

UCAS Data Group**DG/16/001****3 March 2016****For information****HIGHER EDUCATION GREEN PAPER (ENGLAND) - UPDATE****Helen Thorne, Director External Relations**

1. Issue

This paper provides an update about UCAS' response to the HE Green Paper.

2. Recommendations

The Data Group is invited to note this update.

3. Report

The HE Green Paper published in November 2015 consulted on a number of proposals, including two which are particularly relevant for UCAS:

- i) *Proposals to further improve access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds; including UCAS' consultation about the introduction of name blind applications*

Prior to the publication of the Green Paper UCAS had already agreed with the government to consult about the introduction of name blind application and this was reported at the last Data Group meeting. This consultation is being run in two stages: an evidence gathering exercise followed by a more formal consultation about proposals.

The evidence gathering draws upon: a literature review of the evidence base produced by SPA (December 2015); a survey of HEPs (launched 10 December 2015, closed 5 February 2016); an online focus group with representatives from 11 HEPs from across the UK; an

assessment of the published responses to the HE Green Paper; and an invitation to a selection of stakeholders from the UK and beyond to share their experience and opinions.

We received 120 completed responses to the HEP survey. These are considered and detailed responses and UCAS would like to thank the sector for engaging fully and constructively. The rich input will also be valuable for the redevelopment of the application service.

We have discussed the findings of the evidence gathering with our advisory panel and the details will be considered by the UCAS Board on 26 February prior to conversations with UUK, GuildHE, and the Association of Colleges, and with the HE sector at the Admissions Conference at the end of March.

ii) Proposals to establish a power to require bodies providing a service connected with the provision of higher education to provide relevant data and information to help better target efforts on widening access and success”.

In our response to the Green Paper we highlighted the work that UCAS does to provide access to data via its published analytical reports and datasets, data supplies to universities of their own data, and access anonymised, aggregated data about applications, offers, and acceptances and the destinations of other cohorts of students to other institutions through UCAS’ analytical services. We also focused on the development of our new partnership with the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) which will enable UCAS to share data securely with the academic research community and facilitate linking with other datasets for research purposes.

BIS has advised that, assuming there is an HE bill, it will include powers to require UCAS to provide data for widening participation purposes. In anticipation of this, UCAS is reviewing its approach to the provision of data and will shortly be announcing a number of changes so that researchers and those involved in supporting widening participation can access data in advance of any legislation.

4. Communications

UCAS will be communicating its policy on access to data for research and further updates shortly.

A report about the name blind applications evidence gathering exercise will be published in April.