

UCAS VERIFICATION SERVICE REPORT 2024

Introduction

UCAS supports around 700,000 applications every year from domestic, EU, and international applicants to higher education in the UK. The role of the verification service is to help check that applications include true, complete and accurate information, and to support applicants in providing this. Verification activities also help prevent anyone from gaining an unfair advantage or securing a place by deception. UCAS' activities complement those undertaken by universities and colleges, and other service providers, such as the Student Loans Company.

Applications submitted to UCAS are subject to checks using fraud detection software, and personal statements are screened using similarity detection software. Universities and colleges may also identify issues with applications. If information is incorrect, missing or an issue is raised, the application will be flagged, and applicants or their referees will be asked to provide additional information or clarification. If, ultimately, the issues cannot be resolved, the application may be cancelled. Applicants may appeal cancellation decisions.

As part of our commitment to transparency, we publish an annual report and statistics on the performance of the verification service for the undergraduate admissions service, including numbers of applications that were flagged and cancelled, and an analysis of the characteristics of these applicants.

Statistical reporting on the 2024 cycle (UK domiciled applicants only)

In the 2024 cycle, 425 applications from UK domiciled applicants were flagged for further consideration, which equates to 0.07% of the total UK applicant population. Of these, 110 applicants had their applications cancelled (0.02%). Table 1 shows these results in comparison to previous cycles.

In comparison to the 2023 cycle, there has been a 33% decrease in the number of flagged applications from UK domiciled applicants with an 8% decrease in the number of cancelled applications.

Table 1: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged and cancelled for each cycle.

Cycle	Applicant Baseline	Flagged	Reinstated	Cancelled	Suspended
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
2020	577575	960	20	65	60
2021	607000	640	15	60	50
2022	616320	680	10	90	65
2023	604285	630	15	75	45
2024	607645	425	10	75	35
All	3012825	3335	70	365	255

UK domiciled applicants by ethnic group

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of flagged and cancelled applications by ethnic groups. The proportion of flagged applications across ethnic groups has broadly remained the same as seen in the 2023 cycle.

In the 2024 cycle, 42% of flagged applicants were classified as black in comparison to 40% in the 2023 cycle. The percentage of cancelled applications in the flagged black ethnic group increased to 25%; however, this was 18% in the 2023 cycle.

14% of flagged applicants were classified as white in comparison to 21% in the 2023 cycle. The percentage of cancelled applications in the flagged white ethnic group has decreased from 26% in the 2023 cycle to 17% in the 2024 cycle.

Table 2: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged and cancelled and relative proportion each ethnic group comprises (2024 cycle)

Ethnic Group	Applicant Baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	97720	16	95	22	30	27
Black	65275	11	180	42	45	41
Mixed	36440	6	40	9	15	14
Other	21890	4	45	10	10	9
Unknown or Prefer Not to Say	14725	2	10	3	0	0
White	371595	61	60	14	10	9
All	607645	100	425	100	110	100

UK domiciled applicants by age

Mature applicants are defined as those aged 21 and over and typically account for a quarter of UK domiciled applicants. Our figures show the applicants of this group, who commonly apply without the support of a school or college, are more likely to find their applications flagged.

In the 2024 cycle, this accounted for 61% of flagged applicants. This represents an increase of 4% compared to the 2023 cycle. The proportion of cancelled applicants aged 21 and over has slightly increased from 71% in the 2023 cycle to 73% in the 2024 cycle.

Table 3: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged and cancelled and relative proportion each age band comprises (2024 cycle)

Age Band	Applicant Baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
17 or Under	3005	0	0	0	0	0
18	328405	54	50	11	5	4
19	90940	15	65	15	15	14
20	35660	6	50	12	10	9
21+	149640	25	260	62	80	73
All	607645	100	425	100	110	100

UK domiciled applicants by Apply centre (i.e. with the support of a school or college)

Independent applicants are defined as those who apply without the support of a UCAS-registered centre (typically a school or college).

In the 2024 cycle, 33% of individuals applying to higher education were classified as independent applicants. Our figures show these applicants are more likely to have their applications flagged. In the 2024 cycle, 79% of flagged applications were classified as independent applicants with a 9% increase from the 2023 cycle.

Table 4: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged and cancelled and relative proportion each apply centre comprises (2024 cycle)

Apply Centre	Applicant Baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Apply Centre	409255	67	90	21	5	5
Independent	198390	33	335	79	105	95
All	607645	100	425	100	110	100

UK domiciled applicants by region

Our data shows that applicants living in London are more likely to have their applications flagged than those living in other parts of the UK. In the 2024 cycle, this accounted for 41% of flagged applications, representing a slight increase from 40% in the 2023 cycle.

Table 5: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged and cancelled and relative proportion each region comprises (2024 cycle)

Region	Applicant Baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	1640	0	5	1	0	0
East Midlands	37955	6	15	3	5	5
East of England	50900	8	25	6	5	5
London	120990	20	175	41	50	45

North East	17905	3	5	2	0	0
North West	68820	11	65	16	15	13
Northern Ireland	17635	3	0	0	0	0
Scotland	49325	8	10	3	0	0
South East	78920	13	35	9	10	9
South West	39730	7	5	1	0	0
Wales	23255	4	10	3	5	5
West Midlands	54765	9	40	9	15	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	45805	8	30	7	5	5
All	607645	100	425	100	110	100