UCAS
Teacher Training

Guide to decision and offer-making for UCAS

Teacher Training providers

Contents

1. Introduction

This document has been written to help staff in schools and universities understand how the decision and offer-making system works, so they can make informed decisions and structured offers on applications to their training programmes. This methodology will also help providers use best practice.

Staff at many accrediting providers have experience of making decisions using UCAS' systems. If you are a School Direct or Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship training provider, your accrediting provider will be available to help you.

It is the responsibility of both the training provider and the accrediting provider to agree and adhere to a process to manage applications to individual training programmes. It is important to remember that the Department for Education (DfE) policy states accrediting providers must give final approval of any admissions decision.

The official decision about an application is the one sent to UCAS, and subsequently made available to the applicant online. It forms part of the contract between the training provider and the applicant – consequently, training providers **must** include **all** conditions in their offer.

Use this document in conjunction with other guides and resources provided for training providers, to make decisions on UCAS Teacher Training applications. This includes the **UCAS Teacher Training Admissions Guide** – you can view and download this from **www. ucas.com/providers/teacher-training/guides-and-resources**.

There is an application management video at **www.ucas.com/providers/teacher-training/managing-applications**, which gives an overview of receiving applications, sending decisions, and what to do with your management information.

2. Recording decisions
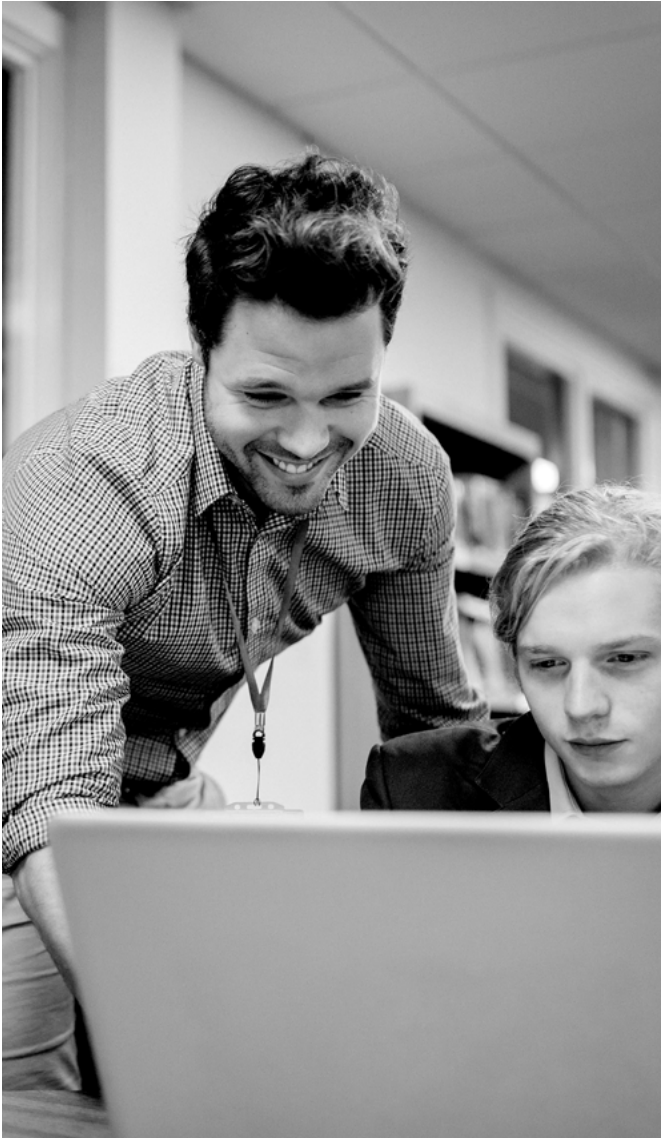
You record your decisions online using web-link, odbc-link, or xml-link. As soon as you make a decision, we update the applicant's record, making the information immediately visible in Track.

You can make the following types of decision in web-link:

+ notification of interview
+ conditional offer
+ unconditional offer
+ reject
+ withdrawal
+ not qualified in English
+ not qualified in maths
+ not qualified in science
+ not considered – training programme full

More guidance about the different types of decisions can be found in the UCAS Teacher Training Admissions Guide (**www.ucas.com/providers/teacher-training/guides-and-resources**).

3. Structure of offers

When a training provider makes a decision against an applicant's choice, depending on the decision made, additional details are likely to be provided in the form of a coded offer, or with free text conditions. The applicant will see this information and use it to make an informed decision about which offer to accept.

3.1. Types of decisions

There are two ways decisions can be made against an application. They can either be written in a free text format, where the text is included in double quotation marks, or coded using the available offer abbreviations.

The offer abbreviation codes allow for a more formalised structure, which reduces the repetitive typing which would be needed otherwise.

We recommend you use the structured offer abbreviation codes, wherever possible.

3.1.1 Structured decisions, including offers

Structured decisions, including offers, can be achieved by the use of abbreviation codes.

A list can be found at **www.ucas.com/providers/ teacher-training/guides-and-resources**. They are used in the format of a full stop, followed by a two-character code, which has an associated description.

> **Example of an abbreviation is given below:**
>
> Abbreviation code = **.DF**
>
> Associated description = **Award of a degree at 2.1**

The offer abbreviations and associated values are separated from each other by commas. Training providers can set up their own offer abbreviation library – see paragraph 3.4.

3.1.2 Free format offer

If you decide to use free format text, the offer text must be enclosed in double quotation marks " ". Please note, when you enter free text, it will be presented to the applicant as you have typed it.

3.2. Offer expansion text

All offer expansions will begin with the wording:

'This offer is subject to you obtaining'

This will be followed, on a new line, with the associated full description of any abbreviations used. Each time you input a new abbreviation code, the text will be presented on a new line.

3.3. UCAS' offer library

UCAS provides a library of offer abbreviation codes for training providers to use, with both conditional and unconditional offers.

We also provide a list of subject codes to use in offers.

Please refer to **www.ucas.com/providers/teacher-training/ guides-and-resources**, or the 'Reference Information Menu' in web-link, for details of abbreviations you can use with conditional, unconditional, withdraw, or reject decisions.

3.4. Training provider's own offer library

In conjunction with UCAS' offer abbreviation codes, training providers can set up their own offer abbreviation codes, to manage their decision processing, and code offers.

These can be set up in the 'Training Provider Information Menu', from the 'Main Menu' in web-link.

4. Key points

To assist staff when making offers to applicants, it is important to bear in mind several key points.

4.1. Entry requirements and offers

The entry requirements you set in Net.update, for each of your training programmes, provide a general indication of the level of attainment required by your training provider.

It is important the wording is clear, as applicants use entry requirements when they research training programmes and providers, to optimise their likelihood of receiving an offer. However, offers can differ from the published entry requirements, as they will usually reflect the whole application, and your training provider's admissions policies.

To help applicants make informed choices, it's important entry requirements do not change unnecessarily during an admissions cycle.

4.2. Early start dates

If the applicant has applied for a training programme with an early start date, or you are making an offer for a different start date, please ensure this is specified clearly in your offer.

If the training programme starts before the decline by default (DBD) date, make it clear to the applicant that they must contact you to let you know if they are going to accept your offer.

4.3. Feedback on unsuccessful decision (Reject)

When you make an unsuccessful decision on an application (Reject), include some feedback, or give details of how they can obtain feedback. This will enable the applicant to make informed choices for any further applications they make, for example, in Apply 2.

See 5.3 for examples of feedback on an unsuccessful decision.

4.4. Timeframes for achievement of offer

In general, academic conditions must be attained before the start of the training programme. It is important training providers give clear advice in their offers about when they expect conditions to be met, and hold places open until this time.

If an applicant has made an appeal to an awarding body – for example, for their GCSE result – we advise them to discuss any impact this could have with the training providers concerned.

Training providers must make it clear to the applicant whether the place would still be available if they achieve the conditions of an offer after a specific date. This is important to manage both the applicant's and training provider's expectations.

4.5. Keeping applicants up-to-date

When an offer is made, the details are provided to the applicant online, in Track. The information provided from UCAS is the official notification of the offer.

If you reject an applicant, they will also see this in Track.

4.6. Outstanding non-academic conditions

Many training programmes have a statutory requirement for enhanced criminal record and health checks. Unless you have evidence the applicant already has these, you must make them part of the offer conditions – they can be included in unconditional offers, as well as conditional offers.

4.7. Best practice

The following points have been provided as a guide for you to consider as best practice at your training provider, and for consistency.

4.7.1 Review offer library

Each training provider can have their own set of offer abbreviations, and use the ones provided by UCAS. It is important for training providers to regularly review the structure and offer abbreviations they have set up in their library, to make sure they are still valid, and clearly explain to applicants what needs to be achieved.

4.7.2 Consistency

It is important your training provider has a consistent approach to the way offers are structured. This enables applicants to understand the offer more easily, and compare it with offers from other training providers.

4.7.3 Explicit in achievements required

Making sure offers are clear and precise should remove any ambiguity about what the applicant is expected to achieve. If you wish to make exclusions, please ensure this is indicated in the offer.

4.7.4 Structured offers

It is important all training providers use structured offers rather than free text. The offer will be clearer, and consistent with other offers – the applicant will be able to easily compare and understand them.

5. Examples of decisions

5.1. Conditional offers

Offers that include an academic outcome

Depending on a training provider's entry requirements, offers will typically include the outcome of:

+ a degree at a specific level

+ GCSEs or equivalent, to improve or attain

+ successfully passing the skills test prior to the commencement of the programme

Offers should follow your published entry requirements, and be clear and unambiguous, so they are not open to negotiation. A conditional offer should be subject to the applicant achieving certain academic levels based on your training provider's own entry requirements.

Conditional offer on completion of a degree

Choose **LD conditional offer** from the drop-down list in web-link.

In the **text of offer box**, enter:

.DF (entered as .DF for a coded offer, or enter as free text in double quotes "Award of degree at 2.1")

Text generated to the applicant in Track:

This offer is subject to your obtaining Award of degree at 2.1

There are other coded offers available for different degree offers:

.DH Award of degree with honours
.DS Award of degree at 2.2
.DW Award of degree

Before each code is entered, a full stop must be added to signify the beginning of the code used.

The basic offer can be enhanced to include other information, such as:

"Your degree should contain at least 50 per cent relevance to the programme"

To put the whole of the offer together, in the **text of offer box**, enter.

.DF,"Your degree should contain at least 50 per cent relevance to the programme"

Text generated to the applicant in Track:

This offer is subject to you obtaining Award of a degree at 2.1

Your degree should contain at least 50 per cent relevance to the programme

Note: The comma between texts moves the wording after it on to the next line.

Conditional offer on completion of a GCSE

Choose **LD conditional offer** from the drop-down list in web-link.

In the **text of offer box**, enter:

Coded conditions: .GS,A@MATHS

Text generated to the applicant in Track:

This offer is subject to you obtaining
General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)
Grade A – Mathematics

Offers that include a non-academic condition

Offers can also include non-academic conditions. Some examples using offer abbreviations include:

.M2 Satisfactory health and police checks will be required
.M1 Satisfactory health check will be required

A free format offer example includes:

"Satisfactory health check will be required"

These can also be used in unconditional offers.

In the **text of offer box**, enter:

.M2

Text generated to the applicant in Track:

This offer is subject to you obtaining
Satisfactory health and police checks will be required

5.2. Reject decision

Applicants can, and will, ask for feedback about their applications. This is not mandatory, but we do ask you to consider adding reasons to your reject decisions, about why they have been unsuccessful.

The reasons you use should be clear and concise, and not overly complicated. Short, distinct reasons work best in helping applicants choose another choice in Apply 2, or to decide on their next steps.

Reasons are not standard, but can be created and added to your training provider's own standard offers in the 'Training Provider Information Menu' in web-link.

Typical reasons for rejection include:

"Personal statement not strong"

"Personal statement and application do not reflect subject knowledge required"

"Reference not strong"

"Not qualified in XXX subject or subject knowledge"

"Overall application not strong enough"

"Applications for this subject were extremely competitive and considered in all aspects"

You can use your own reasons, but please ensure they are not ambiguous, and do not leave you open to complaint.

5.3. Withdrawal decision

There are several reasons why a training provider might need to withdraw an application.

.W1 Withdrawn at your request

.W2 You did not attend an interview, test, or audition

.W3 You did not reply to their letters

.W4 Course withdrawn and no alternative requested

.W6 Failed to attend interview or did not reply to letter

.W7 The course is full*

*If an application is made to you when the training programme was open, it must be considered in full, and equally. A reject with a reason should be used instead.

Choose **LD Withdrawal**.

In the **text of offer box**, enter one of the codes, depending on the reason for the withdrawal.

.W6

Text generated to the applicant in Track:

Failed to attend interview or did not reply to letter

6. Help and assistance

If you need additional guidance on using web-link to send decisions, School Direct training providers are encouraged to contact their accrediting provider, as they may already have experience of doing this.

UCAS' HEP Team can be contacted by any UCAS Teacher Training provider at **hep_team@ucas.ac.uk** or on **0344 984 1111**.

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