

## Terms of Reference

### Undergraduate Advisory Group

May 2020

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Undergraduate Advisory Group (“the Group”) is to provide UCAS with a robust and representative voice of its members of the Undergraduate scheme, to challenge consultation with the sector, and to advise and make recommendations to UCAS on proposed changes to products and services relating to the UCAS Undergraduate scheme.

The Group will:

- Be strategic, operational and advisory in nature with the purpose of providing specialist, scheme-specific advice to UCAS.
- Consider and help prioritise proposed changes to UCAS products and services which are linked to the UCAS Undergraduate scheme and required by internal or external imperatives.
- Represent sector interests and ensure that the impact of proposed changes are anticipated, given due consideration and appropriately communicated to institutions in a timely manner.
- Contribute ideas and proposals for process improvements and system developments.
- Consider the costs and benefits of implementation across the sector of what will potentially emerge from changes and projects and make recommendations to UCAS accordingly.
- Assist in reinforcing the understanding within UCAS of the way in which changes have an effect on processes, procedures and practices operated by member institutions.
- Act as a key channel of communication and consultation with customer institutions in order to facilitate the transition from existing processes and systems to new ones.

UCAS's responsibilities towards the Group are to:

- Consult the Group on changes to the UCAS Undergraduate scheme in a timely manner, including prior to making changes and throughout the change process.
- Consider the recommendations of the Group and respond to its views and guidance.
- Respond to the Group's feedback including outlining proposed actions.

### **Membership Composition:**

- The Group is expected to comprise between 15 and 21 members.
- Membership of the Group will be drawn from a range of institution types within UCAS membership (including representation from a range of different types of universities and colleges, relevant geographical areas and specialisms), reflecting differing experiences and expertise.
- Members should normally be appointed for a maximum term of four years.
- A minimum of four members will be replaced annually, with members leaving the Group following the June meeting. New members will be invited to join for the following meeting in October.
- Opportunities for new members will be made available on the UCAS website and communicated through other appropriate channels.
- Members of the Group who miss two consecutive meetings are at risk of automatic resignation from the Group through non-attendance. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Members who resign or who have been automatically resigned from the Group should be replaced at the next annual cycle of replacement.

The Group elects its own Chair and Deputy Chair from among its members that have served a minimum of one year. The elected members will normally serve for two years as Chair/Deputy. The elections will be held at the relevant meeting preceding the end of the term of the current Chair/Deputy. A member may put themselves forward or be nominated by another member, and the nominees should indicate willingness to serve. The results are announced at the June meeting and the Chair/Deputy take up duties in July.

## **Membership Responsibilities:**

- The Group has an important role in supporting change.
- The Groups representative members would be expected to have the experience and requisite skills in order to be able to devote time to the role.
- Members should have an ongoing awareness of the Group and its recent discussions.
- Members are expected to engage and make a contribution to discussions at the Group meetings and other relevant activities.
- Members are expected to act as representatives of the sector and to reflect the views of the sector.
- Members are expected to feedback to and seek views from the sector through their own networks and user groups and through UCAS Regional Forums and Standing Groups.

## **Powers and Duties:**

The Group shall:

- Require that UCAS considers and responds to any representations made by the Group.
- Be expected to represent a range of views from different stakeholders, but the Group shall not be responsible for building a sector consensus.
- Where a sector provided mandate exists in relation to specific changes and projects, make decisions on behalf of the sector.
- Prepare and approve an annual plan to guide the work of the Group and set aims and objectives for the year ahead.
- Co-opt specialist individuals to the Group for short-term periods to provide specialist knowledge and advice on particular projects.
- Refer matters to other fora (such as other advisory or standing groups, or ARC APG) where the Group feels such matters fall outside of its remit or wider consultation is required.
- Be accountable and transparent to the sector and inform UCAS member institutions of its activities through the submission of a report to the Annual Provider Update, Admissions Conference, ARC APG and all relevant groups.

- Establish smaller sub-groups and short-life working groups if required. Membership of these groups will go beyond the Group's, to include others with expertise or special interests who can contribute to the work of the Group. The work of sub-groups and working groups will be a standing item on the Group's Agenda where relevant, and reports will be received on progress and issues. Terms of Reference and membership of the sub-groups should be provided to the Group for information and comment.

### **Secretariat:**

UCAS will provide the secretariat to support this meeting who shall endeavor to ensure that:

- Minutes are circulated four weeks after each meeting and subsequently published on the UCAS website.
- Agendas and papers are received by all members seven working days prior to meetings.
- Meetings are scheduled six months in advance.
- Members of the group and their Chair are listed on the Groups & Forums sections of the UCAS web pages, along with terms of reference, agendas and meeting minutes.

### **Proceedings:**

- The Group will meet at least three times per year usually in October, February and June. There is also the expectation that the Group will take part in virtual activity between meetings that could involve attending UAG specific webinars, or discussions on Yammer/email as required.
- Meeting agendas will be set and agreed with the Chair.
- Minutes will be approved by the Chair and then the Group via email prior to them being posted on the UCAS website.
- Confirmed minutes of meetings will be circulated to the Group and published on the Groups & Forums section of the UCAS website. Notification of the availability of minutes will be included in the earliest available Correspondents' Bulletin.

**Quorum and Voting:**

The quorum shall be a majority (more than half) of the Group members (including the Chair) at any one time.

Decisions at Group meetings shall be made by a majority vote (more than half) and each Group member shall be entitled to one vote. In the event of an equality of votes at a meeting, it will be deemed that a consensus has not been reached and a further vote will be required at a future meeting.

**Annual review:**

The Group will review its effectiveness and Terms of Reference on an annual basis at the October meeting to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.