Publication of qualifications accepted on entry

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Background

- At present, UCAS collects information from universities and colleges on their stated entry requirement. It is common that students are accepted with levels of attainment above and below this for a range of reasons. For example, many providers exercise discretion when accepting students below their published entry requirements as part of their widening access and participation efforts.
- Advisers and students have expressed a desire to understand this part of the process in order to support decision making. “I think transparency is vital – so many students look at entry requirements and decide whether to apply based on that.”
- The OfS admissions review also sought to explore this matter prior to being paused.
- As part of the Reform and Reimagine project, UCAS worked with universities, schools, colleges and students to develop a way of presenting this data in an appropriate manner, recognising the nuances here. This has formed part of our MVP development.

Representing entry requirements and student achievement on entry

What do we mean?

- From January 2021, we will provide information to advisers on the range of attainment universities accept, in addition to entry requirements.

OfS admissions review

In this issue, we would like to understand the extent to which there are discrepancies between advertised entry requirements and the actual entry requirements that are required by providers…

…Published entry requirements are an important piece of information available to applicants and may inform their choices about which providers to apply to. A mismatch between advertised and actual entry criteria lacks transparency. Prospective students who would meet the actual entry requirements may be dissuaded from applying to providers or particular courses because of the advertised, higher, entry requirements. This may be particularly relevant to applicants who have less access to well-informed guidance from parents and advisers.

Our Proposal

- In January 2021 we'll provide advisers with information to give an indication of student achievement when they entered a course.
- We plan to explore ways of presenting this information to students in the future
- We'll use the most common qualifications and their representative grade profiles held by students, starting with best 3 A levels, best 4 Scottish Highers and best BTEC qualification equivalent to three A levels (e.g. National Extended Diploma).
- To group at course and higher subject level, using HECOS, and aggregate over a three cycles (placed in 2017-2019 cycles), with a minimum threshold applied of 50 placed applicants with the given qualification (not all courses will have a return).
- Data to be grouped at the various levels (course level or higher level HECOS subject groupings) dependent on a threshold: At least 50 placed applicants with the given qualification type over an aggregation of 2017-2019 cycles.
- We'll exclude outliers by removing 5% minimum and maximum extremes.
- We'll include contextual information e.g. proportion on a given course with different qualification types
- Illustrative graphs may be provided in addition to data files.

Our timeline

September to November - Providers:

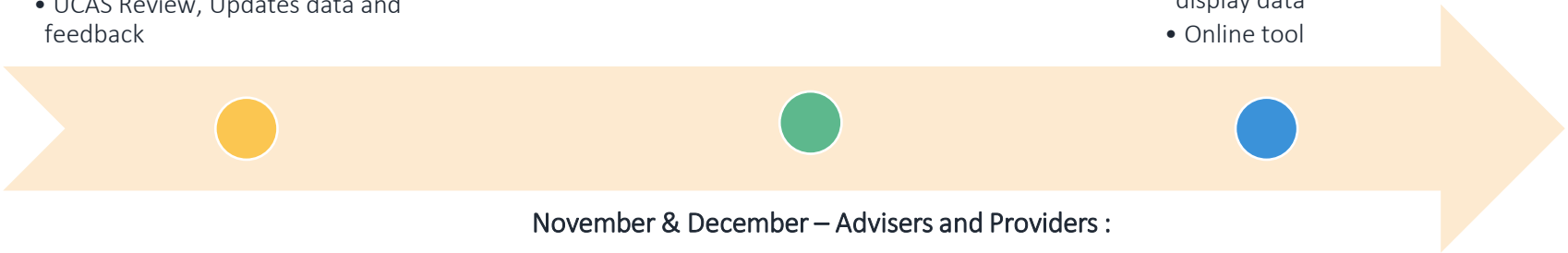
- Review and Validate Data Proposals
- UCAS Review, Updates data and feedback

November & December – Advisers and Providers :

- Engage with Advisors and scope options to display data
- Send Preview data to Providers 23 November for feedback by Monday 21 December
- Deliver MVP Solution in January 2021

2021 - Students

- Scope options to display data
- Online tool



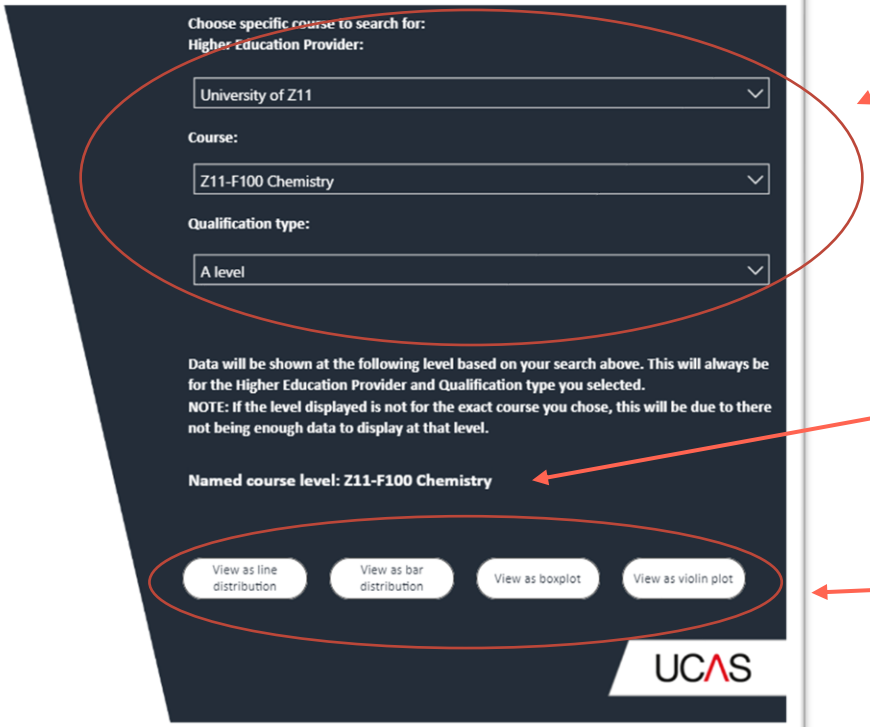
User Dashboard

Product/dashboard name

Intro title

Intro text

<General and provider specific context notes go here>



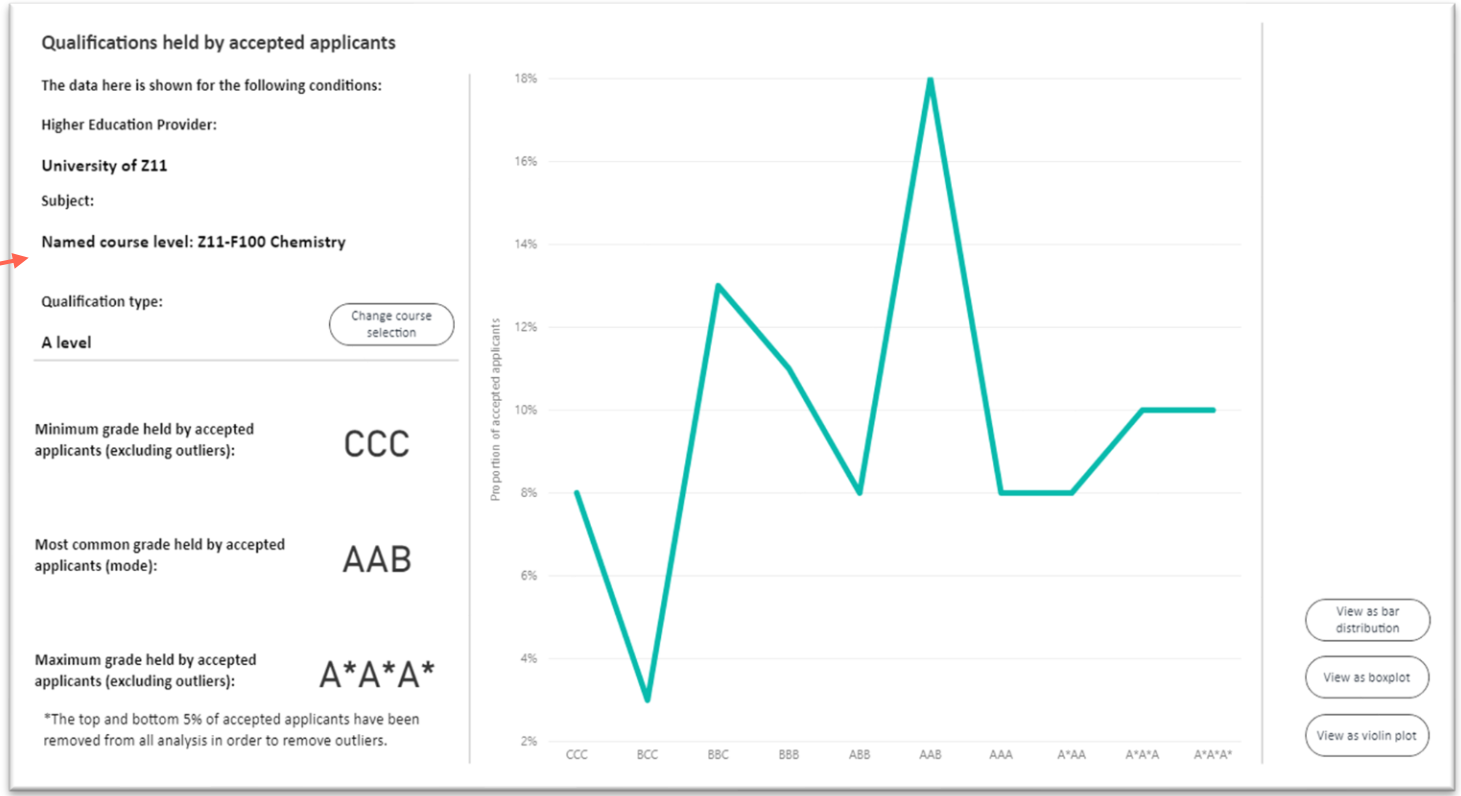
User selects provider, course and qualification

Level of aggregation returned

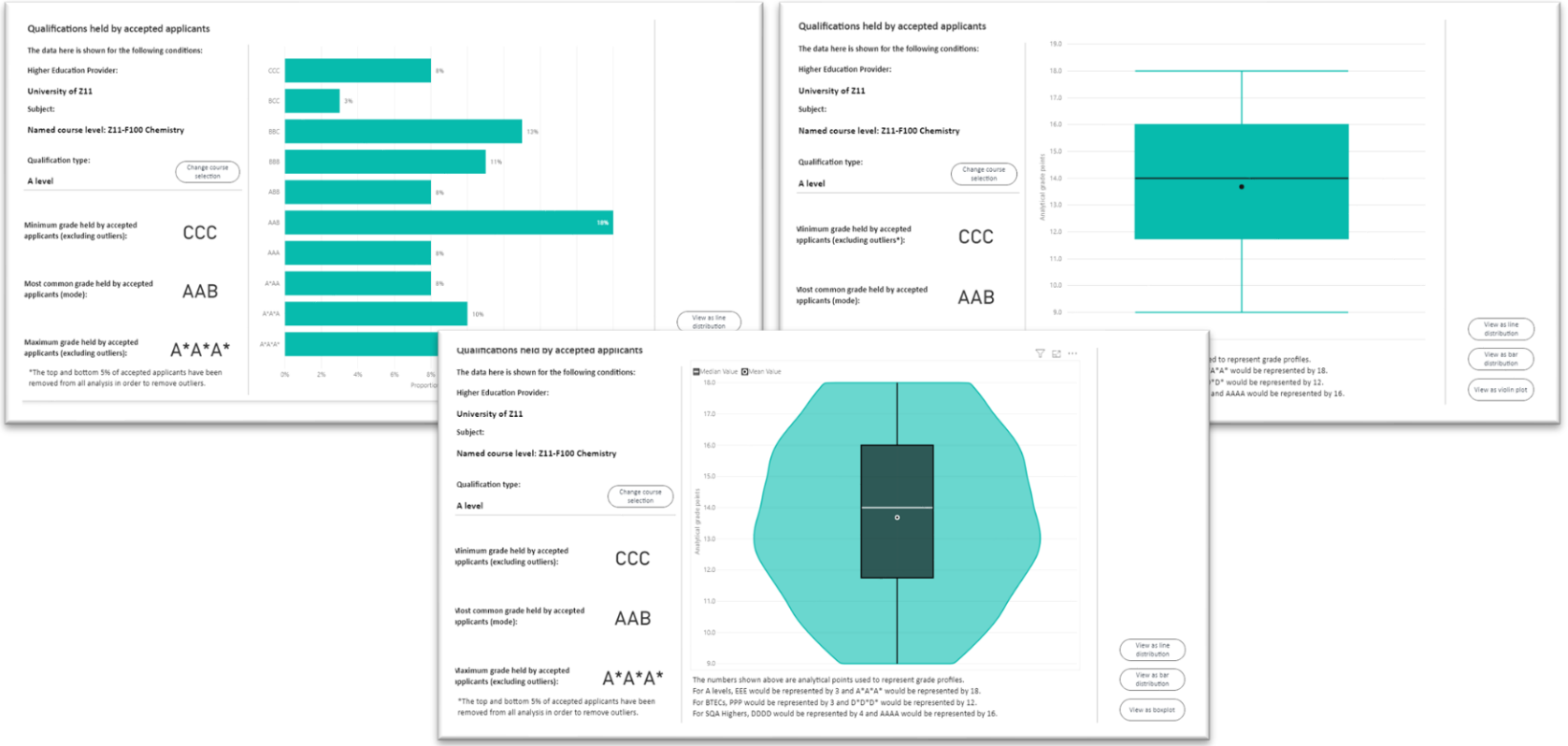
User selects visualisation format

User Dashboard

List of courses to be given if aggregated above course level



User Dashboard



Feedback from providers

- Initial feedback from 20 providers with the following themes

Feedback	Action
Course groupings include foundation courses	Identify foundation courses in the data and report on them separately
The aggregation of data may be misleading	Improve explanatory notes to explain the limitations of aggregated data
Entry Requirements vary year on year	Improve explanatory notes for Advisors
Providers wish to add contextual information	Add provider contextual information on request
Preferences to how data is presented	Preferences are varied and subjective, Advisors will be able to select how data is presented

Next steps:

- UCAS to update the data in accordance with feedback
- Providers will be sent the previews on 23 November and for feedback by Monday 21 December
- Publication of data January 2021