

## Data standards for the collection tool

### Purpose

UCAS has a responsibility to ensure that data used to assist learners in making their higher education choices is clear, consistent, and accurate. This responsibility extends to the products and services we develop to assist providers in managing applications, and includes analysis carried out to inform government and other external bodies.

UCAS has developed these standards to specify the data it requires to facilitate these products and services, and to communicate those specific requirements that allow data to be used efficiently between products and services, without degrading its relevance or currency.

### Definitions

**Validation:** Data validation guarantees the individual characters provided through user input are consistent with the expected characters of one or more known data types, as defined in a programming language or data storage and retrieval mechanism.

One of the simplest forms of data validation is verifying the data type. Data type validation answers simple questions such as whether the string is alphabetic and number is numeric. Range checking ensures the provided value is within allowable minimums and maximums.

**Data standard:** Standards are rules establishing how data are described and recorded in a consistent format.

Standards are useful for integrating data from multiple resources. They depict the required content and format in which particular types of data are to be presented and exchanged. If the various sources agreed on a standard at the point of implementation, this saves time reconciling any differences. This includes standardising the format as well as the meaning applied.

## Applying the standards

In our collection tool, courses will be published by the provider without any involvement from UCAS' Data Collection Team. The course information will appear in our search tool immediately. There are field-level validations that must be met by the data in order to publish – and/or set to receive applications for – a course. The Data Collection Team has no ability to override any of these validations. They are necessary to ensure the consumption of the data by downstream products and services, both in our new estate and across our legacy products and services.

Post-publication, the Data Collection Team will regularly review data that has been entered in free-text fields, to ensure the data standards below have been complied with. The team will also carry out checks for consistency in subject classification across all courses, to ensure our search tool is able to function as intended without disadvantaging any providers or applicants. Providers will not be informed of every change made to data held in the collection tool, as some changes may be cosmetic (for example, removing a double full stop at the end of a sentence). By continuing to use UCAS' marketing services, providers agree to the opportunity marketing service terms of supply, and give permission for UCAS to amend any information supplied.

These data standards are in place to ensure learners are not impeded when searching for and comparing courses.

Ampersands are excluded to facilitate the current functionality of the products and services, and any future use of common data transfer mechanisms.

Maximum character limits and error messages are displayed throughout the collection tool to help providers adhere to the data standards.

If there is any planned change to provider details, such as name, address, website, or UKPRN, relationship managers should be informed as soon as possible.

The Data Collection Team endeavours to identify:

- misspellings
- incorrect grammar
- free text fields which only contain URLs
- formatting
- British English (excluding Welsh or Gaelic)

## Data standards

Field/item	Standard
<p><b>All free text fields</b></p> <p>(Course information, sponsorship information, assessment methods, modules, entry requirements, additional costs/fee information, and international application information.)</p>	<p>British English must be used throughout the collection tool.</p> <p>Welsh or Gaelic may be used in combination with an English translation.</p> <p>Entries must begin with a capital letter.</p> <p>Entries must not include ampersands.</p> <p>Entries must refer directly to the associated course.</p> <p>Entries must not contain URLs only, or URLs with no other relevant information explaining the purpose of its inclusion.</p> <p>Extra HTML is not permitted (e.g. bullet points) in order to ensure the information is presented in a consistent format across platforms for learners to make informed choices.</p>
<p><b>Course title</b></p>	<p>British English must be used throughout the collection tool. Welsh or Gaelic may be used in combination with an English translation in brackets.</p> <p>Course titles in Welsh may be used on their own if the 'Taught in Welsh' option is set to 'Yes'. An additional field will appear to enter the English translation.</p> <p>Providers are not permitted to add extra information to course titles that is already captured in a specific field elsewhere on the course record.</p> <p>Entries may include parenthesis, colons, and hyphens, where the course title requires them.</p> <p>Entries must not include ampersands.</p> <p>Should be the commonly used title that enables learners to understand and compare the subject content of the course. For example, if the official course title is 'BSc Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Banking Practice (Level 6)', UCAS would expect the title entered in the collection tool to be 'Accounting and Banking Practice'.</p> <p><b>UKPASS (postgraduate) courses only</b></p> <p>UKPASS providers are permitted to add extra information to the course title field for courses associated with a current</p>

	UKPASS application code (or 'P code') for identification in UKPASS Apply only.
<b>Awarding bodies</b>	Please contact the Data Collection Team if your course's awarding body is not listed.
<b>Internal reference</b>	This field is solely for providers to use to identify specific courses. It will not display anywhere.
<b>Short title</b>	<b>UKPASS (postgraduate), UCAS Undergraduate, and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> This data is used by The Telegraph for Clearing vacancies and required for legacy Apply systems.
<b>Abbreviated title</b>	<b>UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> This can be a combination of letters and numbers and should be unique to each course. This does not need to include a qualification. This data is required for legacy Apply systems.
<b>Contacts</b>	Contacts are added via provider management.  The title of a contact, their email address, and a single phone number are mandatory.  These fields must only contain a single phone or fax number.  Multiple phone or fax numbers, a forward or backward slash character, parentheses, or extension numbers are not permitted.
<b>Subjects</b>	Subjects will help providers better classify their courses from a hierarchical list of terms.  Terms should be chosen which reflect the exact content of the course, or to provide alternative names for topics.  Subjects must accurately reflect what is taught as part of the course.  The search tool and commercial clients use subjects to link similar or aligned courses.  If you have any queries, please contact the Data Collection Team.

<b>Department</b>	Departments are added via provider management. This entry must be the name of any department, school, college, institute, or other level of academic structure used by the provider.
<b>Copy forms required</b>	<b>UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> Select 'Yes' if you would like a PDF of student applications for these course options.  These PDF files cannot be backdated if a copy form preference is changed from 'No' to 'Yes'.
<b>UKPASS application code</b>	<b>UKPASS (postgraduate) courses only</b> Previously known as a 'P code', this is automatically generated on set-up, and cannot be changed. Providers can add this 'P code' to their course title.
<b>UCAS application code</b>	<b>UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> This will be a four digit alphanumeric application code, chosen by the user subject to the following validation rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It cannot have already been used in the collection tool by the provider.</li> <li>• It cannot contain the letter E.</li> </ul> This code cannot be changed once the course has been saved for the first time. It will only be required for 2018 courses due to the legacy application systems.
<b>Outcome qualification</b>	Please contact the Data Collection Team if your outcome qualification is not listed.  You will need to provide the full name of the qualification, the abbreviated name of the qualification, the FHEQ level, and the SCQF level.
<b>Qualification level</b>	RQF and SCQF levels are automatically associated to outcome qualifications.  Please contact the Data Collection Team if you believe the level of an outcome qualification is incorrectly assigned.
<b>Equal consideration deadline</b>	<b>UCAS Undergraduate courses only</b> 15 October – courses which have professional dentistry, medicine, or veterinary medicine/science outcome

	<p>qualifications, or any courses at the universities of Oxford or Cambridge may use this deadline.</p> <p>15 January – most courses will have the January deadline.</p> <p>24 March – courses which require portfolios as an entry requirement may use the March deadline.</p> <p><b>UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b></p> <p>1 October – this deadline guarantees consideration for UCAS Conservatoires applications to music courses.</p>
<b>Course type</b>	<p><b>UCAS Undergraduate courses only</b></p> <p>If a course does not have 15 January as its equal consideration deadline, the relevant course type should be selected from the list.</p>
<b>Provider apply URL</b>	<p><b>UCAS Postgraduate courses only</b></p> <p>This URL is not displayed but is the result when applicants click the 'Apply' button in the search tool.</p> <p>It must be a functioning and relevant URL. Providers should prefix the URL with either 'http://' or 'https://' when entering data.</p>
<b>Professional bodies</b>	<p>Please contact the Data Collection Team if your course's professional body is not listed.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Locations are added via provider management. The location code is only required for locations offering UCAS Undergraduate or UCAS Conservatoires courses.</p> <p>The entry must be the name of the location that is currently used, to enable learners to accurately research the location and its surroundings.</p> <p>Providers that offer courses at locations owned by another provider (e.g. University of Anywhere offers courses at Newtown College) must ensure any changes to the name and address of the other location are updated as soon as the change is publicised by the other provider.</p> <p><b>UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b></p> <p>The location code cannot be edited after it is set.</p>
<b>Fees</b>	<p>Additional costs/fees information is a free text field which will display as well as specific fees.</p>

	You can set up fee templates to copy from in provider management.
<b>Entry points</b>	This will default to 'Year 1', but can be changed or multiple selections made.
<b>Subject options</b>	The list of subject options can be added or edited in provider management.  Multiple subject options can be added to a course option.
<b>Course subject composition</b>	<b>UKPASS (postgraduate), UCAS Undergraduate, and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> The proportion of subjects (JACS codes) in the course.  Please contact the Data Collection Team if you require assistance with choosing the relevant course subject composition.
<b>JACS</b>	Please contact the Data Collection Team if you require assistance with choosing the relevant JACS.  <b>UCAS Undergraduate and UCAS Conservatoires courses only</b> Further information about JACS 3 codes can be found on <a href="#">HESA's website</a> . The chosen JACS should be the closest possible match to the content of the course.  <b>UKPASS (postgraduate) courses only</b> Further information about JACS 2 codes can be found on <a href="#">HESA's website</a> . The chosen JACS should be the closest possible match to the content of the course.
<b>UKPASS course contact</b>	<b>UKPASS (postgraduate) courses only</b> Selected from list managed via provider management. Can be the same contact as above.
<b>Provider name</b>	UCAS will use the marketing name indicated by the provider at the time of on-boarding.  Requests to change a provider name should be made via the Data Collection Team, in advance of the actual date of change.

<b>URLs</b>	Must be a functioning and relevant URL. Providers should prefix the URL with either 'http://' or 'https://' when entering data.
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