International student mobility taskforce

Covid-19 Heatmap overview summary

18 August 2020
Key outcomes of inward mobility task force

- Covid-19 is rapidly changing the international education environment
- The British Council set up a Covid-19 Inward Mobility Taskforce to pull together the critical information about how Covid-19 is impacting inward mobility to the UK at the global level – drawing on the insights we have via our in-country network and our respective teams (Study UK, IES etc) - in all countries that send more than 2500 students to the UK.

- These 5 heatmaps aim to help inform UK stakeholder (HMG and the education sector) how to best work with each country given local policies and practice.
- These heatmaps provide a live global snapshot of the Covid-19 environment – further in-depth information can be found via our IES county reports.

https://education-services.britishcouncil.org/service-catalogue/education-intelligence
Summary

Five critical questions affecting all aspects of student mobility

1) are domestic students permitted to travel internationally?
2) are international students permitted to enter the country?
3) are HE institutions open for face-to-face learning?
4) has Covid-19 had an impact nationally-funded scholarships for international study?
5) are Visa Application Centres open?

Key
- 100% No = RED
- Approx 80% of pre-Covid levels Yes = GREEN
- Some flexibility/ case by case / we could influence = AMBER
- Not relevant = GREY
1) Are domestic students permitted to travel internationally?

18 August 2020

NB: China and India appear to have gone from Green to Amber – this is not due to permissions, this is due to flight availability.
1) Are domestic students permitted to travel internationally?

Some countries are now open for international travel, such as within the EU, China, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey.

However, although in many countries domestic students are officially permitted to travel internationally, the Amber countries indicate that there are still some obstacles in place:

- Citizens advised against non-essential travel
- Steep flight costs and lack of available flights
- Visa centre closures

Some countries such as Nigeria and Saudi Arabia now have strict travel bans across the country.
2) Are international students permitted to enter the country?

June 2020

14 July 2020

4 August 2020

18 August 2020
2) Are international students permitted to enter the country?

Many countries’ borders are still closed to anyone who is not a permanent resident or in employment in that country. In countries where international students are permitted to enter, some restrictions remain in place:

- Pre-departure Covid-19 tests / health checks
- Quarantine upon arrival
- Lack of flights and steep costs make travel challenging

Examples

Russia has opened boundaries with three countries as of today – the UK, Turkey and Tanzania.

Nigeria has confirmed that airports will reopen from 29 August 2020.

The federal government will no longer require individual states to have opened their internal borders before allowing international students to return to Australia.
3) Are HE institutions open for face-to-face learning?

18 August 2020
3) Are HE institutions open for face-to-face teaching?

Several countries are offering some form of face-to-face teaching:

- Phased re-openings
- Some students allowed on campus (e.g. those who need access to lab facilities)
- Blended learning – a combination of face-to-face and online
- Regional differences – in some countries, regions with low instances of Covid-19 have been able to open universities before the rest of the country

Of the institutions that were not currently open for face-to-face teaching at all, many have plans to re-open in September to some extent.

Examples

In Taiwan, full face-to-face teaching is in place. However, large scale gatherings are not permitted, and larger classes have been divided in two.

In France all HE institutions are closed for now but should reopen face-to-face teaching (respecting physical distancing / mask wearing obligations) when they reopen in September.
4) Has Covid-19 had an impact on nationally-funded scholarships for international study?
4) Has Covid-19 had an impact on nationally-funded scholarships for international study?

- Many nationally-funded scholarships for international study are still operating, although some are offering fewer scholarships than normal.
- However, some (such as China’s Scholarship Council) are offering the option to defer or change study destinations.
- With the USA lifting the Global Level 4 'Do not travel' health advisory on 6 August, the Fulbright programme is resuming but on a case-by-case basis.
- The Korean Student Aid Foundation has clawed back some of the living expenses from students while they stay in Korea, but will continue full support for tuition fees even for online learning. However, this could change so we are monitoring the situation.
- Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Education Dr. Hamad Al-Sheikh has approved the continuation of studies of foreign scholarship students remotely at all academic levels until the end of 2020.
5) Are visa application centres open?

June 2020

14 July 2020

4 August 2020

18 August 2020
5) Are visa application centres open?

- Many Visa Application Centres are now open.
- Some are offering a limited service (re-opening in only a few cities) or offering services by appointment only. Social distancing measures are a concern in countries where fingerprints are a requirement for visas.

Examples

Most VACs in the **USA** are now open but may have limited hours and we are hearing widespread reports from the sector that students are having a very difficult time getting appointments.

VACs in **Indonesia** are now open but with reduced capacity from 65 to 20 applications per day.

**Nigeria** is reporting that although VACs may be open, there are delays in booking tuberculosis appointments at the International Organization for Migration Centre. The earliest appointments available are in the first week of September. The phone scheduling system is not working efficiently either.

VACs in **Brazil** closed again on Friday 14 August. They will try to honour all existing appointments but no new appointments can be made.
• This is a snap shot to highlight the top line information around our global network.

• We intend to update these heat maps on a bi-weekly basis from now through to October 2020.

• The heatmap will be openly available. UK stakeholders are able to access further information about each question and these can be found in IES country reports.

• For further information on the heatmap – contact Jacqui.jenkins@britishcouncil.org or if you would like specific country information - contact our people on the ground in these countries. https://education-services.britishcouncil.org/people

Closing remarks
Thank you