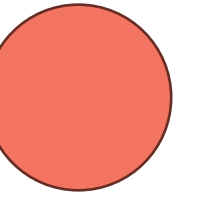# UCAS

RPA BEST PRACTICE WORKSHOP
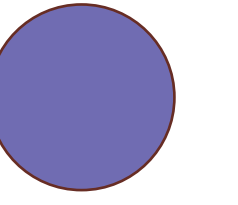
Louise Cyprien

Alison Charles

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AGENDA

- What are RPAs?

- RPA 2024 cycle in numbers

- Key information – process & dates

- Best practice

- Possible improvements

- Your feedback

- Any questions?

WHAT ARE RPAS?

- The Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA) is a shortened version of the UCAS application, using the application information collected through your direct application, but doesn't require a reference or personal statement

- RPAs can be used in situations where the applicant:
  - ✓ Has met conditions for entry
  - ✓ Is not already in the UCAS system
  - ✓ Only wants to apply for a single choice of course and provider

- Providers will pay a capitation fee for all applicants placed through the RPA process at the end of the cycle

BENEFITS OF USING RPAS

- RPAs allow suitably qualified applicants who want to apply to HE but only for a single choice, a quick and simple way to apply, and there is no application fee for them

- This ensures that the universities and colleges who use UCAS are managing all their full time UG applicants through UCAS

- As a result, providers, schools and colleges have complete data on full time UG applicants

RPA 2024 CYCLE IN NUMBERS

74,072

RPA'S

Submitted in total

270

PROVIDERS

Submitted at least one RPA

50%

INCREASE IN USE

50% increase in RPA use since 2020

335

MANUAL CHANGES

335 hours spent resolving cancellations and manual errors

6% of RPAs are cancelled

8% need manual amends because of data issues

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KEY DATES - 2025 CYCLE

RPA opened for 2025 cycle

16:00 - advisory deadline for single RPA submission

2025 cycle closes

8 October 2025

20 October

5 November 2024

10 October 2025

24 October

16:00 - advisory deadline for bulk RPA submission

16:00 - Deadline for submitting RPA's

KEY INFORMATION

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- RPAs can be managed individually or in bulk, depending on how many applicants you are recruiting via the process

- The bulk RPA spreadsheet can be accessed via the dashboard or website

- There is a **'save as draft'** feature at the bottom of the RPA form, used if you are entering details and need to check or obtain some information part-way through completing the submission.

- You can check for draft and submitted RPAs in the RPA dashboard using tabs for the different statuses.

- Because RPAs are single choice, applicants cannot be Released into Clearing. The only option is to WD and enter a new RPA.

- RPA applicants aren't part of our 'applicant journey' email campaigns

MANDATORY FIELDS

Personal Information	Personal Information	Course Information
Title	Area of Permanent Residence	Course code
First Name	Country of Birth	Campus Code
Last Name	Nationality	Year of Entry
Date of Birth	Ethnicity	Start date
Gender	Disability	
Address	Residential Category	
Country of Address	Fee Payer	
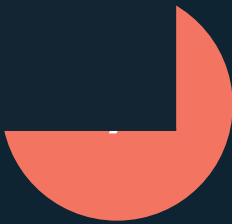
PROCESS

Course information

- Make sure the course(s) you are submitting RPA applications for are open. They do not need to be published
- Check course codes, campuses and start dates – for applicants admitted these must match exactly the details held in the collection tool

Applicant information

- Ensure you have completed the necessary steps for each applicant ahead of entering the data
  - Check Weblink to see if the applicant is in the UCAS system
  - Verify qualifications and any other information required for entry
  - Check that you have the correct information to complete mandatory fields for your applicants
  - Gain applicant consent to add their details to the RPA

Timings

- Wait for applications to be processed, this usually takes 48 hours.
- Submit prior to the deadline: 16.00 on 20 October

BEST PRACTICE

All Users

- Ensure relevant staff have access to add and manage RPAs in the dashboard
- Familiarise yourself with the deadlines, process and mandatory fields before adding your RPAs
- Plan to submit your RPAs by our advisory deadlines
- We can't update applicant email addresses after an RPA has been processed – make sure they are correct if supplied, or update in your own student record system
- If applicants Withdraw or don't enrol on the course, you can process a Confirmation Withdrawal prior to the close of cycle.

Bulk Users

- Enable Active X controls in the Trust Centre settings
- Read the important information and familiarise yourself with the data and allowable values before completing the spreadsheet
- Check the field validations on the spreadsheet are correct before submitting. If any row of data fails, then the whole upload will fail
- If you are using the spreadsheet for the first time, allow time to consider submitting a smaller initial batch to familiarise yourself with the fields and processes.

FURTHER GUIDANCE AND TRAINING

1   Guidance is available on the website: <u>here</u>

2   There's a course on our Professional Development platform '**Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA) on the provider dashboard'**

3   RPA process questions: Customer Success Team: <u>cst@ucas.ac.uk</u>

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

- At the early summer meeting of the Provider Advisory Group, a process change was agreed to support the complete withdrawal by UCAS of an existing deferred main scheme application, *throughout the cycle*, if a new application for the next cycle is submitted by the applicant.

- In line with this approach, we are proposing to extend this rule, so that:

    1. If an applicant submits a new main scheme application, and a deferred RPA application had previously been submitted for them, the RPA will be completely withdrawn by UCAS

    2. If an applicant submits a direct to Clearing application, and a deferred or current cycle RPA had previously been submitted for them, the RPA will be completely withdrawn by UCAS
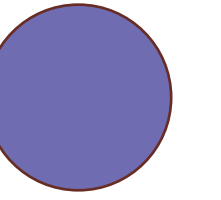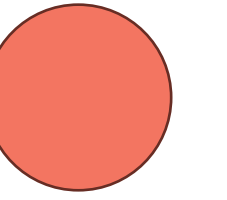
POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

Another scenario we have identified is if an applicant is unplaced in the main scheme and an RPA is submitted for them.

Our suggestion is that we could add the RPA choice as a Clearing choice, to ensure the applicant is included in related operational emails and continues to benefit from advice and guidance contained in the Hub.

If the RPA is submitted *after* Clearing has closed, it would be processed as expected.

Considerations include:

- Do we need to get the applicant's permission?
- What if we don't hear back from them quickly?
- Implications on providers if this happens during the peak C&C period when course availability is volatile

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

The final aspect of the RPA process we are hoping to improve, is how we manage instances when more than one RPA is submitted, either by the same provider or by different ones.

We would like to understand the reasons why this might be happening:

- In the case of the same provider submitting more than one RPA, is it to accommodate a variable start date? Or due to timing challenges over C&C?

- If RPAs are received by more than one provider, are these providers in franchise relationships?

Which RPA should be processed?

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POLLING TIME

ANY QUESTIONS?