

UCAS END OF CYCLE REPORT 2019

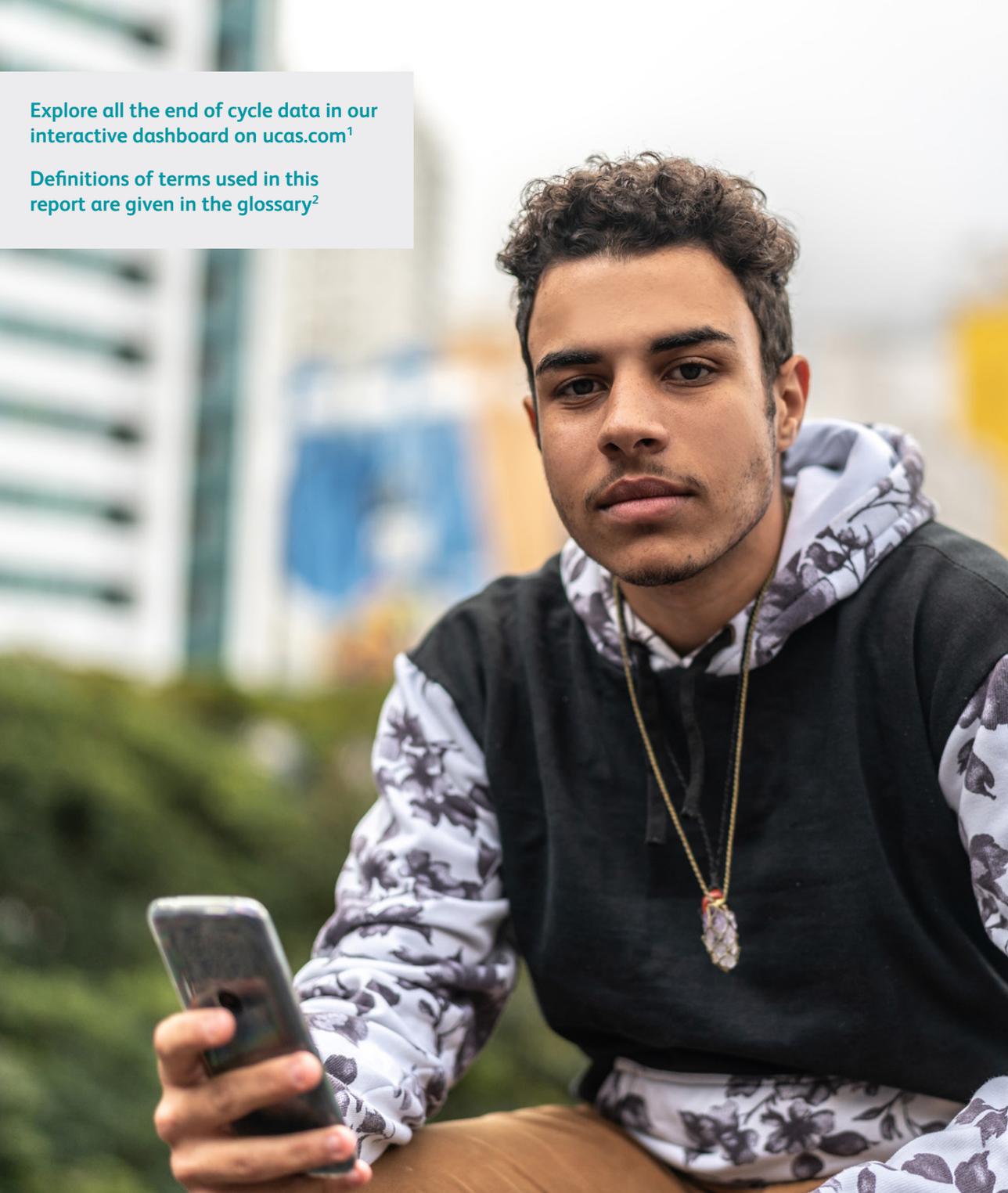
CHAPTER 9: UNCONDITIONAL OFFER-MAKING BY PROVIDER GROUP

- > 15.1% of offers made in England have an unconditional component.
- > The number of providers making unconditional offers of any form (defined as having more than 1% of their offers including an unconditional component) has remained stable in 2019.
- > Seven providers made a large number of conditional unconditional offers (defined as having more than 50% of their offers including an unconditional component) – an increase from two providers in 2018.
- > Lower tariff providers are more likely to make unconditional offers generally, and medium tariff more likely to make conditional unconditional offers.
- > Trend in conditional unconditional offers likely to decrease in the 2020 cycle.



Explore all the end of cycle data in our interactive dashboard on ucas.com¹

Definitions of terms used in this report are given in the glossary²



This chapter outlines trends in unconditional offer-making by higher education providers across the UK. This chapter is intended to be read alongside our ‘Unconditional offers – the applicant experience’³ insight report. This includes more details on the revised terminology used to describe the different types of unconditional offers. UCAS’ information and advice on unconditional offers for universities⁴, applicants⁵, and their advisers⁶ is regularly reviewed and updated.

In addition, as part of our end of cycle 2019 releases, we have published ‘Chapter 5: Unconditional offer-making’. This covers unconditional offer-making to 18 year olds from England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, and notes that a total of 137,805 offers containing an unconditional component were made to these applicants – representing 14.2% of all offers made to this group. This is an increase of 20,680 offers, and a rise of 2 percentage points on the proportion of offers made from 2018.

Analysis presented in this chapter covers 18 year old applicants from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland applying to universities and colleges across the UK. This group typically apply with most of their Level 3 qualifications still pending, and with predicted, rather than achieved results⁷. Unless otherwise specified in this analysis, ‘applicants’ refers specifically to this group.

¹ www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2019

² www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2019-end-cycle-report

³ www.ucas.com/file/292731/download?token=mvFM1ghk

⁴ www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice/unconditional-offers

⁵ www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/ucas-undergraduate-types-offer

⁶ www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/adviser-news/news/preparing-unconditional-offers

⁷ In Scotland, a substantial proportion of students aged 18 who apply through UCAS, have already attained SQA Highers and met the academic requirements to enter higher education. Therefore, applicants from Scotland are not included in this analysis of unconditional offers

Unconditional offer-making by provider country

Different higher education fee and funding arrangements exist across the UK. In most instances, there are no student number controls in England or Wales. However, for providers located in Scotland⁸ and Northern Ireland, there are caps on student recruitment each year for certain groups. These differences in context across the UK countries influence provider behaviour, including offer-making practices.

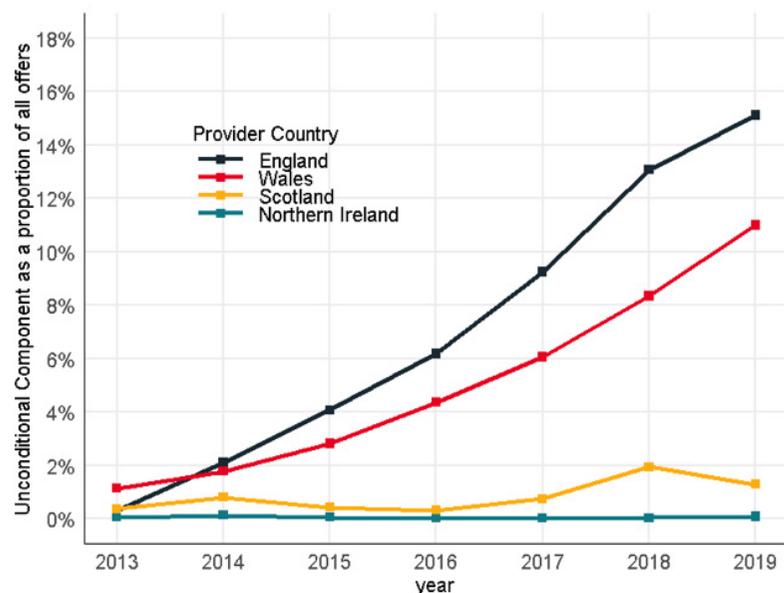
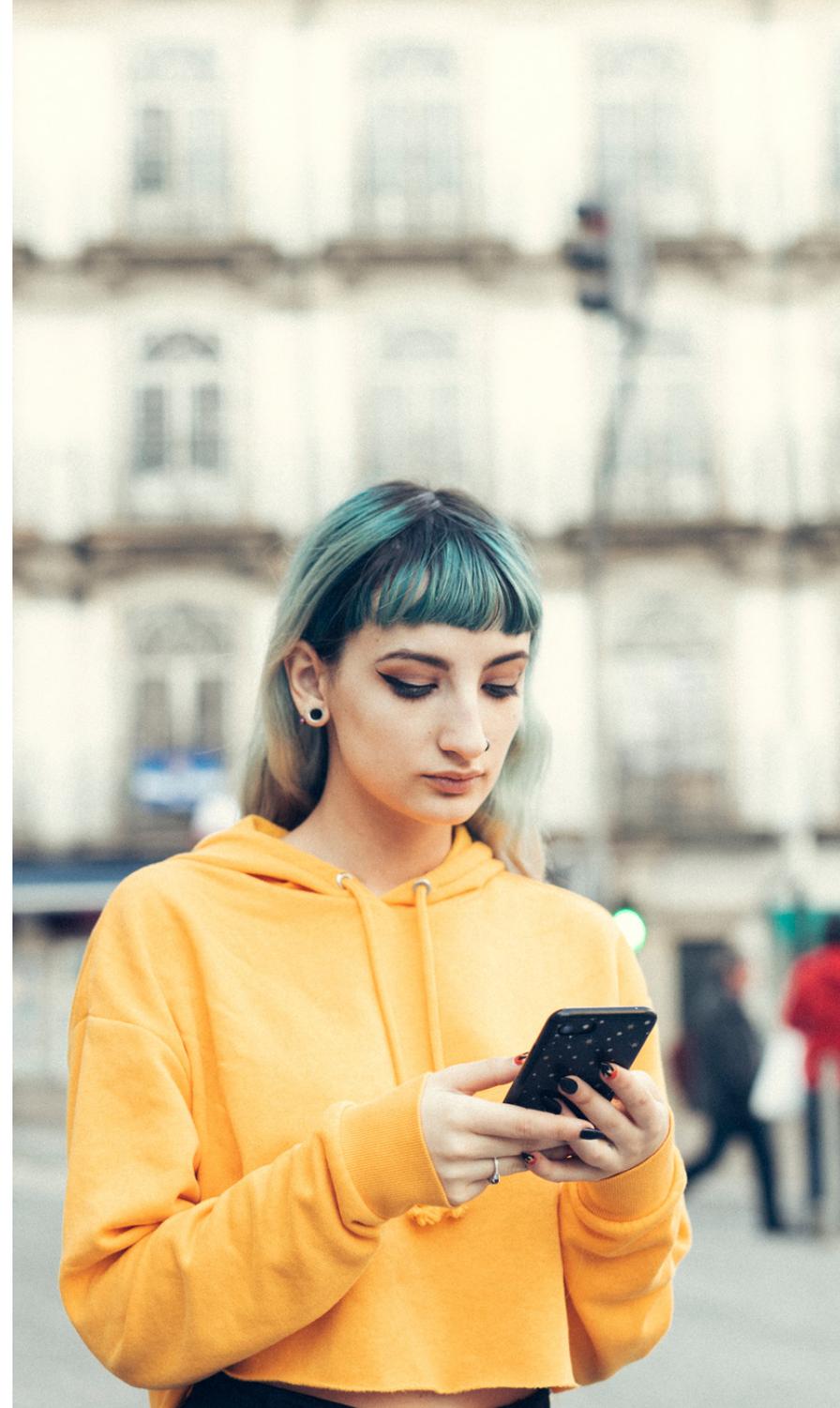


FIGURE 1: Proportion of all offers made that have an unconditional component by year for each provider country

Figure 1 shows the proportion of offers made by higher education providers that contain an unconditional component. The proportion of offers made by English and Welsh providers that includes an unconditional component has increased in 2019 (2 percentage points and 2.6 percentage points respectively). The proportion of total offers that include an unconditional component by Scottish providers has declined 0.6 percentage points in 2019, and remained broadly flat in Northern Ireland (an increase in 0.1 percentage points compared to 2018).

⁸ In Scotland, there is a substantial proportion of higher education that is not included in UCAS' figures. This is accounted for mostly by full-time higher education provided in further education colleges. These students represent around one third of young full-time undergraduate study in Scotland – this proportion varies by geography and background within Scotland. Accordingly, these figures on applications and application rates in Scotland reflect only those applying for full-time undergraduate study through UCAS. Within the next two years, we anticipate we will be able to extend our reporting on Scottish students by working with the Scottish Government, integrating additional datasets.



22.3%

OF OFFERS FROM LOWER
TARIFF PROVIDERS HAVE AN
UNCONDITIONAL COMPONENT.

	DIRECT UNCONDITIONAL	OTHER UNCONDITIONAL	CONDITIONAL UNCONDITIONAL	UNCONDITIONAL COMPONENT
ENGLAND	3.6% (+0.1 pp)	2.3%	9.2% (+1.9 pp)	15.1% (+2 pp)
WALES	6.9% (+4.8 pp)	0.7% (-0.9 pp)	3.4% (+1.2 pp)	11% (+2.6 pp)
SCOTLAND	0.4% (-0.6 pp)	0.1%	0.8%	1.3% (-0.6 pp)
NORTHERN IRELAND	0%	0.1% (+0.1 pp)	0%	0.1% (+0.1 pp)

TABLE 1: Proportion of offers made that are unconditional by country (2018 variance)

Unconditional offer-making by provider tariff group

Higher education providers across the UK can be grouped based on the average levels of attainment of their UK 18 year old acceptances, summarised through UCAS Tariff points. Three groups are created, referred to as higher, medium, and lower tariff providers, with each accounting for around a third of all UK 18 year olds. Higher tariff providers are those which have accepted, on average, UK 18 year old applicants with the highest Tariff points in recent cycles, while lower tariff providers have accepted those with the lowest Tariff points.

Lower tariff providers are more likely to make offers with an unconditional component. In 2019, 22.3% of offers made by lower tariff providers had an unconditional component – an increase of 4.9 percentage points compared to 2018. This compares to 18.6% for medium tariff providers, and 3.6% for higher tariff providers.

Medium tariff providers are most likely to make a conditional unconditional offer. In 2019, 13.7% of the offers made by these providers were conditional unconditional – an increase of 1.3 percentage points. This compares to 9.4% for lower tariff, and 3.3% for higher tariff.

Higher tariff providers are the least likely to make an unconditional offer of any type, with 3.6% of the offers made by these providers having an unconditional component – an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to 2018. Of the offers with an unconditional component made by higher tariff providers, almost all were conditional unconditional.

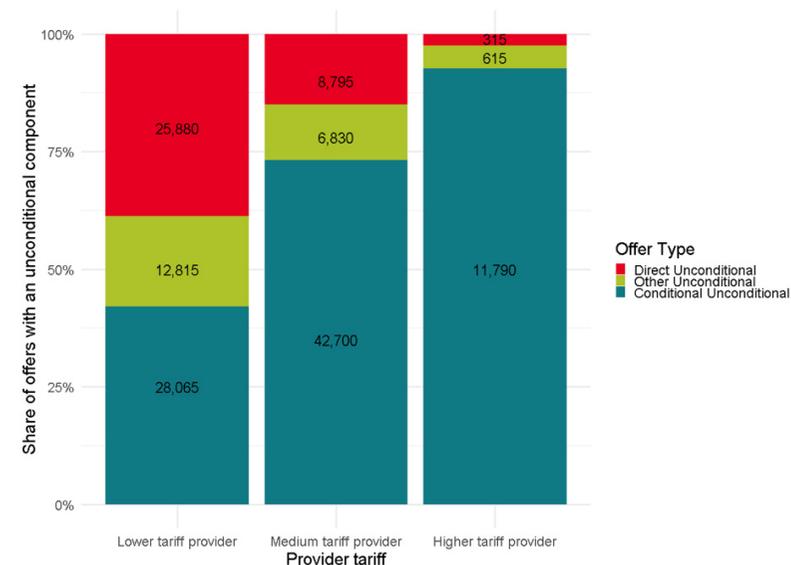


FIGURE 2: Types of unconditional offers made by higher, medium, and lower tariff providers in 2019. Annotated numbers indicate the scale of each unconditional offer type.

ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF PROVIDERS MAKE OFFERS WITH AN UNCONDITIONAL COMPONENT.

Number of providers making unconditional offers

The growth in unconditional offer-making since 2013 has been regularly analysed and published by UCAS. This growth is the result of both an increase in the number of providers adopting the use of such offers as part of their recruitment strategy, and an upturn in the frequency of their usage. Alongside this report, UCAS is publishing provider-level data on unconditional offer-making⁹. To avoid the large amount of variability that would be introduced by including smaller providers in this analysis, the patterns covered in this section are restricted to those with an average of at least 500 acceptances each year since 2013 – which includes 141 providers.

Broadly speaking, the number of providers making unconditional offers of any form (defined as having more than 1% of their offers including an unconditional component) has remained stable in 2019 following four years of consecutive increases, with 88 providers using them as part of their recruitment strategy (almost two thirds – 62.4% of the 141 providers analysed).

In 2019, 58 providers made over 10% of their offers with an unconditional component, a net increase of five providers from 2018. 23 providers made over 40% of their offers with an unconditional component, up from 18 in 2018, and 15 made over 50% of their offers with an unconditional component, compared to 11 the previous year.

In 2019, there were 33 providers whose conditional unconditional offers accounted for 1% or more of their total offers made, compared to 29 in 2018. There were 17 providers whose conditional unconditional offers accounted for 20% or more of total offers made – a net increase of two providers compared to 2018. There were seven providers whose conditional unconditional offers made up over 50% of the total offers made to students, compared to two in 2018.

UCAS has analysed 2018 vs. 2019 data, provider responses to End of Cycle data and offer behaviour in the 2020 cycle to understand if providers are changing their offer strategies in relation to conditional unconditional offers. Based on this analysis we would estimate the number of providers giving conditional unconditional offers in the 2020 cycle could have dropped by up to three quarters.

There has been a small decline in the number of providers making direct unconditional offers to students. In 2019, there were 44 providers whose direct unconditional offers accounted for 1% or more of their total offers made – a reduction from 47 in the previous cycle.

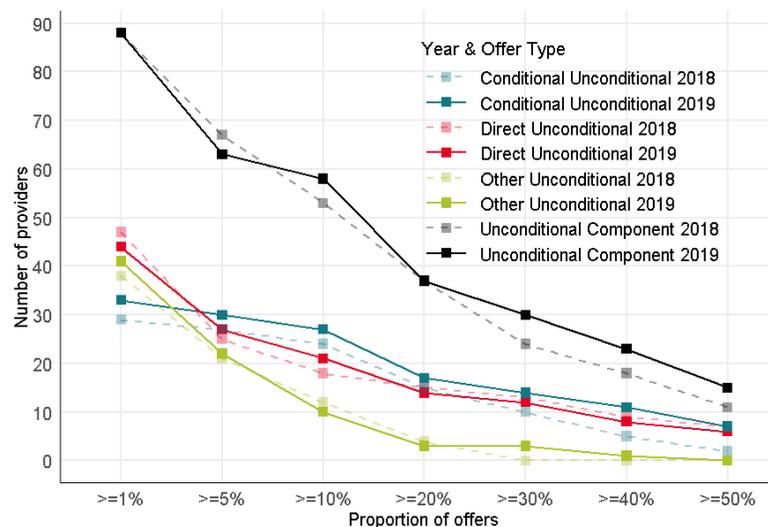


FIGURE 3: Proportion of offers that are defined as unconditional by number of providers for 2018 and 2019

⁹ www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2019/provider-level-end-cycle-data-resources-and-unconditional-offer-reports

33 PROVIDERS USE
CONDITIONAL
UNCONDITIONAL OFFERS.





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