**OFS Keynote Session Notes**

SLIDE 1 SPEAKER:P EMMA MASKELL HEAD OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

SLIDE 2 WHAT WILL WE COVER?

* IAG Strategy
* Discover Uni Platform new student information website
* Information from universities and colleges

SLIDE 3 WHO ARE WE?

* The Office for Students (OfS) is an independent public body. We are not part of central Government, but we report to Parliament through the Department for Education (DfE)

SLIDE 4 OUR OBJECTIVES

* Objective 1 - participation
* Objective 2 - experience
* Objective 3 - outcomes
* Objective 4 - value for money

SLIDE 5 WHAT WE DO

* Full regulatory framework can be found [here](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1406/ofs2018_01.pdf)

SLIDE 6 WHY THIS MATTERS

SLIDE 7 OUR APPROACH

SLIDE 8 AIMS OF STUDENT IAG STRATEGY

* *Aim 1 Identify gaps and opportunities for adding value to the current information available to students*

What we are seeking to address:

Our stakeholder consultation suggests that there is a lot of information available for students but there is a shortage of advice and guidance available both online and through advisers, schools and colleges to help students navigate the information.

Research continues to show that decision-making is complex and more information does not necessarily lead to better decisions, unless it is contextualised and personalised with advice and guidance.

The gaps in information extend into higher education:

Our stakeholder feedback found that information available for students wishing to transfer early on is particularly poor.

Feedback from students suggests that many have considered changing courses or provider at some point during their studies.

Our approach:

The OfS will improve the quality of information available to students. We will ensure students can access reliable and appropriate information to inform their decisions about whether to study for a higher education qualification and, if so, identify which provider and course is most likely to meet their needs and aspirations.

We will ensure that good information, advice and guidance is available to students wishing to transfer between courses, providers and types of higher education provision through information provided on the new information resource and through provider information.

Working with relevant partners we will ensure good quality, impartial, up-to-date information advice and guidance reflecting the full breadth of higher education provision is available to those advising students about their higher education.

* *Aim 2 Ensure that provider websites provide accurate, high quality, accessible information that matters to students*

What we are seeking to address:

The responses to our recent consultation[1] highlighted the need to challenge providers on the information they provide. Feedback from higher education providers suggests that Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) compliance has sharpened the sector’s focus, particularly amongst central marketing teams. This is reflected in the findings of the 2016 compliance review by the CMAExternal link (Opens in a new tab or window). However, clearer and more specific guidelines would be welcomed by some providers and by most students.

Moreover, a recent OfS review found that:

Information on fees and additional course costs could be improved at many of the providers audited

Terms and conditions were not always easy to understand or find

Stakeholder engagement activity has also highlighted issues with the consistency and clarity of course information on provider websites.

Our approach:

We will work with the CMA to create clear, specific expectations for the information from providers, to include course information, scholarships and bursaries, which facilitates comparison between providers.

* *Aim 3 Create and maintain a partnership approach to the delivery of IAG, working with those providing information and advice to students to improve their impact*

What we are seeking to address:

Research and feedback from stakeholders suggest that students want to hear from their peers and to be able to discuss and engage on the topics relevant to them. They would particularly benefit from connecting with and talking to current students.

Feedback from our consultation suggests that information sources such as league tables do not always fully reflect the diversity of the sector.

Our approach:

Using our convening power, we will consider what constitutes high quality IAG delivered to prospective students, undergraduates and graduates by all higher education providers, including benchmarking good practice through the creation of an IAG advisory group.

We will explore with other popular information providers ways in which we can work together to improve the quality of presentation of their data and provide links that make it easier for students to understand their choices and the information they are seeing.

* *Aim 4 Secure effective information, advice and guidance for all students in relation to career choices*

What we are seeking to address:

There is evidence of skills gaps in the country, both nationally and regionally. Employers report not having the flow of highly skilled graduates that they need.

Many students choose to go into higher education in order to enhance their career prospects, yet graduate outcomes for some students (and some providers) are sub-optimal. There is a strong and continuing correlation between graduate outcomes and socio-economic background.

Our approach:

We will ensure there is coherent information, advice and guidance provided between schools, further education and higher education, and in relation to all post-18 education and training options.

We will ensure that current and (as far as possible) future employer needs - nationally and locally, and in identified industries with skills shortages - inform IAG provision.

We will ensure that all information, advice and guidance, including in relation to career choices, take account of all students – young and mature, from disadvantaged backgrounds, non-mobile, and with different equality characteristics (especially race and disability).

Next steps:

Launch of the UK-wide replacement for Unistats – autumn 2019

Revised guidance for providers – autumn 2019

Convening of an IAG advisory group, comprising key partners and stakeholders: sector, students, UCAS, IAG providers – summer 2019

SLIDE 9 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

* Polls by Yougov found that parents were studnts most popular choice for information about HE study followed by teachers

SLIDES 10,11,12 STATS FROM YOUGOV POLL

SLIDE 12 DISCOVER UNI - LINK TO WEBSITE [HERE](https://discoveruni.gov.uk/)

* A new UK wide resource to replace unistats. Information on graduate outcomes and student satisfaction and aims to guide students through the student journey
* Students want information from someone they can trust
* The website will provide links to information from other trusted sources
* The platform aims to reduce misconceptions around HE study
* Provies easily understandable information on areas such as student finance
* The current website is in its beta stage but has received positive feedback so far

SLIDE 13 STATS ON USERS OF DISCOVER UNI

SLIDE 14 DISCOVER UNI AIMS TO REMOVE A LOT OF CLUTTER FROM WEBSITES

SLIDE 15 EXAMPLE PAGE ON WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS

SLIDE 16 CURRENT STUDENT VIDEOS HAVE BEEN USED

SLIDE 17 NEXT STEPS FOR 2020

-Data sets relevant and easily understandable by users

- Lots of students worry about making the wrong choice. The site will have more content along the full student journey

- The website will link in with UCAS

- It will allow students to narrow their search by region

- Comprehensive user testing is required

SLIDE 17 WHO DO APPLICANTS CONSULT AS PART OF THEIR DECISION?

* Students need to be aware of breadth and diversity of courses available
* Students need to be aware of types of providers available (e.g. FE Colleges as well as universities)
* Research commissioned from CFE in 2015 suggests students are most likely to use UCAS and university websites for information

SLIDE 18 WHERE DID STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES GO TO HELP THEM MAKE THEIR CHOICE? INFORMATION ON SLIDE

SLIDE 19 IMPROVING INFORMATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

* There is no single source to the right information
* HEIs need to tailor their approach for different types of students
* Information sources used should be broader - universities and colleges need to let students feel more informed and empowered
* HE sector needs to work together to ensure students receive information that is the most accurate

SLIDE 20 - 23 INFORMATION FROM UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

SLIDE 24 END

Questions:

Question 1 - There is really good content on finance and league tables but a lot of students decisions are based on gut feeling and these things are difficult to quantify. How is the discover uni wesbtie deadling with non quantifiable choices of HEI?

Answer: Our research supports this. What our site aims to do is make it clear that choices are down to the individual and that no two choices arte the same.

Question 2: How can you ensure all disadvantaged groups are accessing the site? Do you ask for information form users when they enter the site?

Answer: We aren’t asking these questions upfront as we don’t want to funnel choices

Question3: We all believe in impartial IAG. What advice can you give to FE Colleges providing HE provision to provide impartial IAG?

Answer: We recognise this issue. All students should have access to impartial information.