

Minutes

CHEAG/19/M1

College HE Advisory Group meeting
held on Thursday 28 February 2019 at UCAS

Chair:	Alison Charles	UCAS
Present:	Arti Saraswat Claire Barton Daniel Apparicio Emma Dickinson James Marczak Kay Burton-Williams Kristine Murray Martin Haynes Roy Mason	Association of Colleges Heart of Worcestershire College Loughborough College (on behalf of Chris Cockerton) Leicester College Myerscough College Birmingham Metropolitan College Blackpool and the Fylde College Coventry College Chesterfield College
Apologies:	Chris Cockerton Debbie Toseland Josie Diggins Kiran Rami Rhys Thomas Richard Tong	Loughborough College Cornwall College UCEN Manchester Uxbridge College Kingston College NPTC Group
UCAS in attendance:	Alice Bennett Alison Charles Ben Jordan Deniz Gosai Duncan Saunders Finlay Willicott Georgina Venman Kate Butland Lauren Cooper Magnus Rabarts Rob Edmondson Suzanne Campbell	Principal Data Consultant Relationship Manager (North) Senior Policy & Qualifications Manager Provider Engagement Coordinator (observing) Business Analyst Product Executive Provider Engagement Coordinator Head of Strategy and Policy Executive Product Manager (observing) Team Lead Product Owner Strategy Manager Senior Insight Consultant

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, introductions were made, and apologies noted.

Paul Featonby had stepped down as Chair after the previous meeting, and the Group was awaiting confirmation of the potential new Chair. Alison Charles chaired the meeting.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting**Minutes**

The minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting.

Actions

CHEAG141 – there was an item on the agenda, to follow up the item at the previous meeting. This action was closed.

CHEAG144 – dates were put together for the next year and circulated with the minutes.

GV
CHEAG144

CHEAG146 – new members had been recruited for the College HE Advisory Group, and UCAS might ask the Group to help with recruitment in future. This action was closed.

CHEAG147 – outcomes from this action were on the agenda. This action was closed.

CHEAG149 – there were no legal implications relating to the 'I'm still looking flag' and self-releasing from a contract with a university. The Chair would ask the product owner if any additional issues had been raised, and would feed back to the Group. The action was left in progress.

CHEAG151 – each provider had a verification contact. If any of the Group members needed to know how to do update their contacts in web-link, instructions could be requested through UCAS' HEP Team or the relationship managers.

CHEAG153 – the Chair thanked members for their feedback, and encouraged them to continue feeding back using the tools on the website, or through UCAS' HEP Team and relationship managers. A Group member suggested the language work and/or research by applicant group (for example, 18 year olds and mature students) could be circulated to the wider sector, to understand the differences. The Group was asked to help when they could, for example, by sourcing student groups to gather their feedback.

A1/18/03 Data for colleges**Records of Prior Acceptance (RPAs)**

UCAS had produced data, looking at further education and higher education RPAs. The data indicated a spike of RPA activity at the end of the cycle, in part due to UCAS supporting providers to ensure all full-time undergraduate applicants were processed through UCAS. The RPA was available from November, but the data showed there was not significant use of them until May. RPAs were primarily used by mature students, or internally progressing college students.

UCAS activity for higher education (HE) in further education (FE)

The data showed 23,600 applicants placed through UCAS for higher education in further education in 2018, which was an increase on 2017. HE in FE accounted for 15% recruitment of older age groups, particularly those over 25 years old. For UK applicants, 33% were processed through RPAs, and a further 8.5% were placed direct to Clearing. For college HE, the activity was higher at the end of the cycle. Over a third of HE in FE applications were made after the 15 January deadline.

Data for colleges

Suzanne Campbell, Senior Insight Consultant, and Alice Bennett, Principal Data Consultant at UCAS, attended the meeting. UCAS wanted to produce a set of reports of key themes relevant for college HE. Questions were sent to the Group before the meeting.

UCAS wanted to explore four key areas: age, geography, subject areas, and reports. Once something appropriate was built, UCAS intended to roll it out quickly

Mature applicants were underrepresented in the data. Colleges had more variation in HE than in universities, and there were more mature students applying for colleges. Members agreed that a large proportion of their cohort was 19 or over.

A member said more information for the sector on college data would be useful. Subject developments were tracked over five years to plan curriculum development, and regional patterns tracked, as well as the national picture. A link into the progression reports would be useful. Providers internally had a sense of who they were competing with, but it could be difficult when, for example there were multiple colleges under one name. It was explained that multiple colleges or campuses under one umbrella could be split out over campus codes.

UCAS' Analysis and Insights Team might be looking for volunteers to take discussions ALL / AC on this forward. If the Group wanted to get involved or had any more feedback, they were asked to contact the Chair.

A1/18/04 Capitation fees update

Rob Edmondson, Strategy Manager, Kate Butland, Head of Strategy and Policy, and Ben Jordan, Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager from UCAS, attended the meeting.

For the 2020 cycle, the capitation fee would be £26.45 per placed applicant, with a minimum of £3,000. The pricing models were assessed in October 2018, and taken to advisory groups for their feedback on the suggested pricing models. UCAS had considered the impact the pricing would have on customers, and the strategy had been approved by the UCAS Board.

The capitation fee of £26.45 per placed applicant was a 2.7% increase, and mirrored the rate of inflation. The minimum fee jump was a larger increase of 17%, and UCAS acknowledged this was significant. In 2019, a value for money workstream was going to share how this would be addressed with customers. UCAS was in the process of developing a corporate strategy for 2020 – 2025, which included the potential for alternative and more flexible pricing models.

A member asked if the £3,000 fee was across all providers, and it was confirmed that this was the case. A concern was expressed about being geographically close to a large university, which would have a financial advantage over colleges with small cohorts. UCAS wanted to seek views from customers about the value for money, to identify how different types of providers used its services. UCAS wanted to include members of the Group, and the wider sector, in these discussions and was planning on taking the proposed strategy to the UCAS Board in December 2019, so the value for money work would probably close in September. It was likely that the pricing structure would change in response to changes in sector.

Arti Saraswat, Senior Policy Manager, Higher Education AoC, offered to invite the team to the next higher education policy meeting, as a sounding board for them to hear from a range of colleges. A member suggested asking some questions aimed at top-level college staff, as well as looking at other services – financial value and other types of value.

Rob Edmondson, UCAS' Strategy Manager, would be leading the Group – and would attend the next meeting of the College HE Advisory Group on 28 June 2019 to understand what UCAS could offer to different types of providers.

AC / AS
CHEAG160
DG / AC
CHEAG161

The Group was pleased that UCAS was considering the pricing models based on the use of services, as colleges operated differently to universities.

A1/18/05 Information and advice

Finlay Willicott, Product Owner, UCAS, showed the Group historical images of the UCAS website, highlighting the information and advice which had been added.

The development of UCAS' information and advice aimed to provide relevant web content for applicants and pre-applicants, allowing them to research more effectively and explore their choices. For providers, it would open early engagement opportunities to the right audience, and applicants would be better informed.

The Group was given a demonstration of the dashboard. Users selected the level of study – for example, undergraduate or postgraduate, where they wanted to live, and where they wanted to study, and after a few initial details were gathered, a dashboard would be created.

On the dashboard, the user could explore and favourite options, link to UCAS events, and use the Tariff calculator (which was being reviewed to be more user-friendly). The dashboard also included a map, and dates and deadlines.

The 'explore' tool allowed users to research subjects, read subject guides, and browse higher education providers. When browsing providers, users could apply filters for location, or type of provider. Data would be pulled from Unistats on to the dashboard, to display the average graduate salary, and student satisfaction rating.

The favourites page would highlight the choices the user had shortlisted, and they could create a top five, which could feed directly into Apply. Widgets linked the user to a personal statement builder, and Apply. The dashboard also included a notepad, FAQs, and apprenticeships opportunities, which offered national vacancy information. Users would be able to track their use of the dashboard, and a to-do list would show how much they had completed.

UCAS was engaging with advisory groups and stakeholders throughout the project. A private pilot was underway, and the product was intended for a soft launch in April 2019, with full launch in September 2019.

A member noted that the number of BTEC qualifications was confusing for students, so guidance around this would be needed. It was suggested that UCAS tailored the qualifications appearing on the Tariff calculator, based on the student's age. UCAS supported the idea, and also wanted to use links to schools to only display qualifications offered by the applicant's centre.

Initial developments did not include wording based on different cohorts, but wording tailored to the user was being factored into further iterations of the

dashboard. The Group stressed that colleges had many mature students, and a more tailored view would be better. A member noted the term 'mature' caused problems, and for data reasons, colleges classed adult or mature students as 19+ . A suggestion was made that UCAS should look at the college websites to research language and presentation styles.

The group was given a demonstration of a tool which was being developed to support pre-applicants. The aim was to open up opportunities to them, and show where their qualifications could lead. A user could add their qualifications, and see what courses others with the same qualifications had studied. This could also be done in reverse – users could enter what they wanted to study, and the qualifications people took to access that course would be displayed. UCAS intended to develop a career explorer and course finder, based on applicant interests.

The link to the I&A dashboard was sent to the Group during the meeting, and slides were sent with the minutes. GV
CHEAG162

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Working groups

The Waiting List Working Group was looking for college members to join. Waiting lists were not generally used for college higher education courses, but this could happen in future. Anyone interested should contact the Chair. ALL
CHEAG163

UCAS' Annual Admissions Conference

The Group was encouraged to attend the two-day event, which included operational sessions and plenaries, development sessions for new staff, and a variety of breakouts. Feedback was welcomed about what would make it easier for colleges to attend.

If any members of the Group held UCAS exhibitions or sent students to them, Duncan Saunders, Business Analyst, UCAS, would be interested to hear from them. ADS
brief would be sent with the minutes. CHEAG164

Dates of the next meetings

The dates of the next two meetings were confirmed as Thursday 27 June and Thursday 28 November 2019. Kristine Murray from Blackpool and the Fylde College, and Claire Barton from Heart of Worcestershire College, offered to host future meetings.

Minutes

UCUG/19/M1

UCAS Conservatoires User Group meeting

held on Tuesday 7 May 2019 at Birmingham City University, Millenium Point.

Chair:	Suzanne Daly	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Present:	Alice Smitton Claire Jones Dean Moody Dominic Tulett Edward Kemp-Luck Karen Edmunds Kam Sahota Luise Moggridge Mark Beards Nicola Peacock Susan Lee-Kidd	Leeds College of Music Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance Birmingham City University Royal Central School of Speech and Drama Royal Academy of Music Birmingham City University Birmingham City University Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama Royal Northern College of Music Royal College of Music Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Apologies:	Ian Warren Marchia Abokie	London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
UCAS in attendance:	Andy Irving Callum Mitchell Claire Howson Deniz Gosai Finlay Willicott Janet Warne Lauren Cooper Louise Cyprien Suzanne Campbell Phil Marshman	Head of Technology Transition (via Skype) System Accountant (via Skype for agenda item only) Senior Product Owner (via Skype for agenda item only) Provider Engagement Coordinator Product Executive (for agenda item only) Relationship Manager Product Manager (morning only) Service Delivery Manager (Admissions) Senior Insight Consultant Strategic Product Manager

A1/19/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and the apologies were noted. Each member of the Group introduced themselves.

Minutes and action log from previous meeting

An amendment to the minutes was noted. Paragraph two on page six stated that there would not be any additional costs for applicants when adding additional choices. It was asked for this to be confirmed and then for the minutes to be amended. LC CUG149

The actions from the log were discussed.

CUG119 – A workshop with students would be held at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Dates were being discussed.

CUG133 – It was noted that a list of ‘go live’ requirements for AMS would not be available, but conservatoires would work closely with UCAS to ensure that all requirements would be captured by the development team. A planning session for UCAS staff involved in UCAS Conservatoires scheme development had been scheduled for the end of May 2019, and, over the next few months, webinars would be held to confirm requirements with conservatoire staff. This action was closed.

CUG134 – It was confirmed that conservatoires can ask their own questions on AMS, as and when they required. This action was closed. However, it was noted that conservatoires had previously requested that applicant choices should be raised to seven, as some applicants applied to multiple courses at the same provider. LC CUG150

CUG136 – The website team at UCAS was currently looking at the wording on their website. Any changes would be forwarded to the Group first for them to agree, before uploading to the UCAS website. This action remained in progress.

CUG137 – The technical briefing document was sent out on Friday 3 May 2019 and would be live for 2020. It was agreed, however, that this would be revisited when conservatoires had new specialisms, or when new members joined the scheme. This action was closed.

CUG138 – The User Experience (UX) Team had been looking at renaming the journey to make it clearer to applicants. It was agreed that the Group would look at the wording before any amendments were finalised. This action remained in progress.

CUG143 and CUG144 – After a discussion, it was agreed that fee waivers would be reviewed after the APP deadline. This action remained in progress.

CUG147 – Notes from auditions could be included in the adviser portal and would be optional for conservatoires to complete. This action was closed.

Actions 135, 139, 140, 141, 142 and 148 were discussed during the meeting, and were closed.

A1/19/02 2019 cycle operational update

The cycle had been progressing well, with no real concerns. However, an issue did arise for applicants applying for part-time courses. When the issue was raised a fix took place, which then interrupted other systems. This had since been fixed and had arisen due to human error. It was confirmed, that when carrying out future fixes, further and more comprehensive test scenarios would take place so that such issues should not arise again. Although the Group was happy with the explanation, they did note that, at the time, they were unhappy with the way the situation was handled, and the lack of communication afterwards.

Conservatoires could close a course, however it was noted that this did not actually prevent an applicant from still applying. It was confirmed that this was already included in the list of developments for AMS.

It was reported that fee waivers were overridden when an audition outcome was added. It had always been the case that conservatoires had to update each audition with a fee waiver, however, the Service Development Manager for Admissions agreed to look into whether this could be done a different way.

LC CUG151

A1/19/03 Payments for new AMS

Claire Howson, Senior Product Owner, joined the meeting by Skype. A presentation was shared with the Group. A copy was sent immediately after the meeting.

The points noted under the section 'payments in AMS' were discussed in detail.

- UCAS application fee must be paid on submission

The Group noted that international applicants did not pay on submission, and often paid by bank transfer. It was confirmed that offline payments would automatically update in the AMS system. Currently, payments were applied the next day, providing all information was available. On deadline dates finance raised payments offline. It was also confirmed that applicants could not hit 'submit' until their bank transfer had been successful, and UCAS would email the applicant informing them this.

- Assessment fees may be paid on or post submission.

The Group was happy with this suggestion.

- No 'locking' if the assessment fee is unpaid.

A discussion was had about whether conservatoires could be allowed to make decisions on applicants who had not yet paid their assessment fees. The Group was keen to retain this feature of the legacy system which prevented them moving the application from audition pending to guaranteed/reserve if the assessment fee was not paid. The Group discussed having a restricted set of decisions available if the assessment fee was not paid e.g. withdraw with the reason 'non payment'. It was also discussed that UCAS could show the status of the assessment fee (paid/unpaid/waived) in the application list (with a filter) and on the application/decision screens.

- Assessment fee status indicator would be available.

The Group agreed with this idea.

- UCAS would charge the assessment fee applicable at the point of submission

It was the current plan that UCAS would only charge the assessment fee at the point of submission, and if the course/assessment location changed, it would be the responsibility of the conservatoire to cover the difference in cost. The Group noted that it was often the applicant who requested a change to the audition location, and it could be problematic for conservatoires when retrieving the cost. There was a detailed discussion on this, and the Group concluded that this would be very risky, especially as word could get out with applicants. It was agreed that further discussions on this would take place, and in the first instance, UCAS would discuss it in detail with The Royal Academy of Music.

CH CUG152

- Cooling off periods, refund, and waivers would still be handled by UCAS.

The Group was happy with this.

It was also noted that the flexible dates in the calendar which conservatoires required were being discussed at UCAS. Following the meeting, it was confirmed that all advisory dates would be removed, the date for applicants to reply to offers where last decision received by 7 January would always be the last day in January, and decline by default should run on a Saturday if that was the day they fell on.

A presentation on conservatoire payments, by UCAS' Strategic Product Manager, was shared with the Group, and a copy was sent after the meeting. The presentation raised many concerns, such as, would applicants need to add their details each time, and how would cooling off, refunds, and waivers be managed? There was also concerns regarding applicants paying for one audition but attending others. As it was too late for

PM
CUG153

the November 2019 go-live date, it was agreed that further discussions would take place before a decision was made.

A1/19/04 Readiness for AMS

Andy Irving, Head of Technology Transition, presented an AMS presentation via Skype to the Group. A copy was sent out immediately after the meeting.

It was confirmed that uploading documents included supporting audio files, and the amount of memory available would be increased. Next phase included capturing what conservatoires required.

The UCAS Undergraduate scheme did not pay and submit until September, and the Group was asked whether they would align with this date. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that conservatoires would open pay and submit in May, however, applications may not be considered until October.

The Group was asked whether any members would be interested in coming on board for the coming cycle for use of APIs, with the objective of supporting UCAS with the technical transition. The Group was keen on this idea if there were plans for data backup, and was asked to contact UCAS directly for more information at a.irving@ucas.ac.uk.

Group
CUG154

A1/19/05 Reporting for UCAS Conservatoires scheme

A presentation on data reporting was shared with the Group. A copy was sent to the Group after the meeting.

The questions and discussions points on slide nine were discussed.

It was noted that data, especially when free, was always useful, however, further discussion of what might be useful would be more suitable for recruitment and marketing teams. Conservatoires also had limited funds for data, and a CUK fee for data could be an option. A decliner survey sent out by UCAS would be useful.

It was confirmed that UCAS would wait until the cycle closed to begin sharing data. Ideas of what data conservatoires would like was discussed.

Janet Warne, Conservatoires Relationship Manger, confirmed she was still chasing the transparency data which historically had never been provided for the conservatoire scheme, but was for the UCAS Undergraduate scheme in EXACT PERS data. It was agreed that EXACT PERS data for the 2018 cycle onwards would be useful. It was noted that this was an OfS requirement.

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CUG155

UCAS also agreed to send the Group information on modernised contextualised data for 2020. The Group confirmed they would like this data in October when the cycle opened.

A1/19/06 Information and advice tool and Career Explorer

A presentation on the information and advice tool was shared with the Group, and a copy was sent after the meeting. A demonstration on the beta I&A dashboard and the Explore Options dashboard was also shown to the Group. It was noted that currently the title read 'uni and colleges', and it was asked whether the word 'conservatoires' would also be included in the title, or change it to 'institution'. It was also noted that applicants to conservatoires tended to look at specific conservatoires, then the course, which was quite different to the way applicants might search for undergraduate main scheme courses. It was confirmed that provider information would be personalised for providers who did not use Tariff points. This could also include those who held auditions.

FW
CUG156

The Group agreed this tool would be useful for applicants who did not know about conservatoires.

It was confirmed that eventually, information collected in the dashboard would help pre-populate the application form.

The Group raised the question about how the dashboard would work for international applicants. An initial question asked where the applicant lived, which would then help personalise the information.

In, for example, a search for music, it was questioned why applicants had to select that they were interested in conservatoires – because they might not know to do this – when, in fact, conservatoire courses should be listed alongside those in the main scheme. It was confirmed that all courses would be shown, however, the information and advice provided would only be tailored to conservatoires if the applicant selected this.

It was also confirmed that, if applicants selected conservatoires, they could list six favourites (with a request to increase this to seven), but on the main undergraduate scheme they could only have five favourites.

It was hoped that the I&A dashboard and Explore dashboard would go live by end of June 2019.

Action

A piece of work was currently being undertaken to align the I&A dashboard and search, as the information was similar between the two, and so would need to work together.

FW
CUG157

The Group was asked to contact Finlay Willicott, by email at f.willicott@ucas.ac.uk, if they knew of any students who would be interested in helping UCAS test out ideas. The Group suggested a specialist music school should be contacted.

A1/19/07 AMS dates and deadlines

An update on AMS dates and deadlines was provided.

- 1 October would remain as the music equal consideration deadline.
- May – applicants could start and complete application during May. Notifications from UCAS would be sent when actions or decisions were required. It was requested by the Group that UCAS would send a notification stating that qualifications and education weren't compulsory. It was also requested that in the acknowledgment email a line would be included to say that applicant might not hear from the conservatoire until the equal consideration deadline had passed. The first contact from a conservatoire was usually informing the applicant about their audition date.
- UCAS would ensure all fields in the lockdown of data fields in the collection tool would align.
- It was on the backlog to have PDF copies of applications within the user interface. Bulk download would also be beneficial and available.
- Terminology – this would be covered by UCAS. Especially the word 'deadline.' The Group discussed alternative words, and agreed to keep the word deadline, but to make clear the context around it. It was also asked whether a flag could be added which indicated places on the courses were still available. LC CUG158
- It was noted that, due to fitting in auditions, conservatoires sometimes struggled to complete auditions and make decisions before the UCAS reject by default date. UCAS was discussing the possibility that within AMS an audition/interview could delay the rejection by default. LC CUG159
- The Business Rules and Admissions Principles (BRAP) Working Group had looked at all the dates to decide whether dates were still fit for purpose for the undergraduate scheme. The Conservatoire User Group had already looked at conservatoires application cycle dates and removed unnecessary dates.
- It was agreed that UCAS would develop a detailed roadmap showing the agreed requirements for conservatoire AMS, and to share it with the Group by June 2019. PM
CUG160

A1/19/08 Any other business and close

Security marking: CONFIDENTIAL

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Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: ~~28 May 2019~~ 21 May 2019

	Action
<p>The International Advisory Group has asked whether a member of the Conservatoire User Group would be willing to attend their meetings, to feed issues, concerns and requirements of international conservatoire customers for UCAS to consider. A copy of the Group's Terms of Reference was sent after the meeting, and the Group was asked to contact Mark Wilson at m.wilson@ucas.ac.uk if they were interested in attending.</p>	<p>Group CUG161</p>
<p>The Student Advisory Group was also looking for a conservatoire student to join their Group. The Terms of Reference for this Group was also sent out after the meeting, and the Group was asked to contact Courteney Sheppard at c.sheppard@ucas.ac.uk if they knew of anyone who could be interested.</p>	<p>Group CUG162</p>
<p>Suzanne Daly had come to the end of her time position as Chair of this group. Suzanne was thanked for her commitment to the role over the years. Claire Jones, Trinity Laban Conservatoires of Music and Dance, was confirmed as the new Chair.</p>	
<p>A copy of the 'AMS getting ready' form was handed out, and UCAS confirmed that it would send a copy of this out with the minutes. Members of the Group were asked to use this template to start discussions within each conservatoire on preparations for new AMS. The Relationship Manager was also thanked for getting the test data together for the Group.</p>	
<p>The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 17 October 2019 at the Northern College of Music.</p>	

Minutes

CSG/19/M1

Change Steering Group meeting

held on Thursday 28 February 2019 at Somerset House, London

Chair:	Steve Wiggins	Chair, ARC APG
Present:	Kim Eccleston Lisa Bowen Michelle Magee Richard Emborg Paul Teulon Suzanne Daly Della Brooker Fiona Johnston Louise Evans Peter Derrick Andy Frampton	Chair, Undergraduate Advisory Group Chair, Teacher Training Advisory Group Chair, Postgraduate Advisory Group Secretary, ARC APG Deputy Chair, ARC APG Chair, Conservatoires User Group UCAS, Head of Change Delivery UCAS, Director of Operations UCAS, Head of Adviser and Provider Experience UCAS, Head of Service Delivery, Admissions UCAS, Senior Strategic Relationship Development Manager
Apologies:	Helen Thorne	UCAS, Director of External Relations

Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and the apologies were noted.

Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

CSG062 – Peter Derrick had updated the document and it was included on the agenda for discussion.

CSG063 – Changes to the Department for Education’s (DfE) approach to teacher training meant that a call – as previously proposed, with a view to creating a pre-announcement response to the DfE – was no longer required. However, it was agreed that a call should still take place between the identified groups, to discuss the impact of the DfE’s announcement. Action to remain open.

CSG064 – The Chair had spoken to Fiona Johnston about issues with feedback, and Fiona Johnston reported that she had addressed the individual item that caused the original concerns. The Chair raised a wider concern about ensuring feedback from the Change Steering Group (CSG) is acted on effectively. Action to remain open, and UCAS to seek opportunities to ensure the feedback loop with CSG was effective.

CSG065 – Included on the agenda. Action closed.

CSG066 – Clearing Working Group reconvened. Action closed.

CSG067 – Scheduling had been improved, with better guidance on content. Action closed.

CSG068 – Closed.

CSG069 – Closed.

Update from UCAS Executive

- Publishing of unconditional offer data

UCAS updated the Group on the feedback and lessons learned from the publication of unconditional offer data. UCAS considered the overall publication process went well, and had identified a number of individual successes, including the engagement process with the

sector to review and feedback on draft data reports, and the positive changes to the releases that were subsequently made. UCAS also provided anonymised data reports to help providers understand their position in the sector, and create appropriate contextualised statements. The Relationship Management Team followed up proactively with the providers who had made the largest number of unconditional offers, to ensure they were engaged.

UCAS encountered some technical issues which delayed the release of the supporting CSV files, which led to some negative press feedback. Some providers also received inconsistent messages from UCAS colleagues, due to a lack of a centralised process for responding to all provider enquiries.

Both these areas of feedback had been acted on, with new processes identified to avoid future recurrence. The Chair was complimentary of UCAS' approach, the opportunities for the sector to engage with, and to understand their position in the sector. The Group fed back it would be useful to identify if UCAS can provide further support to advisers in collating the unconditional offer statements, or providing a central I&A resource for unconditional offer information.

ACTION. CSG070

- Pricing

UCAS advised that, following the discussion on pricing at the previous CSG meeting, the small increases to capitation and application fees for the 2020 cycle had been approved by the UCAS Board, and communicated to the sector. It was confirmed that the rationale behind the increases was to allow UCAS to continue its development of new products and services. In tandem, UCAS was also identifying efficiencies within the business, including digital channel shifts, and letting out part of the building. The Group asked whether consideration had been given to removing the single choice application fee. It was confirmed this had been considered, as the cost to serve a single choice applicant was on a par with a multiple-choice application, and this would be looked at in future pricing reviews.

- Information and advice project

The Group was provided with the background and progress so far in developing UCAS' new I&A solution. Most of the Group had already engaged through webinars and presentations at ARC APG on the project, and were positive about the look and feel. There were some concerns over the detail of the grade profiles, as they were not yet available for testing. The Chair of the Conservatoires User Group identified that conservatoires had not yet been included, and were interested in getting involved.

ACTION CSG071

- Corporate strategy: 2020 – 2025

UCAS' Director of Operations updated the Group on the early discussions that are underway to review the corporate strategy for 2020 – 2025. Initial planning discussions had taken place at UCAS, and relevant advisory groups would have an opportunity to contribute to shaping the strategy in due course.

Looking forward:

- Course switching

UCAS updated the Group on recent and upcoming developments to support applicants who were considering course switching, including an update to the search tool which would allow applicants to filter by point of entry, and developments in the collection tool, which would allow providers to add point of entry specific entry requirements. Discussions would continue at UCAS, around features that could be developed in the application management service (AMS) to provide further support for applicants wishing to switch. The Group confirmed these developments were valuable in the current recruitment climate, especially with the uncertainty over Brexit.

- Brexit

It was confirmed UCAS was thoroughly preparing for all outcomes of Brexit. UCAS' main focus was providing timely and accurate I&A to current and future applicants who may have concerns over Brexit. UCAS was currently working with the SLC and the DfE, among other stakeholders, to identify if there were standard lines to give applicants.

- Teacher training

Since the previous CSG meeting, the DfE strategy for the future of postgraduate teacher training had been released, and UCAS had committed to the short-term support of the UCAS Teacher Training scheme, ahead of the future transition of the service to the DfE. UCAS was currently reviewing its strategy for teacher training in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and accepted concerns raised by the Group about the potential confusion for applicants who may be applying for courses across the devolved administrations, and recognised the need for strong I&A. The Chair also raised a concern around messaging for undergraduate teacher training courses, and the requirement for strong I&A for this. The Head of Service Delivery for Admissions confirmed UCAS was working collaboratively with the DfE to support the transition to the DfE's 'gather' tool, to avoid potential provider resource duplication.

Update on the fraud and verification review

UCAS updated the Group on the fraud and verification (F&V) review that is ongoing, following the Freedom of Information (FOI) request received in 2017, about the disproportionate flagging of BME applicants. The first part of the review had been completed, and some changes implemented. UCAS was now working with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to review the future scope of the service. It was shared with the Group that one of the remaining questions was about the risk appetite of the sector, with regard to the cancellation of applications, with a range of options available in future iterations of the service, such as, if and when UCAS should cancel an application. The Group had a healthy debate about the challenges of dealing with potentially fraudulent applications, and the value of the F&V functionality in the shared service. The Group concluded that the sector held a mixed view on UCAS' position on the cancellation of applications, and recommended UCAS identified a balance between offering the value of a shared service in F&V, vs. provider autonomy. The Deputy Chair of ARC APG recommended

that UCAS look at how other shared admissions services deliver F&V services. The Group identified that quicker turnaround times were impacting on the value of the F&V service, as often, offers had been made before any flags were raised. UCAS confirmed developments to the new AMS would remove the current lag-time between an application being passed to a provider, and a F&V flag being added. The Group raised the challenge of fraudulent or dishonest activity from agents, and how UCAS would monitor this. It was confirmed the new agent and adviser portals had terms of service included as part of the sign-up process, and any advisers who did not adhere to these risked having their access removed.

Advisory groups Chairs' updates

The Chairs of the advisory groups provided an update on the latest discussions in their groups:

UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group: The Group met in November, at which point they were still waiting for a decision on the future of postgraduate teacher training from the DfE. Following this decision, the next meeting of the Group was scheduled for March, where it would be discussing the next steps for UCAS. Those members of the Group whose term of office was due to end had this extended by 12 months, to cover the transition period.

UCAS Postgraduate Advisory Group (PAG): The Group met the previous day and enjoyed a healthy discussion on a number of topics. Main areas of concern were the future potential introduction of an application fee for the UCAS Postgraduate scheme. The Group was pleased to hear UCAS had no immediate plans to introduce a fee, and identified it would need an 18-month lead in to consider this. The Group also discussed the challenges around former ADAR, SWAS and NMAS courses, such as the MA Social Work operating in the UCAS Undergraduate scheme. CSG members discussed the challenges this posed to applicants, but also identified they often applied for courses that spanned both schemes in these subject areas. It was agreed the Group would schedule a discussion at a future meeting to consider potential developments in this area that could be supported by the AMS.

ACTION CSG072. PAG members also expressed some confusion about the proposed postgraduate tracker and current postgraduate insight products operating alongside each other, with some concern about duplication. UCAS confirmed there was a distinct difference between the purpose and functionality of the two products, but accepted that UCAS should be clearer in the vision for each of these, and how providers that use the UCAS Postgraduate AMS could use both products beneficially. PAG members had also discussed the recent developments to the business rules and admissions principles, and were keen to embed these in the scheme as soon as possible.

Conservatoires Advisory Group: The Group last met in November, and there was significant discussion about the cost of application to the scheme, including the UCAS application fee, audition fees, and the travel costs associated. The current Chair of the Conservatoires User Group confirmed her term of office had come to an end, and spoke at the recent Conservatoires Academic Administrators Group meeting to seek a new Chair.

Undergraduate Advisory Group: The previous meeting earlier in the month had discussed a number of items included on the CSG agenda. There was a focus in the UAG meeting on the I&A project, and a desire to reduce the amount of self-declared information from applicants, where possible.

UCAS' Head of Service Delivery for Admissions provided an update on the current working groups:

Clearing Working Group: The Group would be meeting the following day to discuss UCAS' adaptation of the original proposals, to make sure they were still fit for purpose. UCAS would be articulating this through a workshop session at the Admissions Conference.

Variable Start Dates Working Group: This Group is ongoing and working towards a new set of recommendations for the AMS.

Business Rules and Admissions Principles Working Group: UCAS confirmed it was currently working through the recommendations for implementation. A round-table session on waiting lists was being organised, and there was an ongoing impact assessment on process change, the current scheme inclusion and exclusions, bypassing, and sanctions. These would be covered in further detail at the Admissions Conference. It was confirmed that the recommendation to confirm the roles of the primary and UCAS correspondents was complete and now available on ucas.com.

Working Group and efficiencies log

UCAS talked the Group through an updated version of the efficiencies log. A number of items had already been completed, and a significant number would be resolved at the launch of the AMS in 2020. The recommendations from the UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group were currently on hold, as UCAS developed its future teacher training strategy. UCAS discussed each of the items currently on hold – some were potential developments post-AMS launch, while others were on hold due to external or policy influences. The Group agreed item DAG12 would be referred back to PAG to identify if this requirement was still valid, and UCAS confirmed item UAG7 would be reviewed again by the collection tool development team. The Chair requested that the efficiency list be updated and re-circulated with an original planned delivery date and an expected delivery date for each item, so the Group could effectively monitor progress and that delivery was on track.

ACTION CSG 073

AMS programme plan, including launch of the agent and adviser portals, tracker and AMS.

UCAS colleagues talked the Group through the launch of the agent and adviser portals, which went live on 14 February 2019 for UCAS Postgraduate. Over 700 agents had been onboarded so far, with the second stage of development underway shortly, to develop functionality for the UCAS Undergraduate AMS. The Chair of the Postgraduate Advisory Group requested the PAG were given some data on the number of applications submitted via the agent and adviser portals.

ACTION CSG074

UCAS advised the Group that the adviser portal was due to go live on 19 March 2019, following an extensive engagement campaign with advisers, the introduction of a test and

training environment, and a series of face-to-face roadshows. It was said that if members of the Group wanted to see a demonstration, this could be arranged by webinar, on request.

Work on the Tracker tool was ongoing, ahead of the launch in October 2019. Further information about the tool would be shared with the sector, as the development work continued.

UCAS confirmed, for the current programme increment, the AMS delivery focus was on online payment services, the development of a single sign-on module, and the introduction of multi-factor authentication as an added security level.

UCAS also confirmed the next programme increment would begin in April, and would include work on the qualification upload process, developments for Awarding Body Linkage (ABL), the embargo process, and the start of work to support the future of Clearing in AMS.

The Group raised concerns about the readiness of software vendors to develop and release updates to support UCAS Undergraduate AMS, and the ability of providers to be able to take these releases in their internal development schedules. UCAS advised extensive engagement was ongoing with the vendors, and it would be plotting individual provider and vendor readiness for AMS, to make sure developments and messages supported this. It was suggested it would be useful for the Group to hear first-hand from a vendor about their work with UCAS and readiness for AMS, at a future meeting.

ACTION CSG075

Any other business

UCAS' Head of Adviser and Provider Experience raised that the CEO, Clare Marchant, was keen for UCAS to be working with senior leaders in the sector to understand their strategic views, looking towards 2025. The Group supported this idea, and advocated the creation of an extended group of senior critical friends, which utilised the current CSG members alongside those not represented on the Group, such as alternative providers and representatives from the devolved administrations.

Minutes

DG/19/M1

The Data Group meeting

held on Friday 5 April 2019 at University of Dundee

Chair:	Daniel Farrell	University of St Andrews
Present:	Alex Ingold	The London School of Economics and Political Science
	Amy Butterworth	University of Bristol
	Paul Ashby	University of Birmingham
	Wendy Webster	University of Dundee
Apologies:	Caroline Low	HESPA
	Carolyn Charlton	Keele University
	Jo Hamilton	University of Exeter
	Judith Davison	University of Huddersfield
	Lisa Machin	Nottingham Trent University
	Louise Hussain	University of Manchester
	Richard Bartlett	University of Cambridge
	Steve Walsh	Aberystwyth University
UCAS in attendance:	Georgina Venman	Provider Engagement Coordinator
	Peter Derrick	Head of Service Delivery (Operations)
	Sarah Barr Miller	Head of Insight Sales
UCAS in attendance via Skype:	Finlay Willicott	Product Executive
	Fraser Nicoll	Service Lead (Information and Advice)
	Helen Puerta-Terron	Product Owner

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting, and the apologies were noted.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

The continuous improvement strategy for the collection tool was being worked on. UCAS wanted to understand what users wanted from this tool. The collection tool was being moved out of the programme increment planning used in the SAFE agile methodology for the development of AMS. Instead, continuous improvements would be worked on in accordance to the developing strategy and sprint releases. There was a challenge when looking at data standard and completion rates in the collection tool. UCAS was looking at moving from reminding providers what to do each year, to two-way reporting in the hope to drive up completion rates. At the next meeting in June, Kate Westmacott, UCAS' Service Delivery Manager (Collection and Search) would join the group to discuss changes in the Collection Team, and a larger item on collect would be included. It was noted that a roadmap would be useful, and feedback was welcomed at any time. It was suggested by the Group that the sequencing of adding provider questions in the collection tool could require rework, as a course must be open and published before questions could be attached. This lead to some applicants potentially not being asked the provider question.

DG DG164

The Group was interested in how surveys were delivered by UCAS. It was confirmed UCAS distributed surveys at key milestones throughout the cycle – the plan would be circulated with the minutes. Surveys were another form of commercial income for UCAS Media, and could be delivered in partnership with commercial organisations, for example, a survey was delivered with Knight Frank about accommodation.

SMB
DG165**Action log**

DG120 – The list of schools from the Department for Education (DfE) was identified, but wasn't yet included in the reference data for the application management service (AMS), and would be circulated in due course. It was planned for the end of July, and the Group could be updated at the June meeting.

DG128 – The domicile breakdown would be included, moving forward, for other reports. The action was closed.

DG137 – Transparency data guidance could be found here:
www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/534d3e67-7e23-4a75-87c5-d6e987aad9f3/ofs2018_52.pdf

DG147 – UCAS couldn't finalise the proposals as Data Futures was changing. It was included on the agenda but would remain open.

DG152 – This would be delivered by the end of July 2019. The action remained open.

DG154 – Under investigation and remained open. Could be included in discussion at the next meeting.

DG155 – UCAS would not change how they worked with UniStats.

DG156 – This action remained open, and UCAS would follow up.

DG157 – This action was kept open so Group members could send questions.

DG158 – This action remained open for feedback.

DG159 – A webinar was delivered, and more would occur in between meetings. The Group would be kept informed, and the action remained open.

A1/18/03 Issues with Star J supply 2018, and support for Data Futures

Star J

There was an error in the Star J presentation. The Qualent 3 coding for International A levels, and some other qualifications, were incorrect. This was due to changes being noted, but not made, in the derivations in the Star J production. The values were re-ran through the test environments to make sure the changes were identified. It was re-ran through the live system and timestamps were updated. UCAS apologised that the error occurred, and the process of logging changes to values was reviewed. These errors should not occur in the future.

It was noted by the Group that the emails about Star J went to different addresses and weren't consistent. The Head of Service Delivery would follow this up with the Technology Relationship Manager. The data had disappeared before it could be tested –this was a decision made at UCAS to align data quickly, and in future it would be considered. There was a tight schedule to ensure all testing was done before Confirmation and Clearing. The test environment could be accessed through the xml-link, but not odbc-link. When users moved over to APIs, all activity could be viewed and tracked.

HESA Data Futures

Data Futures was delayed for a non-determined amount of time. HESA didn't want it to be delayed for more than a year. UCAS would continue to support the Data Futures work, and would supply Star J in the current format. It would be broken down to three items of work:

- Supporting Star J on legacy
- Supporting Data Futures on legacy
- Supporting APIs on the application management service

It was suggested that a webinar could be conducted for data future requirements.

PD DG166

UCAS was aware the current timings of Star J would not work for Data Futures. Currently it was handled by student information teams, and providers would appreciate getting them involved in the webinar. Members of the Group were concerned about when the changes would happen, and how their data inputs would have to change. It was asked whether providers would prefer only raw data instead of derivations. Previously there was a mixed response on this, and UCAS decided if some providers found it useful, they would continue to provide the support. Receiving data item by item was suggested. Parity for all applicants, undergraduate and postgraduate, should be provided in Data Futures.

A1/18/04 Discussion on data releases from UCAS, and their context

For a future meeting, Richard O'Kelly, UCAS' Head of Analytical Data, would join the Group to further discuss data releases.

DG DG167

Deadline data releases

There was a discussion on POLAR data, in particular POLAR 4, and why providers would move from POLAR 3 to 4. Paul Ashby, University of Birmingham, agreed to speak to UCAS regarding the inconsistencies in the end of cycle reporting. It was also agreed that GCSEs needed to be included in EXACT.

PA DG168

Transparency around data content

It was noted that the primary legislation described what transparency conditions had to be in place, which was difficult to work with. The transparency data document could be found here: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/534d3e67-7e23-4a75-87c5-d6e987aad9f3/ofs2018_52.pdf

Members were invited to feedback to UCAS if they had any further comments.

Unconditional offer-making

UCAS' approach was that the best route forward was to publish unconditional offer data in collaboration with providers, to include context. A good practice document was produced, and, on reflection, it could have been pitched as a wider piece on offer-making. The next time UCAS worked on this, it would be broadened to cover other forms of offer-making.

Unconditional offer data used to be available through EXACT, but due to sensitivity, it was removed. It was viewable on provider level, but a more detailed view couldn't be requested through EXACT on unconditional or conditional unconditional offers. A member was concerned that this change wasn't communicated well enough, as they received Freedom of Information Act (FOIs) requests since the data released incorrectly referred to EXACT, not knowing they couldn't get this data through EXACT. UCAS' Head of Insight Sales confirmed that it was a challenge to identify channels to communicate changes, because providers didn't like to disclose what they used EXACT for. How to make it visible was difficult to determine, as it was hard to navigate the system unless you were already familiar with it. The Group suggested a change to the sign in on the website was needed, with a way of pushing it to users.

Some members of the Group received a PDF preview, which was slightly different to their own records. In the draft report, they contested some of the figures and interpretations, including the conversion rate, and had not received a response. Reporting at a national level, the more intricate provider level messages were lost. The Group agreed the context was important, and should be drawn out further.

A1/18/05 Information and advice, and data collection

Fraser Nicoll, Service Lead for Information and Advice, and Finlay Willicott, Product Executive, joined the meeting via Skype.

The Group was shown historical images of the UCAS website since 1998. Ucas.com had become crowded with information, and it could be difficult to find what was needed. UCAS wanted to create an easier way for applicants to collect personalised information through a dashboard. The focus was broadening the horizons of applicants, and help applicants make better-informed decisions.

The presentation would be circulated with the minutes. A webinar recording was available on ucas.com here:

GV DG169

www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas_information_advice_personalisation_search-mar-19.mp4

The dashboard was demonstrated to the Group. Initially, questions were asked of the user, to collect information:

- When did applicants want to study (2020, 2021, 2022 and after)?
- Level of study, with tick boxes for apprenticeships and conservatoires.
- Where applicants lived (country and region if within the UK), with the opportunity to add a postcode.
- What interests applicants had (including an opt-in for UCAS Media) related to subjects.

This information would generate their personalised dashboard, and a tutorial would introduce them to how it could be used. The dashboard was a visual experience with widgets. The dashboard included widgets for exploring course options, dates and deadlines, events and a tariff calculator. There was a notepad for users to enter additional information which was suggested by students and advisers. The 'got a question' widget was tailored to what information the user had entered. What the user entered in their course shortlist and personal statement builder could be fed directly into Apply. The apprenticeships, widget which was included to keep options open for applicants, was also shown to the Group.

Applicants could refer to a to-do list to aid their research and application.

It was confirmed all the content was previously on ucas.com, but was now in one place. There was an intention to improve subject guides and provision for Scotland on the website, down the line.

It was clarified that users would have to sign up with their first name, last name, email, and password. They would be asked to verify their email, then they would be pushed onto the onboarding questions. It was intended that applicants would only have to have a single account for UCAS services.

It was noted that UCAS intended to develop a mobile application for the information and advice product, and the first prototype was in development. This wasn't ready to be shared.

It was also asked if agents and advisers could use this on behalf of applicants, and how this would work. It was explained that the adviser functionality from the adviser portal could be linked, so advisers could see who was engaged with the tool. The same would be considered for international students and agents.

UCAS wanted to be transparent about any information collected in the tool, and the user could manage that information so they can alter their personalised dashboard, should they change their mind.

Bell review - Career Explorer

In response to the Bell Review, HESA, Jisc, UCAS, and Prospects joined together to collaborate on a new service – the career explorer.

There were scaled questions about the user's preferences, skills and interests. This would generate a profile with information about jobs that may be interesting to them. There would also be a degree explorer to help applicants choose a course that will help them reach a career. The user could then enter their A Levels to populate a list of providers that offered the degree with suitable entry requirements.

The data set would not be the same as the one in the offer rate calculator. It was at degree level, and the accuracy was being tested against results. A member said the problem before was it showed the user's similarity to others, but couldn't respond to pre-requisites. Contextual offers from providers were changing year-on-year, so by being based on historical data, could populate different results. Fraser clarified it was not a decision-making tool, but could be used in conjunction with other information and advice tools, like the new dashboard.

It was confirmed that the Scottish qualifications combined with A Levels issue was still being investigated.

Career explorer would be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

DG DG170

A1/18/06 Search and explore, the use of data to drive course searches

Helen Puerta-Terron, Product Owner, joined the meeting via Skype.

Search

Search by location would be embedded in the search tool by the end of April 2019. UCAS delivered a webinar about the changes. More webinars would be pre-recorded and shared to gather feedback from staff who work outside of admissions, for example, data staff.

Accelerated degrees would be integrated as a filter to pull through courses selected in the collection tool adhering to this requirement, for the academic year 2019 onwards.

Improvements were made to marketing of courses for franchise and college group locations. If TEF ratings differed, they wouldn't both be displayed. UCAS was looking to make changes to the course details pages, to allow franchises to brand certain courses.

New widening participation entry requirements for Scotland were included in the new features. Scottish providers could add a minimum entry requirement.

Entry requirements for entry points other than year one – some students transferred between providers and courses, so additional requirements could be added for different entry years.

Numeric scores for Cambridge English tests would be included.

ATAS messaging would appear on the course details page.

Search for 2020 courses would be available from 7 May, and the Apply link would go live on 21 May (submission would be available in September).

Key information data sets would be displayed, how this would work best on the course details page was being explored. UCAS was looking at taking off the widget and including static pieces of data on the page.

The course details page design would be updated.

It was confirmed that UCAS was going to link through to the Unistats pages, so the data wasn't without context.

Clearing adverts work would be picked up down the line.

In the course management tool, providers could enter information into a free text box titled 'entry requirements for advanced entry (i.e. into year two and beyond).' Potentially, qualification drop downs could be integrated, and it would be linked through to the application management service to prevent applicants from applying to the wrong entry year.

A member asked if research courses and subject areas that fell under ATAS could be generally flagged. It was explained how subjects were categorised against the ATAS flag was being worked on, and this would be investigated.

Scottish widening participation entry requirements weren't yet in the test environment.

HPT DG171

The default view on the search tool was grouped by provider from A – Z. Within the provider view, it was sorted by the relevancy of the search subject. If a location was added to the search tool, this would be considered. There were stop words, for example, university, which wouldn't be considered as relevant to the search. An option was available to view search results by course, which would display results based on the relevancy to the search name, then by provider name A – Z. Applicants and advisers fed back that they wanted to view courses by provider, which is why UCAS chose to group search by provider first.

The Chair asked if the functionality of synonyms had been lost, for example, divinity over theology. It was confirmed the functionality was still there, but it may need to be added to the collection tool. The synonym and stemming list would be circulated to the HPT DG172 Group.

Explore

UCAS was creating an explore tool with integrated subject guides to provide a high level of information. The user could use filters to narrow down the information. When looking at providers, the tool could push users to the individual providers websites directly, to make access to information easier. On the tool, the user would be able to see key information, including average graduate salary and student satisfaction rating (from Unistats) for providers. It was explained this would initially only be available for undergraduate courses, but would be developed for other schemes. A photo would be displayed on the card, and applicants could favourite options.

The Chair asked how frequently the team was picking up the Unistats statistics. It was confirmed that it was a live API, and the specific time would be confirmed.

FW DG173

It was asked how the tool would surface data for providers. This was still being worked out, regarding what can be included in the capitation fee or as part of a paid data package, how it would be presented and what the providers would want to see.

A1/18/07 Tracker

Application and Decision Tracker would not work on the new application management service being developed, so a new tracker tool was being developed.

The current service included free data, competitor picture, benchmarking, and weekly updates.

The new system would be a visual dashboard, with different ways to interact with the website. UCAS wanted to take this forward with single sign-on. Providers could set permissions to allow access on an individual basis for application management, course management, Tracker, etc. Through this, providers could link to the UCAS Media digital experience platform.

UCAS' Head of Insight Sales showed the Group screenshots of the standard home screen, and the enhanced version of the home screen. Tiles for reports would include a short description of what the report provided. It wasn't clear how the visuals, for example, graphs, could be implemented into documents. The intention to make it moveable. There would be a list of dimensions sent to the group. Statics would be able to be downloaded.

SBM
DG174

It was asked if there was data cleansing between collection and presentation of data. It was confirmed that there wasn't a process for this, but there would be standard UCAS disclosure controls applied.

UCAS wanted to achieve a cleaner look and feel, with greater graphical representation of data. Other features would include direct to Clearing reporting, and reporting at country level for your competitors. There would be more flexibility to build reports providers wished to see.

The functions wouldn't change (with the exceptions of small enhancements) but the experience would be improved. Once pricing was decided, it would be confirmed.

A1/18/08 Round table

It was asked if others were moving to Polar 4. UCAS had moved to Polar 4's data set. A member said Polar 4 was surprisingly different and didn't have a lot of overlap. Another member was moving to Polar 4 but needed to check with Tribal if they were able to facilitate.

Clearing

Self-release into Clearing would be included for this cycle. This would be monitored closely. It wouldn't be heavily advertised to applicants, but advisers and providers would be well-informed. Appropriate advice and guidance would be available, and steps were in place to prevent people self-releasing for the wrong reasons.

Pushed offers and the 'I'm still looking' flag would be included when the application management service launched.

RPA's would be replaced by Fasttrack, and webinars had been provided.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Inconsistencies

The Group highlighted that they hadn't received the codes for postgraduate, but they did for undergraduate in the xml-file. Instead, they received a translation – this would be taken forward for APIs. PD DG175

ABL release

A member said they were testing ABL and wasn't sure if receiving all the results was adhering to GDPR. UCAS had approved the process and would be happy to continue this, but the release would be reviewed. What providers did with the data was up to them, as long as it was in line with the sharing agreement.

HEP3 testing environment

A member had application ID and applicant ID, but they lost the application ID. It was confirmed that the application ID was now globally Unique Identifier – a non-humanly readable string value.

In HEP1 and HEP2, they set up courses separately and requested data for some courses. In HEP3, they couldn't differentiate between undergraduate and postgraduate data. UCAS would follow up availability of applicant test data in HEP3. It should be a mirror of PD DG176 the current collection tool.

Membership

The memberships list was circulated including the date a membership term ended. The Chair was concerned that a lot of experience in the Group would be lost by October 2019. He also said a broader range of roles would be an improvement.

Daniel Farrell, University of St Andrews, and Wendy Webster, University of Dundee, were thanked for their contributions to the Group.

The Chair received an expression of interest from a representative at University of Stirling. It was suggested that areas of specialism could be added to the matrix.

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 17 June 2019. It was suggested that the GV DG177 meeting could run from 10:30 until 14:30 on this occasion, and the Group was content with this.

Minutes

IAG/19/M1

International Advisory Group meeting

Held on Tuesday 5 February 2019 at UKCISA, London

Chair:	Enzo Raimo	University of Reading
Present:	Charley Robinson Dominic Scott Oliver Phillips Stephanie Harris Tessa Bell	BUILA UKCISA British Council Universities UK University of Edinburgh
Apologies:	Annie Brunt Cathy McEachern Tino Santonocito Victoria Anderson	Manchester Metropolitan University Queen's University Belfast University of Buckingham Durham University
No response:	Yinbo Yu	National Union of Students
UCAS in attendance:	Fraser Nicoll Georgina Venman Mark Wilson	Service Lead, Information and Advice (attending via Skype) Provider Engagement Coordinator Strategy Manager
Observer:	Julie Allen	UKCISA

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted. The Group introduced themselves, and new members were welcomed.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the last meeting.

IAG118 – UCAS put in a proposal for a panel session at IACAC – this action was closed.

IAG128 – UCAS included statistics in item six. This action was closed.

IAG129 – Feedback from the International Advisory Group (IAG) was communicated to UCAS' Qualifications Team, but a decision had not yet been made – this action remained in progress, and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

IAG131 – This action was being taken forward with the Professional Development Team, and was factored into the update of all international training materials. Unfortunately, due to restrictions on resources, and a current focus on supporting delivery of the adviser and agent portals, this work had been delayed, and a new date for completion was to be scheduled. This action remained open until it could be confirmed.

IAG135 – UCAS' position was 'in responsive mode'. UCAS was dealing with requests to support colleagues in this area, as the EU market changed. BUILA said investment was increasing in EU recruitment functions, and another member said the Scottish Government confirmed fees were protected for the incoming EU cohort, however, for future cohorts, fees may change. This action was closed.

IAG137 – UCAS decided it was the responsibility of the provider for implementing the QAA Code of Practice, but wanted to continue to help providers. This action was closed.

IAG138 – Student engagement was discussed, and it was brought to the Group's attention that there was a new Student Advisory Group at UCAS, which would include international student representatives. Other engagement opportunities would be picked up in item three, and this action was closed.

IAG141 – BUILA was in contact with UCAS about sessions at the Teachers' and Advisers' Conference. Responses to the questionnaire were good, but the number of respondents was small. This action was closed.

IAG144 – The idea of including a conservatoire on the membership was discussed. The Chair and UCAS suggested inviting a conservatoire to attend a meeting, but not as a permanent member. This action remained in progress.

A1/18/03 AG Membership, aims, and objectives for 2019

A paper was circulated prior to the meeting.

Mark Wilson, UCAS' Strategy Manager, wanted to explore how the IAG could help shape the way UCAS reached out, and inputted in to the development of services from key customers.

UCAS acknowledged that members of the Group had other work commitments and priorities, and appreciated any further ways they could reach out, for example, higher education provider (HEP) colleagues setting up student forums at their universities.

The Chair said there were two roles members of the IAG assumed. The first was to be engaged friends of UCAS, and it would not be unreasonable to expect members to contribute more in other ways as part of this relationship. The other role was in keeping UCAS on track with the needs and agenda of the international sector, and driving changes. The Chair said that at UCAS' larger events, the international agenda was a side activity, and the emphasis on this sector should be pushed.

A member of the Group agreed that a balance of providing honest opinions, and steering and assisting UCAS with outreach activities, was needed. It was noted that individual HEPs may struggle to lead on extra activities, and sourcing information from colleagues may be difficult. UCAS clarified they may be able to assist in other ways, or by using their network of international students.

A member of the Group questioned the balance of when issues should be fixed at source, and how much should be resolved using guidance. It was clarified that issues could be fed through on an individual basis, or through other groups, not just at the IAG. It was agreed that the paper IAG.19.01 would be sent to the Group with the minutes for more feedback, and the discussion would continue at the next meeting. It was suggested that a blank box should be placed next to each action on the paper, for members to fill in what they could offer in support of this work. As new members are appointed, expectations should be clarified.

GV IAG145

There were three vacancies on the Group: one for a Welsh HEP, one for an English HEP, and one for a Northern Irish HEP. A document containing the expressions of interest submitted would be sent to the Group, once confidentiality measures had been checked. The Group would have one to two weeks to share their thoughts on the list.

Concluding memberships

The Chair expressed formal thanks to Cathy McEachern from Queens University Belfast, GV / ALL and Dominic Scott from UKCISA, for their commitment and contributions to the Group IAG146 during their terms, and wished them well for the future.

A1/18/04 Engagement with the sector

A paper was circulated before the meeting (IAG.19.02).

UCAS clarified they wanted to explore how they could practically engage more with the international sector. Reasonable aims would have to be set, due to limited resources, but the focus was on how UCAS could benefit from regular sector input, outside of the IAG.

UCAS' relationship with BUILA was positive, and in 2018, international strategy development was assisted by comments from BUILA colleagues. UCAS said regular, structured engagement with BUILA would provide further opportunities. It was identified where UCAS would look to engage in the future, and broaden involvement in events, associations, and networks. The Group was asked if they were aware of other events or opportunities that UCAS could participate in, to maintain contacts and input proposals for sessions. UCAS stressed they wanted to stay involved and up-to-date in the international recruitment sector.

UCAS had an ongoing priority for broader engagement with stakeholders, which would carry on alongside other engagement activities, and was looking to structure international communications for colleagues in marketing and admissions roles. There were communications in place which went to primary contacts, and UCAS was putting together something that could be distributed to more relevant colleagues. BUILA offered to assist in the distribution of such a communication through its network.

A member said there was a weekly e-newsletter at UKCISA, which could be used to reach international sector colleagues, and Universities UK said they also had a similar facility. The International Higher Education Forum, on 27 March 2019, was suggested as a possible forum for UCAS to be involved in. The Chair commented that these would be useful forums, and would improve perspective. In the future, UCAS said they could submit proposals for appropriate sessions at these forums, but it was essential to become part of the information network to achieve this. It was highlighted there was a digital approach for overseas colleagues, and confirmed this would be developed further, but it was also essential to personally engage and network with countries. BUILA said they could use the director's forum to communicate feedback, and feed into MW the 2025 strategy. The Group approved of this suggestion. IAG147

UCAS was keen to engage with agents, and the International Teachers' and Advisers' Conference would be an ideal event to achieve this.

A member of the Group suggested other forums, for example, the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), and the Association of China and Mongolia International Schools (ACAMIS). UCAS clarified it was pulling back from student-facing engagement, but was getting involved with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC).

A1/18/05 Agent portal demonstration

A paper (IAG.19.03) was sent to the Group before the meeting. UCAS showed the Group the testing environment for the agent portal – the portal would go live on 14 February 2019 for agents, who could use it for UCAS Postgraduate applications.

It was explained that login details would be individual, to ensure UCAS was compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All agents would have individual login details. The dashboard would be personalised, and the agent would be allocated appropriate access (as an agent or adviser). It was explained the design of the portal would be minimalist, and a key contact would be allowed to switch off access, should one of their agents leave the agency. UCAS clarified the agency was set up as an individual organisation, no matter how many branches. After the first release, branch-specific access would be developed, so larger agencies could be tagged for different countries.

The Chair said about 40% of all international intake was through agents, and an agent portal would have been preferable first, as this was the larger UCAS customer group. However, UCAS decided to redevelop the Apply service with UCAS Postgraduate first, followed by UCAS Undergraduate, and this impacted work on the agent portal. This was done because UCAS Postgraduate was not as cycle-dependent as UCAS Undergraduate. The agent portal was built to integrate with new application software, the UCAS Postgraduate application management service (PG AMS).

A member of the Group asked if other countries had a similar system to UCAS, particularly Australia (a country historically agent-dependent). It was clarified that each Australian territory had its own admissions service. It was agreed this new agent portal was a step forward for UCAS, and the Group was happy the service was developed. The Chair expressed that, for UCAS to remain relevant to the international market, the agent portal was crucial. It was clarified that, between March and May 2020, UCAS would invite agencies to set up UCAS Undergraduate applications for the 2021 cycle.

The Chair asked the Group why UCAS Postgraduate wasn't as popular. From Goldsmiths' point of view, it could destabilise recruitment to add another layer to the process. Postgraduate applications were by provider, and implementing a UCAS process could be perceived as a barrier to some applicants. Members of the Group said they weren't aware PG AMS was an optional system that could be run alongside an in-house system, and this should be communicated more. It was confirmed that agents expressed a preference for one system to apply for postgraduate courses, and conversations were taking place with vendors and HEPs to try to create an application programming interface (API), to move between student record systems. It was suggested that International Education Services and BUILA should be joined in their discussions with agents, international advisers, and UCAS about this.

MW
IAG148

The Group was shown what the adviser portal offered (there were technical difficulties experienced when an attempt was made to demonstrate the features of the agent portal), and it was explained the agent portal served similar functionalities to the

adviser portal. The Group would be set up with access to the agent portal testing area, and UCAS would look into setting up a webinar. MW IAG149

UCAS went through the list of features and service elements on the paper provided. It was flagged that, for UCAS Postgraduate, there was a small number of providers UCAS could approach, to transfer agents they were linked with over to the new portal. Some providers had fed back they didn't want UCAS to interfere with who can apply to where, and didn't want their options to be limited by using this list of associated agents. It was noted that the number of agents involved in applications supported by a school or college, was growing in the international sector.

A member of the Group said that the ability for customers to receive email notifications of status changes was very important, and 'business critical' to many agents. The British Council provided online refresh packages for agents to increase accessibility to training resources, and these materials included information about UCAS. It was confirmed that agents couldn't become full members of UKCISA, but they could subscribe for access to everything except the discussion forum.

Providers told UCAS they didn't want agents to be gatekeepers, controlling the flow of information to applicants. UCAS wanted there to be an open flow of communication between HEPs and applicants, even if there was an agent involved. Students would be presented with the opportunity to create an account for the agent portal, and monitor or edit their application should they wish.

University representatives on the Group were asked to share the questions on the paper with other universities, and feed back to UCAS. GROUP IAG150

A1/18/06 UCAS admissions statistics 2018, and market update discussion

UCAS' Strategy Manager presented statistics to the Group, based on the 2018 end of cycle data.

Headlines showed overall applications were down, but placed student numbers (UCAS accepts) remained stable. UK application numbers fell by 1.9%, while EU numbers, and non-EU numbers, were up by 2.8% and 6.5% respectively. The non-EU applicant-to-accept conversion rate dipped slightly, to 51.9%, and UK and EU conversion rates improved.

There were 459,285 UK acceptances (0.8% down from 2017), 31,855 EU acceptances (an increase of 3.8% from 2017), and 42,220 non-EU acceptances (an increase of 4.9% from 2017). Non-EU acceptances increased from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, India, and the USA.

Key challenges for UK HEPs included student numbers. This year, the number of 18 year olds accepted into UK higher education declined by 1.3%. 18 year olds made up 45% of UCAS' placed undergraduate applicants. The population of 18 year olds was expected

to increase and stabilise in 2023, and international applicants were likely to fill the gap made by the decline.

China has been prioritised by UCAS as a country for increased engagement, due to the increase in accepted applicants from China. Hong Kong, India, the United Arab Emirates, and the USA were still strong markets.

The Group agreed that the statistics reflected what they experienced in the sector. A member of the Group said that the Nigerian market decrease could be to do with a reduction in Nigerian government funding. The Chair said there could also have been an increase in local provision.

Overall, there was a 50/50 split between independent applications, and those made via a centre, but for the USA, there was a much higher number of independent applicants. A challenge in the USA was how dispersed the centres were, and the understanding of UCAS and UK HEPs was admissions were sparse. A member of the Group said Common App (an international undergraduate admissions tool) was praised, but not 'common' enough, and UCAS could move into that space to create a standard service for worldwide applicants.

Application numbers and conversion rates increased for Spain, Poland, Romania, and Portugal. UCAS clarified a small number of active agents and advisers in these countries were well-informed and could have driven this growth. Overall, international conversion rates were stable at 60% for EU and 52% for non-EU.

GV IAG151

The statistics slides were sent with the minutes.

A1/18/07 Information and advice

Fraser Nicoll, UCAS' Service Lead (Information and Advice), joined the meeting via Skype. The team was working on how UCAS provided information and advice for students, and the Group was shown historical images of what ucas.com looked like since the 1980s. This work intended to solve the problem of having too many pages scattered across the website, by pulling the information together on a dashboard for applicants. A link was shared with the Group for a demonstration version of the information and advice tool, that enabled applicants to access information in one place, and was sent again with the minutes. There were over 1,200 pages of content on ucas.com, and applicants struggled to find what they needed.

GV IAG152

After entering a few details, a dashboard would be generated with options to explore and shortlist. The applicant could add their own qualifications, and international qualifications on the Tariff were intended to be added. There would also be additional elements included for international applicants.

Feedback from applicants said they wanted a way to narrow down a search for courses. In response, subject guides were included on the dashboard under the 'Explore' area. Applicants could use this tool to filter through HEPs and courses. The user interface for

a course search would include information from Unistats, and details about the course. Choices shortlisted could be fed into Apply.

A member of the Group said they had reservations about importation of international Tariff qualifications, because there was a very limited number on the Tariff, and the preference was not to expand this. The Group thought this development could be problematic and limiting for the international sector. UCAS clarified it wanted the dashboard to look different for applicants from, for example, international domiciles, and that it would be tailored for them. The tool was live in the test environment, and the beta version was planned to be live on ucas.com soon. Following this, a live pilot phase in April was scheduled, and the service would be fully live in September (for the same cohort of applicants who would be the first to use the 2021 cycle UCAS Undergraduate AMS). UKCISA said it would like to publicise and promote this when it was ready to launch.

A member of the Group said the terminology should be considered carefully for international users, as the word 'qualifications' may be difficult – a term such as 'exam results' would be more understandable. Changing 'personal statement' to 'essay' was also suggested – UCAS said this would be possible in the future, and suggested planning a workshop with the Group when the international elements of the service were being considered. MW IAG153

A1/18/08 Round table

University of Edinburgh – Colleagues in Scotland asked about verified international qualifications. A small number are verified through UCAS, and more would make an enormous difference, for example, English language qualifications. It had been raised at UCAS, and conversations were had with the College Board in the USA. UCAS had to pause work on this, however, until the new Apply platform was up and running.

Universities UK (UUK) – In an op-ed piece for The Times, ahead of the Education World Forum, Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, announced the government would be launching a cross-departmental international education strategy. UUK had been lobbying the government for an ambitious strategy, underlined by policy development, for over two years, and, in June, was approached by colleagues at the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Department for Education (DfE) to provide input, and to facilitate a 'soft' consultation with the sector. Proposals were discussed at the UK Board and IPN in September, and drawing on this work, Vivienne Stern was invited to present to the DIT Education Sector Advisory Group in November. This meeting was attended by three government ministers, and placed a specific emphasis on visas, immigration policy, and the value of a strategic approach to growing education exports.

UUK also coordinated a roundtable event for the DfE and the DIT in November, which brought together 20 sector representatives. However, it was unclear how far the strategy would eventually reflect this input, given the broader political and policy environment – UUK would continue to engage constructively to help deliver an

effective and impactful framework. Publication was not expected before the end of March 2019.

British Council – The British Council was working on its agent training pieces. They were going global in Berlin, on 13 – 15 May, with two research pieces. The first was for knowledge diplomacy in action, for example, HEPs influencing change. The second piece was for shaping global higher education.

BUILA – BUILA was working on regional interest groups in China and India, and was setting one up for Africa, and potentially Europe, in the future.

UKCISA – Three members’ forums were planned for 13 February, 13 March, and one in Scotland in May. Home Office speakers would be attending to give an update about Brexit. It had been announced that fees and support would be guaranteed for EU students for the 2019 cycle, even in a ‘no deal’ Brexit. Under this scenario, EU students would be able to come to the UK for initial periods of 3 months with no registration or restrictions but would then have to apply for European Temporary Leave to Remain (ETLR) for the next three years although UUK was trying to explain to the Home Office that three years was not suitable for all, for example, Scottish providers offered four-year undergraduate courses.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Universities UK update

This was covered in the roundtable.

Date of the next meeting

11 June 2019, at UCAS, Cheltenham.

Minutes

HEMSAG/19/M1

HE Marketing Services Advisory Group meeting

held on 7 March 2019 at CASS Business School, City University London

Chair:	Jade Wilce	UCAS
Present:	Adam Gore Anna Keogh Beverley Hoare Charlotte Wilson Demetria Maratheftis Genia Garrity Hannah Hughes Iain Morrison Kate Blake Samantha Armstrong Sam Uzzell Tim Longden	Birmingham University Leeds College of Music University of Bedfordshire Lancaster University London Metropolitan University University of Gloucestershire (on behalf of Danielle (Fitzgerald) University of York (on behalf of Joan Concannon) University of Greenwich The University of Aberdeen Edge Hill University University of Surrey City, University of London
Apologies:	Angharad Evans Carys Roberts Donald McLeod Danielle Fitzgerald Emma Leech Joan Concannon Lorraine Westwood Mel MacCarthy	Aberystwyth University Bangor University University of Hertfordshire University of Gloucestershire Loughborough University University of York Keele University Richmond, The American University in London
UCAS in attendance:	Georgina Venman Jade Wilce Matt Criddle Mike Adams Tim Skutt	Provider Engagement Coordinator Head of Media Operations Sales Manager Principle Insight Consultant Head of Events
UCAS via video conference:	Fraser Nicoll	Service Lead, Information and Advice

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Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 18 April 2019

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted. Jade Wilce, Head of Operations, UCAS Media, chaired the meeting in the absence of Emma Leech.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the last meeting.

Action log

HEMSAG47 – the action remained open and would be followed up internally.

HEMSAG48 – if, or when, UCAS implemented the full Clearing Working Group recommendations, the pushed offer process and the 'I'm still looking' flag should replace Adjustment. This means the new application management system would not have an Adjustment process in place. The Clearing plans were still yet to be confirmed, but it was very likely UCAS would implement the change – this would be confirmed in the near future. It was suggested that a UCAS colleague from the Operations Team should attend a future meeting to update the Group. One recommendation, 'self-release' would be implemented for Clearing in 2019.

A1/18/03 Market conditions and Q&A

End of cycle data slides from the October meeting were updated, and shown. Applications were down by -2.1%, and the number of applicants was down by -0.6%. The decline in the UK 18 year old population meant recruitment conditions remained challenging for providers. However, despite fewer applications being made by fewer applicants, the acceptance rate remained flat compared to 2017

Approximately 17,500 applicants applied direct to Clearing. As a whole, use of Clearing declined slightly, as did Adjustment, and applicants placed at their insurance choice.

Unconditional offer-making continued to increase in the 2018 cycle, which was understandable given the market conditions. Universities were being asked to operate in a commercial market, and more than one in five 18 year olds received an unconditional offer in England.

There had been increases in the number of unconditional offers being made across the majority of subject groups, predominantly driven by providers in England. In the past five years, Welsh providers have been second (to England) in terms of the volume of unconditional offers being made, but they actually witnessed a reduction compared to 2017. The process of making unconditional offers remained much less prevalent in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Since 2015, there had been a rise in a relatively new variation of unconditional offers, more strategic in nature, and which UCAS had termed the 'conditional unconditional offer': the initial offer was conditional, but the provider would make their offer unconditional if the applicant chose them as their first choice. This practice has increased from 0% in 2015, to 8% in 2018.

Mature acceptances to undergraduate courses had increased proportionally. The pool of 18 year old applicants was set for continued decline until 2020, but in the long term the numbers would stabilise – recovering to 2015 levels by 2024. The behaviour of applicants and providers would change as these levels changed – as the cohort declined applicants were becoming more market-intelligent. When the cohort increased, the offer-making strategies would change, but the 18 year old applicants' attitude may not.

In 2017, 15% of 18 year olds had a mother who had been to university. This would increase to 38% for those who would be 18 in 2034. (Distribution of births by graduate status – LFS.) This was important, as potentially, demand for higher education in 2030 could be 50% higher than in 2018. It was pointed out that the participation rate varied by region – for example, London was a more attractive area of 18 year old participation and progression to higher education.

EU and non-EU applicants increased year-on-year while UK applicants decreased. Non-EU saw 4,950 more applicants. EU applicant numbers had recovered after a decline in 2017, which was likely to be as a result of the Government guaranteeing the fee status of EU nationals.

81,325 international applicants were accepted in 2018. The country with the largest number of acceptances was China. A member of the Group said it was uncertain if China would continue to be such a large part of the international cohort, as higher education improved in the country. There was also a demographic dip expected in China, just after the UK demographic dip.

France was the biggest EU market in 2018, but acceptances were fewer than 2017. It was unclear whether France would continue to be a large part of the market after Brexit. A member of the Group said, in Scotland they were struggling with planning for post-Brexit admissions. Another member said it would be interesting to find out if the

acceptances of EU nationals (to individual providers) was relevant to whether there was a population of EU nationalities residing locally to a provider.

There was a decline of -2% for all UK domiciled applicants. London was the only region against this decline (increase of 1%). UK acceptances declined by -1% in 2018, but London saw an increase of 3% against this trend. Despite increased appetite to apply direct to Clearing, overall the market for Clearing was in decline (in terms of acceptances). More applicants applied late during the cycle, but not in Clearing. This could be because applicants were becoming more aware of the demand, and using this to their advantage.

London dominated the direct to Clearing market. UCAS Media investigated who was applying direct to Clearing based on 2018 cycle data. The majority were UK-based, with 91% domiciled in England. More of the applicants (70%) were aged 20 or over, and 60% applied to providers less than 45 minutes' drive from their home. Almost a quarter of acceptances through direct to Clearing were from London, and 4% of all acceptances to lower tariff providers were from direct to Clearing applications. The most popular subjects were business and administration, which the demand for had generally increased.

For 2019, approximately 561,420 applicants had completed their applications by the 15 January deadline. This was an increase of 1.4% on 2018. UK domiciled applicants slightly decreased (0.7%), while applicants from outside the UK increased for EU and non-EU. London, the North East, and East Anglia were slightly up from 2018.

A member of the Group asked if there was a reason UCAS Media wasn't reporting on the impact of unconditional offer-making on applicants – for example, on decision making. UCAS explained that those who received unconditional offers would generally miss their predicted grades, but were pleased to receive an unconditional offer. The advisers were concerned, as it was a challenge for them to keep their students focused on their studies. Bursaries and other financial incentives were being used to encourage applicants to remain focused on their studies and achieve higher grades. In some cases, recipients of unconditional offers thought less of the provider who offered it. The volume of unconditional offers sometimes was viewed as a devaluing factor, but they would still accept the offer. A member of the Group commented that they had run an unconditional pilot and evaluated the attainment level of their intake based on the type of offer received. They did not see a significant difference in attainment, even for applicants with unconditional offers.

A1/18/04 Information and advice, and digital experience platform

Fraser Nicoll, Service Lead for Information and Advice, UCAS, attended the meeting via Skype. The Group was shown historical images of the UCAS website, which highlighted the additional information and advice over the years. Information and advice development planned to put information for applicants in one place. On the current UCAS website some applicants struggled to find the information they needed.

UCAS was prioritising delivery of good quality information, and wanted to provide a central hub for applicants to use to broaden their horizons and understand the breadth of opportunities available to them. Then they could filter down and shortlist their options to explore in more detail.

The new information and advice dashboard would provide relevant information for applicants and pre-applicants, which would allow them to research more effectively and explore their choices. For providers it would open early engagement opportunities to the right audience, and it would also be useful for advisers.

The Group was shown the timeline for the service. UCAS was engaged with advisory groups and stakeholders throughout the development of the project. A private pilot was underway, and the product was intended for a soft launch in April 2019, and for full launch in September 2019.

The dashboard was shown to the Group. UCAS wanted to increase the number of sign ups to ucas.com. The user would pick the level of study – for example, undergraduate or postgraduate – where they wanted to live, and where they wanted to study. It was clarified that applicants could select more than one option for where they wanted to study. After a few initial details were gathered, their account and personal dashboard would be created.

On the dashboard, the user could explore and favourite options, link to UCAS events, and use the Tariff calculator. The aim was to provide a source of information and advice for three groups of applicants: those who knew where they wanted to study but not what, those who knew what they wanted to study but not where, and those who had no idea. There was a map on the dashboard to help students identify areas where they may wish to study. There was also a dates and deadlines page, which would highlight key dates, and users could also add their own.

There were widgets on the dashboard, linking the user to a personal statement builder, and to Apply – information on the dashboard could be linked directly to Apply. There were notepad and FAQs widgets, and there was an apprenticeships opportunities widget, offering national vacancy information.

The explore tool on the dashboard allowed users to explore subjects, read subject guides, and browse higher education providers. When browsing providers, users could

apply filters – for example, seaside, music, conservatoire. Unistats data would be shown on the dashboard, to display the average graduate salary and the student satisfaction rating.

The favourites page would highlight the choices the user had shortlisted, and they could create a top five which could be fed directly into UCAS Apply.

A member of the Group asked, how could the filters work for and against providers, and how were they served. It was clarified that the A-Z list had its positives and negatives, and had been a challenge for UCAS. Students looked at league tables, and UCAS wanted to understand the priorities of individual applicants, and reflect that on the dashboard – for example, location or contact hours. UCAS did not want to disadvantage providers or applicants, and the Group was asked for their ideas on how this could be avoided. A member of the Group said that objective information on courses seemed to work, but more personal options, for example, location preference (seaside, city etc), how to feed through those filters presented a challenge for providers. A member requested a view of the timeline – this would be sent to the Group with the link to the beta. A webinar would be set up for the HE Marketing Advisory Group to have a more detailed look at the product.

GV
HEMSAG53

A member of the Group asked if user research had been conducted, and if this could be shown to the Group. UCAS would include this on a webinar.

FN
HEMSAG54

The collection tool had been challenging for providers, and the Group wanted to know if this would be linked to the dashboard. It was confirmed that the information displayed on the dashboard was pulled through from the collection tool.

The Group agreed to supply images for the dashboard. A member of the Group asked if providers would need to input more undergraduate and postgraduate aspects into the collection tool, and it was confirmed that the dashboard would not create any additional work for providers.

ALL
HEMSAG55

It was confirmed that if the TEF rating was most important to applicants, it would be shown on the dashboard, but it would not be a requirement.

UCAS was developing a tool to advise pre-applicants – a user could search for specific qualifications and see what other students had progressed on to. This could also be done in the reverse – users could enter what they wanted to study, and the qualifications students took to enter the course would be displayed.

A1/18/05 Exhibition strategy and scanning

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Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 18 April 2019

Tim Skutt, Head of Events, UCAS, attended the meeting.

The vision for the UCAS Events Team focused around three elements: to inspire, engage, and value.

Inspire – to deliver contacts, content, and communities with the power to inspire and inform choices.

Engage – to make UCAS' events fun and exciting, and to deliver a fantastic experience.

Value – to focus UCAS' investment on delivering exceptional events that offered greater value and features for UCAS customers.

Events and exhibitions aimed to be personal and memorable for attendees. The face-to-face engagement enabled interactions between potential applicants and providers. Events and exhibitions also gave instant feedback.

UCAS focused on applicants, and the events strategy was mainly tailored to this customer base.

The team used agile development, with a focus on how value was driven for customers. UCAS managed the portfolio actively, directing resources to the places most needed to increase relevance to the widest possible audience. It was explained that digital and content-based activities were aligned with the events programme, to more effectively support customer communities. It was important for UCAS to enhance the events portfolio through strategic collaborations.

Customer insight was an important aspect for consideration. UCAS looked at customer analytics to enhance understanding of customer behaviour, and used this knowledge in events planning. By understanding what was valuable to customers, 'pain points' could be identified and minimised.

Innovations were continuously being developed to find new ways of serving customers to boost their experience. Virtual exhibitions were a growing area, and there were concerns this would eliminate face-to-face interactions. However, virtual events could enhance the connections created at the physical events, and provide links any time from any place. If an applicant could not physically attend a meeting, there could be a virtual tool or application to allow them to download the information and connect with exhibitors remotely. They would then still have the same resources available to them as physical attendees.

A challenge for the Events Team was how it raised awareness of exhibitions for the relevant audience, and the team wanted to work with stakeholders and participants to expand its presence. There was a lot of work to be done, and UCAS would be transparent about any developments in events and exhibitions.

UCAS delivered over 50 exhibitions around the country, and was very aware of the demographic dip in 16 – 18 year olds. International admissions were growing into this space, and the Events Team would need to adapt to reach out to this market. Students wanted instant information, which was a challenge for UCAS.

UCAS had a direction for their exhibitions and activities, but wanted to involve the sector and work collaboratively, and was interested in hearing what the Group's views.

A member said they were at a conference recently, and comments from other attendees were around UCAS not moving into the modern, digital space. A member from a Scottish provider pointed out that, in Scotland, the reach of the exhibitions was important because the population was dispersed. It was explained that if UCAS tried to offer physical exhibitions in all areas, this could mean remote exhibitions would not be able to offer the same variety of exhibitors. A roadshow format was suggested – a more 'pop-up', option but with a wider reach.

A member of the Group questioned the value of UCAS developing its digital presence for exhibitions when universities offered their own virtual exhibitions already. It was important to make exhibitions interactive to keep them relevant, not just a place for applicants to collect papers. The plan would begin to be shaped in June or July 2019, and further engagement would take place with the Group. The Group was interested in a report on their scanning matches – UCAS would send this.

MC
HEMSAG56
MC
HEMSAG57

A1/18/06 UCAS Media products and services

Data products and consultancy

Mike Adams, Principle Insight Consultant, UCAS, attended the meeting.

The Data Product Team in Analysis and Insight wanted to help providers use data to shape their planning. Data consultancy products provided a dedicated team at UCAS to bring data to life, integrate diverse data to drive decision-making, and provide bespoke recommendations.

The collaborative nature was fundamental, so UCAS could understand what providers needed and focused on their individual problems. Engagements were defined by the

problem. The price was determined by the time and skill required to provide the recommendations.

Mike showed the Group examples – there were four interlocking areas customers wanted to understand: where, what, who, and to understand their competitors for each of these contexts. To begin, the team compared existing geographical reach to establish the core recruitment area of the customer. The information was then broken down to draw up a comparative benchmark.

Once this was established, greater detail could be identified, and untapped areas of intake could be investigated to help recruitment. New potential applicants could be identified for the existing range of courses. The next step was to identify new courses that the provider would benefit from being offered.

The aim was to produce something practical and actionable for the provider to use. The anonymous example provider produced a three-year strategy on the basis of the recommendations.

A medium tariff provider had different requirements. They wanted to know what was driving change, and understand what to do in response to these changes. For each of the providers subject lines/courses, the team rated them in two areas: provider rating and sector rating. The factors were then given a score, either -1, 0 or +1 to show if the change was significant, and positive or negative. Using this score, the team then compared against the sector to find market share and sector size. This created a simple view for a deep understanding. On course level, the team measured the health of a portfolio to identify courses that were doing well, courses with opportunity, risk, or missing. This allowed the provider to decide which courses should be retained, prioritised, reviewed, or determined.

The team looked at the level of acceptances at higher education, but there was scope for a closer analysis of, for example, GCSEs.

The recommendations provided a clear way for the provider to understand its position in the market and shape its recruitment. Mike clarified that the team could access all the UCAS data products, including untapped geographies. The difference was the bespoke analysis and recommendations provided. Everything was driven by the individual customer and would be confidential. The slides would be sent with the minutes.

GV
HEMSAG58

Peer-to-peer

Matt Criddle, Head of Education Sales, UCAS Media, directed the Group to look at the application insights slide deck, which would be sent with the minutes.

GDPR presented a challenge for UCAS Media, and it was looking at opportunities to collaborate. There was demand from different technical organisations within the peer-to-peer space. UCAS Media wanted to add value for applicants, providers, and UCAS by implementing peer-to-peer engagement on ucas.com.

UCAS wanted to know the challenges providers experienced through peer-to-peer, and the value they gained from it. Also, if UCAS were to venture into this area, what would be appropriate, and how would it be best achieved.

A member of the Group said it was another channel in an already crowded marketplace, and it would need to be a unique offering. They didn't want to interfere with student-run channels and were concerned it would create extra work.

It was remarked that it would be good to see technologies matched up to enhance the peer-to-peer existing areas, rather than generate more traffic. It was clarified that it would be an opportunity for UCAS to be involved and enhance systems rather than develop its own new system. A member of the Group commented that it could fit in with the existing information and advice dashboard workstream, and the Group was reassured it was connected to that project. If there was any further feedback from the Group, it could be sent to Matt Criddle at m.criddle@ucas.ac.uk.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Next meeting date

Thursday 13 June 2019 at UCAS, Cheltenham.

Deputy Chair

A call-out would be emailed to the Group.

GV
HEMSAG59

Student journey

It was requested that an item on the student journey should be included at the next meeting.

GV / DG
HEMSAG60

Minutes

PAG/19/M1

Postgraduate Advisory Group meeting

Held on 27 February at University of Westminster

Chair: Michelle Magee Canterbury Christ Church University

Present: Alex Malin University of Warwick
 Alistair Garmendia University of Winchester
 Bhavesh Varsani University of Westminster
 Cassandra Buckingham University of Essex
 Joanne Faulkner University of Bristol
 Kelvin Faudrey Greenwich University
 Lorraine Hodgson Lancaster University
 Marcus Phillips University of Sheffield
 Samantha Matthews University of Westminster (observing)
 Sudarshana Chaudhuri Oxford Brookes University

Apologies: Alison Meakes Buckinghamshire New University
 Jayne Hines Plymouth University
 Martine Novotna University of Hull
 Nick Hull University of Southampton

UCAS in attendance: Georgina Venman Provider Engagement Coordinator
 Louise Cyprien Service Delivery Manager (Admissions)
 Peter Evans Relationship Manager

UCAS in attendance via Skype: Fraser Nicoll Service Lead, Information and Advice
 Jill Eyes Service Delivery Manager (Results Service)
 Lauren Cooper Executive Product Manager
 Mark Wilson Strategy Manager

Security marking: CONFIDENTIAL

Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 24 April 2019

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted. The Group introduced themselves.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the last meeting.

PAG056 – to make a multi-destination platform for the application management service (AMS) with single sign-on achievable, the UCAS Postgraduate and Undergraduate coding was separated for a period of time. This had an impact on this particular reporting feature. The action remained in progress, but it would be clear after the April 2019 sprint planning review what would be going forward, and the Group would then be updated at the June meeting.

A1/18/03 Operational update

Applications were being made from 190 countries. Numbers of submissions to the UCAS Postgraduate AMS showed that applications were initially slow, but increased over time. It was explained that, until the point UCAS was able to support applicants deleting unwanted draft applications, it would continue to remind applicants to erase their own unwanted drafts.

The collection tool

The University of Westminster had observed that, when they tried to change a course in the AMS, it wasn't synced with the collection tool. They raised a ticket and, Peter Evans, Relationship Manager at UCAS, assured that this was currently being investigated (Note: The issue was resolved 27 February 2019). Westminster felt the ticket system was frustrating and intermittent, but was confident the problem had been escalated. The student record vendor, Tribal, would be ready, post-May, to move over to APIs, which they hope would alleviate any problems. The University of Winchester noted that they had experienced mis-matched dates of birth information, but explained this could have been human error. UCAS advised them to raise a ticket anyway.

Auto-archive process

The auto-archiving was introduced to enhance the experience for UKPASS customers. There wasn't a 'decline by default' process in place to clean up inactive applications. Under the new enhancement, applications would be archived at the end of the third month after the course start date, if it was inactive. Application activity post-launch was slow, but then an increase was observed for courses with September start dates, so the first archiving activity commenced at the end of December. This had caught out some providers, so, webinars were delivered to raise awareness of the process. The enhancement was brought to the Postgraduate Advisory Group for their feedback. It was clarified that an application's status determined whether it was archived. On request, if an archived application was needed, a ticket could be raised, and the application could be retrieved.

Members of the Group commented that it was a shock initially, but the Group was happy with the three-month time period. A member of the Group suggested UCAS should send messages to applicants, to let them know their application would be archived. It was confirmed that communications would be sent to providers with details of the archiving process.

GV / PE
PAG080**UKPASS**

UCAS was conscious that applications were still open in UKPASS. In January 2019, UCAS messaged applicants to prompt them to reply to offers. This would be repeated in early March to clean up the applications still held in UKPASS. It was clarified that any deferred offers, for courses starting after 2019 entry, would be expected to go through the UCAS Postgraduate AMS. A member of the Group said they would appreciate a 'view only' mode before shutting UKPASS off completely, for three months after the 2019 entry date in September.

LC PAG081

UCAS Postgraduate AMS onboarding

Two new customers had joined the UCAS Postgraduate AMS. There was a lot of interest in the product, but feedback, to-date, showed that the provider process of moving over to a new application system can take between six and 18 months.

It was confirmed that Tribal's next software version would be API ready in May 2019, and discussions with other vendors were currently taking place. Bristol Old Vic were very positive about the user interface. UCAS said the challenge was demonstrating the benefits of the UCAS Postgraduate AMS, when providers didn't have any case studies to refer to. The University of Winchester said they would be happy to provide a case study for similar sized providers. Another member of the Group said they would want another demonstration after their vendor had moved to APIs. The University of Sheffield said understanding the approach to different types of courses, for example, split provider programmes, through a case study would be useful.

PE PAG082

It was confirmed there were not any firm plans to introduce an application fee to the AMS. The Chair said that if a fee was to be introduced, it would be helpful to know a minimum of 18 months in advance.

Multi-factor authenticity

Multi-factor authenticity (MFA) would be introduced (potentially, from June 2019), and staff using the postgraduate AMS would then need to validate their user ID with a six-digit code that would be emailed to them. Once the code was entered, the user would be able to access all of the areas without having to do it again, unless on a new device.

A member of the Group said a back-up option would be desirable, for example, an option to have the code sent by SMS, or an alternative way to authenticate. A member of the Group asked if IP addresses would be used to authenticate the device, and said having to do this for every device could be potentially frustrating when working remotely. It was clarified that, initially, MFA won't take IP address into account when checking if authentication will be required, and that MFA would only need to be done once for each device, if it's a different device that is being used, or unless the cache was cleared.

Future of postgraduate courses in the UCAS Undergraduate scheme

Within the current multi-destination search tool, there was a split between providers listing their postgraduate social work courses under the UCAS Undergraduate and Postgraduate schemes. A member of the Group thought splitting postgraduate and undergraduate may cause identification issues for users, as some make an application via the UCAS Undergraduate scheme for postgraduate courses. During the discussion, it was also confirmed that Welsh postgraduate teacher training courses were currently listed.

The Group asked about how it would work for providers that listed their postgraduate social work courses within the UCAS Undergraduate scheme, due to the introduction of the UCAS Undergraduate AMS, with applications also going through the UCAS Postgraduate AMS? UCAS agreed to investigate the future of postgraduate courses listed in the UCAS Undergraduate scheme, and report back to the Group. PE PAG083

During the discussion, the Group also fed back that invoices received from UCAS didn't clearly relate to specific products or services, which made it difficult to pass onto the right contact. Often, a single point of contact at the university would receive invoices for all UCAS activity, including multi-scheme membership and all UCAS Media activity, even though the point of contact had no authority or relevance to the invoices received, especially in relation to UCAS Media activity. PE PAG084

A1/18/04 Information and Advice demonstration

Fraser Nicoll, Service Lead for Information and Advice at UCAS, joined the meeting via Skype to demonstrate the Information and Advice (I&A) dashboard. In September 2018, UCAS asked students about their experience of information and advice on ucas.com, and feedback showed the information was scattered and difficult to source.

The Group was shown historic images of the UCAS website, and the new dashboard. The idea was to enable students to understand the breadth of options and to have the tools to easily narrow down their favourites, to assist in their decision-making. To begin with, users would enter some basic information, for example, where the applicant wanted to live. After details were collected, a personalised dashboard was generated for the user.

The dashboard would enable students to explore course options, universities and colleges, and favourite courses and providers to one place. The dashboard would change depending on the user's actions and selections.

The cohort using UCAS Apply, from September 2019, would be the first cohort with single sign-on, and UCAS confirmed this would apply to the dashboard as well.

The dashboard included widgets such as a calendar, notes, and a personal statement builder. It was explained the Team were trying to cater for three types of students – those who knew what they wanted to do but not where to go, those who knew where they wanted to go but not what to do, and those who didn't know anything.

Course information would be included, for example, assessment types and modules. The Team also wanted to include more about each provider's location, for example, city, rural, or seaside. UCAS explained it wanted to include provider pages with content assisted by the sector, so users would be able to view what a provider looked like. Users would be able to view the average starting salary of a graduate, and the provider's student satisfaction rating.

A member of the Group said it was a great concept and that, as a campus university, the filters would be useful, and asked how they would obtain the information to display. It was clarified that UCAS wouldn't let providers determine all the information for those filters, but it intended to work with providers to establish some of the criteria.

It was asked if, from a postgraduate perspective, the widgets would be changed, for example, predicted grades to undergraduate degree results. It was explained that the dashboard would be ready for a soft launch in April 2019, aimed at UCAS Undergraduate applicants, and these scheme-specific adaptations would be worked on from that point forward. A postgraduate iteration would be ready to demonstrate at

Action

the next Postgraduate Advisory Group meeting in June, and it would be included on the agenda.

PE / DG
PAG085

A1/18/05 Application Insight

UCAS updated the Group on the latest developments to the Application Insight (AI) product.

Related to the I&A demonstration, a member of the Group wondered if the different motivations of a UCAS Postgraduate applicant could be fed in to the application insights, for example, to change career or to become a specialist. Another member of the Group said the wording alongside needed to be carefully thought out.

UCAS demonstrated how the user could view a cumulative total, and cumulative average trends in applications. There was a historical view that showed how the home provider was doing against the sector and their own competitors. The Group was shown the breakdown by domicile and nationality.

One member said the AI tool was working well for them and would become more useful when additional providers were onboard. The Group member advised it was important the tool evolved properly after Brexit, and that a balance of keeping data changes small yet maximising functionality was needed. It was highlighted that, to make it a long-term viable product, more providers would need to join. The list of providers onboarded was sent to the Group with the minutes. It was confirmed that there were points that needed to be worked out by the Steering Group, and they would continue to make recommendations.

PE PAG086

The Chair suggested a page or forum, where interested providers could see who was using it, would be helpful.

Applications year-to-date could be viewed on subject level. The display would include the user, their competitor, and the sector. Other filters included full-time and part-time.

A1/18/06 International strategy

Mark Wilson, Strategy Manager at UCAS, joined the meeting via Skype. The paper was circulated prior to the meeting. The strategy reiterated UCAS' commitment to engaging international admissions. The strategy brought together strands of activity across the organisation.

Security marking: CONFIDENTIAL

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Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 24 April 2019

There was an international admissions review conducted in 2014, but UCAS soon after changed its way of working and underwent digital acceleration, so the area was re-addressed. UCAS explained there were over 700 agents set up as registered centres, and so the agent portal was being developed to create a user-friendly product, specifically for agents.

UCAS wanted to expand its engagement with international customers, and establish multiple channels to gain feedback.

International data packs were made available, running alongside the data consultancy products.

The agent portal soft launch was in February 2019 for UCAS Postgraduate AMS customers. Alongside UCAS Postgraduate applications, the agent portal would be opened for UCAS Undergraduate applications, with the launch of the Undergraduate AMS in May 2020. Agents were happy about how they could control the access for their staff, and it was reported that small amounts of positive feedback had been received, but no negative feedback. UCAS was following up with agents who were registered to use the portal and hadn't yet engaged with it.

UCAS had renewed its focus on market presence, tactics involving face-to-face and online activities and events were in place, to increase engagement with the international sector.

The international data pack was available from UCAS Media, and if anyone in the Group was interested, they could be put in touch with someone at UCAS Media or on the A&I Team.

A member of the Group asked if there was a way for providers to see which agents had been using the portal since the launch. It was clarified UCAS didn't want to disrupt existing recruitment practices. 75 agencies had completed the onboarding steps, and more than half had signed in and begun setting up their users. Webinars were going to be delivered and recorded to help users set up and learn how to use the portal.

A member of the Group, when using the filters in the user interface to search for agents, only found those tagged from previous applications. The ability for providers to go into individual applicant records, and view their links to the agent through the agent portal would be possible, and a filter view was launched to connect the data in the UCAS Postgraduate AMS to the portal. UCAS would make sure that this would be done for APIs too.

Action

It was asked if UCAS could show providers on the Postgraduate AMS how many applications made to them were through the agent portal. However, some providers were sensitive to the competitive nature of agent data, and UCAS didn't want to make this visible. Postgraduate AMS customer members of the Group said they would like to be sent overviews to see how many of their agents had submitted applications through the portal. UCAS confirmed this was in the scope of the development team, who were working on a filter, and the idea would be investigated for the Group.

PE / MW
PAG087

It was confirmed that, due to the mid-cycle launch, a slow uptake of agents joining the portal was anticipated.

Feedback from the agents who had used the portal showed that the functionality was intuitive, and they had users set up. There was positive feedback about the personalised way agents within an agency accessed the portal individually. The group was told UCAS would be able to see if there were agents drafting but not sending applications through the portal, and they would be engaged for more feedback.

UCAS was setting up a specific international bulletin, and this would be used as a vehicle for engaging with providers about the agent portal. On 6 March 2019, the product owners on the agent portal held a webinar, to demonstrate the portal and discuss the rollout to UCAS Undergraduate applications. The link to the webinar was sent to the Group ahead of its start.

PE / DG
PAG088

The University of Westminster would happily share any feedback they received from their agents, and it was suggested that formalised feedback from agents could be discussed at the meeting in June.

A1/18/07 Postgraduate and embargo preparations 2019

Jill Eyes, Service Delivery Manager for the Results Service at UCAS, joined the meeting via Skype.

Postgraduate scenarios were discussed, and it was advised that, a couple of years ago, an increase in breaches of the results embargo (SQA and JCQ) was observed. Due to this, UCAS started a project to minimise the occurrence and impact of embargo breaches.

One provider used an automated email process that was disabled for undergraduate, but not postgraduate, applicants (it was unusual for postgraduate applicants to be anticipating ABL results). A communication was sent out asking students to create their student account, and this was sent to applicants with live results.

In some cases, a postgraduate applicant was waiting for an A level result in English and maths, or an applicant portal was opened for unconditional firm undergraduate and postgraduate applicants. The Chair said, for these instances, it would be useful to know the subject areas where this occurred, and receive specific postgraduate embargo breach scenarios. JE PAG089

There was a nominated contact at each higher education provider, responsible for upholding the embargo. Training modules were rolled out to these contacts, who then passed them on to colleagues within their provider. The modules raised awareness to staff who otherwise wouldn't understand what counted as an embargo breach, and the impact they had.

Members of the Group felt strongly that they couldn't close their postgraduate Apply during the undergraduate embargo period. It was confirmed UCAS was looking into whether something could be included in the AMS, to identify what qualifications were outstanding for postgraduate applicants, and whether they were embargoed.

The next steps were to feed into the AMS scoping group, and explore the direction of development.

For the UCAS Undergraduate scheme, training was available from early April 2019 for the nominated contact, which would include scenarios – and case studies were also available on ucas.com.

A1/18/08 Postgraduate application tracker discussion

Lauren Cooper, Executive Product Manager at UCAS, joined the meeting via Skype.

UCAS wanted to understand what would be most useful to postgraduate providers in the application tracker tool. UCAS was refreshing the service to look at how application Tracker data could be enhanced. The beta version would contain just the home provider's data over all postgraduate applications made through the AMS. It would be built in the same way as the undergraduate application Tracker tool, but the data structure may be different and the Executive Product Manager was interested to know what the Group wanted to see. The Group was asked:

- How do you currently use postgraduate data?

Members of the Group used data to track markets, and for forecasting.

- Would you want subject level or course group data?

The Group wanted subject level data. UCAS could potentially look at grouping by career progression, but the Group didn't express interest in this option.

- In terms of postgraduate, what benchmarking measures do, or would, they find most useful?

There may be issues with what providers wanted to see, and what GDPR would let them see.

The Chair thought this would be a good opportunity for UCAS Postgraduate AMS customers to use the AI service.

The Group expressed confusion as to why UCAS was developing the two tools (application insights and application Tracker), as both had the same purpose, but in a different format.

Some of the postgraduate courses offered, for example, social work, were put through the undergraduate system, so some would be excluded in the Tracker. The Chair said smaller providers on the UCAS Postgraduate AMS may require different reports to that of larger providers.

- What did application Tracker mean to them?

The Group recognised a lot of similarities to the AI development. A member of the Group wanted to see competitor course comparisons on the search tool, for example, how many were shortlisted. UCAS confirmed that it was looking to include search tool reporting for postgraduate applications. The Group was welcome to share any other ideas for features, should they think of them after the meeting.

The Group thought the AI product was more strategic, and application Tracker had the potential to be more operational. The Group felt this product was too close to AI. It was suggested that the Executive Product Manager should be invited to the next Application Insight Steering Group meeting, so she can be informed on their recommendations and decisions. The Group suggested the products should be joined up, not two separate tools.

PAG092

A1/18/09 Department for Education teacher training admissions service update

UCAS was working extensively with the Department for Education (DfE) to determine the future of postgraduate teacher training applications for England. The DfE had announced, in their strategy, that they were going to develop their own teacher training application service for England, to replace UCAS Teacher Training. The DfE wanted to run a pilot for the 2019/2020 entry cycle with a small cohort, and launch a full service for the 2020/2021 recruitment cycle.

The Group was concerned about the practicality of this, and about how it would work due to the lack of information about how the DfE would achieve this. UCAS was continuing to collect data on the UCAS Teacher Training collection tool, which the DfE would take over. UCAS was consulting with Scotland and Wales about their own teacher training apply service through the UCAS Postgraduate AMS, but no decision had yet been made.

A1/18/10 Postgraduate business rules and admissions principles

The rules and principles that were determined at the Undergraduate Advisory Group were to determine the core business rules and admissions principles for providers. At the last meeting in October, the Group fed back more suggestions for the postgraduate version of this document.

The Undergraduate Advisory Group had completed their recommendations, and the document had gone to the UCAS Executive Team for approval.

There was more work to be done, and once the final undergraduate version was agreed, it could come back to the Postgraduate Advisory Group. UCAS wanted to implement scheme rules and principles for the 2020 cycle.

Peter Evans, Relationship Manager at UCAS, thanked the Group for the work done so far. The latest copies of the undergraduate and postgraduate versions would be circulated to the Group with the minutes.

PE PAG090

The Chair was concerned that the postgraduate version would be driven by the undergraduate version. She said aligning them was fine, but one should not be driven by the other. Once the documents had been circulated, the Group could highlight anything they would be concerned about being included in the postgraduate business rules and admissions principles. The Chair said, if there were major changes, then it should be put off until the launch of the AMS for undergraduate. The Group said rules were broken due to the services not being available to assist providers in adhering to them.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Date of the next meeting

The next meeting would be held on 6 June 2019. The University of Winchester and The University of Essex offered to host a future meeting. They would be contacted by the UCAS Provider Engagement Coordinator, and the invitation would be sent to the Group GV PAG091 with the minutes.



Minutes

QAG/19/M1

Qualifications Advisory Group meeting

Held on 26 February 2019 at UCAS, Cheltenham

Chair:	Peter Chetwynd	Kings College London
Present:	Alison Matthews Anna Rogers Bethany Hughes Clare McNicholl James Seymour John Lewis Kate Crabtree Lucy Hemsley Marian Curran Michael Bennett Philip Bloor	University of Oxford Tonbridge School OFQUAL CCEA University of Buckingham Scottish Qualification Authority Qualifications Wales Bournside School and Sixth Form College St Brendan's Sixth Form College, Bristol London Metropolitan University Sheffield Hallam University
Apologies:	Andy Walls Ailin O'Cathain Caroline Low Liz Wyman Suzanne O'Farrell	JCQ FAB HESPA Association of Colleges ASCL
UCAS in attendance:	Amy Smith Ben Jordan Georgina Venman Lauren Gaines	Senior Policy Executive Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager Provider Engagement Coordinator Data Scientist

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. A member of the Group requested clarification for page three 'GCSEs in Northern Ireland were noted as a key area of interest for 2019 entry' and queried whether it should be changed to '2021 entry'. It was clarified that there were some cases for 2019 entry, but most for 2021 entry. Page five was also queried, regarding the inclusion of the Irish Leaving Certificate in the international qualifications on the Tariff. The four options discussed at the October 2018 meeting were revisited:

1. UCAS to continue adding international qualifications to the Tariff, in line with the current set up.
2. UCAS to stop adding international qualifications to the Tariff, but retain the current list.
3. UCAS to remove all international qualifications on the Tariff.
4. UCAS to remove all international qualifications added under the new Tariff.

The inclusion of the Irish Leaving Certificate was dependent on which option was approved, and there was an item on the agenda to discuss this.

No changes to the minutes were required.

Action log

QAG047 – Work on investigating the differences in use of the Tariff between international and UK applicants was ongoing. A new information and advice dashboard was being developed, and the use of the Tariff calculator would change depending on use of the dashboard. UCAS continued to investigate the ways UK and international applicants used the Tariff. The Tariff calculator needed to have something that represented different points in the cycle, and enhanced the user journey.

Fraser Nicoll, Information and Advice Service Lead, and Finlay Willicott, Product Executive, UCAS, joined the Group during lunch to demonstrate the dashboard. A link to the private beta was circulated to the Group.

GV QAG062

It was explained that there was an API for higher education providers who wanted to use the Tariff calculator. A member was concerned that applicants were not sure of their Tariff points until results day. UCAS committed to including this consideration as part of their broader UX work on the Tariff.

A1/18/03 Nominations list

The nominations list was circulated to the Group before the meeting. Under standard qualifications, three nominations were for BCS qualifications, and were only available as part of an apprenticeship – so, BCS had asked for them not to be included in the Tariff. It was agreed that the BCS qualifications would be removed from the Tariff nominations.

The amendments highlighted on the document were outlined, and the Group was asked for comments.

The Chair asked if an increase in guided learning hours (GLH) needed to be justified. Ofqual confirmed that this was not necessary, unless there was something unusual flagged. If the Group had any concerns, they should let Ofqual know. The Chair said a change in GLH should be considered for changing existing qualifications, in the same way as an original submission.

The Group had no concerns about other nominations.

A1/18/04 Tariff points discussion

The discussion was incorporated into the previous item. It was explained that, under the current process for allocating Tariff points and the DfE performance table moratorium, the volumes of submissions would likely decrease. However, reforms in qualifications could trigger more submissions.

A1/18/05 Tariffed qualifications which are below guided learning hours (GLH) of 80 – 90

At the last meeting, there had been a discussion about the minimum size of qualifications on the UCAS Tariff. The Group thought UCAS needed to be clear that the Tariff score was based on size band and grade band. The Group asked if an extra size band or floor level was needed. Other methods had been explored, and one potential solution identified was to create a cut-off of, for example 50 GLH, or to introduce a new size band. But that could make the calculation more complicated, and could present problems for HESA calculations.

Discussion had been started with HESA about an agreed Tariff calculation for qualifications on entry. UCAS was exploring a calculation based on the three best A levels or equivalent, as a consistent measure. Updates on this would be provided at future meetings.

The Chair was concerned that inclusion of very small qualifications within size band one would devalue qualifications that had a GLH close to the top of the band. Other members agreed, and said that putting a cap on the GLH could resolve this. Qualifications with GLH lower than the cap could still be valid but would not be included on the Tariff. UCAS clarified the Tariff was a mechanism for measuring qualifications, not a quality statement, and was continuing to reiterate this message in its communications. It was asked if Ofqual could send information on qualifications grouped by GLH. Ofqual clarified that this information was available on the Ofqual register, and GLH was not the total size of the qualification – total qualification time (TQT) was.

BJ / BH
QAG063

A member of the Group was concerned that qualifications with low GLH were at risk of being tarnished if only measured by GLH, when their TQT was high. The Chair said a deeper clarification of what qualifications were made up of was needed, including assessment methods and research time. It was difficult to reflect skills developed over time only by the size of a qualification. The award in debating was used as an example – as the GLH was low, but there was independent work, activities, and assessment that meant the TQT was high.

The Group agreed it was necessary to establish how many qualifications there were with a low GLH, and establish if there was cause for concern.

BJ / BH
QAG064

A1/18/06 Revisiting the findings of the Qualification Information Review (QIR)

It was explained that QIPs were outcomes of the QIR. Schools and universities used QIPs, and UCAS wanted to find out if the right requirements were included. A copy of the QIP would be sent to the Group with an overview of the QIR.

BJ QAG065

A1/18/07 Review of QIPS – outline of project plan and initial discussion

This item was merged with item six, and an item in any other business gave time for discussion.

A1/18/08 2019 qualification provision survey

Security marking: CONFIDENTIAL

Page 4 of 8

Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 17 April 2019

Action

The 2019 qualification provision survey had been sent out. So far, 280 responses had been received from schools and colleges across the UK. Feedback showed that qualification reform was considered embedded, and AS levels had decreased in use. The survey would be sent to the Group, and representatives from CCEA and SQA agreed to circulate it to schools and colleges they worked with.

AS QAG066

A1/18/09 End of Cycle Report

Lauren Gaines, Data Scientist, UCAS attended the meeting and presented headline figures from the [UCAS End of Cycle qualifications chapter](#). Slides were sent with the minutes.

GV QAG067

A1/18/10 International qualifications on the Tariff

As part of the ongoing review of international qualifications on the Tariff, UCAS asked HESA not to include the international qualifications on the Tariff for league table purposes. Following on from previous discussions with the group, UCAS would seek to deactivate the Tariff points for newly added international qualifications. However, historic international qualifications that were more established, such as the Irish Leaving Certificate or Advanced Placement, would remain.

UCAS felt international students were not usually aware that their qualifications were on the Tariff, but would endeavour to make communications about the changes to the Tariff clear. Any communications would be shared with the Group. The Chair asked if there was scope for using the HESA Tariff to compare what the differences would look like, and it was confirmed HESA had been asked for this.

BJ QAG068

The Group felt there would not be any problems if the communications were well done.

A1/18/11 Apprenticeships and T Levels

T Levels

UCAS was still liaising with the Department for Education (DfE) about how UCAS could allocate Tariff points to T Levels. It was thought they would be allocated in line with three A levels and an overall T Level grade of DMP – work was ongoing. Models had been explored and discussions would continue, with feedback shared with the Group at a future session.

Apprenticeships

The third apprenticeships roundtable took place in January 2019, with representation from across the UK, to try and confirm which model to take forward for tariffing apprenticeships. The roundtable looked at using a blanket score for apprenticeships that were employer-based – which excluded foundation apprenticeships (college-based). The proposed model allocated 96 Tariff points to Level 3 apprenticeships.

A challenge was finding a measure that would work for the four UK nations.

BJ QAG069

The next steps were to test the decided method with the Qualifications Advisory Group, before testing with other groups.

The Group provided a strong pushback on the proposal, stating:

- it was not justifiable to not distinguish between apprenticeships of different size and grading structures
- a single score provided applicants and students with little information, and risked inappropriate admissions decisions being made
- a single score could incentivise certain apprenticeship routes
- it was likely that universities and colleges would not acknowledge this score, which would be potentially damaging to both the Tariff and apprenticeship brand
- not allocating Tariff points to apprenticeships would not impact on the likelihood of an apprentice progressing to HE

The Group remained committed to supporting the progression of apprentices to higher education, and thought a more qualitative route may offer more benefit.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close**Next meeting date**

The next meeting date was scheduled for Tuesday 8 October 2019. An invitation would be sent to the Group with the minutes.

Membership

No nominations for the position of Deputy Chair had been received by email before the meeting. James Seymour, University of Buckingham, volunteered for the role at the meeting, and the Group unanimously agreed. James would assume the position of Deputy Chair at the next meeting.

Kate Crabtree, Qualifications Wales, was retiring, and was thanked by the Group for her contributions during her membership. QW would nominate a new attendee for future QAG meetings.

Advancement to UCAS' own qualifications data

UCAS had informally been reviewing the overall Tariff process. At present, UCAS ran the 'fast track' and 'standard' process, with qualifications nominated via various means. This resulted in a partial coverage of Tariff points across Level 3, with 26% of all qualifications listed on the Ofqual register (active and inactive) currently attracting points.

UCAS' data science capability, and the existence of the Ofqual register and similar data sets, presented the opportunity for all Level 3 qualifications to be allocated Tariff points. This would offer greater coverage to the sector, and create efficiencies in the process. UCAS was keen to gain initial views on this, stressing it was very much an area for exploration, and no commitment was in place.

Comments made by the Group included:

- Such a move would significantly increase the range of qualifications on the Tariff and end challenges around identifying which qualifications were included (such as BTECs).
- Not all nations have a composite data set of qualifications and this would need to be addressed.
- Most qualifications used by 18 year olds for entry into HE were already on the Tariff.
- Despite this not being the purpose of the Tariff, some stakeholders believed placement on the Tariff indicated value to HE. This was an area of discussion for the Group, with UCAS keen to reiterate the purpose of the Tariff.
- Consideration would need to be given to HESA/league table implications.
- The allocation of Tariff points linked to QAN within a single data set offered an opportunity to enhance data quality in this area.
- Any change would need to be linked to the delivery of MDS to offer full value.

BJ QAG071

This would be included on the agenda for the next meeting, and a paper would be generated in advance.

GV QAG072

Ofqual update

Slides were sent with the meeting.

Minutes

SEAG/19/M1

Secondary Education Advisory Group meeting
held on 13 February at UCAS, Cheltenham

Chair:	Beth Linklater	Queen Mary's College
Present:	Alison Woolley Anthony Fitzgerald David Ruck Emma Wrublewski Guy Nobes Hilary Munday Jacqui Quinney Jenny North Joe Bradbury-Walters Lucy Hemsley Mhairi Moore Nikki Foster Wendy Heydorn	The Sixth Form College Farnborough Careers Development Institute Bristol Grammar School Exeter College Marlborough College Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe Princethorpe College Birmingham Metropolitan College HELOA Bournside School and Sixth Form College, Cheltenham School Leaders Scotland Anglo European School Sevenoaks School
Guest attending:	Helen Parker	Teaching Excellence Framework Review
Apologies:	Dan Bishop Emma Bell Nilay Eyre Philip Davis Roger Evans Sally Armstrong Steve McArdle Victoria Sherwood	South Wilts Grammar School for Girls Stratford Girls Grammar School Kings Education Bournemouth St Cyre's School, Penarth Bridgend College Bishop Wordsworth's School Association of School and College Leaders Cheltenham Ladies' College
UCAS in attendance:	Ange James Callie Hawkins Finlay Willicott Fraser Nicoll Georgina Venman Hashmita Patel Louise Evans	Business Customer Service Adviser (observing) Adviser Experience Manager Product Executive Service Lead (Information and Advice) Provider Engagement Coordinator Business Customer Service Manager Head of Adviser and Provider Experience

Security marking: PUBLIC

Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 09 April 2019

Michael Moffat Lead Data Scientist (observing)
Nicola Turner Policy Executive (observing)
Samantha Sheppard Product Owner (Technology)

Action

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted. The Chair announced to the Group that Philip Davis from St Cyre's School, Penarth had passed away. Louise Evans, Head of Adviser and Provider Experience, UCAS, said she would send a card to the school to pass on to his family from UCAS and the Secondary Education Advisory Group.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. The Group agreed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Action log

SEAG149 – this action was still in progress and would be updated in June.

A1/18/03 Operational update

A paper was circulated prior to the meeting. Callie Hawkins, Adviser Experience Manager, UCAS, presented the update. The 15 January 2019 deadline was typically a busy time, with a total of 58,998 applications submitted on the day – 59% of these were from UCAS registered centres. The UCAS Customer Experience Centre took 6,500 calls from undergraduate applicants, which was a drop of 10% on the previous year.

A member of the Group said the deadline was becoming less important to students, and others agreed.

A1/18/04 Adviser experience update

Callie Hawkins, Adviser Experience Manager, UCAS, presented the update to the Group. Slides were sent with the minutes. The Group was shown changes to the adviser portal since the meeting in November, separated by pre-submission and post-submission functionalities.

GV
SEAG160

The adviser portal for the 2020 cohort would go live on 19 March 2019, and Apply for students would go live on 21 May 2019. During this transition, advisers would use the old system for their current, 2019 cohort, and the new 2020 cohort would go through the new system.

Access to sign in would remain the same, through ucas.com, but there would be a single sign on for the new adviser portal. All staff requiring access to the adviser portal would need to register an account with UCAS. UCAS would set up the primary contact's permissions, and they could then manage their centre's set up. The primary contact would need to add staff and set their permissions before they could access the portal. All users would need to verify their email before accessing the portal, and this would not come from UCAS. The email address they needed to 'white list' on their firewall was mail-service@gigya-raas.com.

Details of the paid for reporting products, for example, the Progression Report and Competitor Report, would be available under the 'Data and reporting' tile of the adviser portal.

A link to the adviser portal user guide was given in the presentation. Users would need to register separately for the live environment after the 19 March launch, even if they had registered for the test and training environment. There were online training modules available to help users with specific tasks on the portal. It was clarified that there was no change to how students linked to a centre.

With the introduction of functionality to enable the tracking of offers and decisions in the portal as a free service, UCAS had considered the development of further complementary data products for advisers. The Application Status Report could also be downloaded from the portal, and was produced in real-time. The Final Destination Report would also be populated in real-time, and the data would be accessible for advisers in the following cycle. The free Predicted Grade Accuracy Report would be available for A levels, and a timeline for its development was in progress. The Group said it wanted to see International Baccalaureate and T Levels on the report – and UCAS confirmed it would look into this once the A level version had been produced accurately.

The paid data packages available were gold (£275), silver (£200), and bronze (£50) – the details of what these included were given to the Group. A new monthly key statistics report would also be available in all the packages.

The Group was asked what it found useful for key statistics data. A member said they wanted to see subject numbers, and the Chair said it would be useful to see how many applied, when comparing to the previous year. Another member said they wanted to include subject categories, and discussions may need to be had about, for example,

whether veterinary and medicine would be included in the same category. The top five subject and provider choices at their centre would also be useful. Another member said the most useful statistic for them was a breakdown of qualification type – for example, BTEC, A level, and Access level, but not necessarily down to subject level. A link to unconditional offers would be included, so advisers could see who received them.

There would be quick links to students who had no offers, students who received offers from all their choices, and students who received an unconditional offer. Before going into development, UCAS could potentially mock up what pre-submission data would look like, to get feedback from the Group.

CH
SEAG161

The destination map was shown to the Group, including drive time to university. The Group said they would like to share this with their students, and would prefer poster sized print-outs to show parents in presentation format. They were interested in how many of their students went to specific providers.

A member of the Group suggested broad categories, for example, arts and humanities, then narrowed down. Another was concerned there was a danger of funneling students, by giving them too much specific information, but most of the Group felt the destination map was useful.

The Chair suggested group members should email Callie Hawkins with preferred display formats.

ALL
SEAG162

Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) review

Helen Parker, an adviser working with Dame Shirley Pearce DBE, and the Department for Education (DfE) on the TEF review, attended the meeting. The presentation was circulated prior to the meeting. It was clarified that the review was independent, but with input from the DfE.

A summary was given of the purpose of the TEF – to recognise and reward high quality teaching in higher education. An independent review of the TEF was currently underway. Parallel to this, subject-level TEF pilots were taking place, with a view to introducing subject-level TEF for the 2021 entry cycle (currently TEF only operates at provider-level). It was clarified that a university could choose to not be involved, but if it was being TEF assessed, it would achieve either achieve bronze, silver, or gold.

The assessment considered a combination of student experience and outcomes data, and a written submission from the providers to give additional data to support the assessment. A panel of students, academics, and widening participation experts would

assess the university and decide on the award. The university's award would be published on ucas.com.

The framework showed teaching quality, learning environment, student outcomes and learning gain. About 50% of providers achieved the silver award.

A member of the Group asked if the TEF review team were talking to current university students and applicants, because at their school the applicants didn't care about a provider's TEF award when making their higher education decisions. For example, a bronze award at a Russell Group wouldn't deter the applicant from going to that university. Another member agreed and said the parents also felt there was enough data they looked at on Unistats already. The Chair suggested they should observe teaching at the provider to gain the right insight. A member of the Group had sent their comments prior to the meeting, and said their students valued the course level data from Unistats, and he was concerned about the grouping of subjects which contributed to variations within, for example, the longitudinal educational outcomes. Another member of the Group said they didn't understand the criteria and asked what the correlation between widening access and teaching excellence was. It was confirmed that the data was used to consider the different cohorts of students involved. A Group member commented that the widening access principles, for example, free school meals or parental income, would not have an impact on teaching excellence, so perhaps the wording should be reviewed.

The TEF review looked at student services as well as academic services. It was highlighted that the provider notes were useful, but the general consensus was that the title 'Teaching Excellence Framework' was a misnomer. The Group found it interesting from an adviser perspective, but remarked that their students wouldn't be interested.

A member of the Group said it would be useful to, rather than having the bronze, silver, gold award, to include a score out of 100 to see where they sat within the award categories. Another Group member commented that the bronze measure started too low. The Chair was concerned that this information was being pushed, and could deter applicants from attending open days. The Chair said that, from a parent's perspective, the happiness of the applicant would usually come before the status of the provider. A member of the Group said that there were extra factors universities had, for example, apprenticeships and summer schools, that should be considered and included in the assessment.

Further comments could be sent to TEF.IndependentReview@education.gov.uk.

A1/18/05 Information and advice

Fraser Nicoll, Information and Advice Service Lead, UCAS, and Finlay Willicott, Product Executive, UCAS, attended the meeting to present the information and advice dashboard.

The project had been ongoing since September 2018, and Fraser showed the Group the information and advice dashboard, which he wanted to gather feedback on. The aim was to have all advisers onboarding their students onto the dashboard by September 2019, for 2020 entry.

The Group was shown historical images of what ucas.com looked like 20 years ago, up to the present day, to demonstrate how UCAS had improved its information and advice, and also wanted to be the 'go-to' place for students.

The idea was to enable students to understand the breadth of options, but have the tools to narrow these down easily, to help them make decisions. Users could enter some basic information, for example, where they wanted to live. Once details had been collected, a personalised dashboard was generated for the user.

The dashboard would enable students to explore course options, universities and colleges, and favourite courses and universities in one place. It would change depending on the user's actions and selections.

The dashboard contained widgets, including a calendar, notes, and personal statement builder. Fraser explained they were trying to cater for three types of students – those who knew what they wanted to do but not where to go, those who knew where they wanted to go but not what to do, and those who didn't know anything.

Course information would also be included – for example, assessment types and modules, along with more about the university or college location - city or rural, seaside, and so on. UCAS wanted to include provider pages, assisted by the sector, so students would be able to view their details. Student satisfaction and the average graduate salary would be displayed on the provider cover, with more details inside. The offer rate would not be displayed, but an offer range would be included.

A member of the Group asked if there was a way of factoring in scenarios when applicants entered incorrect qualification or predicted grades. It was confirmed these could be easily changed on ucas.com, and were automatically converted into Tariff points.

UCAS had been out on engagement visits, to investigate what widening participation information it could gather, to identify these students. Whether they used, for example, a postcode was difficult. UCAS needed to be careful on the questions it asked, and where to identify widening participation applicants.

The applicant could favourite, narrow down, and organise their five choices, which could then be fed directly into UCAS Apply. The team hoped to be able to provide reporting from this product for advisers.

The Group was asked what priorities it would like to see. A member said it would be useful to know which of their students had started to research on the dashboard. The Group was also interested in which tools their students were using on the dashboard, and where they were in the 'journey'. It was suggested that this could be included in the pre-submission report.

The Group was shown how, by entering the A levels a student was studying, they could see what other people with similar profiles went on to do. The dashboard also included what people studied at A level to go on to study a specific course.

A member of the Group suggested a PowerPoint step-by-step presentation or a video guide to using the dashboard would be useful.

The link to the demonstration environment was sent to the Group with the minutes.

GV
SEAG163

A1/18/06 Developments of products and services

Application management service (AMS)

Samantha Sheppard, Product Owner, UCAS, attended the meeting to show the Group the testing and training environment for AMS. The environment she showed was for postgraduate, but questions would be similar in the undergraduate version. The education history section would be linked to an applicant, so they could reapply in the future with the same education details.

The Group was given an explanation of the changes compared to the old system. Personal details and contact details were cut down to key information. Work experience, education, residency and nationality, English language skills, supporting information (including widening participation), diversity and inclusion were all separate sections. The work experience section could include placements, paid work, and volunteering.

In the residency and nationality section, higher education providers would be able to work out the fee status of the applicant. Extra questions were added for international

students, but UK domicile students wouldn't see this to avoid confusion. In this section a non-UK applicant could upload a copy of their passport. UCAS would virus scan all uploaded documents, and the file size limit would be 5MB. An applicant could upload documents after applying. A member of the Group commented that sometimes, in cases of dual nationality or when a parent was not from the UK, problems could arise. It was explained that any UK nationality entered would automatically hide the passport question. For dual nationality, if a provider requested a copy of the passport, it may have to be facilitated outside of AMS, because they would have to change status to a non-UK national to see the passport upload. UCAS was aware of the difference in Scottish law, and had engaged with Scottish providers to work on this. They had approved the questions for go-live, with the understanding that some cases may require uploads outside of AMS.

HESA residential status questions remained the same. But UCAS had added further questions about visa status. This section also gave the applicant the option to upload copies of their visa and/or residence permit. UCAS automatically renamed files in this section to include the applicant's Personal ID in the title. Additional questions were included, for example, have you previously held a visa to study in the UK? It was clarified that UK students won't see these additional questions. By including these questions on AMS, the applicant would only be asked once in a standardised way, rather than receiving differently worded questions from different providers. The Group agreed this would be useful.

The Group was shown the finance and funding pages. A student loan company would be included in this section, and instead of codes (f1, f2) a titled list would be included to enhance understanding. This would be asked per choice, to allow for courses that required different funding, for example a scholarship. A Group member suggested including information on this page, emphasising the importance of applying for a student loan. UCAS was working on the help text.

The supporting information section title was being reconsidered, to clarify its purpose. This section covered widening participation questions, and the help text was being written. Care responsibility questions were also included, and the applicant could use this section to let providers know if they needed more flexible schedules. An estranged student question would also be added to this section. The Group felt that mental health questions should also be considered for this section. Nicola Turner, Policy Executive, UCAS, confirmed that the Policy Team was working on the disability questions, and the potential for including mental health questions alongside.

Providers would be allowed to add their own questions to the application, to reduce the number of questions being asked outside of UCAS Apply. The number of questions was not yet confirmed but there would be three types: upload (for example, portfolios) up to 24 uploads per question, multiple choice (for example, to select

accommodation), and free text to allow the applicant to answer specific information under 500 words.

A member of the Group remarked that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge should be encouraged to add their questions on the system. Providers had fed back to that they would like to add between 10 and 20 questions to the application. The Group commented that veterinary schools usually included a lot of questions, and it would be good if these could be implemented into the system, to make them visible to advisers. It was suggested that the number of questions should be tied to the choice, so courses like medicine included more questions.

When UCAS went live with provider questions, trends would be analysed and if course specific criteria could be applied would be investigated. It was up to the providers, who would need to be open for UCAS to display the sort of questions they would ask. A member commented that applicants got fatigued from receiving emails from different sources asking different questions, and having it in one place would be useful.

A member of the Group said if there were too many questions, or they were too difficult, it could very well delay applications being sent in on time, and place an extra burden on advisers. Perhaps these questions could be asked after the initial applications process, but within the UCAS scheme. It was clarified that questions could be marked as mandatory or non-mandatory.

Applicants would need to know beforehand how many questions they may be asked to be prepared.

The Chair said that veterinary schools had external questionnaires with a timeout as part of the selection process and it would be difficult to include this kind of process in the UCAS Apply system.

The Group agreed that the option to input predicted modular grades would be useful.

UCAS was looking at producing step-by-step guides for advisers and students. By visiting the training environment for postgraduate AMS, the Group could see how it was changing.

Clearing

UCAS was looking at the recommendations from the Clearing Working Group. Nothing had been officially decided, but the recommendations were shown to the Group, to discuss how they impacted applicants and advisers.

Self-release

An applicant had five choices, and it was understood that some browsed Clearing even when they had offers or places. When they found a place in Clearing they wanted to change to, applicants had to contact the provider holding their offer to be released, which caused delays.

Self-release allowed applicants to self-serve and speed up the process. Guidance would have to be carefully considered to make this possible. UCAS wanted to steer away from the word 'release' and identified examples of when an applicant may want to use self-release, for example, when looking for a university or college place closer to home.

If an applicant didn't want to go to their firm or insurance choice, they could release themselves from their firm and insurance choices. It would be essential for UCAS to make the applicant aware of what this means (they would lose both). A two-step process was recommended, so the applicant would be sent a code to enter to proceed.

Providers wanted to know reasons for applicants doing this on a more detailed level, so work would be done to establish what reasons applicants could have, and how that information would be collected. However, the applicant could choose not to disclose. The Group approved of the two-step process of being released. It was commented that the insurance choice was sometimes an option applicants added for the sake of it, but then decided they didn't want to go, so more guidance around this would be useful.

UCAS couldn't confirm when this would be launched, but it was anticipated for the 2020 cycle.

I'm still looking flag

This feature was recommended to make the verbal offers made in Clearing visible. Applicants not eligible for Clearing still looked around and secured verbal offers outside UCAS and this was invisible to advisers, UCAS, and the offer holding provider.

The applicant would be in a negative status (for example, declined all or rejected by all) or in an unconditional state. It was originally conditional or unconditional, but after the meeting it was confirmed to be only for unconditional. From 1 July, the applicant could have a way of saying they were still looking for places, to see what was available. The Chair said the date was fine, but there would be a peak on results day. The flag would enable data sharing, so UCAS could record offers that weren't made through UCAS before.

The firm and insurance choices would be able to see if an applicant was looking, but the provider couldn't change the existing offer. Feedback from providers said that the applicant and provider were in a contract, and this would encourage them to break it. It was also raised that this would happen anyway, but wouldn't be visible without a way of going through UCAS.

Pushing an offer in Clearing

An applicant with a 'looking' flag would be able to receive offers pushed from a provider, after talking to them directly. A provider intending to send an offer could use the applicant's Personal ID to view their details, but only for those who had the flag on could then push an unconditional or conditional offer to them.

It was raised that this flag being active from the 1 July could encourage poaching. The Clearing Working Group thought it happened already, but it wasn't visible, which is why they came up with the recommendation. Some of the Group felt there would be a lack of support during this time as schools had already broken up, and the timing could mean that BTEC or Scottish Higher students could be at an advantage. The potential for misuse to gain, for example, first choice accommodation was also a concern. The Group's concerns about pushing offers to applicants would be fed back to the Clearing Working Group.

Pushed offers would have an expiry date, set at a minimum to 17:00 the following working day (including the Saturday after A level results day). Pushed offers would be collected alongside the firm and Insurance choices. The firm and insurance choice providers could see the flag and know the applicant was receiving pushed offers, but no offer details would be visible to them. Likewise, for the providers pushing offers. When an applicant accepted a pushed offer, all other offers would be declined, including the firm and insurance, and any other pushed offers. If the applicant decided they wanted to keep their original choices, all pushed offers would either expire or could be declined. It was confirmed that the applicant could still go through the process again should they want to. Providers were concerned with firm offers not being taken seriously if this option was available, but they liked the visibility it would bring to these types of offers.

The Group said it was similar to a post-qualification admissions solution. A concern was that the more widely known and used this became, the original two offers would be at risk of not being taken seriously. It was explained that this process would replace Adjustment. The Group had mixed views. Some members were concerned about applicants going through this process in a panic on results day, or on a day when there were no staff to assist, but other members said it was very suitable. Concerns were mostly about the applicant mindset.

Action

A member of the Group suggested going live on A level results day Instead of 1 July. It could reduce irrational A level decisions, but meant BTEC and Scottish Higher students would have to wait. Another Group member said that would be a backward step.

UCAS was happy to receive thoughts and feedback from the Group, who could email S.sheppard@ucas.ac.uk. A copy of the slides was sent with the minutes, and it was clarified that they were not to be circulated to anyone outside of the Group.

GV
SEAG164

A1/18/07 Super-curricular

The Group was asked about their understanding of 'super-curricular activities' for applicants to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. A member of the Group said it was not just for these universities, as activities were completed around subject elements by applicants across the board. The only space for applicants to include these on their application was in the personal statement. Oxford University wanted to know if it was appropriate for them to release clear guidance for super-curricular activities. Anthony Fitzgerald, The Careers Institute, said it had its own guidance, and would send it to Callie Hawkins at UCAS. The Chair thought the universities of Oxford and Cambridge should be providing more information.

AF
SEAG165

A member of the Group was concerned about publishing a list or providing guidance, because it could increase the pressure put on schools for these activities to be staff-led. This would be particularly difficult for schools with few Oxford and Cambridge applicants. It was suggested that 'super-curricular' could be added to the UCAS applicant journey. The Chair said Unifrog was good for recording this, and emphasised the student-driven nature of these activities. The Chair also stressed it was important to keep the guidance subject-specific. Another member said that Oxford and Cambridge should not be the only universities providing super-curricular information.

A1/18/08 Any other business

Terms of reference

The Secondary Education Advisory Group terms of reference was not in line with other UCAS advisory groups. Other groups included a written rule: If a group member did not attend two meetings or send apologies (or any communication) they could be automatically resigned. The Group approved of this addition to the terms of reference.

Membership

There were some members whose terms were due to expire. These members would be written to individually and asked if they would like to extend their membership for

Action

another year, to assist with feedback during the launch of the adviser portal. A member of the Group suggested those who chose to leave could be invited to stay on a list if they were still willing to be contacted at the school for, for example, visits or roadshows.

It was suggested that the meetings could start at 10:30 instead of 11:00. The Group agreed, and in the case of a full agenda this could be implemented.

Minutes

UTT/19/M1

The UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group meeting
held on 26 March 2019 at UCAS, Cheltenham

Chair:	Lisa Bowen	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Present:	Abby Evans Chris Whitehead Jan Rowe Julie Lambourne Simon Smith Suzanne Lawson Ursula Clarke Vanessa Combeer	AGCAS (on behalf of Sabrina Altariva) All Saints' Primary School Teacher Training Partnership Liverpool John Moores University University of Exeter Nottingham Trent University University of Worcester University of Cambridge University of Reading
Apologies:	Emma Hollis James Noble-Rogers Karen Hudson Philip Bloor Sabrina Altariva Tim Connole	NASBTT UCET Northumbria University Sheffield Hallam University AGCAS Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership & St Peter's High School
UCAS in attendance:	Andy Frampton Ben Jordan Georgina Venman Hannah Martin Harry Haines Madeleine Teakle	Senior Relationship Manager Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager Provider Engagement Coordinator Relationship Manager, UCAS Teacher Training Service Delivery Partner (Admissions) Business Customer Service Team Leader

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The Group reviewed the minutes, and they were accepted as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting.

UTT110 – decisions could not be made until post-transition. The action was left in progress as an ongoing action.

UTT117 – Hannah Martin, UCAS Teacher Training Relationship Manager, was regularly updating the website, so the Group was encouraged to keep feeding back. The action was closed, but the Group should continue to send feedback to Hannah.

UTT131 – the action was ongoing.

A1/18/03 Operational update

Harry Haines, Service Delivery Partner, UCAS, informed the Group there had been an 11% increase in offers made after the introduction of a pilot scheme to reduce the reject by default (RBD) time over the summer period, from 40 to 20 days.

A member said the shorter timeframe was more useful to them as a provider, and it was better for the applicants. Some negative feedback has been received by UCAS, from applicants who could not attend an interview, and some Lead Schools had struggled to make a decision within 20 days. Another Group member was concerned that the 20-day window presented challenges when processing applications for apprenticeships listed through the scheme, due to the additional information required, but acknowledged this represented a very small proportion of the total courses.

It was commented that feedback could be requested in the bulletin, but the Group was not convinced this would evoke a representative response. UCAS suggested continuing with a 20-day window on review. The Chair said it differed for providers, but for applicants the positives outweighed the negatives. UCAS confirmed it could be adapted year-on-year if it was not effective.

A1/18/04 Feedback from the satisfaction survey and UCAS Teacher Training Annual Provider Update (APU)

Hannah Martin, UCAS Teacher Training Relationship Manager, UCAS, presented the feedback to the Group.

The survey ran from the 4 October until 8 November, and there had been an increase in responses since 2017. The majority of responses were from schools and SCITTs. Generally, the outcome of the survey confirmed UCAS' customer service was strong, but there improvements to systems and communications were needed.

The key areas of dissatisfaction were:

Technical developments – responding to interview decisions in Track and the application were highlighted in the feedback as areas for improvement. The application itself could not be altered, but guidance could be written to help applicants. It was confirmed that responding to interview decisions could be added to a backlog. However, it would not be a high priority, and this wouldn't guarantee delivery.

RBD dates – there was mixed feedback, and UCAS was unable to decide based on the survey results. A member said they had received feedback from applicants who did not know they had a deadline date. Although an applicant's deadline was displayed in Track, it was not guaranteed to be read. The visibility of RDB dates would be improved, and guidance on how to manage courses over the summer RBD could be given if providers did not want to recruit over this period.

Signing in – as the application systems were being split across UCAS and the Department for Education (DfE), it was becoming more complex for users to know where to sign in for which services. UCAS was working on improving signposting, guidance on signing in, and management of users.

References and safeguarding – this had been a prominent point of feedback in the survey. Respondents expressed the need for a safeguarding question in the reference, and the DfE had also requested this feature. UCAS was concerned that, if added, the information would not be validated.

The Group was shown improvements that had been made, and the presentation was sent to the Group with the minutes.

GV UTT148

UCAS was working closely with the User Experience Team on the website and communications. Feedback should be sent to Hannah Martin at h.martin@ucas.ac.uk.

Annual Provider Update (APU)

The APU as held at UCAS on 28 November 2018, and was also livestreamed. Unfortunately, there had been some technical difficulties which affected remote attendees. Some providers felt they lacked awareness of the event, and there was criticism of the presentation by the DfE, as some thought it lacked the information needed.

The event was well attended, and delegates appreciated the opportunity to network and engage in breakout sessions. Determining the location was a challenge, but UCAS felt it was important to have one central update, rather than holding smaller regional updates. The location and structure would be reviewed.

The Chair said that the flexibility of having a remote attendance option was useful, and had boosted the attendance numbers. The next update would be dependent on how the DfE transition proceeded – engagement was important, but how this would be facilitated depended on the DfE.

The Chair asked the Group if they had had experienced issues with the transition so far. One member thought it was fine – except some applicants struggled with the new search. Another member agreed, except they had to update all their training programmes. The Group observed an increase in Schools Direct and international applicants. It was highlighted that the new DfE search tool sometimes made providers harder to find –, for example, Merseyside postcodes did not come up under a Liverpool search. A lack of consistency was observed between the UCAS and DfE search results, but these were towards the beginning of the year. It was confirmed that if this happened again the provider should contact Hannah Martin, who would escalate the issue.

Members of the Group were using Skype for international recruitment. Ben Jordan, Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager, UCAS, asked the Group if they accepted international qualifications. Members said they only accepted limited qualifications, and most international types were not included.

The DfE's changes to the personal statement were raised, and members of the Group said that headlines for what should be included would be useful for applicants who were not sure what to enter. Students were encouraged to get experience, but the DfE did not let providers specify that this was required.

A1/18/05 Efficiency list

The Chair raised this item with the Group. The efficiency list was first commissioned three years ago by the Change Steering Group, to ascertain if UCAS could identify

efficiencies within their digital acceleration development work. The Group reviewed the list to identify if any of the original efficiencies were no longer relevant, with a view to UCAS sharing these with the DfE for its teacher training application service.

UTT1 – the website had been improved to inform applicants about steps that needed to be taken to withdraw an application. UCAS discussed developing a report to send to providers to show who had withdrawn, but it was too large to implement. The Chair said a technical flag would be useful for providers, to show when an applicant had withdrawn.

UTT2 – this efficiency had been fed into the new application management service product across UCAS schemes, and providers had been engaged with webinars. The comments on this efficiency would be updated to reflect this.

AF UTT149

UTT3 – the Group felt the application question regarding how the applicant heard about the programme was still relevant.

UTT4 – the Group felt the efficiency would alleviate issues with qualifications.

UTT5 – the reference page on the website had been improved to reflect the reference requirements. There was also information and links on references in the trigger-based emails. Members said the awareness of grade requirements for UCAS Teacher Training was poor. Harry Haines, Service Delivery Partner, UCAS, agreed to look into the inclusion of guidance on predicted grades.

HH UTT150

UTT6 – the Group felt this efficiency was still required.

UTT7 – linking the accrediting university to Schools Direct programmes was considered to be useful.

UTT8 – Schools Direct providers operating on a campus basis affected the provider allocations from the DfE, which made the efficiency difficult to implement. A member said that if an accrediting provider did not offer a specific programme, but its partner schools did, it would be useful for them to be able to move across without having to go through Apply 2. UCAS explained there was a manual process that could move across applicants in exceptional circumstances, but not to handle a larger volume of applicants. UCAS was working on programme relationships across all schemes, and this could be brought to a later meeting.

HM
UTT151

UTT9 – the Group thought this efficiency was still required.

UTT10 – this efficiency would be revisited after the transition.

The Chair suggested revisiting the efficiency list on an annual basis. The list was circulated to the Group with the minutes.

DG UTT152

GV UTT153

A1/18/06 Transition update

Ben Jordan, Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager, UCAS, attended the meeting to update the Group about the transition of teacher training admissions services in England to the DfE following the release of the [teacher recruitment and retention strategy](#).

Course search and course collection

UCAS had been working with the DfE on the transition of UCAS Teacher Training since early 2018, with a DfE-owned course search facility going live in October 2018. The transfer of the course collection and management (Net.update) facility was due from April 2019. As part of this, the DfE would be taking responsibility for course collection for provision in England, and associated customer support.

The DfE's onboarding system would allow providers to enter this information themselves to remove the course validation process. It was clarified that rolling over of courses would be different – rather than them being manually rolled over, there would be an option in the DfE 'Publish' tool, allowing providers to choose which courses to rollover. Potential risks and scenarios had been discussed and, so far, there were not any concerns with the new functionality.

A member said, in the past they had needed permission to recruit. This would still be the same, and if a programme did not receive an allocation, they would be able to remove it. Providers would use the 'Publish' tool for the actions they had previously carried out in UCAS' collection tool.

Apply

The teacher recruitment and retention strategy confirmed that the DfE wished to develop their own application service, with a small-scale pilot going live during the 2019/20 recruitment cycle. Prior to this, extensive discussion between UCAS and the DfE looked at how the current admissions service could be enhanced. UCAS would still provide a teacher training offering, and would be reviewing its teacher training strategy accordingly.

Following the 2019/20 pilot, it was likely that the DfE service would adopt a larger share of the applicant group. Discussions regarding the make-up of this were ongoing. UCAS had received concerns around the fragmentation of the service for applicants, as most had experienced the UCAS application system previously. UCAS would continue to offer information services, and was exploring the teacher training provision for Wales and Scotland. The Group shared this concern.

UCAS would support the handover of teacher training admission services in England to the DfE. The UCAS Teacher Training bulletin would continue to be the primary method of communication to customers. In addition, UCAS had introduced the DfE development teams to technology vendors.

Future of UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group

UCAS would be keen to continue working with the Group, to link with development of the next UCAS Teacher Training strategy, and to identify what UCAS' offer could be in the future. The Group was asked for initial feedback or ideas.

UCAS felt it was important for the Group to remain engaged during the transition, and although some members were due to leave, they were given the opportunity to stay during this time. After the transition, the Group's purpose might change.

A member asked if the DfE would be involved in the advisory group. It was explained that the DfE had their own engagement channels, but it was suggested that a member of the DfE could be invited to some meetings, particularly during the transition. Members of the Group were concerned that the DfE's service team were not accessible enough, and could only be contacted by email. UCAS agreed to share this feedback with HM the DfE.

UTTAG154

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Date of the next meeting

The date would be confirmed and circulated to the Group with the minutes. After the meeting the date was agreed for Wednesday 12 June 2019.

GV UTT155

Minutes

TG/19/M1

Technology Group meeting

held on Wednesday 6 March 2019 at Sheffield Hallam University

Chair:	Liz Shillito	Lancaster University
Present:	Chris Hallisay Emily Kreetzer Fiona Sanders Garry Main Glyn Jeffries Judy Wilson Lisa Machin Mike McConnell Rebecca Freir Sarah Swindell Sion Pennant Jones Suzanne Grosvenor	University of Southampton University of East Anglia University of Leicester University of the Highlands and Islands University of Sheffield De Montfort University Nottingham Trent University University of Aberdeen Imperial College London Sheffield Hallam University Aberystwyth University Newcastle University
Apologies:	Alex Pescott Ben Stone Joy Bate Peter Fox Richard Wilcox	University of Portsmouth University College Birmingham Liverpool John Moores University The University of Manchester Coventry University
UCAS in attendance:	Adam Glaudot Clare Cozens Georgina Venman	Technology Relationship Manager Technology Relationship Manager Provider Engagement Coordinator
UCAS via Video Conference:	Andy Irving Claire Howson Samantha Sheppard Peter Evans	Head of Technology Service Management Senior Product Owner Product Owner Relationship Manager

Security marking: CONFIDENTIAL

Document owner: Groups and Forums Secretariat

Last updated: 02 May 2019

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting.

TG037 – this action was ongoing, and members should email Groups and Forums, or the Chair, if they had any ideas for the agenda.

TG121 – TAG2 was submitted (including the suggestion that exam results were flagged subject to embargo). It was analysed, and was rejected because it would take up too much resource. TAG2 was added to the backlog for the application management service (AMS), and the action was closed.

TG130 – one expression of interest was received, and a new member would join the Group in June. The action remained in progress and it was clarified that providers using specific student record systems were needed.

TG139 – members were thanked for sending data governance contact details through. The action remained in progress and members were encouraged to send the details to Adam Glaudot, Technology Relationship Manager at UCAS. It was clarified that this contact would function as IT security or technical security for providers who didn't have a data governance colleague.

TG143 – Kate Bevan, Product Owner, was handling deliveries on the backlog. It was suggested the Senior Product Manager should attend a future meeting to discuss, but this position was vacant at UCAS. The action remained open and would be picked up when someone was appointed.

TG145 – webinars were being delivered for the AMS. The Group would continue to be updated, and the action remained in progress.

TG150 – members were thanked for their feedback regarding an outage period proposal. UCAS couldn't find a day that would work for all, so the work was ongoing. Tuesdays were good for most, but would be nearly a week after the provider bulletin, including the reminder, would be circulated. Fridays were ruled out by the Group at the last meeting. Another group ruled out Thursdays due to end of week reporting.

A1/18/03 Survey

There were 25 responses to the survey from technical colleagues. Overall responses decreased from 2017 (by 24), but the number of responses from technical colleagues remained the same.

The overall sentiment was positive, and there was 84% overall satisfaction. The presentation was sent with the minutes and members were encouraged to send any comments and ideas about how to increase the number of responses to the Technology Relationship Manager at UCAS. GV TG152

High satisfaction was recorded for UCAS testing and training environments, and customer service. Dissatisfaction was noted on sign ins, accessing data services, and the UCAS website. Improvements to the consistency of information and the speed of responses across teams was needed.

A1/18/04 AD2020

AD2020 was the delivery vehicle for making changes to existing legacy products. Because UCAS was focusing on the delivery of the AMS, there was only a small pool of resources for technical changes.

Integrated multi-destination platform

The platform was intended to replace multiple systems across multiple schemes with a single platform. Products already delivered included:

- the collection tool
- course search tool
- UCAS Postgraduate AMS for applicants and providers
- agent portal for UCAS Postgraduate customers
- adviser portal, which launched on 19 March 2019

Leverages latest technology

UCAS was building on the strategic decision to move to cloud services. The cloud suited the UCAS business model, for example, it was possible to dynamically amend capacity according to demand, so flex up at key operational times and only pay for what was needed. UCAS was working towards achieving better resiliency and business continuity options, to enable the distribution of systems to avoid single points of failure.

Modern development standards

UCAS was using scaled agile rather than waterfall deliveries.

Modern Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that used the latest security models and industry standards would replace existing connections to/from providers (xml-link/odbc-link). In conjunction with latest technology there was almost no downtime required to release new functionality.

Interconnectivity opportunities

Opportunities were created as a result of using the latest industry standards and technology. By using industry standards, UCAS could look at new opportunities to interface with other partners and suppliers that use the same standards. These opportunities could be actioned once replacements for existing systems were delivered.

AD2020 Deliveries

UCAS described recent deliveries for AD2020, which were detailed on the slides.

The process of updating timestamps had been automated. Users of odbc-link and xml-link could send a request for the timestamp on an application to be reset, direct to the system. This was available for testing in the training environment, and was delivered on 2 March. The Chair asked if a timestamp updated by a different provider would be changed on their system. There had not been reports of such an impact, but it was agreed this would be investigated and confirmed. The Group heard that the development automated a manual process, and any impact should have already manifested. The technical briefing document would confirm how the timestamp worked, and it was sent in the provider bulletin. For providers with Tribal, nothing was needed to be done for this change.

AG TG153

Character validation in link products would return an error to the provider in student record system. It was explained this would affect the reference data, and information would be included in the bulletin to let providers know when they needed to update their reference data. Characters flagged would present an error message.

There was a new web link user verification process with a delivery target for 15 May 2019. When the new accounts were set up, users had to go into web-link for institution updates to verify their account. This was being changed, so the verification step was moved to web-link for application processing.

A1/18/05 Round table

Providers reported their current developments to the Group.

A1/18/06 UCAS products and services**Agent portal**

Claire Howson, Senior Product Owner at UCAS joined the meeting via Skype. The agent portal was demonstrated to the Group.

Application Management Service (AMS)**Self-release**

An applicant had five choices, and it was understood that some browsed Clearing even when they had offers or places. When they found a place in Clearing they wanted to change to, they had to contact the provider holding their offer to be released, which caused delays. The idea behind self-release was to enable applicants to self-serve and speed up the process. Guidance would have to be carefully considered to make this possible. An example of when an applicant may want to use self-release was when looking for a university place closer to home.

If an applicant didn't want to go to their firm or insurance choice, they could go ahead and release themselves. It would be essential for UCAS to make the applicant aware of what this meant (i.e. to lose both choices). A two-step process was recommended, so the applicant would be sent a code to enable them to proceed.

Providers wanted to know reasons for applicants doing this on a more detailed level, so work would be done to establish what reasons applicants could have, and how that information would be collected. If this information was collected by UCAS, it could be utilised, but the applicant could choose not to share it.

This feature would be available from 1 July 2019 for applicants with unconditional and conditional offers.

'I'm still looking' flag

This feature was recommended to make the verbal offers made in Clearing more visible, and to closely monitor Clearing activity. Applicants not eligible for Clearing could still look around and secure verbal offers outside of UCAS, and this is invisible to advisers, UCAS, and the offer-holding provider.

The applicant would be in a negative status (for example, declined all or rejected by all), or in an unconditional state. It was originally conditional or unconditional, but after the meeting it was confirmed to be only for unconditional. The idea was that, from 1 July, the applicant could have a way of saying they were still looking for places, to see what was available.

The firm and insurance choice would be able to see if an applicant had turned on the flag, but the provider couldn't change the existing offer. Feedback from providers said that the applicant and provider were in a contract, and this would encourage them to break that contract. It was also highlighted that this would happen anyway, but wouldn't be visible without a way of going through UCAS. UCAS would provide guidance to raise applicants' awareness that they would be breaking a contract.

Pushing an offer in clearing

Conditional firm applicants wouldn't be able to receive pushed offers like other applicants who put on the 'looking' flag. Other applicants with a 'looking' flag would be able to receive offers pushed from a provider, after talking to a provider directly. A provider intending to send an offer could use the applicant's Personal ID number to look up the application, but only for those who had the flag on, and could then push an unconditional or conditional offer to them. It was suggested that this flag being active from 1 July could encourage poaching. The Clearing Working Group thought it had happened already, but that it wasn't visible, which is why they came up with the recommendation.

Pushed offers would have an expiry of a minimum of 17:00 the following working day (including the Saturday after A Level results day). Pushed offers would be collected alongside the firm and Insurance choice. The firm and insurance choice providers could see the flag and know the applicant was receiving pushed offers, but no offer details would be visible to them. This would also be the same for the providers pushing offers. When an applicant accepted a pushed offer, all other offers would be declined, including the firm and insurance and any other pushed offers. If the applicant decided they wanted to keep their original choices, all pushed offers would either expire or they could be declined. It was confirmed that the applicant could still go through the process again should they want to.

It was confirmed that this process would replace Adjustment. UCAS was investigating how the process would work with the direct contact service. If there was any feedback or questions the Group could email Samantha Sheppard, Product Owner at UCAS s.sheppard@ucas.ac.uk.

A member of the Group said that proactive applicants using this would be more likely to convert, and wanted to know if they could receive the data on this. UCAS confirmed this service would open up visibility to conversion and applicant decisions currently not recorded.

Any new fields of AMS development would only be available in the API technology, however, UCAS would continue to support odbc-link and xml-link until transition had been completed. Those still using xml-link and odbc-link in Clearing would have problems with the pushed offer process. The Group was asked, if they could only use

the UCAS user interface, what challenges would they face? The Group was unclear as to how it would work.

It was clarified that UCAS wanted pushed offers to be downloaded to provider systems, but there would have to be amendments to legacy products for this to be implemented. The Group mostly used their own student record systems for Clearing, rather than the UCAS interface. The Group was reliant on their vendors to move over to APIs. A member of the Group said it was because there would be a two-year window of support for those on old link products, and there would be a mixture of times taken to move over.

Some Group members were developing their systems, with the aim of using UCAS' AMS. The Clearing Working Group made these recommendations in 2015, with the aim of launching them with the AMS. The system would be implemented for 2021 Clearing, and it was confirmed that providers would still be able to release an applicant, should they contact them to request release.

The Chair said that having an unlimited number of pushed offers could make their Clearing process more difficult (for the conditional firm or unconditional firm provider). As a pushed provider they would use the new UCAS user interface or APIs, but the ability to do this with xml-link and odbc-link was not developed. If there was a demand for it, then UCAS would look into it. Both Clearing solutions would not run in parallel unless this was needed. AG TG154

It was suggested that a webinar should be scheduled with the Group, to discuss this further.

A1/18/07 AMS technology engagement strategy

Andy Irving, Head of Technology Service Management at UCAS, attended the meeting via Skype.

It was confirmed that UCAS wanted to improve the level of engagement and assistance – and there will be more webinars as part of this plan.

UCAS had a commitment to delivering the new UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires AMSs for May 2020.

To back up the AMS development, a new methodology was adopted called scaled agile. Numerous pieces of work that had to come together were divided into 12-week increments, which was tracked on a two-week sprint basis. On 29 November 2019, the AMS code should be complete. From a vendor point of view, UCAS was in discussion with the vendors to help them prepare for AMS.

Action

The Group was presented the capability delivery graph, which showed what work was being done. The slides would be sent to the Group with the minutes.

GV TG155

The key improvements were outlined, and included:

- moving towards single-sign on
- a central location for information
- refined data sets (for example, qualifications)
- document upload (for supporting documents, and in questions)
- customised questions to specific application workflows

The APIs would allow UCAS to refine data sets more efficiently, and this service would be expanded in the future.

The Group was asked what assistance would be needed for vendors and in-house teams. It was suggested that UCAS could set up a meeting with vendors and in-house teams to discuss planning. The Group was asked to contact their technology Relationship manager about the existing plans, and share their opinions about the chance for early adoption.

AG TG156

GV TG157

A member asked if UCAS would provide business users documents about fields of data in the AMS. This was confirmed, but the detail was being determined. Drafts would be shown to the Group once they were ready.

AG TG158

Elements of the AMS and ABL were being worked on. Everything was currently working, but UCAS would still need to continue work, post-launch.

A member asked if ABL and legacy systems would be included in the initial launch of the AMS. It was explained that the legacy system would be working as it did before the AMS, initially, and ABL was still being worked on in elements of the AMS. UCAS wanted to ensure that legacy systems wouldn't be negatively impacted by the launch of the AMS, and was aware that some customers would still be using the legacy systems. Everything on the legacy systems was being planned to be included in the AMS, but could not be confirmed until the design phase was completed. This could be picked up at the next meeting.

AI / AG
TG159

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

ABL summary coding in the link products

The impression was this was data only UCAS used, but software vendors did transfer it in their systems. Examples of data included the number of winter results expected to be processed, or the number of A levels applicants were expected to receive. A

CC TG160

Action

member of the Group said they may report on this data. The Technology Relationship Manager agreed to send the list to the Group.

Webinars

Webinars were recorded, and could be found on [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com/providers/services/development-our-services)
<https://www.ucas.com/providers/services/development-our-services>

GV TG161

Group membership

Some memberships were due to come to an end. Expressions of interest for new members were called for, and one new member had been recruited, but more were needed. It was approved by UCAS that those whose terms were due to expire could extend for one year. Members who were affected would be emailed directly.

GV TG162

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 19 June, to be held at UCAS, Cheltenham. The invitation was sent to the Group with the minutes.

GV TG163

Minutes

UAG/19/M1

Undergraduate Advisory Group meeting

held on Wednesday 6 February 2019 at UCAS, Cheltenham

Chair:	Kim Eccleston	University of Warwick
Present:	Andrew Homer Charlotte Harrison-Smith Claire Pryke David Moyle Gemma Aggett Jennifer Geary Kirsty Knox Louise Foster-Agg Paul Featonby Rob Evans Ross Agnew	Kingston University Liverpool John Moores University University of Bradford Aberystwyth University University of Greenwich Goldsmiths University University of the West of Scotland Aston University Hartpury University University of Sussex University of Cambridge
Apologies:	Claire Galliford Gareth Slater Ian Sutherland Kerry Fey Pete Edge Sheila Dowling Victoria Azubuine	University of Exeter UCFB University of Edinburgh University of the West of England University of Law University of Hull University of Bedfordshire (maternity leave)
UCAS in attendance:	Ben Jordan Carys Fisher Della Brooker Finlay Willicott Fraser Nicoll Georgina Venman Jade Wilce Lauren Cooper Linda Morris Louise Evans	Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager Senior Policy Executive Head of Change Delivery (observing) Product Executive Service Lead (Information and Advice) Provider Engagement Coordinator Head of Media Operations (UCAS Media) Executive Product Manager (observing) Service Delivery Partner Head of Adviser and Provider Experience

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Matt Criddle	Head of Education Sales (UCAS Media)
Peter Derrick	Head of Service Delivery (Admissions)
Richard O'Kelly	Head of Analytical Data
Samantha Sheppard	Product Owner

Action

A1/18/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed, and apologies were noted. It was the last meeting for Ian Sutherland, Kerry Fey, and Sheila Dowling, who were unable to attend, but the Chair expressed thanks for their contributions during their membership.

A1/18/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were circulated to the Group prior to the meeting, and it was agreed they were an accurate reflection of the last meeting.

Action log

UAG171 – This action was being investigated for the new application management service (AMS), and so would not be implemented into Confirmation and Clearing 2019. This action remained open.

UAG176 – The efficiency list was updated and had been sent to the Group with the minutes.

UAG180 – David Best was unavailable to attend the meeting. This item would be postponed to a future meeting, and the action remained open.

UAG188 – The type of contact that could be made with the referee was being reviewed for the future admissions guide, and UCAS' Adviser Experience Manager would follow this up. This action was in progress.

UAG192 – The content of communications, regarding how applicants could re-apply, was sent to the Group with the February 2019 minutes.

UAG193 – Good practice on criminal convictions was provided:
www.ucas.com/criminal-convictions-good-practice-he-providers

and UCAS' Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager attended the meeting to offer a verbal update. This action was closed.

UAG195 – Ben Jordan, Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager at UCAS, had not received ideas from the Group about good practice resources, which would be helpful. UCAS was working on resources for fraud and verification, mental health, offer-making, and business rules and admissions principles actions. This action was closed.

UAG196 – This action was closed, but the Undergraduate Advisory Group (UAG) would continue to raise business rules and admissions principles at future meetings.

A1/18/03 Information and advice demo

The Group saw a demonstration of the information and advice (I&A) tool. The I&A dashboard contained 'explore' features for applicants, so they could view information in one place that was otherwise dispersed over the website.

After entering details, a dashboard would be generated where users could explore and shortlist their higher education (HE) options. The applicant could add their own qualifications to the dashboard, which could be expanded in the future.

Feedback from applicants showed they wanted a way to narrow down a search for courses. It was explained the dashboard included subject guides under the 'explore' tool in response to this. Applicants could use this tool to filter through providers and courses. The user interface for course search would include information from Unistats and details about the course from the provider. Choices shortlisted could then be directly fed into UCAS' Apply service.

Fraser Nicoll, UCAS' Service Lead (I&A) joined the Group after the demonstration to collect feedback. A member of the Group asked what UCAS was looking for from HE providers on this product, and it was confirmed it was mainly looking for feedback. UCAS wanted to become a main source for information and advice for applicants, and, in the future, wanted to create provider pages to add to the tool. It would be seeking content, for example, from providers. UCAS clarified there was not yet a 'don't mind' or 'other' Where to Study option, but there would be in the future.

A member of the Group said the wording of 'what people like you do' needed to be changed because it was against the widening participation work HE providers were doing, and it could pigeon-hole applicants. It was suggested sign in questions could be designed to link to widening participation, for example, using an applicant's post code. The Chair said there was a gap in the I&A space for widening participation schemes. The tool could include provider criteria and relevant widening participation information, so

FN UAG206

Action

applicants wouldn't have to go to each HE provider's website. A member of the Group commended a few occurrences of the terminology 'university or college', and said this should be repeated across the system. The Group was asked to send feedback to UCAS by email, to f.nicoll@ucas.ac.uk. It was advised the I&A tool was intended to go live, in a soft launch, in April 2019.

ALL
UAG199

A member of the Group said there was no central point for contextual information, and this would be a good opportunity for UCAS to take control in this space.

FN UAG207

Another member asked about how the Tariff calculator would work in the tool. The Team were aware that the calculator could cause a problem, and would take this into consideration.

A1/18/04 Chairs' business

Post-qualification admissions

The Chair explained there were a growing number of calls for UCAS to adopt a post-qualifications admissions model, and the sector should communicate concerns clearly with them, so they were well represented.

Criminal convictions

Universities UK held a meeting on criminal convictions, and suggested providers could produce collective guidance.

The Chair commented that her university couldn't find a defensible legal basis for asking the first criminal convictions question, in any situation, and she believed the sector could still have further conversations about this at the Annual Admissions Conference.

Some providers had asked their own questions to gather criminal convictions information, and it was confirmed UCAS would be making sure there were valid reasons for these questions to be asked. A member of the Group suggested an interim measure was still needed for the sector.

The Clearing Working Group

The Clearing Working Group had reconvened. This Group reconfirmed the recommendations made at a previous meeting, and discussed the new fast track functionality. It was felt that fast track could fundamentally change the scheme, and could be a preferential application route for many applicants, depending where in the cycle it was launched.

Teacher training

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The Department for Education's (DfE) new strategy confirmed it intended to take over the teacher training application system. UCAS continued to develop systems for teacher training because the DfE's service would only operate for England. UCAS was working with Welsh, Northern Irish and Scottish providers to see how they could be supported in the future.

Bypassing business rules and admissions principles follow up

UCAS continued to work on business rules and admissions principles recommendations with the working group. UCAS thought it would be advisable to coordinate a round-table discussion on waiting lists, which would be arranged by UCAS' Policy Team.

The Chair suggested other organisations should be considered before implementation of the business rules and admissions principles, for example, GuildHE. The Chair said that at the last meeting the Group was content with the direction of the recommendations.

UCAS had received several challenges from providers regarding recommendation five, about putting all full-time undergraduate applications through UCAS. Some colleges received many applications outside of the UCAS system.

Prior to the meeting, the following text was sent to the Group for comments:

'Provider guidance on UCAS Undergraduate application routes

The UCAS admissions guide states that a provider must recruit all its full-time undergraduate applicants through UCAS. We understand that, in some circumstances, a UCAS application could be a barrier to a student completing their application to you, and you may choose to recruit this student via a direct application. However, all applicants should have the opportunity to use UCAS and be made aware of this option; this includes applicants from all domiciles, and those progressing through internal progression pathways (where they have not previously completed a UCAS application for their current programme).

To ensure compliance, providers must include details of the UCAS application process, or a link to ucas.com on their 'How to Apply' page and individual course profile pages as appropriate. Below is an example of the wording that we would expect to appear if a provider considers direct applications for some applicants, and can be adapted to reflect your specific admissions processes:

Applications to our full-time undergraduate courses must be made through UCAS. If you haven't started a UCAS application yet, and only want to apply to [Insert Provider Name], you can apply directly to us using our direct application form/portal and we will process a UCAS application on your behalf.

Action

For further guidance, please contact your Relationship Manager.'

The Group didn't object to the wording, however, the Chair was concerned it wouldn't cover all areas of bypassing. UCAS' Head of Adviser and Provider Experience said it wanted to provide shared text to make applicants aware. A member of the Group said they didn't want to publish the text on their main website, to avoid giving the impression that it's normal not to apply through UCAS. In addition, they said an increase of applicants not using UCAS could be problematic for those who didn't use Records of Prior Acceptance (RPAs).

ALL / LE
UAG200

The Chair suggested using the Annual Admissions Conference as a space for further discussion on the bypassing issue.

A1/18/05 Widening participation activities in AMS

Peter Derrick, Head of Service Delivery (Admissions) and Carys Fisher, Senior Policy Executive had been working on questions to be implemented as part of UCAS' new application management service (AMS). As part of this work, UCAS wanted to know whether providers were interested in receiving information about widening participation activities that applicants had participated in. The Group expressed that this was important information.

A member of the Group said they were interested in whether applicants had attended their provider's own widening participation activity, and if they could make variable offers if the information was clear. It was acknowledged that applicants could hesitate to include provider-specific widening participation schemes, and that most would be applying to a number of different providers.

Some applicants may not know what scheme they participated in, and it was important to explain what it was and that it would not negatively affect their application. It was confirmed that the wording in the help text was to be carefully considered.

Ideally, the Group would want to receive verified information about widening participation activities an applicant had taken part in, not just those delivered by their own provider. The issue was how this could be done in compliance with data protection – UCAS was committed to exploring whether STROBE could be of use in this context.

ALL
UAG201

Rising cohorts of interest included veterans and those in receipt of free school meals. The Group was urged to contact UCAS as early as possible, should they hear of anything after talking to widening participation staff.

A1/18/06 Policy update

Ben Jordan, Senior Policy and Qualifications Manager, and Richard O' Kelly, Head of Analytical Data, at UCAS, attended the meeting to deliver the policy update.

Unconditional offers

It was explained that unconditional offers had increased since 2013, including conditional unconditional offers. The conditional unconditional offer category was identified by the offer text accompanying the offer.

Broken down by subject area, it was observed that courses with a preference for a portfolio to support the application offered more unconditional offers, whereas courses like veterinary and medicine didn't offer unconditional offers.

UCAS looked at the attainment of applicants who received unconditional offers. More unconditional offers were being made, and predicted A level point score was lowered in correlation.

The Group was shown a model of the difference by predicted attainment, depending on the type of offer (unconditional or conditional). There was a 7% increase in applicants missing their grades by two or more.

UCAS commented that applicants' sentiments towards conditional unconditional offers were broadly positive.

The unconditional offer rate for Wales was lower than that in 2017. The Group was shown a geographic map of areas and their offer rate. The East Midlands and North East had the highest rate of unconditional offers, at about 12%.

There were different approaches depending on tariff groups – lower tariff providers made the most unconditional offers.

A member of the Group asked when the Office for Students (OfS) saw the data that was published, and if the OfS asked UCAS to act. It was confirmed that UCAS consulted with the OfS and providers before publishing the unconditional offer data, and the OfS had visibility of the data from the 2017 cycle, but that the OfS had not asked for the publication of the data. Conditional unconditional offers as a measure was new to UCAS, so this hadn't been put out before the publication, but the term was included in the good practice guide.

A member of the Group was surprised by the data, and investigated the instances unconditional offers had occurred at their university or college. Most were due to conditions being met, and they asked if the reports would be altered. UCAS clarified the reports wouldn't be changed because it would open it up to bias, for example, qualifications one provider accepted but another didn't. Another member of the Group asked if awarding body linkage could be implemented in to this. It was advised there would always be gaps in every methodology, but the method they used had worked well objectively.

Criminal convictions

UCAS was approaching the 12-month review for the criminal convictions good practice work, and a new version would be made after it was edited. Messages would be included in the bulletin to inform the reflective work. It would also be taken to the Annual Admissions Conference. Aspects beyond the admissions process, for example, accommodation were being considered.

A member of the Group was pleased with the good practice guide, and UCAS welcomed any further comments on this from the Group.

A1/18/07 UCAS Media workshop Q&A

Matt Criddle, Head of Education Sales, and Jade Wilce, Head of Media Operations, at UCAS Media, attended the meeting to present the Group with UCAS Media highlights.

In 2018, UCAS Media launched a paid media service to drive paid search and social performances through verified UCAS audiences. Results day emails were delivered containing Clearing messages when applicants needed them most. UCAS Media also launched consultancy and insight services, to deliver evidence-based recommendations to support higher education providers' (HEP) business goals and strategies.

The average number of applicants matched to the email list was 50, and there was an 83% acceptance rate.

The 2019 roadmap included performance optimisation, to deliver greater value through increased delivery and optimisation capabilities. A digital experience platform was being developed, and would be launched in 2019. There would be product sets, insights, and access to portfolios available on the dashboard. This service would increase accessibility to the UCAS Media portfolio, and give more control to the user. It was explained that UCAS Media intended to expand their digital portfolio to include more social channels and partnerships with companies.

The Chair was interested to see how the consultancy products affected the sector. The email campaigns were well received, but there was concern about how UCAS would

respond if two competing providers both approached UCAS Media to seek help and insight to achieve the same goal. It was suggested that a session for the next meeting should take place with Sarah Barr Miller, Head of Insight Sales at UCAS Media, to address any concerns.

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A1/18/08 Clearing and fast track

Samantha Sheppard, Product Owner at UCAS, delivered a presentation to the Group that included how to look at Clearing in the new application management service. The ideas covered had previously been discussed at the Clearing Working Group.

Self-release

Applicants changed their minds sometimes and may potentially seek to look elsewhere, without losing their firm or insurance choice. UCAS explained a self-release idea which would allow an applicant to release themselves to accept new offers in Clearing. Once an applicant submitted a self-release request, a code would be emailed to their account, which they would have to enter to be released, to make sure the applicant wanted to proceed with the request. A reason why they wanted to self-release would be taken from the applicant, and they would then be released from their choices. A member of the Group asked when, during the cycle, this would be available to applicants. It was clarified that a decision had not been made, but there were positive and negative points to opening this up earlier or later in the cycle.

'I'm still looking' flag

UCAS was aware applicants still browsed Clearing even when they weren't eligible. The concept of an 'I'm still looking' flag would be a way for applicants to show they were still looking, and it was suggested to make this available from the first July in the cycle. It was confirmed UCAS was looking at adding an expiry date for the flag to minimise the number of applicants who put it on, and left it on, unnecessarily.

Applicants would be made aware of the legalities, for example, potentially breaking a contract before they proceeded. The aim of this process was to record the offers made in Clearing more effectively.

Pushed offers

A provider would be able to push offers to the applicant, rather than providing email or verbal offers, which were undertaken outside of UCAS' processes. There would be an expiry period on the offer (a minimum of 17:00 the next working day). Offers could be sorted by expiry date to help the applicant with their decision. It was explained to the Group that providers who were the applicant's firm or insurance choices would be able to view the applicant's number of offers if they still had the flag on, but not the details. Likewise, the providers who pushed offers to the applicant could see the same. A

member of the Group said they were nervous about an applicant being able to hold more conditional offers on top of their firm and insurance choices. The Group discussed whether the conditional firm could be let go before receiving pushed offers. Having this active while they held conditional firm offers could increase the pressures on providers during Clearing. It was clarified that a drive for this service was to gather data about Clearing activity, that previously could not be observed, and, although there were contentious aspects, it was in the best interest of the applicant.

The Chair suggested that senior managers would insist on longer expiry dates, to avoid losing potential students.

UCAS clarified that when an applicant accepted a pushed offer, it would automatically decline all other offers.

Once an applicant had accepted a pushed offer, the firm or insurance choice provider would be able to view that they had declined, their reason, the accepted offer, and details of pushed offers. A pushed offer provider would be able to see all offers and the final place chosen.

It was explained that UCAS intended to consult with students and advisers about these services. A member of the Group was concerned about the consequences, and expressed the timing of this would be crucial, and that the process could be stressful on the student.

Some of the Group expressed concern because providers took a firm offer as seriously as a contract, and this service could influence applicant behaviour.

It was confirmed that business rules were needed, to prevent providers from contacting declined applicants, before the applicant had contacted them first.

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A1/18/09 Course activities

Linda Morris, UCAS' Service Delivery Partner, attended the meeting to talk to the Group about course activities. During postgraduate course collection in November to March, UCAS wanted to make sure courses were maintained, and the Group was urged to remind their colleagues to update courses.

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Relationship managers would contact providers for more information, should anything change.

For the 2020 cycle, the search tool for undergraduate courses would go live on 7 May 2019. The UCAS Collection Team would be calling out to providers to supply support. By

the end of March 2019, or later, UCAS was making changes to the collection tool for the 2020 cycle. A new minimum entry requirement for Scottish providers would be added, and entry requirements for specific entry points. UCAS was keen to hear any suggestions from the Group on how the collection tool could be improved. The higher education provider survey responses showed providers thought there was a lack of training support. More collateral would be released to solve this, for example, collection tool guides, and it was the intention to develop a guide for Clearing too. A member of the Group said challenges they had faced were about provider resource, rather than the support provided by UCAS.

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A workshop would be available at the Annual Admissions Conference.

A1/18/12 Any other business and close

Admissions Conference

There would be facilitated group discussions and breakout sessions at the Conference. UCAS' Adviser and Provider Experience Manager advised that many senior colleagues from the sector couldn't make the Conference, and asked the Group if they considered the Conference a professional development opportunity for their junior staff, or a strategic engagement for senior staff. The Chair said the agenda influenced who attended, and particular items could draw the attention of senior staff. A member of the Group said they could only have two people attend, and this sometimes created a conflict of internal interests. Another member of the Group said it was during the Easter break, which was an issue for many.

Date for the next meeting

The next meeting date hadn't been decided due to conflicting availability, but after the meeting, the Chair and UCAS' Group Owner agreed on 18 June 2019. The invitation was sent with the minutes.

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