

# Report

UC/16/R2

## **UCAS Council**

Report of the eighth UCAS Council meeting, held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 in the Conference Suite, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL52 3LZ

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### **Introduction**

The eighth meeting of the UCAS Council ('Council') was held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 at Rosehill, Cheltenham. The meeting was chaired by Chris Brodie (Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor of the University of Sussex), and was attended by 23 Council members ('Members'), and the UCAS Chair, UCAS trustee Dr David Ashton, the UCAS Chief Executive ('CEO'), Director of Technology and Operations, Director of External Relations, and Director of Finance and Corporate Services. The full delegate list is attached to this report.

### **Report from the UCAS Chair and Chief Executive**

#### **Membership**

The UCAS Chair welcomed Chris Brodie to his first meeting as Chair of the UCAS Council.

Following consideration, the Members approved the following Council nominations:

- Lisa Bowen, Head of Admissions and Enrolment, Cardiff Metropolitan University
- Emily Chapman, Students' Union President, Leeds City College
- Hassun El Zafar, Member of the National Executive Council, NUS
- Deirdre Gillespie, Principal, St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt
- Lynsey Hopkins, Head of Admissions, The University of Sheffield
- Michelle Magee, Senior Admissions Manager, University of Westminster

- Andrew Parkin, Principal, St. Dominic's Sixth Form College
- Vincenzo Raimo, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), University of Reading
- Professor Martin Stringer, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Swansea University

The full list of Members is available on [ucas.com](https://ucas.com).

### **Executive accountabilities**

The UCAS Chair noted with regret, that the Board of Trustees had recently accepted the resignation of the CEO, Mary Curnock Cook, who was attending her last meeting of the Council, and highlighted the transformation UCAS had undergone whilst under her leadership. The UCAS Chair reiterated that the UCAS Board was fully committed to the Corporate Strategy and the ongoing Digital Acceleration programme.

### **Development of UCAS' products and services**

Mary Curnock Cook highlighted that UCAS' new offer rate calculator had recently been released as a beta tool for advisers. It had been developed following feedback from students and teachers, to enable advisers to support their students in considering courses they may have previously not thought about applying to. Members were invited to provide feedback, and made a number of suggestions for improving the information and advice given with the tool. Questions were also asked about how the tool worked and the involvement of higher education providers (HEPs) in its development.

The UCAS Chair made reference to the UUK (Universities UK) Sector Agencies Review, noting that the work was ongoing, and there were no significant developments to share at this time.

### **The 2016 and 2017 admissions cycles**

Fatuma Mahad, Director of Technology and Operations, gave an overview of the delivery of the 2016 admissions cycle, focusing on the delivery of Confirmation and Clearing (C&C), and gave a forward look to the 2017 admissions cycle.

C&C had been delivered smoothly, and could be considered as one of the most successful in recent years. Two changes made to the way in which C&C operated – the earlier availability of Clearing vacancy listings, and the ability to add a Clearing choice earlier on A level results day – had been successful, and improved the service for applicants.

Council commended UCAS on the efficiency and success of the provision of verified examination results data. This had enabled significant improvements to be made to the C&C process, and UCAS was congratulated on the successful IT transformation over recent years.

It was noted that the 2017 admissions cycle had launched smoothly.

#### **Application and capitation fees for the 2018 cycle**

Kate Butland, Head of Customer Strategy, introduced this item by asking Council for its advice on the proposed application and capitation fee pricing strategy for the 2018 cycle. Council was invited to discuss the strategy, and identify any risks relating to the recommendations. Council members supported the proposed approach, and asked a number of questions about how the pricing strategy might evolve in future. Members' views would be shared with the UCAS Board, to inform its consideration of pricing for 2018.

#### **Targeting zero results embargo breaches in 2017**

Fatuma Mahad invited Council members to share their views on the strategies UCAS was proposing to take – to ensure HEPs understood the necessity of complying fully with all examination results embargos, and to demonstrate a stronger compliance culture, in a period of increasingly technologically complex and competitive admissions. Members were asked to consider what activities they could undertake to raise awareness of the potential impact embargo breaches could have, and any further actions UCAS should take. Members made a number of practical suggestions to strengthen provider commitment and mitigate risks.

Chris Brodie and Fatuma Mahad thanked Members for their valuable discussions and feedback. Whilst time constraints meant this issue had already been discussed by the UCAS Board, UCAS was keen to hear Members' views, as they would inform engagement with HEPs.

#### **Responding to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

Ben Jordan, Senior Policy Executive, provided an overview of the TEF, highlighting how it may influence applicant and HEP behaviours, and the challenges UCAS was considering as it examined how to integrate information about the TEF and TEF results in its products and services.

Council was invited to discuss the TEF and offer advice on how UCAS could best support students, advisers and HEPs in providing information about TEF outcomes and how to use them. Members emphasised the need for UCAS to translate what the TEF means and

doesn't mean, into language that relevant to students, parents and teachers. There were differing views about how this might be achieved, given that not all HEPs would be participating in the TEF, and home and international students might need subtly different information.

Chris Brodie and Helen Thorne, Director of External Relations, thanked Members for their helpful comments. These would be shared with the UCAS Board at its next meeting in December 2016, and inform engagement activity with students, teachers and HEPs.

#### **Responding to the recommendations from the Social Mobility Advisory Group**

Helen Thorne provided an overview of the recommendations from the UUK Social Mobility Advisory Group report, and UCAS' plans for responding to and engaging with these.

Council was invited to discuss the recommendations, and provide advice on further actions and engagement which UCAS could undertake to support UUK and the HE sector, in addressing the priorities and recommendations in the report. Members were supportive of the actions proposed and, in particular, invited UCAS to consider what further actions could be taken to support older and part-time students.

Members were thanked for their valuable feedback, which would inform UCAS' subsequent conversations with UUK and the wider implementation group.

#### **Chair's business**

Chris Brodie thanked Members for their contributions, acknowledging the value of Council's consideration of the substantive issues. Feedback would be shared with the UCAS Board at its next meeting in December 2016, and the outputs of the Board meeting would be shared with Council in due course.

Mike Nicholson, Sir Michael Griffiths, Professor Patricia Price and Dr Wendy Webster were also thanked for their valuable contributions to Council, as their terms were coming to an end after the meeting.

#### **Next meeting**

The next Council meeting will be held on Friday 16 June 2017.

## Delegate list

### UCAS Council meeting held on Wednesday 30 November 2016

present:

Christian Brodie, UCAS Council Chair; Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor of the University of Sussex; Chair of the Student Loans Company

Dr Matthew Andrews, University Secretary and Registrar, University of Gloucestershire

Lisa Bowen, Head of Admissions and Enrolment, Cardiff Metropolitan University; Chair of the UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group

Hilary Boulding, Chair of Conservatoires UK (CUK); Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Emily Chapman, Student Union President, Leeds City College

Lysandre de-la-Haye, Deputy Registrar, Newman University

Jennifer Dwyer, Head of Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast

Marie-Noël Earley, Assistant Registrar, University of St. Andrews

Hassun El Zafar, Member of the National Executive Council, National Union of Students (NUS)

Rod Francis, Head of Milford Haven School (Wales)

Heidi Fraser-Krauss, Director of Information Services, University of York

Deirdre Gillespie, Principal, St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt

Jonathan Godfrey, Hereford Sixth Form College Principal

William Hammonds, Programme Manager, Policy Group, Universities UK

Professor Richard Harvey, Academic Director of Admissions, University of East Anglia

Lynsey Hopkins, Head of Admissions, The University of Sheffield; Chair of the Undergraduate Advisory Group (UAG)

Dr Mark Mabey, Principal of the London College UCK

Mike Nicholson, UK Chair of the HE Liaison Officers Association (HELOA); Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Bath

Andrew Parkin, Principal, St. Dominic's Sixth Form College

Dr Steven Quigley, Academic Registrar, Regents University; Member of the Association of University Administrators Board of Trustees

Dr Tim Westlake, Deputy Council Chair; Director for the Student Experience, University of Manchester

Alastair Wilson, Head of HE, South Devon College

alternates: Michelle Magee, Senior Admissions Manager, University of Westminster

apologies: Martyn Annis, Chair of the Academic Registrars Council Admissions Practitioner Group; Director of Academic Services, University of Brighton  
Christine Giles, Deputy Academic Registrar, University of Portsmouth  
Janet Graham, Director of Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)  
Shakira Martin, Vice President Further Education, NUS  
Mhairi Moore, Adviser, Higher Education, School Leaders Scotland  
Dr Millan Sachania, Head Master of Streatham and Clapham High School  
Dr Wendy Webster, Operations Manager, University of Dundee; Chair of the Postgraduate Advisory Group

in attendance: Professor Sir Steve Smith, Chair of the UCAS Board; Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter  
Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive, UCAS  
Dr David Ashton, UCAS Trustee; Chief Operating Officer, Royal Holloway, University of London  
Fatuma Mahad, Director of Technology and Operations, UCAS  
Iain Moore, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, UCAS  
Helen Thorne, Director of External Relations, UCAS  
Rhian Blackman, Governance and Performance Administrator, UCAS  
Kate Butland, Head of Customer Strategy, UCAS  
Jill Eyes, Results Service Delivery Manager, UCAS  
Ben Jordan, Senior Policy Executive, UCAS  
Sara Smith, Corporate Governance Coordinator / Council Secretary, UCAS