ACCESS: INSIDE KNOWLEDGE LIVE WITH XML-LINK IN SITS:VISION: A HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER CASE-STUDY

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Live with XIVIL-Link in SITS: Vision

A Higher Education Provider Case-Study

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UCAS XML-Link integration available in SITS: Vision since September 2022.

A number of Institutions are currently live.

Live with XML-Link - Contents

- Overview of XML-Link functionality in SITS: Vision
- Higher Education Provider Stats and Figures
- Insight from the University of Dundee (Laura Jeffrey)
- Further Advice and Available Community Support
- Audience Plans for Go-Live
- Questions



Less than 3 months until Confirmation and Clearing 2023



Less than 4 months until new Applications (2024) are no longer provided through UCAS ODBC-Link



Less than 7 months until UCAS ODBC-Link is decommissioned



Overview of XML-Link functionality in SITS: Vision

- Current Functionality
- Upcoming Functionality
- Future Functionality



Current Functionality

Functionality that Institutions can go-live with:

Day-to-day processing

- Application scan and import
 - Including XML-Link exclusive data
 - Including UCAS data (previously known as StarH and StarX)
- Decision export

Standalone Results processing - with two methods to obtain the data:

- A 'manual' workflow in which the scan is manually started when UCAS say the results are released, then the import is manually started once the scan is completed.
- A 'batch' process in which the scan is scheduled to run for a few hours surrounding the usual release time, it begins scanning automatically when results are available, then imports automatically once the scan has completed.

Upcoming Functionality

Functionality that will be available end of May 2023:

Confirmation

- There are no end user or business process changes required for confirmation it should be business as usual.
- One minor background change ODBC-Link System Parameters (SYP) are replaced with the correct XML-Link alternatives when using XML-Link.

Clearing

- There are no end user or business process changes required for clearing it should be business as usual.
- One minor background change to enable a connection to XML-Link from the Clearing web screen (SIW_YCLR) to be able to retrieve applicants from the UCAS database.
- Also allowed for applicant self-release into clearing.

Future Functionality

Functionality that will be made available throughout 2023:

- Delayed confirmation with reasons
 - Will be available for the next cycle.
- HESA data previously known as StarJ
 - Will have its own option on UCR for downloading this data when made available.
- Reference data HCV replacement
 - A mechanism for importing reference data.
- Import/export monitoring MUX replacement
 - An e:Vision screen for monitoring the progression of Import and Exports.
- e:Vision processing screens
 - e:Vision representations for the Controller (UCR), Updates (UUD), Transactions (UTR), and Messages (UUM)

Higher Education Provider Stats and Figures

How is the transition going?

How many HEPs have made

the switch?



General Feedback from Live Higher Education Providers

- HEPs that have gone live are generally happy with the setup of the integration and support from Tribal.
- HEPs have found issues when configuring the system, testing, and during their golive.
- Tribal have resolved all "show stopping/critical" issues.
- Once live, HEPs are happily processing applications.
- No live HEPs have had to revert to ODBC-Link.

Higher Education Provider Stats and Figures

Number of HEPs:

- Making a connection to UCAS test (HEP1) environment 61
- Making a connection to UCAS production (live) environment 22
- Live on XML-Link 5 (4 Pilots, 1 non-Pilot)

*Figures provided from UCAS on 11th May 2023

• One of the UK's top 30 universities (*Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023*)





XML-Link Pilot Scheme



- Part of the Pilot scheme from the beginning
- > Teams site useful to raise questions/issues prompt response from Tribal colleagues
- > Teams site useful to monitor questions/issues raised by other Pilot Institutions
- > Issues raised have been addressed promptly software updates with 'fixes' have been released quickly
- ➤ Known issues list good to keep track of what has been raised/level of priority/date of release

Preparation



- Operations Teams created an internal Teams site with colleagues from IT & Strategic Intelligence
- ➤ Checked the mapping comparison document familiarised ourselves with differences between odbc-link and xml-link
- Familiarised ourselves with XML functionality e.g. HXF now UCR
- Informed relevant colleagues throughout the University about changes to tables/fields e.g. MCI
- Checked scripts and processes that were impacted by field changes e.g. Fee Status calculation/contextual scorings
- ➤ IT created HTM records— as per guidance in SITS manual
- ➤ IT updated AES/AEC as per instructions on Tribal slides (available in XML forum)
- ➢ IT set up XDUT initially with default values Ops amended as appropriate as a result of testing
- Updated reference tables SITS manual/UCAS reference tables
- Requested test data from UCAS variety of applicants and characteristics
- Conducted testing from a system perspective but also asked Admissions colleagues to run through testing from a BAU perspective
- Issues that were 'show-stoppers' to going LIVE raised with Tribal for a fix
- > Defined 'issues' that could be addressed with workarounds and would not prevent go-live
- Asked UCAS to supress delivery of Star X

Go-Live



- > Scheduled go-live to coincide with SITS 10.4 upgrade agreed date was 23rd November 2022
- > IT colleagues completed setup and configuration work and completed the migration process
 - Ran UCR 0.1, 0.2 and 0.3
- Operations Team checked that migrated records were created correctly
- First import was monitored carefully to ensure all fields had populated as expected
- ➢ IT set up UCR options 1 and 2 to run in sequenced batch
- Operations Team continue to have workarounds in place for the outstanding issues that are sitting with Tribal

Important to note:



Prior to migration ensure you:

- > Run final export
- > Run final import
- ➤ Deal with any HUM errors these must be cleared down prior to migration to ensure that records are accurate (as no longer using HUM in xml-link replaced with UUM)
- > Deal with any UUM errors that arise from the migration process BEFORE closing that (migration) process
- ➤ Don't be alarmed at the new UUM errors most are slightly different messages to HUM errors but are the same kind of issue/solution
- Review your duplicate matching process (XDUTs etc)
- ➤ Used to deal with export errors in the morning when dealing with import but exports are now immediate notification so can be dealt with at same time
- > Apply patches in a timely manner to resolve some of the issues on the known issue list



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Further Advice and Available Community Support

Further HEP Advice

Available Community Support





Further HEP Advice – Top 5

- 1) Make sure you whitelist all URLs.
- 2) Pay attention to detail when creating your HTTP Transfer Method (HTM) records.
- 3) Don't forget the 90-day Password expiry for live connections.
- 4) Familiarise yourself with Data Mapping document. Update communications, reports, and e: Vision screens for Protected Characteristics and Widening Participation data.
- 5) Request a good amount of Test Data from UCAS, be specific with the data you want, and get Results added.

Available Community Support

A dedicated UCAS XML-Link Forum is available to all SITS: Vision based Higher Education Providers on the MySITS Forum.

Tribal provided documents

- Known Issue List
- XML-Link Reference Data XPC files
- Links to useful UCAS documentation

Tribal provided advice

- First steps
- o Can we use both XML-Link and ODBC-Link features at the same time?
- Passwords and Expiry Updates

Institution Questions and Advice

- Fields moved to MCI
- Test Data in HEP1

Audience Plans for Go-Live

To help Tribal and UCAS understand the readiness of Higher Education Providers.

Who has plans to:

- Go-Live before C&C 2023: before August.
- Go-Live post C&C to before the start of the 2024 cycle: September-October.
- Go-Live post the start of the 2024 cycle: October-December.
- No Go-Live plans yet.



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