

## Minutes

IAG/22/M3

International Advisory Group meeting

Held on Thursday 6 October, virtually through MS Teams

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Chair:	Jane Dunn	Aston University
Present:	Lamberto Coccioli	Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
	Patrick Cosh	Cardiff University
	Anne Marie Graham	UKCISA
	Jacqui Jenkins	British Council
	Anthony Manning	University of Kent
	Catriona McCarthy	Ulster University
	Jenny Oxley	Leeds Arts University
Apologies:	Tessa Bell	The University of Edinburgh
	Charlie Carter	BUILA
	Chris Chang	Portsmouth University
	Stephanie Harris	UUK
	Charley Robinson	UUKI
	Tom Snell	Teesside University
UCAS in attendance:	Teona Droc	Customer Experience Manager
	Victoria Waterson	Service Delivery Coordinator
Presenting:	Kim Eccleston	Head of Strategy and Reform
	Chris Kirk	Director of UCAS International
	Haleema Masud	Policy Adviser
Observing:	Linda Morris	Service Delivery Partner & manager

### **A3/22/01 Welcome and apologies**

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

### **A3/22/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting**

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate reflection of the last meeting.

The open actions from the log were discussed:

*IAG204* – It was noted that minutes from the most recent UCAS Council meeting had yet to be circulated, thus an update was not possible at this meeting. Once these minutes were approved and made available, any urgent updates would be communicated by the Chair via email in the interim. An agenda point would be included in the next meeting of this group.

*IAG208* – This action remains open, with representatives of Digital Delivery at UCAS set to be invited to the next meeting of this group.

*IAG212, IAG213* – It was noted that both actions will remain open for the foreseeable future.

*IAG215* – It was noted that this action had been completed and an email with the relevant links would be circulated following the meeting.

*IAG216* – The recruitment of new members for the group is in progress and would be discussed under Any Other Business (AOB).

*IAG217* – was missed – put back into next meeting action list

*IAG 218* closed

### **A3/22/03 UCAS International update**

Chris Kirk, Director of UCAS International, presented insights on the Confirmation and Clearing (C&C) over the Summer, a look forward to 2023 and an update on Myriad. Which was positive for Non-EU confirmed places.

The data from Summer 2022 suggested that there are more speculative applications from international applicants which has caused an increased workload for schools, centres and Higher Education Providers. It was noted that UCAS recognised that more analysis was required for specific countries as part of the insights work. The group commented:

- The impact Brexit had been a blow for Conservatoires with more scholarships needed to offset the fees for EU students. It was noted that the mainland European market connection is imperative for Conservatoires due to post-higher education movement of artists, musicians etc.
- Following Brexit, the UK needs to consider scholarships or other financial aid like the ODA scheme
- It was suggested that analysis is required to understand what subject areas are driving attraction to study in the UK for each country rather than just considering the overarching data
- It was strongly felt that the UK needs to undertake a repositioning exercise for the EU market
- Sustainability is becoming more of a focus –travelling to the UK for study, in terms of finding accommodation and obtaining CAS sponsorship is heading for crisis with out action to address the growth in demand

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It was **AGREED** that UCAS would work on further breakdown of the 2022 Cycle insights at a subject and tariff level. To be completed by end of October and circulated to IAG.

Group

It was flagged that the 2023 cycle at UCAS would be staying the same, largely driven by SQA and JCQ Results Days. UCAS recognised that the data is suggesting that the use of the service will decrease for international students unless there is reform, though are aware that the system does not allow for pathway provision. It was **AGREED** that the group needs to identify the issues surrounding each key date for international applicants.

IAG220

The group made the following points:

- BUILA have discussed the negative press surrounding international students, e.g. they are subsidising courses or that they were taking places away from UK applicants, and would like to coordinate work on this with other bodies like UKCISA and UUKI
- The group **AGREED** that a sector-wide approach is needed to address the negative press with UCAS being in an apt position to provide data to inform this work, and that there was a good opportunity for this with the introduction of the new UKCISA international student charter. UCAS will work with all key stakeholders on proactive communication strategies across 2023.
- It was noted that there needs to be considerations of international recruitment versus strategic aims of institutions, e.g. environmental issues with international travel and insufficient accommodation. The UKCISA international student charter could be used as a guideline for the work on the wider pressures

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The Group commented that it would be useful to have a list of the 'emerging markets' targeted by Myriad advertisement to help to join up the approach across the sector. It was noted that there would be a formal launch of the Myriad agent portal in May 2023, after a soft launch in January 2023, and there were ongoing discussions about the best way forward in terms of promotion of best practice (i.e. code of conduct) and potential links with the British Council's Hub. The progress of the direction of the Agent Portal was positively received.

### **A3/22/04 Policy introduction and update on market reports**

An introduction to UCAS' work on international reports so far was given to the Group.

It was noted that the Policy team were currently working on country profiles for China, India and Nigeria, exploring the full journey from pre-arrival to graduation. The report was aimed for publication in Spring 2023 with bespoke surveys set to be sent to supplement that data that UCAS already hold. The Group made the following comments:

- The devolved nations might have different priorities from each other and would need to be considered when producing the report
- Long with growth, the challenge is managing diversity to ensure access to education across all global borders.
- There needs to be a clear purpose of the report, for example what is trying to be achieved and who is the audience, and consider what markets the provider would want to see profiles about
- It was noted that there was a plea from the Group to scope out the work with stakeholders and assess the risks before proceeding with the survey, being mindful of outcomes and sensitivity of data collected.

Additional reports that are under consideration by the Policy team at UCAS are:

1. A global comparison of international students' motivations and experiences drawing on insight from the IAAO
2. A collection of case studies collected from international applicants, agents and universities answering questions about the student journey

3. University experiences of recruiting and hosting international students – an analysis across different provider groups
4. Establishing an understanding of trends, influences and motivations of international students coming from the EU
5. Understanding more about the WP landscape for international students

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It was highlighted that there were similar reservations about the research as the country profiles – what are the aims? who would be the audience? How is it different to previous research? It was **AGREED** that UCAS would continue to have an open discussion with stakeholders and to keep the Group informed on progress with these proposals.

### **A3/22/05 Reform updates**

Kim Eccleston, Head of Strategy and Reform at UCAS, provided a presentation giving updates on the reform of the References and Personal Statement. The Group **AGREED** they would like to see insight on the Personal Statements for the following:

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- A segmentation of the responses from international students/applicants
- Evidence of the responses from schools and centres as a customer group
- Inclusive of agents and counsellors feedback to reform proposals

It was noted that the team would welcome comments and were contactable at [reform@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:reform@ucas.ac.uk).

### **A3/22/06 Landscape change post-covid – how is the sector feeling?**

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- A significant number of international applicants are getting their results early, though are getting caught up in the blocks on student systems due to the UK Results Embargo and other UCAS processes
- For institutions with a lack of accommodation, there could be the introduction of international student cap to reduce the loads on the campus, city or town. There is also an issue with family accommodation with an increased number of students coming with dependents
- The deadline for 'guaranteed accommodation' is too early in the cycle for international applicants, e.g. 1 July
- Limits to CAS number are a huge block and any increases require a strong business case to UKVI. The UKVI are now asking if institutions have sufficient accommodation as part of these business cases
- UKCISA will be running a member event shortly to discuss the accommodation issues in the sector

### **A3/22/07 Sector updates**

#### UKCISA

- The [UKCISA international student charter](#) was launched in June and UKCISA is working with members and student ambassadors in discussing implementation. In the next couple of weeks, an email on the reopening of the Grants programme will be circulated under the banner of the Charter
- Applications for the next round of student ambassadors are now open
- UKCISA is in the process of organising activity in November for International Students' Day

- There is a planned refresh of the member survey on accommodation going out next week, with an accommodation symposium being held by UKCISA shortly

#### BUILA

- BUILA are in a consultation period to ensure that the focus of the organisation correct and have reached out to partners for feedback with the hope of improved collaboration in the future
- There continues to be a good relationship between BUILA and UKVI/Home Office teams and BUILA have helped to support by producing a plan for UKVI to deal with surge in CAS' being processed
- Around 5,000 agents are currently signed up to the training around the Agents Quality Framework. There are a number of roadshows being held and a best practice guide will be available shortly
- BUILA request UCAS to help support the promotion of the Agents Quality Framework as part of their engagement with the international sector

#### British Council

- Training is set to be released for the Hub later in the calendar year and UCAS have been asked to test the sandbox. UCAS are encouraged to create an account in the Hub as it would enable communication with agents and centres.
- The Alumni UK service launches imminently with a focus on how to support people once they have finished studying in the UK and returned to their own country
- It was agreed to organise a meeting between UCAS Policy team and the British Council Insights team

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### **A3/22/08 Any other business and Close**

Following updates from advisory and policy group chairs at UCAS Council, a member of Council suggested that UCAS bring together group members with an interest in Widening Access/Participation, as this was a common topic of concern and a cross-cutting discussion could help to drive this forward. UCAS would like to take this forward as a pilot, opening an invitation to all group members. Anyone interested in being part of the discussion are asked to email [access@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:access@ucas.ac.uk).

The Group suggested the following for the future membership:

- Pathway Providers
- Representative for Schools, e.g. COBIS or ECIS
- International students
- Admissions or Visa Compliance colleagues at HE Providers
- Non-UK based colleagues
- Sending schools or ELT providers

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It was **AGREED** that these would be pursued following the meeting.

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of this group would take place on Thursday 9 February 2023 at Aston University.