Data standards: collection tool

UCAS has a responsibility to ensure that data used to assist applicants in making their higher education choices is clear, consistent, and accurate. This responsibility extends to the products and services we develop to assist providers in managing applications, and includes analysis carried out to inform government and other external bodies.

These data standards relate specifically to the collection tool and describe the expectations for data entry and formatting. They do not provide a description of the purpose of each field within the collection tool, and it is recommended that these data standards are read in conjunction with the Collection Tool Support Guide and other support materials.

These data standards are an important part of ensuring data quality and are in place to ensure applicants are not impeded when searching for and comparing courses.

In the instance that UCAS identifies any required changes to the data held in the collection tool, providers will usually, but not always, be informed of these requirements. For example, UCAS may carry out minor data correction activities, such as correcting typos.

By continuing to use UCAS' marketing services, providers give permission for UCAS to amend any information supplied.

General data standards

Course information will appear in the UCAS search tool as soon as the 'publish' flag is selected by the provider in the collection tool. Therefore, it is the responsibility of providers to check the content and quality of their courses data before they are published.

Please ensure any information inputted into the collection tool adheres to the following:

- British English must be used throughout.
- Welsh or Gaelic may be used in combination with an English translation.
- Entries must begin with a capital letter.
- Entries should not be written entirely in capital letters.
- Entries must refer directly to the associated course.
- Entries must not contain URLs only, or URLs with no other relevant information explaining the purpose of their inclusion.
- Acronyms must be written out in full the first time, then used with the acronym in brackets.
- Extra HTML formatting (e.g. bullet points) is not permitted, in order to ensure the information is presented in a consistent format across platforms.
- Bold formatting can be used in free text fields.

Specific Data Standards

Data validation is required to ensure consistency and quality of data. It guarantees that the individual characters provided are consistent with the expected characters of the system being used. Validations are necessary to ensure the consumption of the data by downstream products and services, both in our new estate and across our legacy products and services.

There are field-level validations that must be met by the data in order to publish and receive applications for a course. These include:

- Mandatory fields that must be completed, which are marked with an asterisk.
- Maximum character limits and error messages which are displayed throughout the collection tool.

General data standards

Item	Format	Examples
Dates	Use the day/month/year format, with a preceding '0' when using a numeric date format. Don't use 'st', 'nd', 'rd', or 'th'.	6 June 2018 Wednesday 6 June 2018 06/06/18 06/06/2018
Hyphens	Hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. Don't hyphenate: A level, breakdown, breakout, cooperate, coordinator, email, end of year, lowercase, onboarding, online, postgraduate, resit, undergraduate, uppercase, website.	award-winning, build-up, decision-making, end-to-end, face-to-face, fast-track, full-time, left-hand, market-leading, part-time, post-16, real-time, re-mark, right-hand, school-centred, up-to-date, work-based, year-on-year.
Numbers	Spell out numbers one to ten, unless you're writing percentages, dates, or a year of study. Use numbers for 11 and above.	Students can apply for up to five courses. Year 9 students. 10% or 10 per cent. Figure 1.
Telephone numbers	These fields must only contain a single phone or fax number. If a number follows an obvious pattern, group it up. Remember to always replace the first '0' with +44 for international numbers. A forward or back slash character, parentheses, or extension numbers are not permitted.	0371 468 0 468 or 01242 545 712 +44 330 3330 230
Email addresses	These fields must only contain a single, non-generic email address i.e. not used by multiple staff members.	
Subjects	Write subjects in lowercase, unless they form part of a specific qualification.	
Times	Use the 24-hour clock, with a colon between the hour and minutes. Add (UK time) afterwards if you're talking to an international audience, to make it clear when something's happening. Do not use 'am' or 'pm'.	Your application needs to be with us by 18:00 (UK time) on 15 January to guarantee equal consideration by the unis or colleges you're applying to.

		You can call our Customer Experience Centre from 08:30 to 17:00 (UK time).
URLs	Ensure that any URLs: • are be functioning and relevant • are always be entered in lowercase • are prefixed with either 'http://' or 'https://'	https://www.ucas.com/
Qualifications	Use valid qualifications followed by the abbreviation in brackets if applicable.	advanced apprenticeship bachelor's degree Bachelor of Arts (BA) Bachelor of Education (BEd) Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) Bachelor of Science (BSc) Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) degree apprenticeship diploma foundation degree higher apprenticeship Higher National Certificate (HNC) Higher National Diploma (HND) honours degree master's degree Master of Arts (MA) Master of Engineering (MEng) Master of Science (MSc) Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) postgraduate degree Tech levels T levels

Specific data standards

The below table outlines the field-level validations that must be met by the data in order to publish and receive applications for a course:

Provider management (mandatory fields)			
Field	**Field type/validation**	**Character limit**	**Expectations/good practice**
Provider details			For any changes to provider details including name, address, website address, and logos, please email coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk.
Course contacts	Tick box Free text fields: • contact title • contact email • contact phone	150 characters 100 characters 30 characters	Please refer to the general data standards guidance re. telephone numbers.
Departments	Free text field: • Department name	250 characters	Used to indicate which faculty, department, school, college, or centre has oversight of the associated courses. Where an organisation does not have faculties, departments, etc., we suggest subject areas are used so courses can be grouped logically.
Locations	Free text fields: • Location name • Location address • Town • Postcode Dropdown lists: • Country • Region	250 characters 100 characters per field 50 characters 8 characters	A list of all locations for study of a course which can be applied to course options in Course Management. Used to specify the main location of study for a course. The location name is shown on the search tool, and the postcode of the location determines where courses are displayed when viewing search results on the map view.
Location code (for UG and conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown list	One character	Courses in the UCAS Undergraduate scheme must be assigned to a location with a location code.

			Conservatoire courses must be assigned to the location with location code ' – '. The location code cannot be edited after it is set.
Audition locations (conservatoires only)	Free text field: • Location name	50 characters	Audition locations determine where a student can audition for a course. They are assigned individually to courses in Course Management, along with associated fees. Any updates to this information during lockdown (from June) will not feed into downstream products and will result in data inconsistencies.

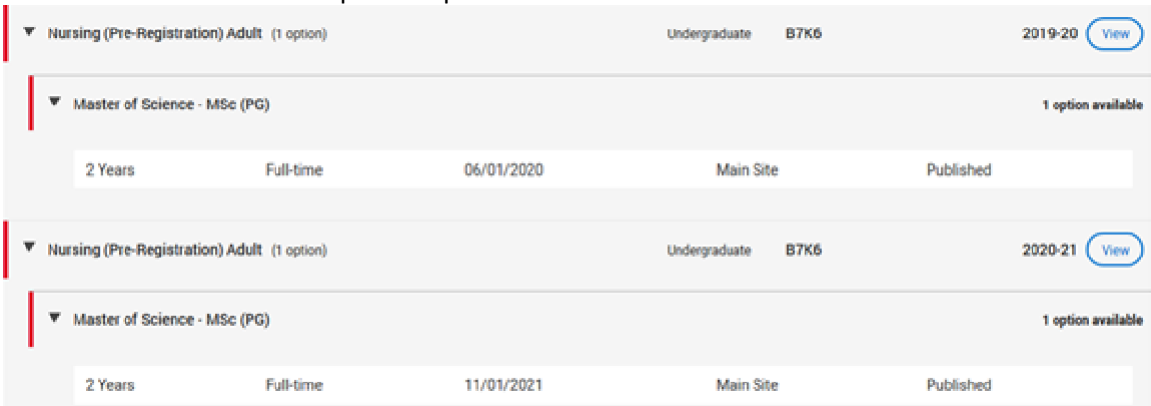| Provider Management (non-mandatory fields)			
Field	**Field type/validation**	**Character limit**	**Expectations/Good practice**
Clearing contacts (for UG courses only): Clearing contact (search) Confidential Clearing and text alert contacts	URL field Free text fields: • Title • Email • Phone • Availability Free text fields: • Name • Email • Phone • Job title	100 characters 100 characters 30 characters 1000 characters 100 characters 100 characters 30 characters 250 characters	If you take part in Clearing, we advise you to add a Clearing contact (for applicants to access on the search tool from early July once added), confidential Clearing contacts (for providers to use to discuss applicants), and text alert contacts (to receive important updates from UCAS).
Location category	Dropdown list: • Main site • Campus		Used to describe the 'location'. For franchise locations, a separate location logo, website URL, and TEF rating can be supplied by emailing coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk.

	• Franchise location • College (College Group)		For College Group locations, a separate location logo and website URL can be supplied. The College Group's TEF rating will be displayed for all group members.
Fees (templates)	Free text fields: • Name • Additional costs/fee information Tick boxes Dropdown lists	100 characters 4000 characters	Used to specify the cost of tuition for a course based on the applicant's fee status, and any other additional costs that the applicant should be aware of. You can copy the data from a template to courses in bulk by using the 'Copy to courses' button. Fees can alternatively be set in Course Management.
English language requirements	URL field Free text fields: • Template name • Further information • URL description	150 characters 4000 characters 200 characters	Add requirements relating to specific English language tests. This can then be copied to courses in bulk using the 'Copy to courses' button with this section. They will then appear in the 'English language requirements' section within the course option.
Subject options (used for UG courses only)	Free text fields: • Description • Code for application	100 characters 14 characters	Subject options are variants of a course and are assigned to course options in course management. You can add multiple subject options to a course e.g. modern foreign languages may have subject options of French, German, Spanish, etc.
Application questions (currently for UCAS PG AMS courses only)	Free text fields: • Question • Applicant help text Tick boxes	250 characters 250 characters	Set up bespoke application questions that can be included as part of the application when a learner applies to your course. You can assign these questions to courses individually and in bulk. The question that is added will display exactly as it will be displayed to the applicant. Characters < and > are not permitted. Use the 'Applicant help text' field to add any question guidance for the applicant.

	Dropdown list: • Question type		

Course Management (Mandatory fields)			
Course Details			
Field	**Field type/validation**	**Character limit**	**Expectations/Good practice**
UCAS application code (for UG and conservatoire courses only)	Free text field	Four-character alphanumeric code (letters and numbers)	The code that applicants will use to apply for this course. It must not start or end with the letter 'E'. It must be unique and not have been used previously. This code cannot be changed once the course has been saved for the first time.
UCAS PG application code (for UCAS PG courses only)			Previously known as a 'P code', this is an automatically generated application code that is issued for all UCAS Postgraduate courses. Providers can add this 'P code' to their course title.
Academic year	Dropdown list		This is the academic year in which the course starts.
Course title	Free text field	150 characters (UG/conservatoire courses) 250 characters (PG courses)	Must start with a capital letter and must not start with a number or 'e-'. Providers are not permitted to add extra information to course titles that is already captured in a specific field elsewhere on the course record - e.g. outcome qualification or location. For Nursing and other allied health courses, the regional NHS Trust can be included, and must include 'NHS Trust'. For PG courses recruited through the UG scheme, 'postgraduate' and/or 'pre-registration' or 'pre-reg' can be included.
Study type (PG courses only)	Dropdown list		The correct option must be selected: **Taught –** usually 12 months full-time (or 24 months part-time) in duration and delivered and assessed through a series of **taught** modules.

			Research – requires student to carry out their own **research** project in a specialized field of study.
Course information summary	Free text field	4,000 characters	This field should contain meaningful information that is relevant to the course, including marketing information. It **must not** contain only a single character or punctuation, for example, a full stop. This will be displayed to students in the search tool.
Short title (UG, conservatoire, and UCAS PG courses)		48 characters	This data is required for legacy Apply systems.
Abbreviated title (UG and conservatoire courses only)		10 characters	This data is required for legacy Apply systems. This can be a combination of letters and numbers and should be unique to each course. This does not need to include a qualification.
English title (mandatory if taught in Welsh option selected)		150 characters	You can enter an English translation of the course title. When a course title search is performed, the search tool will look for a match in both the 'Course title' and 'English title' fields. The English title will not be displayed on the course listing in the search tool – it is only used to find relevant courses.
Department - set in provider management	Dropdown list		
Search subjects	Dropdown hierarchical list		A minimum of one search subject must be added to be able to publish a course. There is no limit to the amount of search subjects that can be selected but they must accurately reflect the content of the course or provide alternative terms for topics taught as part of the course.
Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) subject codes (mandatory for UG courses and PG AMS providers)	Dropdown list		A subject coding framework mandatory for all undergraduate courses. Providers are required to assign codes to courses by adding a percentage value to indicate the proportion of the subject within the course. For further information on HECoS, please refer to the HESA website: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos For information on using HECoS to categorise your courses, please refer to the UCAS website: https://www.ucas.com/providers/services/our-products-and-systems/higher-education-classification-subjects-hecos

Specialisms (conservatoire courses only)	Tick boxes		The specialisms selected must match the principal study option chosen, for example, if the 'joint principal study' option is chosen, both a 'principal' and 'other' specialism must be chosen from the list of specialisms. These cannot be amended after courses lockdown in June.
Audition location – set in provider management (conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown list		This is the location of the audition.
Audition fee (conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown lists Free text boxes		If there is an audition but there is no audition fee for it, use 'No fee charged'. This course will be shown on the search tool with no fee for this audition. If there is no audition of this type, use 'Audition not applicable". This audition will then be hidden from the search tool for this course. If the fees are not collected by UCAS, and the fee is not yet known, use 'Fee not known'.
Outcome qualification section			
Outcome qualification	Dropdown list		The qualification the learner will obtain on completing the course. Mandatory field in order to publish course.
Business rule (UG/ conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown list		Select the relevant business rule for the course.
Fees	Dropdown lists Tick boxes		Fees can be added individually, or templates can be set in provider management and copied to courses if desired.
Course options			
Study mode	Dropdown list		Captures the attendance type for the course (full-time, part-time, distance learning, etc.).
Start date	Dropdown lists		Start date of the course. Where the course has a specific start date you must enter both the month and year. It is possible to flag postgraduate courses where there is no specified start date using the 'start at any time' tick box. If you have a specific start date that is not the first of the month, please make sure it is added to your course option in the collection tool. This can be done using the bulk

management facility, if required. **When AS12 Confirmation Letters are generated for applicants, if no specific start date has been assigned in the collection tool, the letter will default to display the first of the month that the course starts in.**

If you have courses with a start date between January and August, the following process must be carried out to enable applicants to apply for them (this example is for start dates in 2021):
- You need to have both a 2020/21 and a 2021/22 intake version of the course i.e. you need to have added one course, selecting the academic year of 2020/21 and one with 2021/22.
- Both 2020/21 and 2021/22 versions of the course must:
  - have a specific start date with the same start month and the same location
  - be open and published

Location – set in provider management	Dropdown list		This is the place of study. The location requires a 'location code' assigned to it in provider management for it to be available to select for UCAS Undergraduate scheme courses.
Duration	Dropdown list		Select a single duration or a range.
Entry points (UG and conservatoire courses only)	Tick boxes		Courses will automatically default to accepting applications from students entering into the first year. You can add alternative entry points for courses that accept students joining courses in other years e.g. foundation year, year 2, year 3, etc. There is also a corresponding entry requirements field specifically for entry points beyond year 1.

Entry requirements (PG courses only)	Free text field	Between 20–4000 characters	Add your entry requirements for the course. A default template can be set in the outcome qualification section and selected in the course option if required.
Standard qualification requirements (UG and conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown lists URLs Free text fields: • Further details	4000 characters	Add your qualification entry requirements for the course. Students can filter courses by entry requirements on the four most common entry qualifications (A levels, BTEC, Scottish Highers, and Access to HE Diploma). Completeness of this data will help your courses appear to relevant students.
Application status (UG, conservatoire, and UCAS PG courses only)	Radio button		Manage the availability of your courses via the bulk actions menu once course options are set up. Only course options that are set to 'open' will allow learners to apply through UCAS.

Course Management (non-mandatory fields)			
Course details section			
Field	**Field type/validation**	**Character limit**	**Expectations/good practice**
Awarding bodies	Dropdown list		
Internal reference	Free text field	250 characters	For any references you use in your own systems to help you identify a course.
Taught in Welsh	Radio button		Course titles in Welsh may be used if the 'Taught in Welsh' option is set to 'Yes'. An additional field will appear to enter the English translation.
Sponsorship information	Free text field	4000 characters	Should contain information about the financial support that is available to students applying to the course, including scholarships and bursaries.
Contacts	Dropdown list – set in provider management		Displayed to students in the search tool, it is expected to be a point of contact for students. Can be a specific person or a generic contact email address/phone number. Contact lists should be set up in provider management and assigned

			individually to courses. Lists of courses attached to each contact can be found in provider management.
International applicant information	Free text field	2000 characters	Used to highlight information that is specific for international applicants e.g. general information about study visas, accommodation, and support offered. It should also be used to inform students that the provider is unable to consider international applications due to UKVI regulations.
Copy forms (UG courses only)			Select 'Yes' in the Application Information section of the collection tool if you would like a PDF of student applications for these course options. These PDF files cannot be backdated if a copy form preference is changed from 'No' to 'Yes'.
Faculty code (can be added when copy forms selected)	Free text field	One character	This can be used if copy form preferences are set to yes as above. Format must be 1 character (uppercase A-Z, 0-9 or -).
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – for UG and PG courses only	Dropdown box		To be selected when successful completion of the course leads to QTS. Alternatively, there is an option to display that the course does not award QTS.
Additional audition info (conservatoire courses only)			
Outcome qualification section			
Course type (UG courses only)	Dropdown list		Medicine, dentistry, or veterinary science – for courses that lead to qualifications that enable graduates to practise as registered doctors, dentists, or veterinary surgeons. Art and design – for courses where the entry requirements include the production of a portfolio of work.
Subject to validation	Radio button		Providers should flag courses that are still subject to approval. The course will appear on the search tool with this corresponding message.
Entry requirements (PG courses only)	Free text field	Between 20 and 4000 characters	This should include entry requirements for the course.
Assessment methods	Free text field	4000 characters	Capture information about the assessment methods used to assess student progress throughout the course, e.g. coursework, exams, presentations, etc.

Modules	Free text field	4000 characters	Capture information about the typical modules a student can expect to study on the course.
Provider course URL	URL field		This should be used to direct applicants to the appropriate course details page on your website.
Provider apply URL	URL field		This should be used for courses that are not applied to through UCAS. The link will redirect to the page you would like applicants to use when clicking 'Apply' on the search tool. UCAS Postgraduate provider's apply URL will not be displayed in the search tool but applicants will be directed to it via the 'Apply' button.
Professional bodies	Dropdown list		
Additional costs/fee information	Free text field	4000 characters	This should include any relevant information in relation to tuition fees.
Course options			
Internal reference	Free text field	250 characters	
Deferred entry (UG courses only)	Tick box		Appears when start dates are selected. When applications for deferred entry are not accepted for a course, learners will be informed in the search tool but they will not currently be prevented from making a deferred entry application in Apply.
Subject to validation	Radio button		Here you can flag courses that are still subject to approval. The default can also be set in the outcome qualification section.
Subject options (UG courses only)	Dropdown list – set in provider management		Subject options need to be set up in provider management and will be displayed to students in the search tool. You can add multiple subject options to a course, e.g. modern foreign languages may have subject options of French, German, Spanish, etc.

Application questions – set in provider management (currently for UCAS PG courses only)	Dropdown list		Select bespoke application questions that will be included as part of the application when a learner applies to this course.
Additional requirements (UG and conservatoire courses only)	Ticklist		Add all additional entry requirements – interview, portfolio, admissions tests, etc.
English language requirements (Templates can be set in provider management)	Dropdown lists URL fields Free text fields: • Further information • URL description	4000 characters 200 characters	Add any English language requirements to help international students see if they meet the required English language standard. For each test you can add an overall score and additional information. These can be added individually within the course options or added in bulk via the English language requirements section in provider management.
Assessment methods	Free text field	4000 characters	Capture information about the assessment methods used to assess student progress throughout the course, e.g. coursework, exams, presentations, etc. The default can be set at outcome qualification level.
Modules	Free text field	4000 characters	The default can be set at outcome qualification level.
Fees	Dropdown lists Tick boxes Free text field: Additional costs/fee information	4000 characters	Please enter the fees for the course. You can use the default fee set with the outcome qualification (where applicable), or you can add fees individually to each course option. Alternatively you can copy fees from templates which can be set up in provider management.
Vacancy status	Radio button		Vacancy status can be changed once the equal consideration deadline has passed. The status of 'no vacancies' will be shown to learners researching this course in the search tool and in Apply as they make their application. It will only stop learners from applying to courses when all domiciles are marked has having no vacancies.

International learners within vacancy management	Tick box		Select this if your course is not accepting applications from international learners, e.g. not being licensed to sponsor migrants under Tier 4. You can do this at any time of year, including before the equal consideration deadline. Setting this option will not prevent any learners from applying to the course.
Publication status	Radio button		This can be set via the bulk actions menu in the course options section once a course option has been set up. Only courses that are set to published will appear on the search tool.

Help and Support
If there are any planned changes to provider details, such as name, address, website, or UKPRN, your relationship manager should be informed as soon as possible.

If you require any further help or support on adding information to the collection tool, please contact the Data Collection Team on 01242 544864 or email coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk. We also welcome any feedback in relation to information currently in the dropdown lists and information fields.

Useful resources developed to help providers use the collection tool can also be found via the collection tool help page on ucas.com. This includes the following documents along with some FAQs:
- 'collection tool support' guide
- 'Rollover' guide
- 'Are your courses ready for Clearing in the collection tool?' guide
- Getting started in the collection tool e-module
- Rollover e-module