STROBE
user documentation for widening participation organisations

What is STROBE?
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STROBE stands for standardised tracking of outcomes with benchmarking and evaluation. It is a service UCAS offers to organisations wishing to track groups of individuals into the higher education system using our data.

STROBE customers are typically charitable organisations, or higher education providers. These would usually seek evidence of a return on their investment in widening participation or outreach activities. STROBE provides robust statistical evidence on the impacts of these activities.

How can it be of benefit?

The service provides anonymised information on a cohort of individuals, supplied by the customer. Typically these are people who the customer has interacted with in some way, through the programme or intervention they have run.

The information provided by STROBE relates to every stage of the higher education admissions process.

It includes:
- applications by the individuals, and the route through which they were made
- offers made to these applicants from higher education providers, and whether they were conditional or unconditional
- replies to offers made by these applicants to the providers, and if they were firm or insurance choices
- acceptances to higher education, and the route through which this acceptance was gained

For each stage of the higher education process, STROBE will compare the data supplied by the customer with an appropriate control group, and report on any significant change achieved.

In addition to this, STROBE allows you to gain insight into:
- groupings of individuals within the data, enabling evaluation of multiple interventions, or the use of a user-defined control group
- which higher education providers, or groups of higher education providers, the groups of individuals have applied to

The STROBE service can be linked to our data commissioning service, EXACT*, to allow customers to find out much more about a cohort. For example, customers can see which courses individuals chose to study, or how they performed in their A levels. When used together, STROBE and EXACT allow the customer to access extremely powerful insight.

Reports and pricing

There are two distinct outputs available:
- low volume, high resolution. This service is charged at £5 per record submitted (+VAT), and contains the full breakdown of the application journey, as well as higher education provider groupings and user-defined groupings
- high volume, low resolution. For customers who wish to submit a very high number of records, the per record charging structure is not appropriate. In this case, UCAS offer a standard fee of £2,000 (+VAT) for a summary report, which can then be enriched using EXACT, if required

Both report styles can be specified, to return information on which higher education providers applicants applied to. The output can be used to link into the EXACT service offered by UCAS, to give you greater insight by accessing extra variables such as sex, POLAR3, course applied to, and more.

These charges would be reduced if only a low number of individual records were matched to the UCAS database.

The minimum charge for an initial STROBE output is £400.

Customers of the UCAS Undergraduate scheme (higher education providers and Apply centres) have a separate pricing arrangement. Please contact us at strobe@ucas.ac.uk for more details.

For analysis of recognised widening participation and fair access activities where the pricing of the service is preventing access, we have a public benefit programme. Please contact us at strobe@ucas.ac.uk for eligibility criteria.

*If a link to EXACT is required, this will be chargeable and quoted separately.