

Regulation update

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Wales

- Scotland – outcome agreements
- England – regulation, register, conditions
- Student citizenship guarantee – added value role of HE experience
- Place – public engagement and/or cold spots
- Welfare and wellbeing duty as a condition of registration



OfS and regulation

- Is OfS regulating? Sabre rattling as regulation
- Three phases...initial, Covid...
- December 2020 consultation on information about providers
- Propose that investigations usually confidential
 - Susan Lapworth at IHE
 - Kathleen Stock and the Lords
 - Skills Bill
- Complete U-Turn! Winter is coming...



Talking about informed choices – I expect many of you here will be getting public transport home today, and chances are you will see an advertisement for two things on your way home: credit cards and universities.

When you look at the credit card advertisement, you'll notice that no matter what the sales line is, or how appealing the wider terms, the APR is written in black and white at the bottom.

This information is there because of a conscious decision by government to ensure that consumers can make informed decisions before they make such a significant financial and time commitment.

But then glance over to the university advertisement next to it. You will notice that in sharp contrast, bold claims about career enhancement and graduate salaries are not backed up with the real information, despite the financial exposure of most courses being greater than most credit limits.

And for anyone with the data to hand, the potential for students to be misled could not be clearer.



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Guidance to OfS

- We would like to see providers incorporate data on completion rates and entry into professional employment, or further study, in all their advertising of subjects and courses from the start of the next admissions cycle.
- This information will assist prospective students as they make their choices about what and where to study.
- We would like the OfS to work with us and the sector in producing guidance for providers.
- We intend that this greater transparency will be introduced voluntarily, though we would want to discuss possible regulatory and enforcement mechanisms with you, should compliance turn out to be insufficient.





The missing puzzle piece

- Consumer protection law guidance “owned” by CMA, OfS requires providers pay due regard
- November 2019 review concluded that OfS should own and revise the guidance
- Focus on (comparable) clear promises that students are able to enforce



For example...

- Unlawful to mislead students by failing to give them the information they need to make an informed decision
- OfS likely to broaden and clarify aspects of CMA15 definition of material information, for example data/information on outcomes and data/information on teaching and assessment format.
- May also include more detail on pressure selling (conditional unconditionals ruled out)
- Can a student get as far as enrolling without understanding the (worst of) provider/subject stats?

Also...

- Grade inflation (“unmerited”)
- Unconditional offers (an agenda that is fading thanks to outlawing of CUOs)
- Blended learning review panel