

minutes

DG/15/M3

Data Group meeting

held on Wednesday 4 November 2015, 10:30 till 15:00, at UCAS, Cheltenham.

Chair:	Wendy Webster	University of Dundee
Present:	Alex Ingold	The London School of Economics and Political Science
	Daniel Farrell	University of St Andrews
	Gurjit Nijjar	University of Derby
	Jo Hamilton	University of Exeter
	Lisa Machin	Nottingham Trent University
	Tania Smith	University of Manchester
Apologies:	Christine Giles	University of Portsmouth
	Emma Christmas	Keele University
	Helen Reed	University of Cambridge
	James Brown	University of Glasgow
	Judith Davison	University of Huddersfield
	Nick Bhugeloo	Kingston University
	Paul Ashby	University of Birmingham
	Stella Fowler	University of Gloucestershire (representing the Higher Education Strategic Planners Association)
	Steve Walsh	Aberystwyth University
In attendance:	Andy Youell	Higher Education Data and Information Improvement Programme (HEDIIP)
UCAS in Attendance:	Claire Feeney	Admin Support Officer
	Deniz Gosai	Groups & Forums Administrator
	Fraser Nicoll	Strategic Product Manager
	Helen Thorne	Director of External Relations
	Kate Westmacott	Provider Change and Engagement Manager
	Louise Cyprien	Business Change Lead
	Mike Spink	Data Architect
	Peter Derrick	Head of Service Delivery
	Sam Wathen	Product Owner

A3/15/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted. Daniel King had resigned from the Data Group due to a change in his role within his university.

A3/15/02 Minutes and actions from the last meeting

The minutes from the past meeting were approved. The open actions were discussed:

DG004 - Membership of the Group would be reviewed to ensure it still had a true representation from the sector. This action remained open.

DG043 – Jo Hamilton, University of Exeter, had spoken to Suzanne Campbell, UCAS Education Account Manager, directly about the pricing structure of the EXACT service. It later became apparent in the meeting that ucas.com did not contain information about the pricing of EXACT data services. This action remained open. Peter Derrick, Head of Service Delivery, agreed to arrange for a range of pricing variables to be available on the website. This action remained open.

DG049 – A guide on contact information would be available at the end of November 2015. Following the meeting the contact information was delayed and would now be made available in February 2016.

All other open actions were covered during the meeting.

A3/15/03 Undergraduate service development engagement, including link products engagement to date

Kate Westmacott, Provider Change and Engagement Manager, introduced herself. Presentation DG/15/001 was explained. It was re-iterated that the Change Steering Group did not make final decisions, but agreed which Advisory Group would be best suited to offer specific advice or recommendations.

UCAS would consult with the sector on six broad areas, as outlined in the presentation. As a result of the business rules strand, a Dates and Deadlines Working Group had been set up. Further details were available about this group, including their terms of reference on ucas.com. Timeframes on reporting and recommendations would be communicated after the Annual Review Meeting on 18 November 2015 and available on the UCAS website.

With reference to the link products, it was agreed that the UCAS Data Group would look at how the transaction data is packaged for transmission via the link products, while the UCAS Technical Group would look at the link product technology. It was

action

confirmed that PQA itself would not be re-reviewed by the Dates and Deadlines Working Group.

KW DG052

The Group asked that webinars which were relevant to the Data Group, could be communicated via Yammer, in addition to the bulletins.

A3/15/04 Undergraduate product proposition

Presentation DG/15/003 was given to the Group. It was noted that a beta version of the postgraduate search tool had been live for eight weeks. UCAS was now seeking feedback on the search tool.

The wireframe for the collect service was shown to the Group and feedback was requested. It was confirmed that provider details would be held centrally, and pulled through to each course. The filters were for HEPs to enable them to add courses more easily.

The Group requested the following should be included.

- A discrete list of qualification outcomes.
- More standard lists (less free text), to maintain consistency.
- Bulk upload and bulk delete.
- Option to close courses early by fee status (for example, if numbers for international students had been met).
- Option to put in special requirements (for example, if the course required an interview).
- Option to put in non-academic requirements.
- To be able to publish and not publish courses / or have expressions of interest for courses.
- Option to have pre-application for research proposals.
- Option to add a collection of framework elements (for example, some degrees could be used as a progression route to another degree).
- To be CMA compliant. UCAS had an internal consumer protection working group, which was looking at this.

All DG053

The Group was asked the importance of XCRI to HEPs. The consensus was that the Group would need to speak to their marketing departments first. This would be followed up on Yammer. Daniel Farrell agreed to post some information on the background and structure of the XCRI project onto Yammer to initial discussion.

DF DG054

The new admissions portfolio was explained to the Group. It was noted that universities that interviewed applicants for their courses would need to be considered, and it was

action

confirmed that the ability to upload e-portfolios using a document management service would be a module of the system.

A3/15/05 5.1 Data requirements validation

Sam Wathen, Product Owner, joined the meeting. A data requirements spreadsheet was talked through. A copy of the spreadsheet was circulated after the meeting. Sam asked the Group to look at the spreadsheet and feedback information on the outputs. Specific information required was about: DG DG055

1. any data requirements not included for a reason ALL DG056
2. any data that UCAS collected but was not required or HEPs did not use
3. any data items which should be provided in a different format, and if so, what

A further update would be provided at the next Data Group meeting. SW DG057

5.2 'Name-blind' applications

It was confirmed that UCAS had been contact by BIS prior to the announcement made by David Cameron on name-blind applications. UCAS had agreed that they would consult with the sector about the feasibility of name blind applications.

UCAS will be carrying out an evidence gathering activity to ask the sector for feedback on the name-blind applications proposals. UCAS believes that the final decision had to be made by the sector and would work closely with Guild HE and UUK to agree the process. SPA would carry out a piece of work to develop an evidence-based document that would support the evidence gathering activity.

If name-blind was not favoured by the sector, a proposal would need to be developed and put forward about how the admission process could be improved, to minimise the risks of unconscious bias and to help achieve the widening participation targets that the Government has in place. If name-blind was agreed, then discussions would need to take place on how it would work.

It was confirmed that the consultation period would begin before Christmas 2015, lasting until February 2016, with the final decision due to be made during summer 2016.

A3/15/06 Potential efficiencies

A list of 10 efficiencies gathered from the Postgraduate Advisory Group was shared with the Group. The data efficiencies and postgraduate efficiencies lists were circulated with the minutes. The Group agreed with the list. In addition, the following efficiencies were added:

DG DG058

- extended data collection for 'in care'
- schools data – this was a high priority
- qualification verification – to include postgraduate and undergraduate

The Group agreed to continue the discussion on Yammer, and that the efficiencies should link to the undergraduate scheme as well as the postgraduate scheme.

A3/15/07 Review next steps on current data issues

UCAS was aware that training for UCAS Correspondents had to be improved. Stella Fowler, Higher Education Strategic Planners Association, was working with UCAS to achieve this.

As no development would take place on the legacy infrastructure, the Group asked whether HEPs could have access to underlying school data that fed applications, such as the school's name, school code and DfE code. It was noted that Adam Glaudot, Technical Relationship Manager, was aware of this request. The Group would discuss it further on Yammer, and an update would be provided at the next Data Group meeting.

AG DG059

A3/15/08 HEDIIP update and HESA data futures consultation

Andy Youell, Director of the Higher Education Data and Information Improvement Programme (HEDIIP), joined the meeting. The Group was reminded that JACS codes were not sustainable, and a new coding system had been developed (the Higher Education Classification of Subjects, HECoS). JACS codes had been based on a hierarchy, whereas the new subject coding system, HECoS, was flat, with just over 1,000 codes. The 'others' option would not be available with HECoS, and there was space in the coding structure to add additional codes if necessary.

HEDIIP had received the deliverables for the final stage, and the next step was to agree an adoption timescale. It was estimated that the timeframe would be 20018/19.

It was noted that there would be a break in the timings from JACS to HECoS, however HESA and UCAS would have the ability to analyse the codings and understand the impact of discontinuity data. It was also noted, that HESA could go live with HECoS first, and UCAS could follow at a later date.

action

The Group asked for HEDIIP to map JACs to HECoS and provide more detail about the implementation timeframes, as soon as possible. AY DG060

A3/15/09 UCAS policy on personal data

The Group was asked whether they had any questions on the paper DG/15/005. It was confirmed that the Economic and Social Research Council fund the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN). The ADRN was a service provided to the academic search community, and data gathered could not be used for commercial use. UCAS confirmed it could be confident in assuring applicants that their data will be stored safely and used responsibly.

A3/15/10 Any other business

10.1 Safe harbour

It was explained that the European Court of Justice had recently declared the safe harbour between the USA and the EU invalid. UCAS had some data stored with US companies and would remain as compliant as possible, whilst waiting for a new safe harbour to be established.

A3/15/11 Date of the next meeting

A date would be agreed between Wendy Webster and Helen Thorne and a calendar invite would then be sent to the Group. The next meeting date had been set for Wednesday 2 March 2016 at UCAS. Calendar invitations had been sent to the Group. DG DG061