Conservatoires UK ADMISSIONS SERVICE

UCAS

Important changes to the UCAS and CUKAS schemes for 2012 entry – an adviser's guide

Two substantial changes will be made to the UCAS and CUKAS schemes in the 2012 application cycle. These are the introduction of extended character sets, and the provision of additional contextual data to institutions.

Extended character sets

From the 2012 entry cycle, UCAS and CUKAS applicants and UCAS referees will be able to enter some European characters that are not in the English alphabet (extended character sets) in certain fields of Apply and Staff Apply, for example, â, é, õ, ß. We are doing this in order to support the Welsh Language Act (1993), and in doing so, further allow applicants to enter other European characters. Information shown to applicants in Apply will refer to the extended characters as 'European characters'.

If an applicant enters a European character in Apply, all fields that will accept European characters will be marked with the symbol 'Æ'. Some fields in the following sections of Apply will accept European characters:

- personal details
- personal statement
- employment
- referee details
- reference.

Applicants can also enter European characters if they change their address in Track.

Not all institutions can view these characters correctly, so a version of the application with substituted English characters is also made available to them. If a European character is entered in Apply or Track, a warning message will appear on the screen. The applicant or referee will need to view and agree to the substituted characters version of each section in which they've entered European characters before submitting the application.

If a European character is entered that does not have a valid substitution, we will insert the character '#'.

This change will allow applicants and referees to use characters from the following Unicode character sets:

- Basic Latin (excluding C0 control characters)
- Latin-1 (excluding C1 control characters)
- Latin Extended A
- Latin Extended B
- Latin Extended Additional.

A full list of the European characters accepted in Apply and Track and their English character substitutions is available on the UCAS website at **www.ucas.com/advisers/sixsteps/applying/howtoapply** and the CUKAS website at **www.cukas.ac.uk/advisers/sixsteps/applying/howto**.

Contextual data

Many institutions already use the contextual information that is available within the data supplied as part of the UCAS application – such as whether an applicant has been in care. Some institutions go further and use significant resources collecting other relevant contextual data; others do not use any additional data.

For the 2012 application cycle, additional contextual data will be made available to universities, colleges and conservatoires who wish to use it. This is one of a number of shared services being developed by UCAS for the benefit of the HE sector, and comes in response to a number of requests from institutions to provide such information.

The 'basket of data' that will be made available has been agreed through consultation with Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) and the institutions that currently use such data, together with agreement from the administrations of the UK.

The information that will be available is:

- the school performance of students achieving:
  - five A*-C GCSE including English or Welsh and mathematics or equivalent in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - five or more SCQF level 4 Scottish Standard grade including English and mathematics or equivalent in Scotland
- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points for the best eight GCSEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - average points for the best eight Scottish Standard grades or equivalent in Scotland
- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points per A level entry (or equivalent) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - average UCAS Tariff points per Scottish Highers entry in Scotland
- the school performance relating to the:
  - average QCA points per A level student (or equivalent) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - average UCAS Tariff points per Scottish Highers student in Scotland
- the percentage of students at the school
  - entitled to free school meals in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
  - registered for free school meals in Scotland
- the percentage of students at the school
  - entitled to educational maintenance allowance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (note this information will be available for one year only for England as this data will no longer be collected in England. It will be available for other administrations if still available through them)
  - registered for educational maintenance allowance in Scotland
- lives in a low progression to higher education neighbourhood (Polar 2).

The information will be linked to the applicant or can be made available as part of the school/college information supplied to institutions. It will initially be available for the 2009 and 2010 academic years.

General changes

Application fee

The UCAS application fee has been increased from £21 to £22 for two – five choices. It remains at £11 for a single choice.

The CUKAS application fee has been increased from £15 to £16.

Distance contract regulations

The current cooling-off period for applicants will reduce from 14 to seven days. This will mean that, should applicants wish to cancel their application or change one of their choices, they will have seven days from the date on their Welcome letter in which to do this. This also affects applicants who want to change their replies. After making their replies, applicants will have seven days to contact us if they want to change them (reduced from 14 days).

Dance and drama courses

From 2012 entry, some conservatoires will be including their dance and drama courses in the CUKAS scheme. Applicants should check Course Search at www.cukas.ac.uk for complete course listings.

Course fees

Recent changes to policy on student finance arrangements and higher education funding mean many universities, colleges and conservatoires may be delayed in planning and confirming the courses they will be offering for 2012 entry and the fees they charge.

UCAS Course Search will be live from May 2011, whilst fees information will be available in mid-July 2011. As in previous years, Apply will be available from June, and applications can be submitted from September 2011.

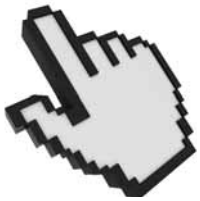
CUKAS Course Search and Apply will be live from mid-July 2011. At that time, applicants will be able to access information on the fees that will be charged.

It is possible that similarly titled courses at different institutions will charge different fees. Therefore it is important that, prior to submitting their application, your students are clear on exactly how much they will be paying for their studies as well as the course they wish to apply for. CUKAS and UCAS Apply will alert applicants to check student finance and course information before submitting their applications.

The latest student finance information is available on the 'Student finance' pages of the UCAS and CUKAS websites.

Adviser Track

following your applicants' journeys



Adviser Track displays your applicants' progress after their applications have been sent to UCAS. View their offers and replies, see who is accepted after exam results are received, and find out who can use Extra or Clearing.

What you need to do:

- Check that your centre has subscribed – if not, email **customerdatabase@ucas.ac.uk**
- Advise your applicants to agree that you can view their completed application (this is part of the declaration in Apply or in the Personal details section in Track)
- Log in to Apply at www.ucas.com and click on Adviser Track on the left hand side – you can now view the statuses of your applicants.

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