a Widening participation standpoint – are we all creating similar content and bombarding schools/ colleges? Should we be working more collaboratively?**

Important to keep existing Widening participation groups going – doing this through virtual delivery – making sure that those groups have access and the necessary training to access online services.

* Brightside and Sutton Trust places to look for resources

Will we have to give particular thought to the impact on current Year 10’s and what additional support they’ll need at future events?

**Focus on School Liaison**

* Communication is key
* Some institutions are getting limited response, or feedback that the schools don’t need content
* Some institutions are getting good responses, with people keen to get content – particularly careers advisors from colleges who may not have been as engaged in the past
* Some institutions carrying out weekly catchups with target schools – with different weekly themes followed by Q&A
* Institutions being requested to provide pre-recorded video content that can be sent out, as well as PDF / word documents that can be emailed out, rather than time limited webinars
* Teacher sessions are being explored by some universities, but it was noted that it’s unclear whether teachers would be willing to engage with this type of activity at the moment when they have so much else going on. Some colleagues had spoken to their teacher contacts and recommended doing this to get a better understanding of what schools, students and teachers would actually find useful. Some schools had noted that they are using their own virtual platforms and it might be more helpful for universities to use those, rather than asking schools to adapt to our systems.
* People have also found it has been easier to get academics to engage, as they are committing to an hour of their time for a webinar from home, rather than a few hours out of their day for a visit to campus.
* There was a worry during the first week of how best to support schools/colleges with many emails being sent to show we are still here to support them. One university has increased their monthly email newsletter to a weekly one, updating people about events they are running and sector news and asking what practitioners would like. Responses at first have been slow but now more are starting to come back. Typical responses have been for Finance/Budgeting, Progression Pathways for younger years and Why Go to Uni sessions.
* Evaluation of sessions was a concern. Some are using hits for videos to show engagement or building in an evaluation quiz into the end of sessions.  Some have been using Microsoft Forms to get some more detailed data.
* It was asked is institutions had noticed that some schools/colleges had been asking for masterclass/subject specific type sessions that would help to feed into their curriculum delivery as one of the members institution had been asked this. Others hadn’t had this request, but one institution was using Channel Talent to deliver sessions based on subject specific content.
* After the initial rush to contact schools’, institutions are now taking the time to create valuable resources rather than generic content, such as word searches/crosswords, live chats/webinars and online modules. Unibuddy has been popular and quite successful.
* Offering sessions to Year 13 students, not recruitment but talks on employability, transitioning to university has been useful.

**Where are different universities at in terms of their current plans for online events?**

* Looking to start running at the end of Easter – school teachers asking for them
* In process of promoting online events via Zoom
* Online offer holder event linked to from main webpage, Q+A focused
* Offer holder activity online, with colleges running own conversion activity – presentations with questions
* Producing YouTube videos of presentations – unlisted and sent to schools
* Some institutions with offer holder events running within academic departments
* Pre-recording year 12 sessions to have ready to roll out
* Looking to move pre-app online, but current main focus is applicants
* Call campaigns starting in some faculties – making use of online phone system to work remotely

**Advertising**

* Some faculties want to communicate all their events to people – with many faculties, this can get messy
* Importance of streamlining communication with offering
* One webpage with all information in one place as a means of reducing number of comms

**Content**

* Using student ambassadors for student life sessions
* Student life webinar over Zoom
* YouTube videos (unpolished) with authentic student voice
* Unibuddy as a source of blogs and video content
* SAs taking over Instagram feeds for authentic voice – save as stories on profile to reuse content
* Also trying to gamify where possible with quizzes but difficulty of inserting quiz platforms like Kahoot into virtual delivery. Also can attendees vote and view a virtual event, do they have multiple devices to use?
* Most members who said they were looking at virtual delivery were looking at doing ‘bitesize’ versions of their sessions to ensure the audience was fully engaged with the session. One member asked if there had been any requests from schools/colleges to have the presentations on a specific platform as they had received this request but most of the group hadn’t had such a specific request. It was commented that there is a concern that schools and colleges will be bombarded with the same content and sessions from a wide range of universities. In terms of transition activity, it was mainly focussed on the WP schools and they were asking for more study skills based activity to be delivered in bitesize chunks online.
* We discussed the different ways those institutions who have moved to virtual delivery have done it so far, this included narrated presentations that were sent to teachers via a link where the presentation could be downloaded, and virtual online campus tours/visits which were split out into slots.
* Brand teams can help badge the student videos with logos and/or starts and ends

**Creating new content**

* While this is difficult to do from home, some universities are using student ambassadors to create student led content, such as studying at home blogs and tips for working at home.
* A number of institutions had delivered a virtual fair and used UniTasterDays to promote this. It was set between 10-2 and contained a chat session and 3 x 1 hour sessions for faculty input. There seemed to be peaks during the day for various sessions with Student Finance being a popular one. The platform allowed questions to be asked while the presentation was going on and then the presentation would be repeated.

**International**

* Difficult to effectively triage questions from international students versus UK when all online

**Moderation**

* Moderators in presentations to answer questions rather than the presenter
* Unlisted YouTube links with comments turned off – not using live function to avoid issues
* Facebook live UCAS event – poor comments from students

**Top tips**

* When doing a presentation, have a moderator to keep an eye on questions to keep the presenter focused on presentation
* Set up tabs in browser to copy and paste links into chats
* Get people to sign up anonymously or change names for recording purposes
* **Adapting content for online delivery:** Most felt that sessions should be shorter than usual to hold attention. Some noted that they were reluctant to provide full content online, and were instead thinking about how virtual activity fits into longer term plans and how they could follow up with more in-depth sessions once in person activity can resume. Some also delivered short sessions and followed up with handouts with more detail. Some universities were not delivering any live activity, and others had concerns about making ‘working from home’ backgrounds professional.
* **Safeguarding:** Discussed importance of making sure personal information isn’t able to be shared through webinars/live sessions by participants. Some noted about disabling comments and using platforms where you can temporarily remove/block participants.

**Teachers and Advisors conferences**

The discussion moved onto the delivery of Teachers and Advisors conferences that many universities had coming up. One institution is looking to do a series of virtual sessions delivered over different days instead of it all taking place on one day. Another institution was looking at a live event that took place on the same day as planned originally but a shorter day. The day would consist of breakout rooms similar to how they would normally run a conference. There was also going to be a discussion room where the advisors can chat between themselves to aid peer to peer support.

One institution has made the decision not to move their Teacher and Advisors conference to online as their campus is a big selling point for their university so they have postponed until further notice.

Another institution has postponed theirs until September but has held Q & A sessions recently. However some sessions ran before a lot of new information had come out so teachers were asking questions which unfortunately couldn’t be answered during that time. They commented that they found they were able to reach out to staff who they hadn’t normally being able to access before during this new way of delivery for example being in contact with teaching staff as opposed to mainly careers advisors.

One institution said they had sent out a survey to teachers and advisors to see how they can support them during this time and what sessions they would find useful.

**Unibuddy**

A question was asked to those institutions who use Unibuddy, if they had noticed an increase in students making contact via that platform. The universities who use Unibuddy both said they had seen a considerable increase in activity through this platform. The Unibuddy blogs were being used more by one university to reach out to students.

Unibuddy being used for offer holder days. Using different channels. Unibuddy limitations are that not all messages are attached to a thread so sometimes the staff miss a question. Having staff involved from the Access and International teams was good for answering questions from enquirers that can’t always access the campus.

# Supporting Widening Participation

**Positives and negatives**

* Just one member of the team working in WP/Access
* Most institutions seem to be focusing on post 16
* It has been positive about how quickly things can happen
* Lots of resources for WP activities couldn’t go remote straight away
* Often teams were in the middle of projects and now these have just stopped and the impact of that
* Had time to catch up on evaluations and wider reading
* There is a big focus on current students and those starting in 2020 and their needs
* 2021 planning has started
* Teachers are getting bombarded with emails and offers to help – how can we do this more as a joined-up approach?
* Time to get creative with outreach
* How can mentoring projects be taken online?

Digital can’t replace face to face engagement – [Wonkhe](https://wonkhe.com/blogs/digital-cant-replace-face-to-face-when-it-comes-to-widening-participation/)

1. **Access-** Barriers to this for vulnerable and WP students who may not have a device, internet usage at home.
* Teachers could provide information about which learners in outreach programmes need alternative access to resources if limited internet/no device at home. Some teachers are posting resources to these students so could print resources shared by institutions. Also, if given permission, could ask students to provide mobile numbers so that institutions can text key info.
* Importance of communicating with the triangle of teachers, parents and students at this time, and just checking consent to do so.
* Someone had attended a webinar from the accessibility charity which mentioned the importance of students being able to access things at any time, in advance of a webinar/live chat so they can access early and ask questions during the event.
1. **Mediums for outreach- which to use?**
* Mentioned using a university’s Moodle to create a course that teachers/learners can have a log-in for to help host content and also track usage of outreach resources.
* Microsoft- use functionality to create stages of resource that can be engaged with. Ask students to complete an evaluation after first stage then moderator can unlock the next stage of resource/activity. Incentivise using vouchers.
* Social media- FB as a platform to engage.
* Challenge- everyone uses different platforms.
* Mentoring platforms have been popular with virtual schools.
* Engagements have been of a light touch, using Facebook and Instagram.
* Teams has also been used to support virtual residentials. Time scales can also be changed with projects lasting 6 weeks.
* It was discussed how to target support for different learners. Some are targeting schools with high proportion of BAME students. Other companies/charities can support outreach. Engaging local faith/community groups or larger organizations such as the National Autistic Society can also support students. BAME content follows similar setup, with students’ careers aspirations and experiences
1. **Comms with schools**
* Hosting zoom chats with teachers to keep communication lines open and be responsive to their needs. Appreciate that they are prioritising online teaching and calculating grades for students, but where engagement was booked and is now cancelled-prioritising those contacts to offer alternative.
* See above re moodle.
1. **Student Ambassadors**
* Unibuddy, video content as alternative use of them as a resource
* Brightside e-mentoring.
* Exploring if they are a member of staff, would they be eligible to be furloughed?
* Student Ambassadors were asked to ensure they had the right type of technology to record sessions (phone of pc access). Videos stored on systems such as One Drive as some have had issues sending large files and then edited by universities using software such as Premier Pro Editing. The sessions would be storyboarded in advance and sent to SA’s to record. Once finished they would be sent to schools/students via web links. Most talks so far have focused on traditional talks, Student Life, Student Finance and UCAS.
* Other SA videos have focused on personal wellbeing, what inspired them, looking at their study space and what has been their greatest challenge/achievements. Academics have also been asked to complete similar sessions.
* Using the time now to have ambassadors create/be training to deliver workshops
1. **Success so far in institution re what works or what is being tested-**
* Get students to share their experiences at the moment either through video/writing and invite them to an event on campus when able to. Engage with those who want to engage.
* Considering alternative to summer school, e.g. tasks that students can do instead

**APP spend**

* Keeping a record of shortfalls, as well as creating “hardship” funds that can be used to support WP students during these different times. As well as paying for Unibuddy

Discussed a 3-stage project for Yr10/11s. This includes different forms and assignments, both online/offline to support all students which were posted to schools. This will culminate in a prize draw. Plus discussed academic projects/competitions being both online/offline to support students who don’t have access to the internet.

How can NCOP’s be used? To help the amount of emails teachers are getting/send out a survey to find out what teachers want?

When schools go back – will they let students out for events?

Limited access to academics when things are “normal”

How can residential be replaced?

Sending out an activities box with goodies and resources

**Contingency planning**

* Priority has been to put existing workshops online and to find a means of delivering summer schools virtually. A question emerged in the discussion on how to replicate the campus experience virtually. It was suggested that Aula may be a piece of software that is able to support with this.
* Those taking part in the discussion have been exploring ways to move academic content online in a way which is engaging and interactive
* YouTube videos and other content which can be accessed via a smartphone is being prioritised in order to reach those students without home Wi-Fi or computers
* Parents and teachers are being engaged via webinars and online conferences and content for advisors is also being developed.

**Pastoral support**

* Common theme emerged in discussion around providing wellbeing and pastoral care to programme participants. This type of engagement has specifically been requested by virtual schools. One university is using content from their wellbeing team to support students to build resilience.
* What can institutions do in the future to help with learning gaps?

**Challenges**

* It was felt by some in the discussion that supporting transition, particularly from Y13 to university, was an upcoming challenge that they hadn’t yet resolved how to approach. Future support and discussion on this topic would be welcome.
* Difficult to forward plan when we don’t know when schools will be back
* Finding engaging methods of interacting with students online which also offer the necessary safeguarding measures can be challenging. This may be an area for further discussion too. General recruitment bigger priority for some institutions
* Many young people aren’t engaging with school, making it more challenging to work with them
* Poor attendance numbers for some online planned activity
* Many students aren’t working at home
* Access to internet and computers
* Identifying best engagement tool – many cost, safeguarding and GDPR barriers raised
* Getting non computer-based resources to young people
* Getting student ambassadors involved in activity
* Difference in responsiveness of different age groups to activity
* Videos causing streaming problems depending on internet speed

Ideas

* For those involved in programmes, where we have the data, posting resources
* Sending dongles to young people (concern will waste on things like you tube)
* Sending USB sticks to young people with lots of non internet based activities
* Survey partner schools to find out what resources are being used – many found teams to be popular.
* Working with academics – turning presentations into activities to increase engagement
* Working collaboratively with other university teams to develop diverse resources
* Recording yourself on Microsoft powerpoint and sending to schools removes the needs for software, although file size can be a problem. OBS was identified as a possible way to compress videos to support sharing.
* Creating incentives for participation in activities
* Maintaining engagement through online courses where you need to complete to be able to unlock next stage – incentive for completing.

# Offers and Applications

**Positives**

* Learning to use online technology e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Meetings.
* Hosting and attending webinars.
* Collaborating with colleagues whom we wouldn’t usually work closely with e.g. Digital and Web teams.

**Negatives**

* More difficult to bounce ideas off colleagues.
* Reduced interaction with colleagues.
* Being in the house all the time.
* We are people who love to be out and about meeting students, and we really miss it.
* Had planned to be out at schools a lot at this time and it’s difficult to switch to more online activities.

**Access students:**

* Lack of information from UCAS: having a mature student session and having sessions separately at open days/virtual events
* Harder for students who aren’t in mainstream education (private students/re taking students).
* Access to HE- release around the intention to calculated grades is very much along the same lines of A levels but mores students have completed ongoing modular assessment and therefore grades may be more accurate.
* Concerns around level 2 grades and those that don’t have/private students and lack of information here.

**How are universities being flexible around entry:**

* Unconditional offers, the pressure that his has put on other institutions from prospective students. UCAS are saying no change to student intentions but our feedback is that there is pressure from students on that.
* Confirmation/Clearing: questions from applicants around when will we have our results. We don’t know a date! More recent news is that Clearing is back to where it has been in previous years, similar to normal results day.
* Unless applicants already have an unconditional offer, they won’t be getting one. Portfolios (for art and design courses) are being submitted via PebblePad and interviews being conducted via phone/Skype.

**Communications to students:**

* FAQ sections on websites.
* UCAS have said applicants go to university websites first/look to unis for information first and foremost
* Students feel that they aren’t being given an opportunity to prove themselves – particularly challenging for students who didn’t perform well in Year 12, but have worked hard in Year 13.
* How are universities communicating term dates? One university has confirmed end of October start date for 2020-21 academic year. Others haven’t confirmed this yet. Feedback from The Student Room suggests students don’t want vague responses, but also don’t want to be given key information that is subject to change.

Teachers are struggling to follow DFE advice and don’t know how to predict grades. There is also more pressure on teachers to meet student/parent expectations, now that students know what grades they need for their first choice university.

Accessing work experience opportunities is likely to be difficult for Year 12 students, particularly for those interested in studying medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and other health-related courses, with many placements already cancelled. Needs to be an emphasis on volunteering and demonstrating a commitment to the community. Universities will understand the challenges. Applicants will have fewer experiences to talk about, but can still present them well. General Medical Council are developing a virtual work experience tool.

Many universities are working with their academic staff to digitise subject-specific resources for students to access over the summer. It can be difficult to engage with WP students who may be less engaged with their school/college and/or experience difficulties accessing materials on digital platforms, due to lack of equipment, internet access etc.

**Unconditional offers**

* Members were unanimous in their view that a blanket switching off conditional offers to unconditional would be insulting to applicants and is not good practice.

**Concern around student numbers**

* Institutions very concerned at the potential decrease in student numbers, particularly international students.
* However, there is no data to suggest that students are rushing to change their plans. On the contrary, many institutions report that there has been no increase in requests to defer and students appear to be showing resilience and are holding onto their current plan.
* Not much thought appears to have been given as to how to deal with a potential increase in students meeting their conditions as a result of the estimated grades.
* Members haven’t seen an increased interest in online courses.  It was felt that students, particularly at UG, prefer the on campus experience.

**Results Day 2020**

* Concern over lack of clarity as to which date student results will be released and the impact on clearing dates.

**UCAS Cycle 2021**

* UCAS are considering rescheduling the cancelled RUK Shell scheme exhibitions and holding them from October to December.
* Members are concerned as to whether schools would attend at this time. Having lost a considerable amount of teaching time in the spring term and with likely continued social distancing guidelines, they may be unable to attend.
* Concern over how institutions would staff the exhibitions at an already busy time of year for school outreach and open days. This could lead to an increased use of student ambassadors, who would not have the same level of knowledge as a staff member.
* Would UCAS change deadline dates if they do move their exhibition dates
* UCAS seem to only be planning for the very immediate future.
* Impacts on changing application deadlines, some universities may benefit from this and the sector will need regulation to protect student and wider sector interests.

***Conversation summary:***

Grey area around admissions, need more information about timing and direction from ucas about how university could prepare for changes in admissions and the impact on clearing and confirmation.

Uni connect hubs are looking for advice and direction about what universities individually and collectively are doing and how are they communicating with their schools about development. Related to this is there information that can be pull together to help inform students especially those from WP background.

**Question**: what are admissions team doing for WP and other group’s i.e. contextual information being considered, specific initiatives being created for these groups? Is there specific support being put in place to aid them during clearing and confirmation?

One response is to direct all enquiries to COVID specific pages on the main uni website. This is being treated as golden copy that everyone refers to ensure consistency.

**Question:** What are you doing to prepare for clearing and confirmation if this is on campus or remote?

UCAS need to be dynamic in their response and make sure enough time is given to universities to consider applications once results are in.

UCAS could delay track to allow students to express interest in clearing places and then allow universities to process if the student would meet requirements ahead of track going live.

Some are not preparing for remote clearing and this will be in line with previous years

Others are preparing to run remote clearing using web services/forms, interactive chat rooms or other online based services.

**Questions:** What are people doing regarding IELS testing especially where student may not have been able to visit these centres?

No real answers around this. JA said he would email contact in IDP who are heavily involved in International and domestic recruitment to see if they have any insight in to sector wide responses to supporting international students proving their language ability.

It was mentioned that the validity of some language qualifications could be extended past their one year expiry to aid progression.

# Remote Working

**Introduction and initial thoughts**

* There has been a mixed response to settling in to working from home and this is influenced by a lot of factors - including job role, department, each intuition’s stance on WFH and everyone’s individual response to the new environment.
* Those particularly involved in outreach and the deliverance of student recruitment initiatives have found it harder to adapt and their workload has been most effected.
* Some in more managerial positions have found their workload now easier to manage; however, they are finding it more difficult to ensure that the people that they manage have enough in their workloads to remain busy.

**What have teams and individuals been doing that works well?**

* Some teams have been having daily 10am coffee breaks together, using Microsoft teams, with mostly un-work-related chat, the way that they normally would do so.
* Other teams have been trying 10am work-based chats and team meetings each day. This is to ensure everybody is check up on from a wellness perspective, but also kept in the loop regarding the wider university on goings and updates.
* Teams are also trying lunch clubs on two set days during the week.
* Gyms and sports departments in institutions have been offering both live and pre-recorded workout videos that some have found beneficial for physical and mental health.
* Those who are used to or prefer to work towards deadlines have found it really useful to set a certain number of tasks for the day and reflect upon these at the end of the day, to then set targets again for the next. Some suggested software like Microsoft teams and Trello are useful for this.
* Some people have found moving around the house for different parts of the day effective, so they are not staring at the same walls for the full day. Others will move about around the house on short walks to keep them sharp.
* There have been more regular team meetings, with some institutions having 3 video calls a week, which is partly business but also a way to connect with people.
* People have found they are phoning/video calling people more to chat about simple tasks instead of sending emails, which has seen a decrease in emails, however there has been an increase of positive emails/praise from senior staff.
* Some people have struggled with home schooling but feel supported by their institution to be able to work around this and work flexibly.
* Keeping to a regular routine is important, starting work at your normal start time, taking coffee breaks and keeping to a proper lunch hour. Moving away from your office space for lunch/breaks has been useful. When on lunch people have used this as a time for their allotted exercise and have gone for a walk. Speaking with people from a safe 2meters has also been good for mental health, whether that is neighbours over a fence or just saying hello to people passing in the street.
* Making your work space nice has also been popular, with plants and air diffusers being used. To help concentrate on tasks it is good to shut your emails down and to turn off the chat functions on Gmail and Teams.
* Interacting with colleagues in a social way has been popular. Doing pub quizzes in the evening, using Whiteboard on Teams to do Pictionary or playing games. Jackbox was suggested as a way of doing online games. One person needs a account, but can share the screen with multiple people.
* The most important thing to take was that we are not working from home, home working during a crisis. We will not be as productive as we would be in the office and should not feel guilty for this. Setting reasonable targets helps, with one person suggesting they do a 3 point to do list each day that is a reasonable possibility of creating.

**HELOA’s involvement and help**

* Slack channel has been really useful (there are also some suggested changes that will be taken to the Exec and UKC to discuss).
* Webinars are useful and great for chatting to other people, outside of your own institution.
* As time goes on and this situation evolves, the content of these webinars should adapt to this.
* The session finished with us discussing we should remember we are all good at our jobs as we are still supporting students and teachers in a different format and if we do struggle with anything, there is plenty of support on the HELOA Slack and Facebook channels.

# HELOA Social Media

* [**HELOA Slack Channel**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https:%2F%2Fjoin.slack.com%2Ft%2Fheloa%2Fshared_invite%2Fzt-cy98razq-iPTCiJfEV3W7X~ueCWh8RQ&data=02%7C01%7Cac6356%40coventry.ac.uk%7Cdb99fc0e59664dcdf4de08d7cfdb0a40%7C4b18ab9a37654abeac7c0e0d398afd4f%7C0%7C0%7C637206411986146649&sdata=WkIUY0zk7oigFUDFppspFyeiTlL31ZfxD%2FgPIuO07G4%3D&reserved=0)
* [**HELOA Facebook Page**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/HELOA/)
* [**HELOA Twitter**](https://twitter.com/heloa_uk?lang=en)
* [**HELOA YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGJzZ-jQSDznpSAjXruVXPQ)