



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

It's been a significant week with exams, return to class, and catch up taking centre stage. On Thursday, the **Education Secretary** outlined the Government's plan for awarding exam results this summer. Teacher assessments will be used to issue grades to pupils after formal exams were cancelled following the partial closure of school. **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** has defended plans for teachers to grade GCSE and A-level exams in England this summer as a "good compromise". Earlier in the week the **Prime Minister** announced the Government's roadmap for removing lockdown restrictions, which will see all school pupils and students on practical university courses return to education on 8 March. The Association of Colleges' chief executive, **David Hughes** responded by noting that "it's good to hear" that many college students will be returning to face-to-face learning from next month. On Wednesday, the **Education Secretary** announced a £700m package to aid the education recovery for children and young people. The recovery plan will focus on an expansion of one-to-one and small group tutoring programmes as well as supporting the development of disadvantaged children in early years settings. Shadow Secretary of State for Education, **Kate Green** stated that the Government's education recovery plan "lacks ambition". The week was rounded off by **Gavin Williamson's** speech launching the digital learning review, where he reiterated his drive to end the dominance of the three-year bachelor's degree, pointing out there were better ways of learning for many, including Higher National Diplomas.

Our **Policy Blog this week** is by Gary Gates and considers the Office for Student's recent plans to raise the bar on quality and standards in higher education.

The Future of Qualifications and Assessment consultation continues and so there is still time for you to join the 1000s of people who have already taken part [Click here to take part in the consultation](#)

Top stories

The **Education Secretary outlined the Government's plan for awarding exam results this summer. He noted that fairness and flexibility are central to the plan.**

- Teacher assessed grades will be given to pupils and they will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades, this includes the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, mock exams and coursework. It was stressed that **no algorithm will be used.**
- Detailed guidance will be offered to teachers before the end of the spring term to ensure consistency and fairness across the board. Random checks will be implemented to root out any malpractice and to ensure a consistent application of grading.
- **In a statement to the House of Commons on Thursday**, Gavin Williamson also noted that the department is working on a robust and comprehensive appeals process. Results day will be moved forward a couple of weeks to provide additional time for appeals to be completed.

On Monday, the Prime Minister set out the Government's roadmap for removing lockdown restrictions which included a timetable for reopening schools, colleges, and universities. Reaction from the education sector included:

- **Universities UK (UUK) welcomed** the roadmap. **President, Prof. Julia Buckingham** stated it was a "long-awaited boost for students in England on practical and practice-based subjects.". Buckingham stated that there will need to be a "further focus on supporting students' mental health and wellbeing."
- **The Association of Colleges' chief executive, David Hughes responded** saying "it's good to hear" that many college students will be returning to face-to-face learning from next month. Hughes also noted that although the return to colleges is positive, it is not enough to "avert a lost generation".
- **The Russell Group's chief executive, Dr Tim Bradshaw stated** that "universities will welcome the news" regarding students on practical courses. He offered reassurance that campuses are COVID-secure and urged the Government to "consider whether more students can return to in-person teaching at the Roadmap's first review point in early April".
- **The UCU described** the wider reopening of college and university campuses as "irresponsible" and stated that online teaching should continue wherever possible. **General secretary, Jo Grady** criticised the Government's proposed testing regime.

The Education Secretary announced a package to aid the education recovery for children and young people. The package will cost £700m.

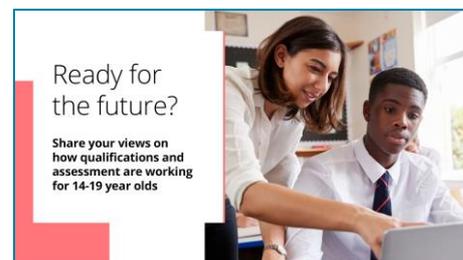
- The recovery plan will focus on an expansion of **one-to-one and small group tutoring programmes as well as supporting the development of disadvantaged children** in early years settings and summer provision for those pupils that need it most.
- A new one-off **Recovery Premium** for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, will be provided to schools to use as they see best to support disadvantaged students.
- **The new Education Recovery Commissioner, Sir Kevan Collins** acknowledged the education recovery is a "longer-term challenge" but continued to state that "the range of measures announced today are an important next step."

Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Kate Green stated that the Government's education recovery plan "lacks ambition".

- Labour have warned that children have lost over **900 million days of face-to-face school since the start of the pandemic in March 2020** - an average of 105 days per pupil.
- Kate Green stated: "The Government has neglected children throughout the pandemic. We need a transformation in support for children's learning and wellbeing but Ministers are failing to give pupils, parents and staff the support they need".

Pearson news

Future of Qualifications and Assessment We are undertaking a public consultation on the future of qualifications and assessment. And so, if you are a student, parent, educator or employer, we would love to hear from you. Join the 1000s who have already done so! [Click here to take part in the consultation](#)



Weaving Well-Being We are thrilled to announce the launch of Weaving Well-Being! A brand-new positive mental health programme that aims to enhance wellbeing in primary school children. [Find out more](#)



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Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- [Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP - Higher Education Update](#)
- [Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP - New measures to support education recovery](#)
- [House of Commons Statement - Covid-19: Road Map](#)
- [House of Lords Statement - Covid-19: Road Map](#)
- [Lord Callanan - Research and Development Update \(UKRI\)](#)

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 26 February 2021

- Education Committee - Education Committee to hold evidence sessions on i) Covid catch-up plans and ii) Awarding of student grades
- Early Day Motion - Tabled 22 February 2021 - Good practice in Holocaust education
- Early Day Motion - Tabled 23 February 2021 - Investment in prison education technology
- Early Day Motion - Tabled 23 February 2021 - Retirement of General Teaching Council (GTC) Scotland Chief Executive

COVID-19

- Department for Education - Teacher assessed grades for students
- Department for Education - Catch-up premium: coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Mass testing for secondary pupils as all schools and colleges fully reopen from 8 March
- Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons on roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions, England
- Labour Party - Government's education recovery plan lacks ambition. Analysis: 900 million school days lost
- Labour Party - Kate Green responds to Government's plan for summer assessments process
- Social Mobility Commission - SMC response to the government's plan for 2021 exams and catch-up
- NAHT - Catch-up does not exist, but recovery does
- GMB - Government has done 'precious little' to prepare schools for safe return
- Community Union - A phased return to classroom learning: letter to the Education Secretary
- Community Union - 'A reckless throwing of caution to the wind': statement on school return plans in England
- Community Union - Statement on education recovery package
- Learning and Work Institute - Over 8,000 people to be supported into new careers through Covid-19 Support Fund donation
- GMB - Joint statement on wider opening of schools in England
- Education Policy Institute - EPI comments ahead of the Prime Minister's Monday announcement on schools
- Universities Alliance - University Alliance response to government roadmap announcement
- Russell Group - Russell Group response to Government update on return to higher education
- House of Commons Library - Coronavirus: HE/FE return to campus in England 2021
- NEU - The Government are still not following the science
- NEU - NEU comment on Schools Wider Opening from 8 March
- GK Strategy - The education crisis: an opportunity for a reset on EdTech
- AOC - Plans for awarding grades in 2021 set out by government - AoC responds
- AOC - Government publishes roadmap out of lockdown - AoC responds
- Universities Alliance - University Alliance responds to school exams grading announcement
- Student Loans Company - Transforming SLC to support the post-Covid economy

Regulators and inspectorates

- Department for Education - Direction issued to Ofqual (Summer exams)

Schools

- Department for Education - New education recovery package for children and young people
- Institute of Economic Affairs - Back to school and beyond: Time to fix longstanding problems in education, says new research
- Department for Education - Pupils' progress in the 2020 to 2021 academic year: interim report
- Department for Education - NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme)
- Department for Education - National Skills Fund (Updated)
- Education Committee - Work Funding and financial management of schools (Non-inquiry session) (23 February 2021)
- Petitions Committee - Committees to question Government Minister on Black history and cultural diversity in the curriculum
- Sutton Trust - The Digital Divide includes families in the Early Years

Higher Education

- Department for Education - Education Secretary speaks at launch of digital learning review
- House of Commons Library - Support for disabled students in higher education in England
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) - UK Performance Indicators: Non-continuation, 2019/20
- Office for Students - 'This is the higher education sector's moment to learn, change and innovate'
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) - Higher Education Staff Data 2019/20
- Office for Students - Students more confident with online learning than lecturers are about teaching digitally
- Sutton Trust - New £4.8m collaboration with JPMorgan Chase to improve access to employability opportunities
- Sutton Trust - Low-income students more likely to be missing out on extra-curricular activities

Scotland

- Scottish Government - Gradually easing lockdown restrictions
- Scottish Government - 93.3% of school leavers in positive destinations
- Scottish Liberal Democrats - Half of supply teachers still stuck on the side-lines

Wales

- Welsh Government - Lockdown to continue for further three weeks as pupils return to school

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

- Monday 1st March: Oral questions (2.30 pm) - Education (including topical questions)
- Tuesday 2nd March: Education Committee (10.00am): The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services. Witnesses: Sir Kevan Collins, Education Recovery Commissioner, Department for Education, Professor Becky Francis, Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation, Geoff Barton, General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders
- Wednesday 3rd March: Financial Statement – The Spring Budget 2021 - Rishi Sunak