

## **The UPPF Student Futures Commission**

### **Aim of the Commission**

The purpose of the Commission is to explore how, in light of the disruption everyone has faced during the pandemic, universities can take action to support students from September 2021 to make the best of their remaining time at university and support those who are starting their journey in higher education this year.

We will seek to discover approaches that will help ensure students' successful futures from September 2021. This will include considering what additional support needs to be put in place for students – academic and more widely - recognising that student days are a time of learning and living as well as a chance to build a foundation for students' future professional careers.

The Commission will also consider what opportunities there are to build on a fast-evolving model of higher education, and what developments there have been during the pandemic that could be made more permanent to enhance and augment the student experience post pandemic.

### **Call for written evidence**

This is a public call for written evidence. We welcome responses from higher education institutions, organisations working in the higher education sector as well as students, student bodies and other stakeholders.

The deadline for submissions is **Friday 9th July at 5pm**. Additionally a series of invitation-only oral evidence sessions will take place over the summer and into the autumn both virtually and in person with experts, institutions and student groups from across the sector.

This is just one way in which you can become involved in the work of the Commission. We would also be very interested in hearing views more informally, on any or all of the areas which the Commission is considering.

You can email the Commission at anytime at [studentfuturescommission@publicfirst.co.uk](mailto:studentfuturescommission@publicfirst.co.uk)



## **If you would like to submit written evidence**

The Commission is happy to receive submissions on any issues related to its Terms of Reference available [here](#) but would particularly welcome submissions on the questions listed below. You do not need to address every question, indeed you may only wish to answer one question or interpret the questions/give evidence in whatever way you see fit.

The Commission will strive to be inclusive by ensuring it takes into account the experience of all students including those who may be under-represented or disadvantaged in higher education by age or ethnicity or home geography or circumstances around pre 18 education, those who study part time or are mature learners, and international students studying in UK institutions, as well as those who commute.

## **CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

### **Section 1: Preparing for September 2021 and beyond**

As part of this Commission we want to begin to share over the summer practical examples and recommendations on how universities are and should be preparing for the return of all students to campus in the Autumn and thus we are interested in the following broad questions.

1. What are you doing differently to prepare for the Autumn term 2021 compared to pre-pandemic?
2. What do envisage doing differently throughout the academic year 2021/22 and beyond compared to pre-pandemic?
3. What have been your main challenges throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and what lessons have you learnt from dealing with it that will change your approach going forward in all aspects of university life?
4. For students - whether new to university or returning - have the events during the last year changed your perceptions as to what is important to you and how that may affect the way you engage with and spend your time at university?

### **Section 2: Student experience and wellbeing**

For this section, we are interested in understanding people's experiences and views on a range of issues concerning student experience during Covid - what challenges need to be addressed post Covid and whether they have been good practice and instances of things which could be continued. We are especially interested in how these topics specifically relate to under-represented or disadvantaged students or to specific groups such as international, part-time or commuter students.

1. How have students' mental health and wellbeing changed through the pandemic? What data or instances have you seen of changing health and wellbeing? Has this disproportionately affected any particular groups of students in your experience and if so, who?
2. What lessons could be learned - both building on good practice and avoiding poor practice - on how to support students' mental health and wellbeing at university from September 2021

and how will you help them transition back into the full life of the university when they return to campus?

3. What role do you see clubs, societies, student unions and student support services having in supporting students to regain access to the full life of the university and in welcoming them back in September?
4. How has the nature of physical university campuses - thinking about student living accommodation, lecture spaces, other learning spaces, and broader student spaces both internally and externally - changed during the pandemic? What of these changes do you think ought to remain and / or continue after September 2021 to better support learning, socialising and student experience?
5. What information do you think students want and need and where do they get it from in advance of term starting in Autumn 2021?
6. Who has felt left out and what do they feel left out of throughout this pandemic and how can this best be addressed by institutions and the sector more widely?

### Section 3: Teaching and learning

For this section, we are interested in understanding people's experiences and views on a range of issues concerning teaching and learning during Covid - specifically around lost learning, building on some of the successful blended learning and online approaches that have been used and to learn about what universities are putting in place to support students in their return to face to face learning.

1. How are you supporting incoming students as they transition from a largely online Year 12 and 13 and returning students going into the latter years of undergraduate provision, or undergraduates transitioning to postgraduate study as they transition from a largely online study over the past year?
2. Have you made, or are you planning on making, any changes to curriculum design or teaching plans in light of challenges to face to face learning throughout the pandemic?
3. Have you put, or are you planning on putting in place, ways of identifying areas where you may need to recover learning for students? If so what does this look like and what have you found are the greatest areas of need?
4. What have been the successes and challenges of the blended model of teaching and learning, and how can these be built on and effectively transitioned into the post-Covid environment?
5. In what way has the role of grading, assessment practices and policies been adapted in light of the pandemic. Will any of this new way of working continue from Autumn 2021?
6. What has been the impact of the pandemic on university staff, so far as it affects engagement with students and the delivery of teaching and research?
7. What has your experience been around your digital estate, digital access and expertise for all students, and delivery by staff?

## Section 4: Employability

For this section, we are interested in understanding what impact the pandemic has had on labour market outcomes for students, how students who have a required professional or workplace training element to their course have fared and what plans universities have in place to rebuild international and industry partnerships and placements.

1. What have you put in place to support students in accessing career and employability support throughout the pandemic?
2. How do you think the pandemic has affected students' future job market preparation and employability outcomes?
3. In view of 2 above, how have you changed or enhanced your careers and employability support for students?
4. What has been the experience of those students who have largely continued face to face study, specifically around practical qualifications and those requiring professional and workplace training?
5. How have students requiring a minimum level of hours for professional qualifications been supported to transition into work?
6. What are your plans on rebuilding placements, travel abroad and industry partnerships and what have these looked like throughout the pandemic?
7. Thinking about your role in your local community (or as a civic institution) and your wish to improve employability outcomes, have you made any plans to embed volunteering and/or service into your curriculum or career support?

### Guidance for submissions

- Please limit your submission to no more than eight sides of A4
- Please submit in a plain word document or pdf.
- You can submit your evidence by emailing [studentfuturescommission@publicfirst.co.uk](mailto:studentfuturescommission@publicfirst.co.uk)
- The deadline for submissions is 17:00 on Friday 9th June
- Please state if it is an individual or an organisational response, providing details if the latter.
- Our default position is that consultation responses will be shared publicly on our website and may also be referenced and quoted throughout the work of the Commission. Please state alongside your response if you do **not** want your response to be considered public, in whole or in part.

For more information visit: <https://upp-foundation.org/student-futures-commission>