Minutes

SAG/22/M1

Student Advisory Group meeting

Held on Wednesday 16 February 2022 virtually through MS Teams

Chair:	University of Oxford
Present:	Manchester Metropolitan University
	Edge Hill University
	University of Southampton
	Birkbeck University of London
	University of Hertfordshire
	Swansea University
	Coventry University
	Lancaster University (works at Cardiff Metropolitan University)

UCAS in attendance:	Callie Hawkins	Lead Product Manager
	Deniz Gosai	Customer Engagement Coordinator
	Matt Wasley-Wood	Lead Product Manager
Presenting:	Finlay Willicott	Marketing Product Lead

A1/22/01   Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting. Wayne Gouro introduced himself to the Group as the new Chair.

A1/22/02   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:

SAG026 – it had been fed back to HELOA that the Group had suggested providers could hold open days for mature students. This feed back had been well received by HELOA.

SAG028 – UCAS had ten guidance toolkits for teachers and advisers. The Group was asked to review the toolkit and feed back to Callie Hawkins – c.hawkins@ucas.ac.uk.

A1/22/03   Hub Roadmap

A Hub roadmap presentation was shared with the Group which included various pages from the Hub.

The following discussion and feedback was noted:
- Would students be able to convert their profile into pdf? Yes. It was also hoped that a unique ULR could be created so that the profile could also be shared online.
- The Group confirmed that the Hub interface looked user friendly, accessible and purposeful.
- Was the sample size or weighting in the 'My personality and trait quiz' transparent? It currently was not shared with students. The Group confirmed that students would find further breakdown data useful.
- Could UCAS also offer alternative careers based on personality quiz (to highlight other options) to ensure that students were also open to other ideas/careers and remain flexible.
- University/Apprenticeships should be able to reach out to various learners based on the personality quiz for specific webinars etc.
- Could the tools be available for international British school applicants? The tools available are accessible and beneficial for international students.
- It was asked whether a 'don't panic' section could be considered for students who had not met their entry requirements or had chosen subjects but changed their career path. It was confirmed that UCAS was carrying out some work on what entry requirements were verses what students had achieved and been accepted onto a course with.
- Additionally, it was asked whether information could be available if an applicant did better than expected. It was confirmed that Adjustment had been decommissioned but Clearing could be used as a free movement (both over or under achieved).
- Videos, as part of an application, was an early concept, and would take a while to be imbedded by the sector.

- Could the Hub be integrated effectively with Track and other elements of UCAS?

The provider profile pages were shared with the Group. These pages explained what it was really like to study at a particular university. Members really valued these profiles and noted the following feedback and suggestions:

- Incorporate student union pages, as these were the heart of universities, but students only find out about them after they have started their courses. Student Unions usually had a separate page on their university's website which UCAS could link to.
- Could the profiles link to the fees and funding pages on ucas.com?
- Could the accommodation fee section highlight that the fees might change each year.

Finlay Willicott, Marketing Product Lead, agreed to feedback all the suggestions.

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A1/22/04   User Experience survey questions

To help UCAS improve the student experience the Group was asked what the biggest surprises were after starting university and what would they tell someone who was just about to start university. The following feedback was noted:

- Students should get involved in faculties and get to know their student union immediately. Not only were they great skill builders but also looked good on CVs.
- If you did not like your course or university you could change it.
- Transitioning to university could be difficult.
- Make friends outside of your course and/or accommodation so you've got friends to hang out with when you don't want to think about your course and when you need to get away from your house mates.
- More information on mental health and building resilience.
- Building students digital skills and what to expect. Some universities did not provide laptops. Also need to be more aware of scams and different websites.
- Meet your course/school/faculty early on.
- How to live independently. Could UCAS set students challenges during the summer months such as budgeting or cooking a meal for their family?
- Could UCAS produce a tick list so that students could scope out what was available when they first arrive at university?
- The importance of academic integrity and general academic preparation needs to be stressed. This could include:
  - ➢ A timetable of a typical day in the life of a student (degree/university specific).
  - ➢ How to reference and write academically.
  - ➢ How to find academic help should you need it.
  - ➢ Dangers of failing academic integrity.
  - ➢ To read the Student Charter - always useful to find out what you were expected to do as a student, and what the student union and University were expected to do for you.

Accommodation

The group was asked a number of questions about accommodation. Some feedback included:

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- Accommodation was extremely important to students – after all it was the place they would spend most of their time.
- Course and location ranked above accommodation but knowing that accommodation was available was important.
- Most students only considered onsite halls for the first year.
- Accommodation was generally researched at either the time universities were researched or when offers had been received.
- The cost, location (easy of getting to university and safety) and size of bedrooms/bathrooms (or if there was ensuites) was the most important factors.
- Living at home might not be cheaper due to travel costs.

A1/22/05   Any other business and Close

Callie Hawkins informed that Group that she had taken on a new role as the Lead Product Manager for advisers. Matt Wasley-Wood was the new Lead Product Manager for students and would be more heavily involved in the Student Advisory Group moving forward.

The date for the next meeting would be confirmed shortly.