



The All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities
Department for Education
20 Great Smith Street
SW1P 3BT

27 April 2021

Dear Minister,

I am writing as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group to ask about government plans to allow individual universities that have the capacity and capability to manage the mandatory quarantine of international students arriving from red list countries to do so, and whether this has been discussed with colleagues in the Department for Health and Social Care.

Placing India on the red list was absolutely necessary given the huge growth in case numbers and potential variants, however we must also recognise that this will exacerbate the potential capacity problems within the managed hotel quarantine system over the summer as students arrive to commence, or continue, their studies in the 2021/22 academic year and potentially cause distress to these students. India is the fastest growing country for international recruitment in recent years, with around 55,000 students enrolled at UK universities. Applications from India at undergraduate level were up 25% at the 15 January deadline for 2021/22 entry, in part due to the government's welcome decision to introduce the Graduate Route,

For many international students arriving in the UK to study it will be the first time they have set foot in the country, and therefore it is important their first experiences are positive, welcoming and supportive. Spending their mandatory quarantine in university-owned accommodation will help students feel included in a community and establish that important link with the institution they are enrolled at for at least the next year, and in many cases several more. The latest QS UK International Student Survey, released today, found two thirds of students would prefer to quarantine in a university hall of residence rather than quarantine hotel.

Institutions have faced an incredibly difficult year, adapting to a fast-moving public health situation whilst delivering world-leading education and support services. Universities need to know the requirements they would need to meet in order to facilitate mandatory quarantine with as much notice as possible; students arrive at different stages of the year but numbers will significantly increase in August and September. As a group we would appreciate if you could speak to ministers and officials overseeing mandatory quarantine at the Department for Health and Social Care to ensure universities are being properly considered, and decisions made in a timely way.

As it stands, international students must arrive in the UK by 21 June in order to qualify for the Graduate Route. We would also urge you to speak with your Home Office counterparts to push this back to prevent a surge in students from red list countries arriving in the UK in mid-June when supply of quarantine facilities may not be able to meet demand.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Zeichner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Daniel' and the last name 'Zeichner' clearly distinguishable.

Daniel Zeichner MP
Chair, All-Party Parliamentary University Group