

## Minutes

EPG/22/M2

Group meeting

Held on Wednesday 12 October 10.00 – 12.00, virtually through MS Teams

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Chair:	Brian Lutchmiah	University of Law
Present:	Jonathan Atkinson	HELOA
	Alex Bols	Guild HE
	Harvey Church	BBC London, Broadcast Engineering Apprentice
	Anita Ibrahim	Grant Thornton UK LLP
	Anna Gates	EDF Energy, Civil Engineering Degree Apprentice
	Kevin Gilmartin	ASCL
	Adam Green	DFE
	Nick Hull	University Birmingham
	Dan Hurley	UUK
	Gary Lindley	Durham Sixth Form Centre
	Michelle Magee	Canterbury Christ Church University
	Prof Claire O'Malley	Durham University
	Eleanor Parker	Kings College London
	Simon Pick	Bridlington School
	Arti Saraswat	AoC
	Paul Smith	SLC
	Rob Tucker	London South Bank University
	Lizzy Woodfield	Aston University
Apologies:	Andrew Webster	CEC
UCAS in attendance:	Victoria Waterson	Service Delivery Coordinator
	Carys Willgoss	Principal Policy Adviser
Observing:	Irene Anastasiades	Data Scientist
	Shauna Blake	Reform and Strategy Adviser
	Holly Brown	Policy Adviser
	Gregory Hodges	Data Collection Support Office
	Georgia Marks	Public Affairs Adviser
	Haleema Masud	Policy Adviser
	James O'Brien	Data Collection Support Officer

### **A2/22/01 Welcome and apologies**

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. Chair introduced Eleanor Parker as a new Policy Group member.

## A2/22/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate reflection of the last meeting. It was noted that Deniz Gosai has moved to a different role at UCAS and a permanent replacement to cover support of the meeting is hoped to be in place for the next meeting.

The open actions from the log were discussed:

*EPG002* and *EPG004* are now closed.

*EPG003* – the group were provided the following update:

Following updates from advisory and policy group chairs at UCAS Council, a member of Council suggested that UCAS bring together group members with an interest in Widening Access/Participation, as this was a common topic of concern and a cross-cutting discussion could help to drive this forward. UCAS would like to take this forward as a pilot, opening an invitation to all group members. Anyone interested in being part of the discussion are asked to email [access@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:access@ucas.ac.uk).

*EPG005* – it was noted that a discussion on fair access would be included in the next agenda.

## A2/22/03 Chairs update

Feedback from the last UCAS Council meeting

A presentation was given to the Council members by Eddie Playfair from the Association of College (AOC) about sector collaboration towards Widening Participation (WP). It was **AGREED** that the slides from the session would be shared with the group following the meeting.

VW  
EPG006

The new entry grade tool was demonstrated to Council members, and it was noted that the Group would like to have the option of finding out more information about the functionality. It was **AGREED** that a separate, optional session would be arranged for the members of the English Policy Group to give a demo of this tool.

CW  
EPG007

The Council meeting also covered the newly introduced WP questions within the 2023 application form and the insights for Confirmation and Clearing (C&C) this year. In addition, it was noted that some applicants had been receiving mixed messages on the answering of disability questions on the application and that the Head of Operations at UCAS would be looking to address this

Any issues/feedback Group would like raising at the next Council meeting

There were no issues raised.

## A2/22/04 Shaping upcoming UCAS Research - discussion

*What does 'value' mean to students, and how does it influence their decision-making?*

Carys Willgoss gave a presentation on the current research being considered at UCAS. The Group were divided into three breakout rooms and discussed to consider the following questions:

1. What about this insight most interests and/or surprises you?
2. Is there specific national context that may be affecting findings?
3. On which areas should UCAS focus when determining recommendations?

The following points were raised as part of the discussion:

- A general view that the student voice on value needs to be amplified to balance the rhetoric on pay/job title
- There would be benefits to making the segmentation more nuanced, for example by subject area, demographic or provider type
- It was noted that there should be a clear motivation for why this research is being completed

- Clear definitions for terms used, such as the type of skills. For example, will students interpret skills as broad or discipline-specific
- There should be more options as part of the motivation question as the current options do not capture all facets of wellbeing
- It would be insightful for all recommendations to stretch across the student lifecycle, not just limited to admissions but include on-course views and continuation post-qualification
- Consider the inclusion of a question on what the applicants are anticipating their fees to be spent on
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#### **A2/22/05 Campfire – member updates**

The following updates were provided by members:

- There is a commitment to the UK becoming at the forefront of technology but HE is using Zoom which is a limitation for international students
- It was noted that following the OfS' new consultation, HE Providers will have to overhaul their access and participation plans, including datasets, with OfS planning to move away from POLAR. It was noted that UCAS were currently formulating a response to this consultation, including the value of the data captured by UCAS, both at provider and sector level.
- The Million+ group have published a report on the cost of living which flags that there has been no changes in financial support for students despite the current economic climate. It was **AGREED** that the cost of living crisis will be discussed at the next meeting
- Some schools and colleges are calling for the standardisation of WP programmes across the HE sector as it causes pressure on teachers and acts as a disadvantage for already disadvantaged applicants – it was noted that UCAS' Fair Access programme is developing a tool that is designed to address this concern.
- The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) are planning to publish the results of their survey at the end of October, alongside recommendations for the Panel and will act to inform IFATE's initiatives over the next year
- Shortage of teachers and reduced funding will have a significant impact on the support that schools and colleges can provide students on decision about HE. This is likely to get worse in the coming months and years.

VW  
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#### **A2/22/06 Any other business and Close**

BL is unable to attend the next UCAS Council meeting on 17/11/2022. Jonathan Atkinson **AGREED** to provide a verbal update on behalf of the group at the 17 November UCAS Council meeting, as appropriate.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be discussed offline for some time in the new year ahead of the UCAS March Council meeting.

BL/CW  
EPG009