

Student Record System Developer/UCAS Webinar

11 October 2023

UCAS



Welcome

- Monthly event
- Bringing together student record system (SRS) developers
 - Commercial vendors as recognised by UCAS
 - HE Providers developing in-house
- An opportunity
 - Ensure consistent messaging
 - Facilitate engagement between UCAS and developers
 - Operational changes
 - Roadmaps
 - Workshops on new developments
 - Demonstrations
 - Q&A/Surgeries

Agenda

Operational update – Adam Glaudot (Service Delivery Manager)

ODBC-Link decommission update – Adam Glaudot

Roadmap update – Clare Cozens (Group Product Manager)

Changes for the 2025 cycle – Jenny Garner (Product Owner)

XML-Link infrastructure changes – Richard Leeman (Solution Architect)

Supported by Harry Haines (Service Delivery Partner)

Operational update

■ 2023 cycle

- Closed 1 October (Conservatoires)
- 25 October 2023 (Undergraduate)

■ 2024 application cycle

- Opened on July 12 (Conservatoires)
 - New Gender questions
- Opened on 5 September (Undergraduate)
 - New Gender questions
 - References now in 3 sections – collated for delivery
- Applications available in XML-Link and Web-Link only

■ October 16 deadline (undergraduate)

- For Oxford/Cambridge, Medical, Dentistry and Veterinary courses
- Will see applications to other HE Providers (HEPs) by association
 - E.g. other choice made by an applicant applying to Oxford or Cambridge

Data for HESA statutory returns

■ Test environments

- HEP1 - Data generated on 6 October with timestamp of 06/10/2023 14:00:00
- HEP2 – 2023 cycle will close on 12 October
 - Data to be generated on 13 October with timestamp of 13/10/2023 14:00:00
- 2023 cycle cannot be used for any other testing after these dates

■ Production

- **Changes for 2023**
 - Details in technical briefing documents
 - In test environment
 - Production deployment being planned
- **Data generation in November**

ODBC-Link decommission update

Adam Glaudot

UCAS



ODBC-Link decommissioning

- *2024 cycle applications will not be available in ODBC-Link*
- Decommissioning still planned for December 2023
- After 2023 cycle activities have completed
 - HESA data
 - DCF RBD

XML-Link migration

- Approx 40 HEPs have now moved. At least 30 more planning to move by end of October
- Many more are using our test and training environments
 - Record levels of test data requests
- But still 100 left to move
- Comms will continue to flag impact of not migrating
- Please let Service Delivery Management (Technical) team know of any plans you becomes aware of (if appropriate) on sdmtech@ucas.ac.uk
- Information and FAQs on next steps on [UCAS.com](https://ucas.com) – please share
- Common questions/issues
 - Production XML-Link account
 - IP addresses need to added to a firewall rule at UCAS if outside of the UK

Roadmap update

Clare Cozens

Group Product Manager

UCAS



2025 CYCLE

2026 CYCLE

POST 2026 CYCLE

NON-CYCLE SPECIFIC*



Residency, nationality and address data collection improvements Collecting better, more thorough data from students allowing you to make the right admissions decisions faster.



Qualification and education section improvements Collecting better, more thorough data from students allowing you to make the right admissions decisions faster

Entry grade data (2024 cycle) To respond to sector calls for transparency, accepted entry grade data will be published in Course Search - initially for A level and BTEC qualifications after the January 2024 ECD.



Modernised Contextual Data Service (including verified free school meals data, where available) via UCAS-link. Allowing you to seamlessly access this data within your student record system alongside the rest of the applicant's data.

Replacement for Application & Decision Tracker. A new dashboard allowing providers to benchmark performance during the cycle.

Outreach Connection Service A dedicated online tool for providers to show their opportunities and activities and be the go-to, single source of truth place for teachers and advisers offering an efficient and time saving tool for them to support underrepresented performance during the cycle.



Document management phase 1 Allowing students to attach documents at the point of application and enabling you to choose which documents you want to receive and when.

Personal statement reform (aiming for 2026 cycle) Making it much clearer to students what supporting information really makes a difference to their application, making it simpler for them to express themselves as well as increasing their confidence that they have properly understood what they should include.



Extenuating circumstances. Allowing students to share details of any extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their education/exam related performance.



Agent/sponsor tagging Allowing students to demonstrate that they are being supported by an agent, sponsor etc. who is not a UCAS registered centre.



Courses data restructure A seamless and efficient experience which streamlines data collection, submission, and tracking. Providers will be able to use APIs to update course data, in addition to a user interface.



Document management phase 2 Building on our document management offering to provide a better student and provider experience and looking at document collection post submission.



Record of Offer (aiming for the 2025 cycle) Allowing providers to create records for students who have no prior relationship with UCAS, before all conditions have been met.

Phone number validation (due to go live before Christmas) Ensuring we collect phone numbers in the right format to provide you with better quality data.



Data for statutory returns reimaged (TBC) Looking at how and when we supply the data that underpins statutory returns e.g. HESA

Improved personalisation across ucas.com We will be looking to enhance student personalisation based on their preferences, behaviours and engagement across our estate.

Enhanced information, advice and guidance for all Maximise the support we provide to students, parents, advisers and teachers on all post-18 pathways through experiential content.

Decommission ODBC-link (December 2023) Improving the technology you use to integrate your student record system with UCAS.

Publication of TEF ratings & course level insights To surface a clear signal of a provider's excellence – TEF ratings will be surfaced for English providers from October-23. We will also extend the data insights surfaced to include Graduate Outcomes data.

* These items will be made available as soon as they are ready instead of waiting for the next cycle to launch

Changes for the 2025 cycle

Jenny Garner

UCAS



XML-Link protocol change

Richard Leeman
Solutions Architect



The Driver



Like any other organisation, UCAS needs to ensure that we are in support for the 3rd Party Tools / Technologies that we rely on to run our systems.



Running on unsupported tools / technologies could pose a risk to both UCAS and potentially to our customers, therefore we need to maintain support to ensure we are taking advantage of security patches & new security features.

What's changing?

As part of a UCAS wide modernization exercise, the UCAS XML-Link Product has been highlighted as running on technology that we need to upgrade to remain in support.



We need to upgrade the version of the programming language that we are using.



We need to upgrade the platform that we are running the product on and move XML-Link to run on that platform.

What issues will the change cause?

Moving XML-Link to our new chosen platform has highlighted a stumbling block.



XML-Link uses the RPC Encoded SOAP Protocol.



The platform we need to move XML-Link to does not support the RPC Encoded SOAP Protocol, as it is an old unsupported protocol.

What does this mean for our customers?

UCAS want to provide a fully supported platform for XML-Link.



Ideally, we would like our customers to transition to the new version of XML-Link that we have a demo version of in the HEP Test environment.



The change for customers is to the protocol they use to communicate with our SOAP endpoints, instead of RPC-Encoded, they would need to use Document Literal SOAP Protocol.

Protocol Differences ...

Regardless of protocol, the WSDL file still has full definitions and type information, the impactful differences are in the SOAP envelopes themselves, as illustrated below.

RPC Encoded

```
<soap:envelope>
  <soap:body>
    <myMethod>
      <x xsi:type="xsd:int">5</x>
      <y xsi:type="xsd:float">5.0</y>
    </myMethod>
  </soap:body>
</soap:envelope>
```

Document Literal

```
<soap:envelope>
  <soap:body>
    <x>5</x>
    <y>5.0</y>
  </soap:body>
</soap:envelope>
```

Demo

We made a demo available previously to those who have flagged that they are reliant on the WSDL to show how the new DocLiteral version can be used from both Java and .NET, if you would like to see that please contact sdmtech@ucas.ac.uk.

A demo instance is available and is detailed in a [technical briefing document](#).

We will be making a new more, integrated test instance using DocLiteral in due course and will let you know when its available.

Thank you for attending

Questions?

Subsequent questions

Suggestions for future webinar

Improvements to how UCAS works with you

sdmtech@ucas.ac.uk