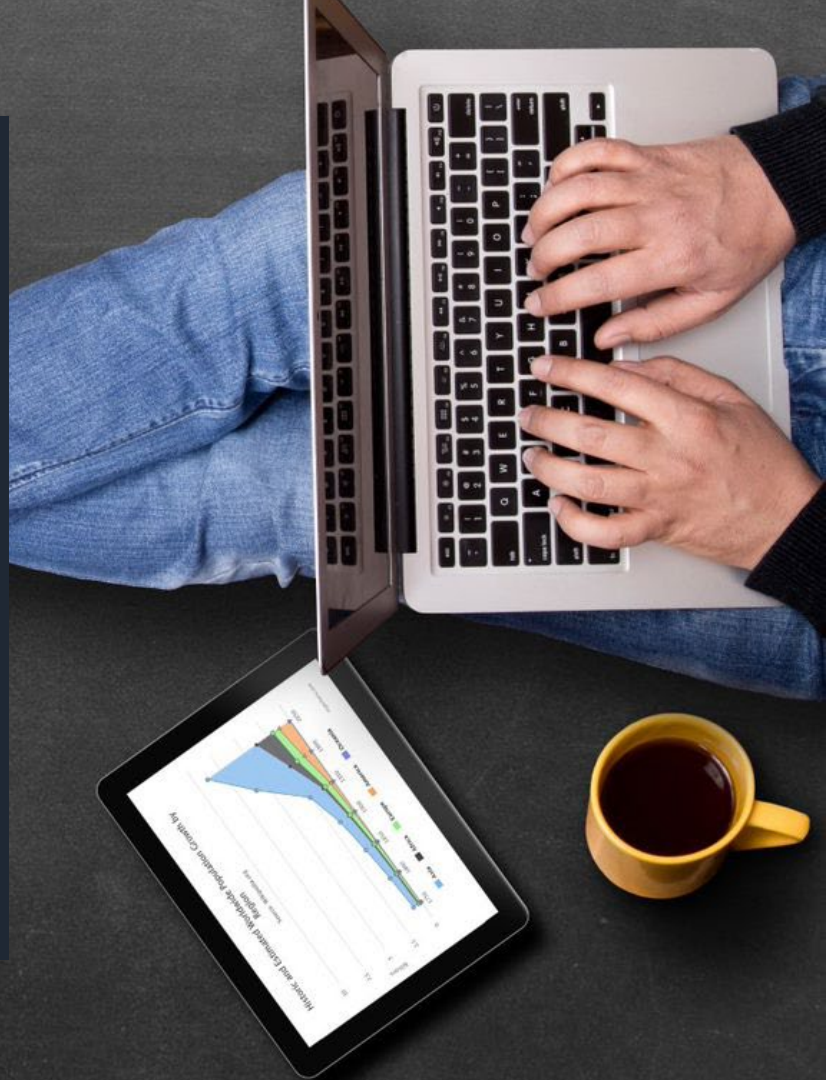


Insight Newsletter

July 2022

UCAS



Welcome to the UCAS Insight Newsletter – July 2022

It's official. The sharp end of the higher education calendar is here with a bang:

3 weeks into Clearing already...

2 days of sweltering temperatures...

1 month until results day kicks off the 22/23 year...

Pre-applicants are now heading into their final ever year of further education, whilst polishing their personal statements, and thinking about their university, college, and course shortlists.

Applicants, on the other hand, are playing the waiting game until results day. What are they doing with their downtime? Expanding those 'uni essentials' shopping lists ahead of term...


For us, this month has been all about monitoring the trends of Clearing 2022 and figuring out how what they mean for marketing strategies for the rest of the season.

Let's get stuck in.


Lessons learned from just 3 weeks of Clearing advertising

We're only a few weeks in and still a few more away from when students get their exam results. But that doesn't mean that there's nothing to be learned from an early look at performance.


In fact this year's trends are already clear to see and ready to action – for the proactive marketers looking to tweak their strategies and take advantage of real-time insight.




All signs point to a record-breaking year in terms of interest and engagement with Clearing.
Overall impressions are up +31%, clicks are up +29%, and CTRs are the highest we've ever seen.



Emotive language and supportive sentiments are performing in this year's creative.
Messaging that shows care and interest, like "we're here to help", are delivering results.



The best performing creative was also the most concise, text-light design.
Let the imagery do the heavy lifting. This is the Instagram and Tik Tok generation.



The least performing creative also had the longest rotation time.
These are young people making big decisions from a million options. Get to the point.

What are students doing?

Across ucas.com

WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top ten searched for subjects on UCAS Search in June 2022

Position for
June 2022

=	1	Medicine	▲ ¹	6	Computer science
▲ ¹	2	Psychology	▲ ²	7	Economics
▼ ₁	3	Law	▼ ₃	8	Midwifery
=	4	Nursing	▼ ₁	9	Physiotherapy
▲ ¹	5	Business	▲ ⁶	10	Pharmacy

▲
Change in
position since
June 2021



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

ucas.com users: Top ten non-UK countries in June 2022



Position for
June 2022

=	1	India
▲ ¹	2	China
▲ ¹	3	Nigeria
▼ ²	4	United States
▲ ³	5	Hong Kong
▲ ³	6	Ireland
▼ ²	7	Pakistan
▲ ²	8	United Arab Emirates
▼ ³	9	Malaysia
▲ ³	10	France

Change in
position since
June 2021

WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

ucas.com users: Top ten UK cities in June 2022



POSTCODE DISTRICT MAP

Position for
June 2022

=	1	London
=	2	Birmingham
▲ ³	3	Leeds
▼ ¹	4	Manchester
▲ ⁵	5	Liverpool
▲ ⁶	6	Edinburgh
▲ ⁴	7	Sheffield
▼ ⁴	8	Glasgow
▲ ³³	9	Leicester
▼ ³	10	Bristol

Change in position
since June 2021



WHO'S ENGAGING WITH UCAS?

Top five undergraduate pages on ucas.com in June 2022

Position for
June 2022



▲ ²	1	Applying to university
=	2	How to write a UCAS undergraduate personal statement
▲ ¹	3	What is Clearing?
▲ ³	4	Filling in your UCAS undergraduate application
=	5	When to apply

▲
Change in
position since
June 2021



Clearing 2022 display ads

Results so far (up to and including 24/07/2022)

Results so far

- Overall, the ads have reached 8.6m impressions (up by 31% since this time last year) and over 22k clicks (up by 29%).
- The Clearing homepage ads have achieved the highest CTRs so far at 0.82%, (the average CTR at this point last year was 0.51%).
- Keyword impressions have more than tripled since 2021 with 1.6m in total across the keyword ads.



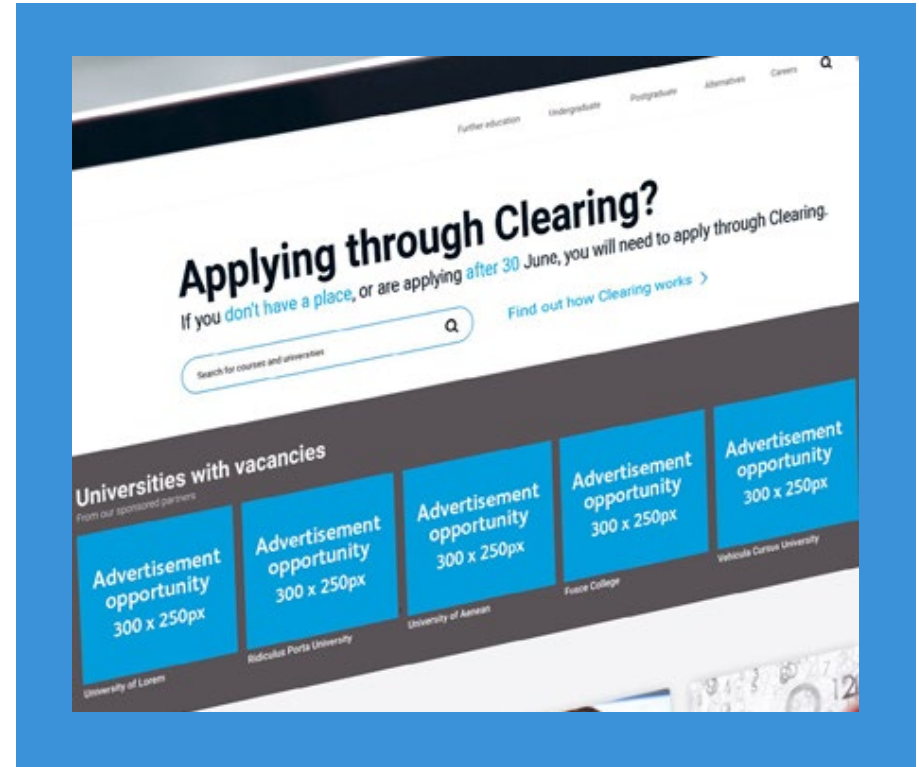
Results so far

- CTRs for the Clearing homepage, Clearing resource pages, Clearing research pages, Premium content pages and the Clearing content page bundles are all up since 2021.
- Our research page text link clicks are currently up by 77% since 2021.
- The highest performing sponsored content link has received over 400 clicks already; within the creative the provider lets unplaced applicants know that they have Clearing places available and to get in touch with them.



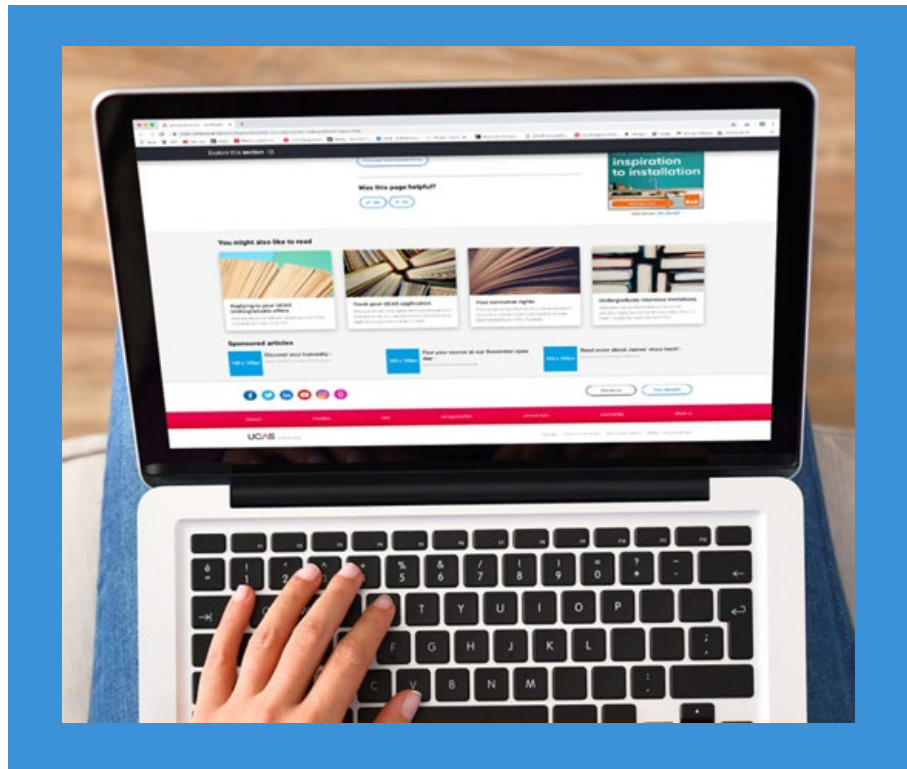
High performing Clearing homepage creative attributes

- The highest performing creative uses emotive/supportive language which seems to be resonating well with users in the run up to the results days, using phrases such as 'we're here to help' and shows interest in how applicants are feeling.
- The two creatives with the highest CTRs used the least amount of text on their frames / were the most concise.
- One of the lower performing creatives didn't include their university name (just the logo) until the last frame, and took the longest to rotate through all frames, so users may not have seen who the ad was for.



High performing sponsored content link attributes

- High performing text mentions 'Clearing places' alongside a call to action e.g., Get in touch, Register your interest, Register.
- High performing text also created a sense of excitement using an exclamation mark at the end.
- It may sound obvious... but the majority of the lower performing sponsored content links don't include the word Clearing and are perhaps not capturing users' attention as much as others.





Display creative best practice

1. Be clear

Students preferred simple ads which made crystal clear what they were all about.

2. Keep text short

Many students said ads didn't work as well on mobile e.g. if they used more than 1 text line per frame.

3. Use imagery

Students said that ads that used imagery engaged them more than those with just text.

Access our full [display best practise guide](#) for more hint and tips.



Creative best practice guides

UCAS

Please find all our best practice guides below:

- [Display](#)
- [Paid media](#)
- [Email](#)
- [Direct mail](#)

[Access all our specs](#)

If you have any further questions, your account manager is on hand to work with you.

Here comes results day

August is huge – it's when futures are made for young people across the UK. Big decisions are finalised and new chapters begin – but when everything can change in the blink of an eye, you can't take yours off the ball.

Listen to conversations between students. Be ready to adapt, based on in-the-moment insight. Don't forget the two bigger pictures: COVID and cost-of-living. Be patient, show understanding, provide support. Pay attention to how sentiments are changing and be ready to change with them.

Reactivity is going to be more important than ever over the next six weeks.

We can help with that.

Get in touch

For further information and insights contact your UCAS account manager or email us at educationservices@ucas.ac.uk.