

UCAS Data Group

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For information

UCAS' consultation on name blinding applications

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1. Issue

This paper provides information about the government's announcement on the proposal to introduce name blind applications to address perceived risks arising from unconscious bias in university admissions, particularly in relation to students from ethnic minority backgrounds. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

2. Recommendations

The Data Group is invited to note UCAS' proposed approach.

3. Report

The government has targets to:

- Increase the number of full-time, UK domiciled undergraduates enrolled in English higher education providers who are from a Black or Ethnic Minority community. The aim is to achieve growth of 20% between the academic years 2014-15 and 2020-21
- Double the proportion of students from the most disadvantaged areas going into HE by 2020. This is based on 18 year olds from disadvantaged areas (POLAR quintile 1). In 2009 the entry rate for this group was 13.6%. The target for 2020 is 27.2%.

In response to concerns about unconscious bias in university admissions, particularly relating to students from ethnic minority backgrounds, the government has proposed that applications are name blinded from September 2017 (2018 admissions cycle).

Following an approach from the government, UCAS has agreed to consult universities and colleges about how name blind applications might be realised as part of our ongoing conversation about the redevelopment of the application management service. Universities UK is supportive of this way forward.

If there is demand to remove names from applications centrally UCAS will build this capability into the new version of its undergraduate application management service. The earliest this could be delivered is for the 2018 admissions cycle, which opens in September 2017.

The consultation process and questions are being developed and an update will be provided at the meeting. This also provides an opportunity to seek views on other changes UCAS could make to the admissions process that could facilitate fair admissions for underrepresented groups.

4. Communications

UCAS initial statement about name blind applications is at: <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/news-and-key-documents/news/name-blind-applications-higher-education-%E2%80%93-comment-ucas%E2%80%99-ceo>

UCAS Correspondents were informed on 26/10/15.