

Minutes

HEMSAG/23/M2

HE Marketing Services Advisory Group meeting

Held on Thursday 8 June 2023 virtually through MS Teams

Chair:	Sam Uzzell	University of Surrey
Attendees:	Richard Bengree Clare Martin Dan Charles Kate Green Lucy Stevenson James Ackroyd Mark Jackson Melissa Nurcombe Ailie Ferrari Fiona Morrison	University of Chester University of Plymouth University of Gloucestershire University of Loughborough Aberystwyth University University of Reading QMUL University of York University of Bradford University of Aberdeen
Apologies:	Adam Sturch Sian Jones Demetria Maratheftis	Sheffield Hallam University University of Huddersfield Point Blank
UCAS in attendance:	Becky Hopwood Laura Hawkins Sarah Underwood	Head of Customer Growth - Education Customer Engagement Coordinator Customer Success Director
Presenting:	Vickie Phair Richard O'Kelly Kate Bevan Rachel Harris Ben Jordan Finlay Willicott	Team Manager – Lead Product Manager Head of Data Reporting and Research Product Owner Product owner Head of Policy Marketing Product lead

A2/23/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and the apologies were noted. Kate Green and Lucy Stevenson were welcomed as new members.

A2/23/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

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

A2/23/03 Data Update

Rich O’Kelly delivered an update on the data for offer rates. Slides were shared with the group.

Offer making has reached a mid-point from 2021 and 2022 levels. There has been a decline in mature applicants relating to a decline of certain subject trends such as healthcare and teaching. International offer rates are increasing however fewer students from China are looking to study internationally due to an internal economic effect and a decline in grades achieved.

Conversion rates are expected to be lower this year on average than last year. Because of more offers in the marketplace. Firm accept choices from applicants have increased, whilst acceptances have decreased. Conversion rates will be down due to applicants receiving more offers.

A2/23/04 Entry Grades Tool UpdateCareers Tool Demo

Rachel Harris and Kate Bevan delivered a demo of the new entry grades tool. This is currently in a user testing environment with students. Slides were shared with the group. The data found will be available for providers, with the HEP test environment. The date for launch is planned for after C&C.

The following feedback was given by the group

- How can UCAS prevent students from being disappointed if acceptances don’t meet the tool prediction.
- Concerns were raised regarding students becoming deterred from their predicted grades informing them they likely won’t get a place on a course, even if they do, in principle, have a chance.
- Students may get confused from an overwhelming amount of data available.
- Lack of contextual responses with regards to offer making for students concerned providers.

The group agreed that an URL around contextual offers or offer making policies would be useful.

It was confirmed that 5% outliers in either extreme have been removed from the data and data from the pandemic didn't make a difference in grade achievements. Additionally, mixed qualification profiles for both BTECH and A-level will be the next phase goal.

Feedback and data will be collated and developed after June - this round of advisory group meetings. The date for the provider's Webinar demo is Wednesday 21st June.

Group members are advised to contact Kate k.bevan@ucas.ac.uk for further discussion.

A2/23/05 App Track Development – Deep Dive

Vickie Phair and Rich O'Kelly took the group through an app track development demo. The group agreed it looks really useful. UCAS are getting insights teams feeding back and utilising it with marketing teams
There will be training video on the product before it is launched. In September it will be launched in BETA mode.

Providers would still have to collect data out of the app tracker as it doesn't include postgraduate applicants. In the future there may be an opportunity to get integrated data from it.

The group were invited to make comments on Competitor Benchmarks

- Domicile applicants – Region is useful, but would there be a possibility of showing postcodes?
- It is easy to navigate, intuitive and straightforward.
- Would there be anything to identify clearing applicants and main scheme separately?
- The ability to convert it into a market share would be helpful.
- Reference against specific years e.g., to exclude pandemic anomalous years.
- it would be good to view different subject level competitors.
- It would be useful to have explanation of titles to accompany what the user is viewing.
- Country data is useful for overseas undergraduates.
- Providers would like to see what is driving increase/decrease in applications?
Course code or CAH1/2/3.

Win Rate

- It would be good to have the ability to choose a point in cycle i.e., compare firm rate now to end of cycle firm rate last year.

- Providers would want to compare against specific competitors due to regional locality, and to segment by region of student.
- Can users see a pipeline view of data from start to finish (application – decision).

How can UCAS differentiate their offer from IDP?

IDP covers both undergraduate and postgraduate so unless it was free of charge members agreed they might not invest.

A2/23/06 Policy Update

On 6 July UCAS will be releasing an Apprenticeship report in collaboration with The Sutton Trust.

Three releases UCAS have looked at Widening participation, Student choice and competition and scaling the student's experience with regards to accommodation output.

The group agreed that 'what does it mean for you' report will be useful, as widening the amount of accommodation is challenging for some smaller cities and towns, which in turn makes it hard to grow markets towards 'Journey to a Million.' With regards to apprenticeships, providers agreed building relationships with employers and guiding them towards universities needs to move forwards.

A2/23/07 IAG Update and Discussion

Finlay Willicott discussed changes to the Unibuddy's partnership and the way it will affect the model UCAS are offering. He then took the group through the new Hub look and opportunities it will bring providers.

The group were invited to share their views on the changes to the provider page product offering, specifically guaranteed leads and competitor retargeting:

- Concerns were shown about the prospect of offering students out to competitors to re-target, but agreed it was something they would use.
- Members would like to be involved in influencing the tool.
- How does UCAS define a 'competitor' - a university or intelligence within the website?
- Will course level targeting be offered as well as institution?
- Members would be more likely to engage if it promotes an individual journey rather than going up against another university.

Widening participation

- The issue of widening participation is bespoke for each provider e.g., some institutions can't attract white males.
- The group are welcoming leads that have more WP students within them and the ability to target different groups based on their institution's recruitment strategies.

Unibuddy is introducing personalised ambassadors across ucas.com. The hub will provide audience-based display and targeted sponsored content.

A2/23/08 Any other business and Close

A placeholder has been set for the next meeting which will be hosted at UCAS Cheltenham on 5 October 2023.