

# UCAS DATA STANDARDS

COLLECTION TOOL

UCAS



# 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 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 and discover tools when 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'.	8 June 2025 Wednesday 8 June 2025 08/06/25 08/06/2025
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.	Learners 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.	

# GENERAL DATA STANDARDS

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 the last Wednesday in 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 18:00 (UK time).
URLs	Ensure that any URLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ are functioning and relevant</li> <li>▶ are always be entered in lower case</li> <li>▶ are prefixed with either 'http://' or 'https://'</li> </ul>	<b>www.ucas.com</b>
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 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 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 <a href="mailto:coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk">coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk</a> .
Course contacts	Tick box Free text fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ contact title</li> <li>▶ contact email</li> <li>▶ contact phone</li> </ul>	150 characters 100 characters 30 characters	Please refer to the general data standards guidance re. telephone numbers.
Departments	Free text field: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Department name</li> </ul>	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Location name</li> <li>▶ Location address</li> <li>▶ Town</li> <li>▶ Postcode</li> </ul> Dropdown lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Country</li> <li>▶ Region</li> </ul>	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 and discover tools, 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.

### Provider Management (non-mandatory fields)

Field	Field type/validation	Character limit	Expectations/good practice
Clearing contacts (UG courses only):	URL field (search)		
Clearing contact (search)	Free text fields: ▶ Title ▶ Email ▶ Phone ▶ Availability	100 characters 100 characters 30 characters 1,000 characters	
Confidential Clearing and text alert contacts	Free text fields: ▶ Name ▶ Email ▶ Phone ▶ Job title	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 and discover tools from early July), 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 ▶ Franchise location ▶ College (College Group)		Used to describe the location. For Franchise and College Group locations, a separate location logo and website URL can be supplied by emailing the Data Collection Team on <a href="mailto:coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk">coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk</a> . Select the appropriate TEF rating option for your franchise locations.

Fees (templates)	<p>Free text fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Name</li> <li>▶ Additional costs/fee information</li> </ul> <p>Tick boxes Dropdown lists</p>	<p>100 characters 4,000 characters</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Fees can alternatively be set in the 'outcome qualification' and 'course options' section of Course Management.</p>
English language requirements	<p>URL field</p> <p>Free text fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Template name</li> <li>▶ Further information</li> <li>▶ URL description</li> </ul>	<p>150 characters 4,000 characters 200 characters</p>	<p>Add requirements relating to specific English language tests. This can then be copied to courses in bulk using the 'Copy to courses' button within this section. They will then appear in the 'English language requirements' section within the course option.</p>
Subject options (used for UG courses only)	<p>Free text fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Description</li> <li>▶ Code for application</li> </ul>	<p>100 characters 14 characters</p>	<p>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.</p>

## 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)	<p>The code that applicants will use to apply for this course. It must not contain the letter 'E'.</p> <p>It must be unique and not have been used previously.</p> <p>This code cannot be changed once the course has been saved for the first time.</p>
Academic year	Dropdown list		This is the academic year in which the course starts.
Course title	Free text field	<p>150 characters (UG/ conservatoire courses)</p> <p>250 characters (PG courses)</p>	<p>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, location or duration.</p> <p>For nursing and other allied health courses, the regional NHS Trust can be included, and must include 'NHS Trust'.</p> <p>For PG courses recruited through the UG scheme, 'postgraduate' and/or 'pre-registration' or 'pre- reg' can be included.</p> <p>For Degree Apprenticeships or Graduate Apprenticeships (Scotland) these can be included in brackets after the subject eg. Architecture (Degree Apprenticeship).</p> <p>This also applies to Higher Technical Qualifications. HTQ can be added in brackets after the subject e.g. Computing (HTQ)</p>
Study type (PG courses only)	Dropdown list		<p>The correct option must be selected:</p> <p><b>Taught</b> – usually 12 months full-time (or 24 months part-time) in duration and delivered and assessed through a series of <b>taught</b> modules.</p> <p><b>Research</b> – requires student to carry out their own <b>research</b> project in a specialised field of study.</p>
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 <b>must not</b> contain only a single character or punctuation, for example, a full stop. This will be displayed to learners in the search and discover tools.



Degree apprenticeship	Tickbox		For Degree apprenticeship or Graduate apprenticeship (Scotland) courses
Short title (UG, and conservatoire courses)		48 characters	This data is required for legacy application systems.
Abbreviated title (UG and conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown list	10 characters	This data is required for legacy application 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 and discover tools 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 and discover tools – it is only used to find relevant courses.
Department - set in Provider Management	Dropdown list		The correct department can be selected from the dropdown menu. Departments can be added in the Provider Management section of the collection tool.
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 is mandatory for UG courses	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: <b><a href="http://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos">www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos</a></b>

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 and discover tools 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 and discover tools 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.
Business rule (UG and conservatoire courses only)	Dropdown list		Select the relevant business rule for the course.
Fees	Dropdown lists Tick boxes		Fees can be added individually, or fee templates can be setup within Provider Management and copied to courses in bulk.
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.

			<p>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 2024):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ You need to have both a 2024/2025 and a 2025/26 intake versions of the course i.e you need to have added one course, selecting the academic year of 2024/25 and one with 2025/26.</li> <li>▶ Both 2024/25 and 2025/26 versions of the course must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– have a specific start date with the same start month and the same location</li> <li>– be open and published</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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 20–4,000 characters	Add your entry requirements for the course. A default template can be setup 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further details</li> </ul>	4,000 characters	Add your qualification entry requirements for the course. Learners 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 learners.
Application status (UG and conservatoire 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.
Minimum qualification requirements	Dropdown Free text URL	4,000 characters	Add your minimum entry requirements for the course
Contextual Information for course	Free text field	500 characters	Here you can add text to advise students of any key policies, offer-making practices or specific requirements.
Contextual offer URL	Free text field	500 characters	Here you can link to further contextual information on your own website.

## Course Management (non-mandatory fields)

### Course details section

Field	Field type/validation	Character limit	Expectations/good practice
Awarding bodies	Dropdown list	Four-character alphanumeric code (letters and numbers)	
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	4,000 characters	Should contain information about the financial support that is available to learners applying to the course, including scholarships and bursaries.
Contacts	Dropdown list – set in provider management	Between 20–4,000 characters	Displayed to learners in the search and discover tools, it is expected to be a point of contact for learners. 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	2,000 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 learners that the provider is unable to consider international applications due to UKVI regulations.
Faculty code	Free text field	One character	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 Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)	Radio button		Providers should flag courses that are still subject to approval. The course will appear on the search and discover tools with this corresponding message. The Yes/No radio buttons can be used to flag if the course is a Higher technical Qualification.
Entry requirements (PG courses only)	Free text field	Between 20 and 4,000 characters	This should include entry requirements for the course.
Assessment methods	Free text field	4,000 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	4,000 characters	Capture information about the typical modules a learner 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 and discover tools. UCAS Postgraduate provider's apply URL will not be displayed in the search and discover tools but applicants will be directed to it via the 'Apply' button.
Professional bodies	Dropdown list		
Additional costs/fee information	Free text field	4,000 characters	This should include any relevant information in relation to tuition fees.

Course options			
Internal reference	Free text field	250 characters	Expectations/good practice
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 and discover tools, but are not prohibited from making a deferred entry application in the UCAS Application.
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 in the search and discover tools. You can add multiple subject options to a course, e.g. modern foreign languages may have subject options of French, German, Spanish, etc.
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	4,000 characters 200 characters	Add any English language requirements to help international learners 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	4,000 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	4,000 characters	The default can be set at outcome qualification level.
Fees	Dropdown lists Tick boxes Free text field: Additional costs/fee information	4,000 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 and discover tools and in the UCAS Application as they make their application. It will only stop learners from applying to courses when all domiciles are marked as 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 and discover tools.

# HELP AND SUPPORT

**If there are any planned changes to provider details, such as name, address, website, or UKPRN, your Customer Success Team should be informed as soon as possible.**

If you require any further help or support with adding information to the collection tool, please contact the Data Collection Team on 01242 544864 or email [coursesdata@ucas.ac.uk](mailto: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](https://ucas.com).

**'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**

