

Information Session



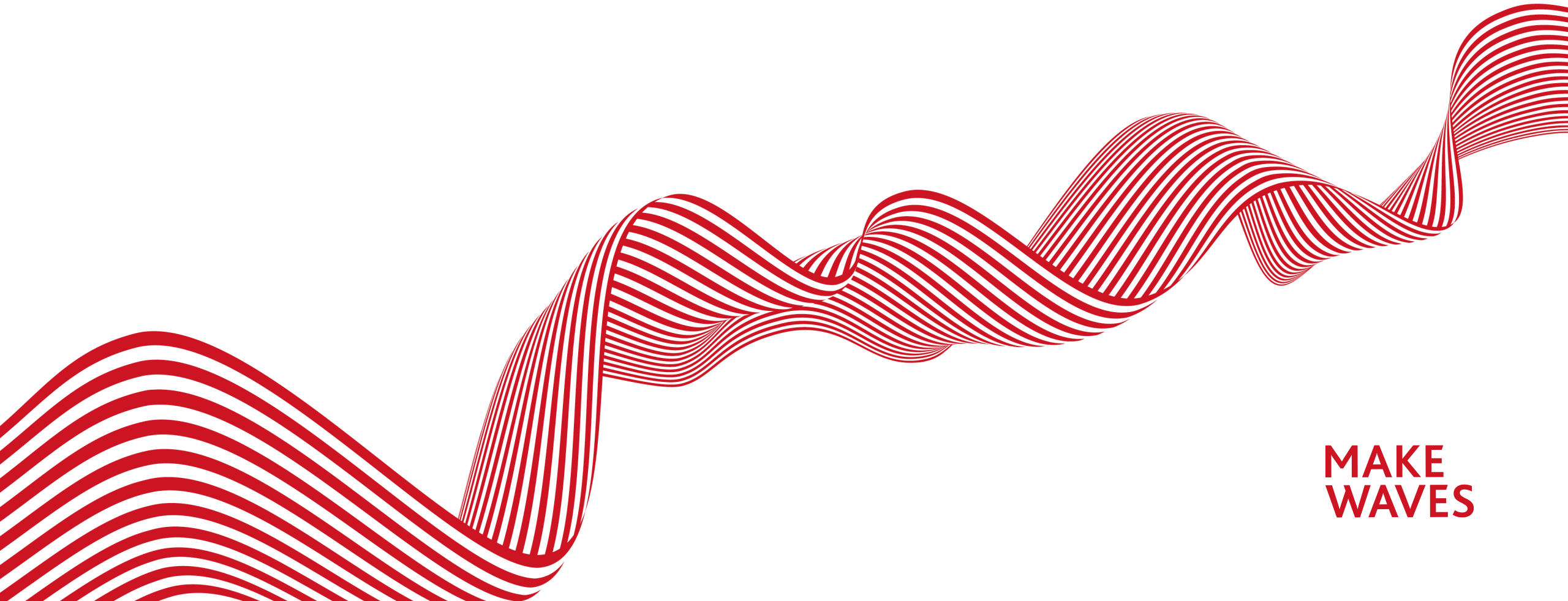
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**MAKE
WAVES**

Current situation

Southampton
Solent
University



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23 March 2026

DfE Letter to 15 providers

- This letter sets out the immediate action the Department for Education and the Student Loans Company (SLC) will be taking in response to their perceived misclassification of weekend courses.
- According to the DfE Letter, under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011, attendance on weekends only is classified as distance learning, and students on such courses do not qualify for maintenance support or targeted grants (with the exception of Disabled Students' Allowances).
- For the purposes of the Student Support Regulations, a course is considered “in-attendance” only where students are required to attend on a regular, timetabled, in-person basis during weekdays. The DfE normally considers regular weekday attendance to mean at least once per week of required, scheduled attendance for learning or professional practice during Monday-Friday.

Required actions for providers

- **Identify all students** who have *not* regularly attended on weekdays during term-time during this academic year (i.e. weekend-only students) and share with SLC.
- From the **6th to 17th April 2026, submit Change of Circumstance (CoC) notification** to SLC for all weekend-only students to transfer them to the new distance-learning course.
- For any students that have already moved or now **intend to move to a weekday in-attendance study pattern, submit a second CoC notification as soon as possible.** This will allow the calculation of transferring the student onto the relevant course. **For students that continue to receive maintenance support, repayment of money that they received incorrectly will be managed by deductions from future payments through an affordable repayment plan.**

What happened before 23 March 2026?

- On **9th December 2025**, the **DfE** sent a **letter** to all universities setting out its expectations with regard to franchise providers, including **requiring large franchise providers with 300 or more students to register with the Office for Students (OfS) from academic year 28/29** in order for their courses to be designated for student finance.
- Ask of providers to ensure effective management and governance arrangements for franchise provision, reference to Fair Admissions Code of Practice, **reference to in-person attendance requirements going forward. There was no reference or call to action included for current students.** The University commenced planning for 2026/27 in response to the letter.
- OfS announced a new ongoing **condition E10** on 12 March 2026 focusing on subcontractual arrangements which comes into effect from 31 March 2026 for new contracts and 30 June 2026 for existing contracts.

Your options

Please note that none of the below options, negate the requirement to pay back any maintenance support or targeted grants to the SLC that have been paid to you to date. Option 2 would give you the option to claim maintenance support and/or targeted grants in the future. However, SLC have indicated that past maintenance support/targeted grants may be deducted from those future payments.

Stay on current course

Stay on your current course which is not eligible for maintenance support or targeted grants.

Transfer to in-attendance course

Transfer to a course by 17th April that has the same content but is classified as in-attendance because it requires regular, timetabled, in person attendance during weekdays. Please note that the University has to evidence regular weekday in-person attendance and so will be monitoring this carefully.

We will provide timetable information as soon as possible.

Suspend your studies

Suspend your studies. This will enable you to take a break from your studies and then, depending on the circumstances when you wish to return, you could have the opportunity to rejoin your current course (option 1) or transfer to another course (option 2).

Withdrawal from your studies

Withdraw from your studies. This means that you have decided not to continue with your studies and wish to withdraw from your current course and not transfer to another course.

Next steps with the SLC

- If you are a current student on an impacted course, your maintenance loan and targeted grant payments will have been blocked by the SLC with immediate effect.
- The SLC will contact you to recover any previous payments made via a repayment plan for the duration of your course.
- Repayment plans are based on a student's individual circumstances. An affordability exercise is undertaken with you when you contact the SLC and a repayment plan is developed as a result of that discussion. The following link provides more information:
<https://www.gov.uk/repay-student-loan-overpayment>
- This includes: Maintenance loan and targeted grant payments (e.g. childcare)
- This does not include: Disabled Students' Allowance or Tuition Fee Loan payments

Support for you

- In the process of applying **automatic extensions for your assessments**
- **On campus wellbeing support** available via the QAHE Student Welfare team.
- **Wellbeing support** also available through the Student Assistance Programme

Student access details:

Link to app: [Wisdom](#)

Code to use to register: **MHA339939**

- **Drop-in sessions on course transfer** to follow
- **Students' Union:** suadvice@solent.ac.uk
- **Complaints:** qahe.complaints@solent.ac.uk

Thank you

For queries, contact
qahe.enquiries@solent.ac.uk

