

## UCAS Business Rules & Admissions Principles Working Group

February 2018

### Background

In June 2017, the UCAS Undergraduate Advisory Group (UAG) established a working group to review UCAS' Business Rules, and the Admissions Principles for the Undergraduate scheme, currently contained within the Admissions Guide.

The UCAS Business Rules and Admissions Principles Working Group is responsible for leading consultation on whether the existing rules and process are fit for purpose, and if further clarification, amendment or addition is required. The group is HE sector-led with representation from fifteen providers across a range of institution types, and supported by UCAS staff.

The group will be presenting its initial proposals to the Admissions Conference in March 2018, before its final recommendations are submitted to the Undergraduate Advisory Group in June 2018. UCAS will then impact assess the proposals with the potential to embed for the 2019 admissions cycle.

### Draft recommendations

Below are the first draft of the recommendations which the group is seeking feedback on during February and March 2018. Work is ongoing to define these, and further recommendations may be added in due course.

**Providers should comply with all relevant legal requirements such as, but not restricted to, the Equality Act 2010, Customer Protection Legislation, UK Visas, General Data Protection Regulations, Tuition Fees Assessment Regulations and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements. Compliance with these may mean a provider cannot uphold a UCAS Admissions Principle.**

## Future UCAS Admissions Principles

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### **A provider should:**

- support the provision of clear, current and transparent information including listing opportunities for study on the UCAS search tool
- show consistency, fairness and the avoidance of bias in the processing of all applications and the use of contextual information (see \*\*\* for more about fair admissions)
- use and update UCAS as the authoritative source of information on the status of an application submitted through UCAS systems
- try to expedite complete applications promptly at all stages of the process and avoid undue delays
- honour all UCAS deadlines. Providers should consider reasonable requests outside of these deadlines. Any flexibility offered should be with the agreement of the provider(s)
- collectively review the Admissions Principles on a two yearly basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The Undergraduate Advisory Group will be responsible for overseeing this review.

### **A provider should not:**

- ask applicants where else they have applied to until the applicant has replied to all offers made to them. Application choices to other providers will remain invisible until the applicant's replies have been recorded (see paragraphs 2.10 and 6.5).
- exercise undue pressure on applicants in order to directly or indirectly influence their decisions.

# Future UCAS Business Rules

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## **A provider must:**

- recruit as many of its full-time undergraduate applicants through UCAS as possible (whether individual application, RPA or OPF). Exemptions are listed in the Admissions Guide (see paragraphs 2.1 – 2.3)
- list all full-time undergraduate courses it recruits through UCAS on the UCAS search tool (this may also include some or all of its post-qualification courses (e.g. LLB Conversion, MA / Dip in Social Work, PGCE)
- consider all applications for each course on an equal basis if they are received on or before the relevant deadline (15 October, 15 January, and 24 March)
- transmit the type of offer, academic and non-academic conditions, subsequent offer or decision amendments and Confirmation decisions to the applicant using UCAS Systems
- make decisions about applications by the relevant published reject by default date, otherwise UCAS will reject the application (RBD)
- only contact an applicant who has made their replies:
  - a. if the applicant is holding a firm or an insurance place at that provider or
  - b. to invite the applicant to indicate why they have declined an offer or
  - c. if the applicant has requested the contact.

## **A provider must not:**

- force an applicant to reply before their reply date, regardless of when the offer was made, unless the course starts before 1 September
- reject an applicant at Confirmation if they still have outstanding or missing conditions until the agreed date (currently 31 August) or a date published by the provider in the offer, unless the applicant is unable to reach the terms of their offer based on the information already received (academic or non-academic).

## **Feedback and next steps**

If you have any feedback on the draft recommendations, please contact:

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The group is meeting again on March 14<sup>th</sup> to review feedback and draft its recommendations for the UCAS Admissions Conference.

Security Marking: PUBLIC

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Document Owner: Groups and Forums Administrator

Last updated: 12 March 2018