

**INDEPENDENT  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION**

# **Annual Report 2023**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME

We are delighted to share our Annual Report for 2023.

This has been another successful year of growth and impact for Independent Higher Education (IHE). In this report, spanning the period from January to December 2023, we highlight some of our key achievements from the year in which we also celebrated IHE's 15th anniversary.

Our membership has expanded further, with 77 members now part of the IHE community. In 2023, we welcomed nine new members representing a diverse range of specialisms including film, fashion, counselling, and science. Each new member strengthens and enhances the IHE network, bringing new insights and opportunities to collaborate as part of our thriving ecosystem of independent providers. Growth of the staff team this year has enabled us to better serve our expanding membership, building on existing activity and increasing the expert support delivered to the IHE community.

This report highlights IHE's significant policy influence over the course of the year, through our robust and ongoing engagement with policymakers and sector stakeholders. A key achievement in 2023 was giving evidence to the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee's inquiry into the Office for Students (OfS), where we provided insights into the experiences of new and specialist institutions and advocated for independent providers in the regulation of the higher education sector. We have continued to champion independent providers within the highest levels of government, through strategic collaborations with key stakeholders in the education sector, and as part of our ongoing work with IHE partners and supporters.

A major development during 2023 was the establishment of our Student Advisory Board (SAB), strengthening our commitment to student representation and creating opportunities to amplify the student voice. We also completed a comprehensive governance review, updating our Articles of Association and redrafting our Membership Regulations. As we approach the final year of our current strategy, we look ahead to the next phase holding ourselves to the highest standards for governance, professionalism, transparency and accountability.

As we reflect on our achievements and impact in 2023, we enter 2024 as a respected and influential voice for independent higher education. Building on our success to date, we look forward to the year ahead and the opportunities for further growth, innovation, and influence.



**Alex Proudfoot**  
Chief Executive



**James Pitman**  
Chair of the Board



**Dr Roxanne Stockwell**  
Chair of the Board, 2018-23

## 2. OUR MEMBERS

### FACTS & FIGURES

**77**

**IHE MEMBERS**

**9**

**NEW MEMBERS**

IHE members are world leaders in higher education, professional training and pathways, covering a vast and fascinating range of subject areas including – but not limited to – medicine and dentistry, video games and animation, the performing arts, business, law and finance, hair and beauty, engineering, fashion, music and theology.

By bringing together institutions with such diversity, IHE provides a unique opportunity for professional development, skill sharing, networking and growth for independent providers. Through our engagement with government and the wider higher education sector, we amplify the voices of our members and their students, ensuring that their diverse needs and concerns are considered.

Growing our membership is a key strategic objective for IHE. A broadening membership deepens our knowledge and understanding of the needs of the independent sector, and each new member enhances the IHE network, bringing new insight, skills and opportunities to share and collaborate.

We are delighted to have welcomed the following new members in 2023:

- Christ the Redeemer College
- Collective Acting Studio
- Fashion Retail Academy
- London Professional Training College
- Metanoia Institute
- Raindance Film School
- SP Jain London School of Management
- The Counselling Foundation
- Tiro

A full list of our members is available at [ihe.ac.uk/our-members](https://ihe.ac.uk/our-members).

## 3. NETWORKS AND FORUMS

### FACTS & FIGURES

**23**

**MEMBERS VOLUNTEERED AS CHAIRS**

**400+**

**ATTENDEES ACROSS ALL NETWORK MEETINGS**

**37**

**NETWORK MEETINGS**

Our networks and forums provide an opportunity for individuals within member institutions to engage in policy updates and share advice, support and good practice directly with their peers. Most meet formally three times a year, with members continuing informal discussions between meetings.

IHE networks are thriving hubs for collaboration between our members; a space in which they get together to discuss opportunities and challenges within their own spheres of work, share their knowledge and expertise, and support each other. They are particularly special because of the vast array of interests of our members: the head of a culinary arts school sharing similar interests and challenges to that of a film school or a performing arts academy makes for fascinating and fruitful discussion, while creating opportunities for collaboration between industries that would not normally meet.



Our networks cover the following areas of work:

## NETWORK SCOPE

## CO-CHAIRS DURING THE YEAR

### ACCESS & PARTICIPATION

Ben Norris, Futureworks  
Elizabeth Miller, MetFilm School

### ADMISSIONS

Amy Antonioni, Escape Studios  
Nicola Ridley, BCNO Group

### FINANCE

Liyun Ye, MetFilm School  
Colin Castelino, Le Cordon Bleu

### IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE

Alex Fowler, Kaplan International Colleges  
Rob Pennell, Sotheby's Institute of Art

### INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Phil Deans, Richmond American University, London  
Claire O'Leary, College of Medicine and Dentistry

### MARKETING & RECRUITMENT

Dee Burn, Norland College  
Agata Mazurkiewicz, Condé Nast College of  
Fashion and Design

### STUDENT DATA

Laura Cochrane, Dyson Institute of  
Engineering and Technology  
Stephen Rowstone, Tavistock and Portman  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Muhammad Obaidullah, Met Film School

### STUDENT SERVICES

Kate Le Cocq, Futureworks  
Jude Payne, SAE Institute

### QUALITY

Christie Beauchamp, Point Blank Music School  
Alison Chapman, Royal Academy of Dance  
Boryana Peevska-Cutting, Escape Studios

### RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Miriam Handley, CIEE  
Edward Dimsdale, Cambridge School of Visual  
and Performing Arts  
Nikita Hari, Dyson Institute of Engineering and  
Technology

## NEW HEADS OF INSTITUTION MONTHLY MEETINGS

In the latter half of 2023, IHE introduced monthly online meetings with Heads of member institutions. These high-level meetings sought feedback from members to inform discussions with government departments and regulators, enabling IHE to be more effective at influencing policy makers. We also shared information from these meetings with ministers, civil servants and politicians, to better support member strategies and preparedness for change.

### MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

Alongside formal networks, IHE hosts a number of groups which bring together members with a shared interest:

- Careers and Employability
- Digital Education (including IT and libraries)
- Human Resources
- Data Futures software

## STUDENT SERVICES NETWORK MINI-CONFERENCE – MAY 2023

This year the Student Services Network was keen to bring its members together to discuss a variety of key topics at its first all-day mini-conference. The Co-Chairs and IHE policy team worked together to design the agenda for the day, with most of the sessions led by members sharing their expertise with their peers. The post-event feedback reflected the value that members found in learning from each other and being back together in person as a network for the first time since the pandemic.

Topics included scaling up student services provision to meet institutional growth, and exploring innovative ways of engaging students. The event ended with the IHE team exploring the future for collaborative services to support students.

### CASE STUDY: SPOTLIGHT ON THE VALUE OF OUR MEMBER-LED NETWORKS

"2023 was a big year for the Quality Managers' Network. With discussion spanning TEF submissions, regulatory life after the QAA, and the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), our meetings were packed with learning!

A highlight was holding our first meeting of the year in person for the first time since the pandemic offering members an invaluable opportunity for reconnection, networking and collaborative learning. Sessions were engaging and informative, covering topics such as Degree Awarding Powers, supporting quality through data, developing modular provision, and student feedback in the quality process.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we look ahead to what the future holds. While we celebrate our successes, we also acknowledge the ongoing challenges and uncertainties faced by the higher education sector. However, with a network that brings us together to share knowledge, and best practice, we will continue to navigate these developments, and maybe even get excited about them!"

*Christie Beauchamp, pointblank Music School, Co-Chair of the Quality Managers' Network*



## 4. POLICY AND ADVOCACY

### FACTS & FIGURES

**91**

**GOVERNMENT MEETINGS**

**9**

**FORMAL CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

**28,000**

**WORDS IN CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

IHE's policy work is widely respected by our members and our sector partners, who often comment that we punch above our weight in the sector, given the sheer volume of high-quality work that we produce. We have invested in growing the policy team to ensure we remain at the top of our game as our membership and influence expands.

The breadth of work delivered by our policy team is so wide-ranging that we can't cover it in detail in this report. Below is a snapshot of key moments from 2023.

### SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

Our policy and advocacy work starts with day-to-day support for our members, whether in response to individual needs, through brokering relationships between members, or in the form of group activity delivered to address issues which affect our members at large.

**In 2023, this included:**

#### KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS

- Updates and support for members seeking Degree Awarding Powers
- Understanding OfS regulation eligibility criteria
- Support for members completing HESA returns
- Support for members responding to various sector consultations
- Legal updates on regulation and tax
- Student recruitment
- The future of Artificial Intelligence

#### GOOD PRACTICE SESSIONS

- Mental health and wellbeing in the workplace
- Preparing for effective student elections
- Remote working responsibilities
- Student mental health and wellbeing
- Transnational education (TNE)



## A NATIONAL VOICE FOR INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS

Our influence at both sector and government level continues to grow. Our lobbying in 2023 covered matters ranging from high-level policy positions on student number controls and the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), to more practical concerns such as advocating for discounted energy costs and exploring the impact of Artificial Intelligence in academia. Whether it's blue-sky thinking or practical day-to-day solutions to shared challenges, IHE is at the forefront of the conversation.

## IHE IN PARLIAMENT: HOUSE OF LORDS INQUIRY INTO THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS (OfS)

In March 2023, IHE Chief Executive, Alex Proudfoot, was invited to give oral evidence to the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee as part of its OfS inquiry.

IHE was asked to give evidence relating to the experiences of new providers and specialist institutions in being regulated by OfS, and the different business models in the independent sector. Alex's evidence drew the committee's attention to a variety of concerns, including:

- difficulties caused by the inflexibility of OfS's approach in certain areas
- OfS's over-reliance on data
- a lack of coherent vision for OfS, resulting in mission creep
- the need for a clear focus on improving flaws in the validation system

Alex called for an overarching strategic vision for the OfS to ensure its duties are clear, and argued that this should focus on growth, to ensure the accelerating demand for tertiary education in the UK can be met by expansion in the higher education sector. Instead, providers seeking regulation are met with barriers and inflexibility, meaning that many providers remain unregulated.

The committee published its report in September 2023, concluding that the regulator has poor relations with providers and students alike, an arbitrary and combative approach to regulation, and a lack of separation from government.

IHE's involvement in this inquiry ensured that the needs of independent providers were considered. Much of Alex's feedback is reflected in the report's findings and he is quoted extensively throughout.

Video footage of Alex's full evidence is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-gives-evidence-house-lords-inquiry-ofs](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-gives-evidence-house-lords-inquiry-ofs).

*'Alex Proudfoot suggested that his organisation has evidence of "providers choosing not to go into the OfS because they do not think it is worth the burden and the cost", while others "have withdrawn from the OfS having tried it", instead seeking to be validated by other institutions.'*

**IHE response to the OfS Inquiry report: House of Lords OfS Inquiry report, Must do better: the Office for Students and the looming crisis facing higher education**

## **LEADING THE WAY ON ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS: A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PROJECT**

Our work is often strategically focused on the intersection of higher education policy developments, member need and the student voice, and while a lot of our work can be in response to policy changes in the sector, it can also take the form of proactive, long-term endeavours. Our Academic Partnerships project is an example of this.

Academic partnerships between independent providers and universities are common and necessary for most of our members to be able to offer degree-level provision if they don't have Degree Awarding Powers, and yet guidance around how best to establish and deliver such partnerships is scant. Working with Pinsent Masons, we launched our Academic Partnerships project with the aim of better understanding the experiences of the teaching partner, the awarding partner and the student, looking to surface the risks involved and how to better manage them.

The work has so far included:

- setting up a steering group of key sector stakeholders
- surveying views of validating and awarding partners
- developing case studies of teaching providers
- engaging the IHE Student Advisory Board
- analysing data

Work will continue into 2024, when we will report on our findings and recommendations.

## **IHE CODE OF GOVERNANCE**

In 2021, we created the IHE Code of Governance to support independent higher education providers to demonstrate their governance to stakeholders and regulators. In 2023, IHE developed two supplementary guidance documents to support members in implementing the Code. The first guidance document focused on the creation of a governing body, looking at critical elements like composition and remuneration. This was developed in collaboration with Shakespeare Martineau. The second guidance document was developed with Advance HE, and is designed to help providers induct and support members of their governing body and wider governance structure. Both pieces of guidance are available to IHE members on request.

## **HESA DATA FUTURES**

In 2023, independent higher education providers joined the rest of the sector in submitting to the HESA Data Futures platform for the first time. For independent providers this meant moving away from the HESA Student Alternative return to the new Student return, with more data fields and greater burden. IHE organised workshops and roundtables with HESA and data suppliers to support member submission. IHE members shared their challenges of the data submission with others with similar delivery models, student characteristics or data systems. IHE acted as a vital connector to ensure members could meet the requirements of the new data submission model.

## **SPRING 2023: HESA REVIEW OF THE AGGREGATE OFFSHORE RECORD (AOR)**

Following the growth of transnational education (TNE) in the UK, HESA launched a review into the way data is collected in relation to those studying abroad, proposing to move away from an aggregate record to an individualised Student return, similar to that used already for students based in the UK. While this change would represent a considerable burden for IHE members with TNE activity, and an entirely new requirement for those with online provision offered to students outside the UK, it will ensure that data is fit for purpose.

The review also introduced a new data model for students studying on partnerships, creating more transparency for students in subcontractual partnerships, but introducing new burdens for providers teaching courses validated by OfS-registered partners but who are not registered with the OfS themselves. As a result of IHE's lobbying efforts, the OfS has delayed the introduction of some aspects of this review to ensure that effective systems can be put in place to minimise burden.

Our full response is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-hesa-consultation-data-collection-partnership-and-tne-students](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-hesa-consultation-data-collection-partnership-and-tne-students).

## **OCTOBER 2023: IHE RESPONDS TO ONS CONSULTATION ON POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) launched a consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales to grow understanding of how the statistics are currently used.

IHE responded to the consultation, indicating that we make extensive use of these statistics to understand international student populations and support member organisations with planning and strategic modelling, to estimate variations in international student visas to support public policy decision-making, to support international partnership activity, and to contribute to ongoing discussions around export revenue from international education.

We added that IHE strongly supports more robust population statistics and data to facilitate better policy discussions and encouraged more integration between population statistics and education data for both domestic and international students. Out of over 700 responses to the consultation, IHE were invited to attend a meeting with the National Statistician and Permanent Secretary of the ONS, Professor Sir Ian Diamond.

Our full response is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-ons-consultation-future-population-and-migration-statistics](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-ons-consultation-future-population-and-migration-statistics).

## CASE STUDY:

### SUPPORTING AND DELIVERING EVIDENCE-BASED CONSULTATION RESPONSES

In February 2023, the OfS launched a consultation into tackling harassment and sexual misconduct as a proposed new condition of registration for higher education providers in England. The proposals have potentially broad-ranging implications for IHE members registered with the OfS, including training needs for staff and students, and comprehensive published information on institutional policy.

Before responding, the IHE policy team issued information to members about the consultation and put in place avenues for gathering feedback, including an online survey of members and a consultation event with legal experts, Eversheds Sutherland.

By proactively engaging with our members before we respond to consultations, and by involving relevant experts, we ensure that we are arming ourselves with the right information to be able to build a robust response reflective of the views of our members, while also providing members with expert advice and guidance to enable them to submit their own responses.

Our full response is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-ofs-consultation-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/publications/response-ofs-consultation-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct).

## INFLUENCE IN THE SECTOR

Our policy expertise is often sought out by partners in the sector, meaning IHE is engaged in a variety of committees, taskforces and working groups.

IHE staff were members of the following groups in 2023:

- British Council Higher Education Sector Group (HESG)
- Graduate Outcomes International Data Workshop (Jisc, Department for Education)
- Education Advisory Group (Home Office)
- Education Exports Data Quarterly Workshop (Department for Business and Trade, Department for Education, ONS)
- Education Sector Advisory Group (Department for Business and Trade, Department for Education)
- Education Sector Group (Home Office – UK Visas and Immigration)
- HE/FE Care-experienced Taskforce
- Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce (Department for Education)
- International Student Employability Group (UKCISA)
- LLE Provider Working Group (Department for Education)
- NSS Review External Advisory Group (Office for Students)
- QAA Consultative Board
- UKCISA Strategic Advisory Group
- UKCISA Board of Trustees
- UKCISA Membership Committee
- UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (sector-led)

## 5. STUDENT VOICE

Ensuring that the student voice is at the forefront of our members' minds is a key strategic focus for IHE. As the only higher education sector representative body to have a full student member on our Board of Directors, we are keen to model good practice in this area, and so in February 2023 we created the Student Advisory Board (SAB).

Made up of students from member institutions and chaired by our Student Board Member, the SAB ensures our work and decision making is in the best interests of those studying at our member institutions, allowing them to engage with sector-wide issues and consultations, while providing them with valuable networking and development opportunities.

The SAB was established with the help of a valued IHE partner, Coole Insight, who also provide ongoing administrative support.

***"Working with IHE over the last 12 months has been a highlight of Coole Insight's year. Our work in helping to establish the Student Advisory Board and the opportunity to develop national student representation mechanisms for IHE's members is both incredibly exciting, and a privilege."***

**Steve Coole, Coole Insight Limited**

One of its first pieces of work was a response to the call for evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Students' Inquiry into the impact of the cost of living crisis on students, ensuring the voices of those studying with independent providers are considered on a national level. The SAB has also contributed to work we have undertaken on academic partnership provision and mental health support.

In the autumn of 2023, the SAB renewed and grew its membership for the 2023/24 academic year, with a new Student Board Member as Chair. This expansion represents more of our members and an even more diverse group of student voices, as we amplify a compelling and strong national student voice for independent providers of higher education.

2023 saw the appointment of Peter Sharpe as our second Student Board Member, a position which is now supported by a small stipend to help widen access to this rare opportunity to represent students at a national level.

***"The work of the SAB and the Student Board Member is unique, acting as an example of what meaningful student engagement looks like. We have demonstrated a resolve to ensure that students at IHE members have the voice they need and deserve, and it has been great to have the support of IHE as we have engaged with the DfE and OfS. We have a lot of work to do going forward, and I am thrilled to be working with the excellent members of the SAB to safeguard students' interests. I am very grateful to IHE for the support they provide us."***

**Peter Sharpe, IHE Student Board Member**

## 6. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

Tapping into established and emerging international markets is a key strategic aim for many UK providers of tertiary education, and IHE members are no exception. As part of our day-to-day work of supporting members in this endeavour, IHE is engaged in various activities at government and sector level which enable us to influence policy and keep members abreast of changes.

We provide knowledge-sharing events and policy updates, as well as facilitating collaboration between members and supporting the development of tools and resources which enable members to understand the policy landscape and implement their own strategies locally. Alongside regular updates for IHE members on global opportunities through the British Council and Department for Business and Trade (DBT), IHE has also been working with members to develop more collaborative approaches to supporting members with developing overseas activity.

### ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

One of the ways IHE makes an impact at government level is through our work with the APPG for International Students. IHE assisted in the establishment of the group in 2016, alongside Paul Blomfield MP and Lord Bilimoria (now the APPG's Co-Chairs), and we provide its secretariat dedicating around two days per month in support.

As part of our secretariat role, IHE administers and leads on a cross-sector advisory group, with members including sector bodies, campaign groups and other organisations with interests in all levels of education in the UK.

The APPG exists to:

- recognise the internationalisation and global prominence of UK education
- promote the value of international students to UK education, economy and 'soft power'
- raise awareness of issues which affect international students and UK education
- provide a platform for collaboration between parliamentarians, international education institutions and professionals and business leaders.

Our work in this area ensures that the voices of independent providers are heard during these important discussions.



Paul Blomfield MP and Lord Bilimoria,  
Co-Chairs, APPG for International Students



## GRADUATE VISA INQUIRY

In 2023, the APPG launched its Graduate Visa Inquiry, which sought to understand if the Graduate route had had the intended impact.

Several events were held as part of the inquiry:

### MAY 2023: EXPERT ROUNDTABLE

The expert roundtable brought together those who had conducted research into the graduate visa to identify key themes and share their views on the success of the route.

### JUNE 2023: STUDENT ROUNDTABLE

The student roundtable included those with experience in a wide range of post-study work options, including those who chose to leave the UK rather than take up the graduate visa.

### JULY 2023: GRADUATE VISA INQUIRY REPORT LAUNCH EVENT

The substantial and well-received report made ten recommendations, aiming to improve the effectiveness of the graduate visa and the steps necessary to ensure its continued success.

The full report is available on the APPG website: [internationalstudents.org.uk/publications/appg-report-graduate-visa-inquiry-2023/](https://internationalstudents.org.uk/publications/appg-report-graduate-visa-inquiry-2023/).

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DAY: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – NOVEMBER 2023

As well as special projects which change from year to year, the APPG also celebrates international students annually through our International Students Day, when we invite students to parliament to hear their perspectives on key issues. This year's theme was equality and diversity, which provided an opportunity for APPG members to reflect on the considerations that should be made in visa regulations for international students with protected characteristics.

More information about the APPG for International Students is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/about-us/appg-international-students](https://ihe.ac.uk/about-us/appg-international-students).

## EDUCATION SECTOR ADVISORY GROUP (ESAG)

IHE has a permanent seat as one of the original seven sector members of the UK government's Education Sector Advisory Group (ESAG), which exists to coordinate efforts to boost UK education exports and set the strategic direction for the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) education team.

In November 2023, our CEO, Alex Proudfoot, presented to the group on the need for DBT to focus more on supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – a category that 90% of our members fall into – with their education exports work.



The presentation highlighted the varied needs and priorities of SMEs in the education sector versus the support that is currently available to them, highlighting significant gaps which must be filled for SMEs to fulfil their potential as exporters of UK education. Alex summarised the current barriers as being related to:

- Confidence – many SMEs need more help understanding how to export their offer
- Capability – SMEs need funding and capacity to invest in market exploration
- Connections – SMEs need contacts in UK government and overseas to build from
- Policy – UK regulatory compliance is inconsistent and costly, making expansion risky

Alex proposed ways in which the DBT could better support SMEs in overcoming these barriers advocating for the establishment of a working group, new research into SME needs, and the provision of resources in the short term, while working towards a strategic action plan for SMEs as exporters.

## **CASE STUDY: SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGIC COLLABORATION**

### **CHINA MISSION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS PITCH BOOK**

**Professor Phil Deans, President & Vice Chancellor, Richmond American University London, Vice Chair of IHE Board, Co-Chair of International Education Forum.**

In September 2023, Phil Deans represented IHE members on a joint British Council and Universities UK International mission for higher education institutions to China. Phil joined a delegation of 20 representatives from the UK higher education sector, meeting counterparts from 44 Chinese institutions.

In preparation for the mission, IHE members were invited to share information about their experience, offering and interest in prospective global partners for delivering transnational education and other opportunities.

Prior to the trip, 18 colleagues attended the 'Exploring New Partnerships in China' event, hosted by IHE and 15 providers in total expressed an interest in working with partners in China specifically. These 15 providers formed the basis of a Global Partnerships Pitch Book, which was collated and produced by IHE and made available online for ease of sharing.

A more generic version of the Pitch Book was then developed, which is housed on our website, and updated regularly according to member interest in transnational education. Our International Education Forum – a staff network for those interested in global partnerships and recruitment – has been working on identifying further collaboration opportunities to build on this work.

The Pitch Book is available to view on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/our-members/pitchbook2024](https://ihe.ac.uk/our-members/pitchbook2024).

## 7. LAUNCHPAD AND CONSULTANCY

### FACTS & FIGURES

8

**LAUNCHPAD SUBSCRIBERS, WITH 3  
BECOMING FULL MEMBERS**

100+

**DAYS OF CONSULTANCY  
ACROSS 16 PROJECTS**

### LAUNCHPAD

For new providers, or those new to the regulated higher education sector, we offer access to our expert advice via Launchpad, a suite of tailored resources to support providers in achieving their strategic and regulatory goals. By subscribing to Launchpad, providers benefit from IHE's knowledge and support, while also gaining access to our consultancy services, which are exclusively available to members and Launchpad subscribers.

Our experts have supported providers in understanding the regulatory framework, registration with the OfS and attaining Degree Awarding Powers, as well as more strategic objectives, such as building a student community, reviewing governance procedures and enhancing student welfare services. In 2023, we had 8 Launchpad subscribers, 3 of whom went on to become full members of IHE.

*"As a new organisation in the UK, we found Launchpad very helpful. The support provided by IHE as we navigated through OfS registration and new Degree Awarding Powers was invaluable. They provided expert support and guidance on policy and process, with knowledgeable consultants. The networking opportunities were also helpful to share good practice (as well as pain points!)."*

**Marion Lowe, Chief Operating Officer, SP Jain London School of Management**

*"As an Independent Apprenticeship Training Provider specialising in science and technology, we searched high and low to find the right programme for our Level 3 laboratory, materials testing and science manufacturing technician graduates to progress on to. We came to realise if we were to offer the kind of degree route our customers desired for their staff, we would have to build it ourselves. Cue IHE's Launchpad! What initially felt like a minefield was quickly made into an achievable project. With IHE's counsel, we swiftly gained an understanding of the new world of HE that we've now come to inhabit. We secured a partnership with a great university, gained institutional approval and validated three degree programmes with them. Our relationship with IHE has blossomed as they are extremely inclusive with an awesome membership who are also always happy to help."*

**Charlotte Blant, Founder & CEO, Tiro**

## CONSULTANCY

IHE Consultancy has continued to develop into a significant part of IHE's offering to members. We have steadily grown our portfolio of consultants to increase our project capacity as well as the breadth of services we are able to provide.

Over the past year, as part of broader plans to streamline our operations and processes, we have been analysing the enquiries, support needs and projects completed over the last 48 months to determine where we need to focus our efforts to recruit more consultant capacity. We have also been conducting a full review of all IHE consultants' knowledge, experience, skill sets and availability so that we can map this against the emerging demand we are seeing.

As part of our growth strategy, we are creating example packages that will address common consultancy enquiries. These packages will give members a clearer idea of the likely input a consultant would need from the provider, the intended outputs, the timescale and ballpark costs.

To date, demand for IHE Consultancy has been flowing organically from membership enquiries. As we continue to grow our consultancy capacity, we aim to start more actively promoting the suite of services we have developed as part of our stakeholder communications.

*"EdAd is a small consultancy company of four people who met at UCAS over a decade ago and are passionate about supporting the best education opportunities for students. We work with HE providers large and small, and the organisations that support them, to develop their offer and competitive strategies in recruiting students, ensuring effective supporting policies and operations and the best possible student journey."*

*"It has been a particular pleasure to work with IHE and its small specialist provider members on many different types of contracts including HE admissions, new degree business case development, teaching and learning strategy development, TEF applications, and CMA compliance. We are very selective in choosing our clients and are proud to work with IHE and its members as they drive real innovation and choice, transforming the HE sector for the better. We have worked professionally across the sector for a long time, and are particularly impressed by their current achievements and future potential in a rapidly evolving and increasingly internationally competitive 21st century HE system."*

**Dr Liz Bell, EdAd**

INDEPENDENT  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION

Promoting  
**diversity**  
in higher education

IHE.AC.UK

## 8. EVENTS

### FACTS & FIGURES

**82**

**EVENTS HELD**

**15**

**IN-PERSON EVENTS**

**1309**

**ATTENDEES ACROSS ALL EVENTS**

**227**

**ATTENDEES AND SPEAKERS AT OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**50+**

**NOMINATIONS FOR IHE AWARDS**

**10**

**INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN 'CREATE' MENTAL HEALTH PILOT**

**9**

**IHE AWARD WINNERS**

Our events bring together colleagues from across our member institutions to discuss, learn, share and network around a variety of topics. Events include conferences, roundtable meetings with sector agencies and bodies, member-led networks and forums, meetings to discuss IHE responses to government consultations, and other special interest events.

Special interest events are regularly organised in response to common concerns, areas of interest or arising opportunities. Topics this year included:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Student mental health
- Guidance on running student elections
- Working collaboratively towards new growth strategies

## EVENT TYPE

### NETWORK / FORUM

NUMBER OF EVENTS: 37

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 401

### SPECIAL INTEREST

NUMBER OF EVENTS: 29

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 384

### SECTOR CONSULTATIONS

NUMBER OF EVENTS: 6

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 123

### POLICY ROUNDTABLE

NUMBER OF EVENTS: 5

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 139

### LAUNCHPAD

NUMBER OF EVENTS: 4

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 35

## IHE ANNUAL CONFERENCE – 28 NOVEMBER 2023

Our Annual Conference is the highlight of our events calendar. Uniquely placed as the only conference in the higher education sector dedicated to independent providers, it is an opportunity for our members to come together to discuss key topics, specifically as they relate to independent provision.

This year the event also served as a celebration of IHE's 15th birthday, allowing us not only to reflect on the past year, but also to reflect on the growth of the organisation since our inception, while looking forward to the next phase of our development, in partnership with our members.

With a General Election ahead and a venue in the heart of Westminster, speeches from key political figures and senior sector representatives enabled lively discussion not only about the current context, but the possible future.

Highlights included:

- Ministerial address: Robert Halfon MP, Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education, outlining the government's continuing reform agenda and the promise of a Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), while reflecting on the innovation, choice and unique insights our members bring to the sector. A full transcript of the speech can be found on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/robert-halfon-mps-speech-ihe-annual-conference-2023](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/robert-halfon-mps-speech-ihe-annual-conference-2023).
- Shadow Minister's address: Matt Western MP, Shadow Minister for Higher Education, setting out the Labour vision for the HE sector, and reflecting on the important impact that independent provision has in empowering individuals, boosting the economy and diversifying teaching practice. A full transcript of the speech can be found on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/matt-western-mps-speech-ihe-annual-conference-2023](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/matt-western-mps-speech-ihe-annual-conference-2023).



- Plenaries and panel discussions covering the topics at the forefront of our members' minds, such as flexible funding models for tertiary education, regulatory risks and opportunities, and a look at the future of higher education policy. Panel members included senior sector representatives from the Office for Students and JISC, education policy and strategy experts, other sector leaders, and Peter Sharpe, IHE's Student Board Member.
- Breakout sessions covering specialist topics, including the sustainability and growth of the independent higher education sector, an update from the Office for Students on quality assessment and Degree Awarding Powers, preparing for Artificial Intelligence, meaningful student engagement, and discussions around international student employability and student skills and success.

This year's conference also featured our largest ever exhibition hall, including representatives from our main sponsor, Jisc, as well as a variety of other exhibitors offering opportunities to discuss services of interest to members.

More detailed conference highlights are available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-annual-conference-2023-highlights](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-annual-conference-2023-highlights).

Our next Annual Conference will be held on Tuesday 26 November 2024, back at One Great George Street in Westminster.











## THE IHE AWARDS 2023

We were thrilled to receive a record-breaking number of nominations for the IHE Awards this year. The awards give us an opportunity to celebrate and share the work and expertise of our members at both a provider and individual level.

### Winners & Shortlists

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#### INSPIRING COURSE

**Winner:**

- ACM

**Shortlisted:**

- ACM
- Richmond American University London
- TEDI-London



#### TECHNOLOGY ADVANCED LEARNING

**Winner:**

- Point Blank Music School

**Shortlisted:**

- Point Blank Music School
- Royal Academy of Dance
- ThinkSpace Education



## SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

### Winner:

- Bloomsbury Institute London

### Shortlisted:

- Bloomsbury Institute London
- Chickenshed
- Point Blank Music School



## OUTSTANDING COLLABORATION

### Winner:

- Tiro

### Shortlisted:

- College of Medicine and Dentistry
- Futureworks
- Tiro



## ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

### Winner:

- Royal Academy of Dance

### Shortlisted:

- QA Higher Education
- Royal Academy of Dance
- UCFB and Global Institute of Sport



## SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

### Winner:

- TEDI-London

### Shortlisted:

- Institute for Optimum Nutrition
- London Institute of Banking and Finance
- TEDI-London



## **RISING STAR**

### **Winner:**

- Dr Fayyaz Hussain Qureshi, Oxford Business College

### **Shortlisted:**

- Dr Fayyaz Hussain Qureshi, Oxford Business College
- Valentina Vlasova, Waltham International College



## **OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE IHE COMMUNITY (PROVIDER)**

### **Winner:**

- Futureworks



## **OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE IHE COMMUNITY (INDIVIDUAL)**

### **Winner:**

- Sue Edwards, Kaplan International Colleges

IHE warmly thanks our award sponsors and judges, a full list of whom can be found on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-awards-2023-winners](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/news/ihe-awards-2023-winners).

# SPOTLIGHT ON ACM

## Winners of the IHE Inspiring Course Award 2023

ACM clinched the 2023 Inspiring Course award for its Creative Industries Futures programme.



Launched in September 2022, the course offers a versatile framework that caters to various learning styles and career aspirations in the creative sector. The programme's interdisciplinary nature allows students to combine a wide array of creative industries subjects – including music, business, live production, games, and visual arts – within numerous study modes. These include accelerated study, traditional three-year study, an embedded foundation year, an integrated Master's option and a standalone Master's.

The programme operates on three main learning models. Firstly, students engage in hyper-specialised skills units, where they can choose from over 150 short courses. These courses are designed to upskill students in specific areas across the creative industries spectrum. Secondly, students participate in collaborative project groups, where interdisciplinary teams work together to tackle industry briefs and apply the skills they have acquired in their skills units. This hands-on approach fosters teamwork and peer learning. Thirdly, the programme emphasizes the contextualisation of chosen pathways within the creative industries, ensuring that students gain a deep understanding of their chosen field's history, its psychology and biology, its cultural impact, and its future trends.

Facilitated by technologies such as the MyACM app, live streaming, video calling and Whatsapp messaging, Creative Industries Futures adapts to the rapidly changing needs of the industry. The curriculum is designed to facilitate dynamic content updates, ensuring that students are equipped with up-to-date skills and knowledge. The programme has also been designed with the Lifelong Learner Entitlement (LLE) in mind.

The programme was judged to have excelled in its use of innovative technology, pedagogy, and practice to provide a unique, impactful and collaborative student learning experience. Award judges also commended ACM for the interdisciplinary nature of the course design. Praising the dynamic content updates, and ACM's strong links with industry, the judges noted both the fact that the programme is LLE-ready, and the opportunities given to support students in recognising learning and skills gained.

Find out more on ACM's website: [acm.ac.uk/acms-creative-industries-futures-programme](https://acm.ac.uk/acms-creative-industries-futures-programme).



## **'CREATE' PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHARLIE WALLER TRUST**

At the start of 2023, we partnered with the Charlie Waller Trust to launch a pilot initiative of bespoke training sessions for IHE members, which aimed to support the creation or development of evidence-based mental health strategies, built on a whole institution approach.

The Charlie Waller Trust designed training to enable application of the CREATE toolkit – to provide strategies to assist participants develop a mental health strategy that works in line with a shared set of principles. The pilot training programme launched with ten institutions in March 2023, with four sessions over six weeks, and a catch-up for review in July 2023, which was also attended by Student Minds.

Pilot participants found the mental health policy toolkit clear and user-friendly, and valued being part of the training pilot. While there were some challenges in terms of practical implementation, this is to be expected as part of a pilot programme with such a diverse range of participants. Happily, however, the toolkit proved useful as a way of facilitating incremental change and policy review, even for those who were not able to implement broader strategic change.

The pilot participants gave helpful feedback for future iterations of the training, such as a preference for dedicated, in-person training days to enhance focus and collaboration, which will be taken into consideration in the next stage of the project.

IHE is grateful to the Charlie Waller Trust team for creating this programme for us and we are looking forward to the next phase of this work.

*"It has been an absolute pleasure to work with IHE, using the Charlie Waller CREATE tool, to help members to consider their institutional needs when adopting a whole institution approach to reviewing or creating a mental health strategy. We look forward to continuing our work with IHE in the future."*

**Julie Castleman, Mental Health Trainer - Universities, Charlie Waller Trust**

## 9. PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

### FACTS & FIGURES

18

**PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS**

7

**NEW RELATIONSHIPS ESTABLISHED**

Our relationships with partners and supporters are extremely valuable to IHE and our members. Through building relationships with key partners and supporters, we benefit from their expertise, act as a broker for direct relationships between key organisations and our members, and generate funds to enable IHE activity.

Those who choose to work with IHE are committed to delivering high-quality products and services, tailored to suit the needs of the independent higher education sector. They include sector bodies, legal and accounting firms, technology specialists, consultancies, and more.

In 2023, we renewed our focus in this area, ensuring that resources were directed towards maintaining and building these important relationships through the appointment of a Head of Partnerships, who will also ensure we strategically seek out new opportunities for collaboration in line with member need.

*"Intersol Global have proudly supported IHE for over 5 years. Delivering investigation training and associated services, their founding senior partners, Ian Hynes and Mick Confrey, have supported and attended many events and conferences in that time and increasingly deliver their services to a growing number of IHE members."*

*Working with IHE delivers significant benefits to us as a company. IHE has provided streamlined access to the world of independent education providers and significantly educated us as to the particular needs and nuances of the sector, as well as the challenges it faces. Their regular conferences and workshops are impeccably organised, providing value for money and the opportunity to network with both potential clients and other providers in the higher education supply chain. I have no doubt that our recent conversion from supporter to IHE Partner will deliver even more mutual benefit and we look forward to cementing that relationship."*

**Ian Hynes, Partner and Director, Intersol Global**

*"Advance HE have been delighted to engage with IHE through a collaborative partnership over the last year. Recognising the great work IHE does to support and champion independent providers within the higher education sector, our partnership has allowed Advance HE to ensure that our work is aligned with the needs of our shared members."*

*Support so far has included guidance for the IHE Code of Governance on board induction and development, a development session on 'Good Governance', and support at several of the IHE member networks. Advance HE has future work planned on governance development and exploring the needs of leadership development for independent providers."*

Nick Skeet, Director of Membership, Advance HE



A full list of our current partners and supporters is available on our website: [ihe.ac.uk/what-we-offer/partners-and-supporters](https://ihe.ac.uk/what-we-offer/partners-and-supporters).



# 10. COMMUNICATIONS

## FACTS & FIGURES

**30%**

**GROWTH ON LINKEDIN**

**23K**

**NEW WEBSITE USERS IN 6 MONTHS SINCE NEW SITE LAUNCHED**

In the summer of 2023, we began work on developing a new communications strategy, which set out clear objectives and tactical activity aimed at:

- raising the profile of IHE and our members
- representing the interests of IHE members
- growing the number of IHE members
- demonstrating the impact of IHE's work
- streamlining our messaging across multiple platforms

The new strategy provided much-needed focus for our communication activity and having been developed following the launch of our new website and brand identity, signalled a step change how we present ourselves externally.

## OPINION PIECES

Outside of our strategy development work, the IHE staff team continued to share their views and expertise through a variety of opinion pieces published externally. These included:

- Underfunding smaller institutions has serious consequences (Wonkhe, March 2023) [ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/underfunding-smaller-institutions-has-serious-consequences](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/underfunding-smaller-institutions-has-serious-consequences).
- How can diversifying providers help meet the challenge of a journey to a million? (UCAS, April 2023) [ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/how-can-diversifying-providers-help-meet-challenge-journey-million](https://ihe.ac.uk/latest/policy-and-insights/how-can-diversifying-providers-help-meet-challenge-journey-million).

# 11. GOVERNANCE

## GOVERNANCE REVIEW

As a formal national representative body in the higher education sector with a high degree of influence, we hold ourselves to the highest standards in relation to our governance and transparency. These are principles we also promote within our membership, ensuring that the independent higher education sector is trusted and valued by the public.

This year, we completed a comprehensive review of our constitution and governance. With advice and drafting assistance from leading law firm Shakespeare Martineau, we re-wrote our Articles of Association in their entirety. We also redrafted all Membership Regulations, which were approved by the IHE Board in October.

This was a huge but important undertaking, completed in line with commitments around governance and transparency in our 2021-24 strategic plan. It is a key part of IHE's strategy to ensure that we set the bar for governance, professionalism, transparency and accountability, enabling us to grow IHE's influence in the sector.

## KEY GOVERNANCE UPDATES

### JANUARY: ANDREW BOGGS APPOINTED AS INDEPENDENT BOARD MEMBER

Andrew joined IHE at the start of 2023 as our new Independent Board Member and Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee, for a three-year term. As one of the UK's leading experts in higher education policy, and currently University Clerk at Royal Holloway, University of London, Andrew has brought to the role a wealth of experience in corporate and academic governance, legal matters and higher education regulatory compliance.

### JUNE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

IHE's revised constitutional document, our Articles of Association, were formally approved and adopted by our Members.

We were delighted to welcome Claire O'Leary (College of Medicine and Dentistry) and Rachel Nicholson (Academy of Live Technology) to the Board following successful elections, alongside Sharona Friedman (Global Institute of Sport, UCFB) who was re-elected. Each will serve a three-year term.

### AUGUST: STUDENT BOARD MEMBER APPOINTED TO BOARD

We were happy to announce the appointment of Peter Sharpe as our new Student Board Member for a two-year term from August 2023. Peter was one of several extremely impressive and dedicated students who applied for this opportunity, standing out as someone who would be a successful advocate and representative. Peter impressed the panel with a passion and commitment to the student experience. He also became Chair of the Student Advisory Board.

## SEPTEMBER: JAMES PITMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF STUDY GROUP, SUCCEEDS DR ROXANNE STOCKWELL AS CHAIR OF THE IHE BOARD

Having served on the Board for many years, most recently as Vice Chair, James continues to be instrumental in guiding our work in key areas, such as member growth and international education. IHE members benefit greatly from his dedication to our work and to the sector. He is a member of the British Council's HE Sector Group and founding advisor to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for International Students.

## DECEMBER: PROFESSOR PHIL DEANS BECOMES VICE CHAIR OF THE IHE BOARD

Phil Deans is President and Vice Chancellor, Richmond American University London. He brings a wealth of experience in navigating higher education regulatory requirements and curriculum development, with a focus on international opportunities and perspectives. Phil is also Co-Chair of IHE's International Education Forum.

## SPECIAL THANKS

### DR ROXANNE STOCKWELL

We extend our sincere thanks to Dr Roxanne Stockwell for her unwavering dedication to supporting IHE's development during her six years as Chair. Roxanne has guided IHE deftly through some important strategic milestones and substantial changes, both internally and in the sector. We are ever grateful for her efforts. IHE today is all the stronger for her personal commitment to the cause.

*"I have enjoyed my time as Chair very much, especially at such an important period for IHE and indeed UK higher education as a whole. The whole sector was reshaped in 2017 following new legislation and I am very proud of what IHE has achieved to help support the independent sector."*

**Dr Roxanne Stockwell, IHE Board member and former Chair**

### HEMA TANK

We wish to thank Hema Tank, LIBF, who retired from the IHE Board after six years' service. We are very grateful for the time, energy and expertise that Hema shared with us during her time on the Board and as a member of our Finance and Resources Committee.

## 12. FINANCE

2023 marked another year of growth for IHE, with our turnover exceeding £500,000. This was largely due to increased income from membership subscriptions. Additional funds were used to expand our staff team, ensuring we can continue to meet the needs of our growing membership with an increase in capacity for planning and delivery across all areas.

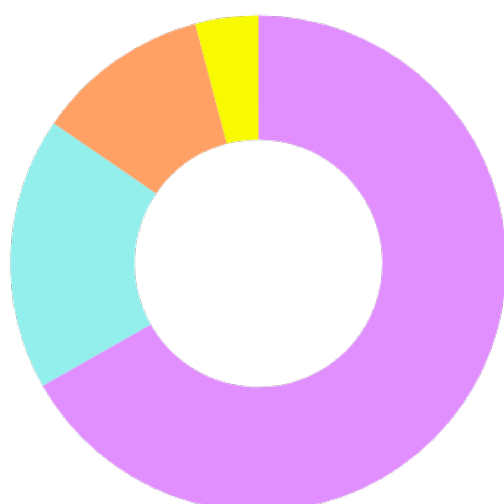
We ended the year with a planned overall deficit, agreed by the Board in our annual budget following a strong positive margin in 2022. We are in an excellent financial position going into 2024, which allows us to build and innovate new benefits and services for our members.

INCOME	2023	2022
IHE Member Subscriptions	£367,475	£308,763
Consultancy and Development	£97,817	£105,409
Events	£62,365	£59,954
Commercial Partnerships	£22,547	£22,640
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£550,205</b>	<b>£496,766</b>

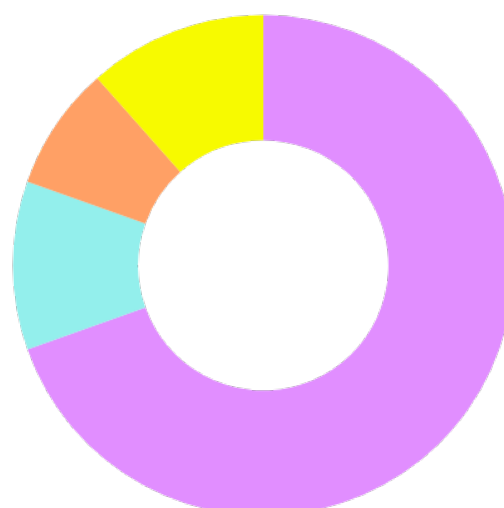
  

EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
Staff	£387,099	£317,597
Consultancy Costs	£60,587	£63,041
Events Costs	£44,657	£34,280
Operational Costs	£64,230	£59,623
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£556,573</b>	<b>£474,541</b>
<b>TOTAL MARGIN</b>	<b>-£6,368</b>	<b>£22,225</b>

**INCOME 2023**



**EXPENDITURE 2023**



# 13. IHE STAFF TEAM AND IHE BOARD

## STAFF TEAM



**Alex Proudfoot**  
Chief Executive



**Gemma Green**  
Director of  
External Relations



**Joy Elliott-Bowman**  
Director of Policy and  
Development



**Natalie Kubicki**  
Director of Operations



**Jane Southgate**  
Head of Partnerships



**Anna Gibbs**  
Communications and  
Marketing Officer



**Penny Tzivitz**  
Events and Operations  
Officer



**Angela Halston**  
Senior Policy and  
Engagement Officer



**Anna Mathews**  
Senior Policy and  
Engagement Officer



**Sophie McCarthy**  
Policy and Engagement  
Officer

## IHE BOARD



**James Pitman**  
**Chair**  
Managing Director,  
UK and Europe, Study  
Group



**Professor Phil Deans**  
**Vice Chair**  
President and Vice  
Chancellor, Richmond  
American University London



**Dr Roxanne Stockwell**  
Chair of the Board,  
2018-23



**Sharona Friedman**  
President, Global  
Institute of Sport



**Colin Castelino**  
Finance Director, Le  
Cordon Bleu London



**Andrew Boggs**  
University Secretary,  
Royal Holloway,  
University of London



**Claire O'Leary**  
Director of External  
Relations and  
Partnerships, College of  
Medicine and Dentistry



**David Howell**  
CEO, MetFilm School



**Dr Janet Rose**  
Principal, Norland  
College



**Peter Sharpe**  
Independent Student  
Board Member



**Rachel Nicholson**  
Head of Institution,  
Academy of Live  
Technology



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**INDEPENDENT  
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