

## Direct Contact Service 2017: Update for DAG

### The ideas behind the service

The Direct Contact Service (DCS) introduces three new ideas:

- Enables you to speak directly to applicants who have not applied to you.
- Uses advanced data-driven methods to help solve the needle-in-the-haystack discovery problem in Clearing.
- Introduces a language of “like people placed on this course” as a more natural way for you to request applicants.

### What was the take up in Clearing last year?

- 150k+ applicants signed up to the service – 30k more than the previous year.
- Just under 23k applicants ended up ‘in scope’ – as estimated.
- All applicants ‘in scope’ were distributed to the 110 participating providers.
- Approximately 1,200 applicants are recorded as placed at one of the providers who received their details.

### Applicant feedback from the end of service evaluation survey

- Nearly all applicants (90%) said the service was useful.
- The overwhelming majority (86%) found speaking to you ‘very helpful’ or ‘somewhat helpful’.
- Two thirds of those contacted by a provider say they were made an offer, and half say they took it up.
- 65% said they felt their details were distributed the right number of times (to nine providers), but over a quarter would like to receive more calls than this.

### Provider feedback from the end of service evaluation survey

- 80% of providers said the service was better than the previous year.
- Nearly 75% feel that the service helps to support applicants.
- Over half indicated that they didn’t understand the order process fully, and 80% requested a ‘complete my order’ service from UCAS.
- Nearly 90% of providers would support the pre-selection of anonymised applicant details.

## What's new this year?

### Extra 2017

- Following customer feedback, we are trialling running DCS over Extra this year between 27 February - 30 June 2017. This service has two major differences from the Clearing 2016 service:
  - Participants were asked to pay a non-refundable £500 fee to subscribe to the Extra service. This fee is comprised of a £50 administration fee, and £450 redeemable against two accepted students (either in DCS Extra or DCS Clearing).
  - When formally signing up to use the service, providers did so on the basis of a 25% discount being applied to all placed students to account for spontaneous accepts and negate the need for evidence based exclusions.
  - Each provider was offered a personalised recruitment snapshot report and a 30-minute consultation phone call with a member of the DCS team to agree recruitment requirements.

Early indications show the numbers of applicants made an offer/placed via the Extra service to be very modest due to a low number of applicant sign ups.

### Clearing 2017

- The Clearing service will run from A level results day until 1 September 2017, although providers will be able to contact applicants using the details supplied until 9 September 2017. The Clearing service will also benefit from the consultative order process trialled in Extra, but there are several new features to highlight:

#### The Clearing 2017 Pre-Selection Model

- We are introducing a pre-selection model which has been created to cut down on the amount of time it takes to make decisions during the busy Clearing period:
  - Ahead of A level results day (towards the end of July), we will provide a data supply full of signed up applicants that match your order (based on predicted and previously achieved grades). The applicants' personal details will be masked but their academic details will not.
  - Providers will be given two weeks to consider and select the applicants they would like to see in their DCS supplies come A level results day **IF** they are unplaced.

- Applicants who have been pre-selected will be marked in the supplies received from A level results day onwards, ready to be fast tracked.

#### Region propensity filter

- We have introduced a new optional filter which will allow your results to be narrowed down to applicants who have shown an interest in studying in your region based on their main scheme choices, and on the flow of historical applicants in Clearing between regions.

#### Pricing

- As in Extra, providers will be asked to pay a non-refundable £500 fee to subscribe to the service. This fee is comprised of a £50 administration fee, and £450 redeemable against the final invoice for accepted students.
- The core pricing for the service remains driven by the principle of payment by results – you will only be charged if an applicant whose details are supplied to you goes on to be accepted at your university. The cost for an accepted applicant is £300 (excl. VAT).
- When formally signing up to use the service, providers will be given the option to **either** receive a 25% discount on all accepted students, or to be able to contest applicants who appear on your invoice who you believe were not accepted as a result of the service (e.g. they contacted you first). Providers who opt for the latter will be expected to provide evidence for UCAS to check against when challenging an applicant on the invoice.

#### Calling time

- Following consultation with the Secondary Education Advisory Group, providers will be allowed to contact applicants from 11.00am on A level results day (previously 12.00pm).

#### Next steps

- Providers were invited to register their interest in taking part in the service in the provider bulletin and the sign-up window is now closed. There are seventy providers signed up and applicant sign-ups are currently on par with last year.
- We are currently conducting the consultation calls with signed up providers to discuss their current position and gather their recruitment requirements ahead of pre-selections and A level results day.
- Providers who wish to know more about the service should contact [dcs@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:dcs@ucas.ac.uk) or click this link: [Find out more about the service.](#)