Report

UC/13/R2
UCAS Council
Report of the second UCAS Council meeting held on Monday 25 November 2013

Introduction

The second meeting of the UCAS Council ("the Council") was held on 25 November 2013 at the Royal Society, London. The meeting was chaired by Paul Jagger MBE (Pro-Chancellor and Council Chair, University of Bradford) ("the Chair") and was attended by 27 Council members (including two alternates), the Chief Executive ("CEO"), Chief Operating Officer ("COO"), Director of Policy and Research, and the Director of Marketing Communications. UCAS Trustee Professor Joy Carter (Vice Chancellor, University of Winchester) deputised for the UCAS Chair, Professor Sir Steve Smith. The full delegate list is attached to this report.

Meeting Report

Membership

The Council is now at full complement with 31 members including a new Deputy Chair Dr Tim Westlake (Director for the Student Experience, University of Manchester; and Chair of the UCAS International Advisory Group). Several alternate members have also been nominated since the first meeting, to attend Council meetings in their respective member's absence.

The full composition of the Council can be found at the following link:
http://www.ucas.com/about-us/inside-ucas/ucas-board-executive/ucas-council

Report from the UCAS Chief Executive and UCAS Chair

Higher Education (HE) Sector

Professor Joy Carter introduced this item with a high level summary of the key issues in the sector including:

- The Office of Fair Trading call for information on the provision of undergraduate HE in England, including competition between, and the impact of regulation on, universities; and student experiences of the current system;
- The affordability of student finance;
- The recent announcement by the Minister for Universities and Science regarding the cessation of recruitment to HND and HNC courses at 23 private higher education colleges;
- The challenges with student number controls; and
- The challenges caused by the proposed GCSE qualifications reforms, introduction of Tech-Levels and the introduction of AS Levels as standalone qualifications; and the alternatives for students to the standard university route to HE.

Outcomes from the admissions cycle 2013

The CEO gave a brief overview of the early end of cycle statistics as published four weeks after A-level results day (day 28). The End of Cycle Report 2013 has since been published (on 19 December) and can be found at the following link: **http://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-2013-end-of-cycle-report.pdf**

Feedback on the new services

Council members shared their feedback on the Course Collect tool and Course Search and were advised of the next phases of development and enhancement. UCAS acknowledged reported issues with the service and the need for close engagement with institutions throughout the design, development, testing and delivery phases of new services.

Annual applicant survey

Council was advised of the annual applicant survey conducted by UCAS to understand better students' decision-making, choices and satisfaction with UCAS in order to identify opportunities for service development. Early analysis of the recent survey findings was extremely positive with applicant satisfaction in the top quintile at 86%.

Admissions of international students

Following positive Council feedback on the UCAS survey of international correspondents at institutions, it was agreed that a follow up discussion at a later meeting on international admissions would be beneficial.

Admissions Delivery 2013

The COO gave an overview of the effective implementation of the new systems and cloud solutions for managing Confirmation and Clearing 2013 ("C&C") and its successful delivery. This had been achieved despite the delays caused by the June service outage incident through an intensive focus on project delivery and the commitment of UCAS' staff.

The COO described UCAS IT strategy and the approach that UCAS was using to develop its IT infrastructure, capabilities, processes and skills to ensure sustainability.

Other issues discussed included UCAS' development of a more sophisticated, automated telephone messaging service to enhance self service calls and online enquiries, which had been successfully utilised for C&C.

Members from the secondary education sector asked whether they could receive exam results data and students' confirmation status the day before results day in order to support better students who may have missed their offers. It was explained that UCAS' ability to do this was constrained by contractual arrangements with Awarding Bodies. In addition, it was emphasised that institutions continued to make decisions throughout the period, so any data on confirmation status supplied before results day would necessarily be partial. This would however be explored and reported on at a later meeting.

New Corporate Strategy

UCAS is in the process of developing its new corporate strategy for the period 2014-15 to 2018-19. The new strategy will build on UCAS' current strategy and the progress made in achieving strategic objectives. The UCAS Board invited the Council to discuss and provide feedback on a number of strategic issues in order to inform the strategy and direction of UCAS.

The following issues were highlighted by Council:

- The importance of developing a strong commitment to recognising regional differences within the strategy, as well as considering the global market in which institutions and UCAS operate;
- UCAS' role in striking a balance between supporting institutions with their recruitment and meeting their targets, whilst supporting students to choose and make successful applications to the course of their choice;
- The strategy should address UCAS' partnerships with other organisations such as the Student Loans Company;
- The importance of the unique learner number and enhanced engagement with the secondary education sector;
- The strategy should explain the importance of UCAS Media Ltd in supporting the activities of the charity.

The Board has been notified of the above key emerging themes and will maintain engagement with the Council in developing the Corporate Strategy which will be complete by April 2014.

UCAS Schemes for Postgraduate, Performing Arts (CUKAS) and Teacher Training Admissions Services

Council was advised of the progress in the areas of Postgraduate, Performing Arts (CUKAS for Conservatoires) and Teacher Training admissions services including the successful launch on 21 November of the new UCAS Teacher Training search and apply services (which replaced Graduate Teacher Training) and the smooth introduction of this new service thereafter.

In terms of the planned activities for the forthcoming 12 months, future investment in the postgraduate service would enable the display of a broader range of postgraduate course data.

Advisory Groups

UCAS' proposed new Advisory Group structure which can be found below was shared with Council.   Council was also advised of the proposed remits, future activities and planned meetings of the groups and their periodic review to ensure continued suitability and effectiveness.

Chair's Business

Council was asked for its feedback on the proposed agenda for the next meeting which would include the following key areas:

- 2013 End of Cycle Report Summary and Latest 2014 Statistics
- The 2014 Admissions Cycle and Confirmation and Clearing
- UCAS' Corporate Strategy
- Developments with Postgraduate, CUKAS and Teacher Training Admissions Services
- Formal review of the UCAS Council and its terms of reference.

Council members were also asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire for analysis at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday 19 June 2014 in London.

Delegate List

UCAS Council Meeting
On Monday 25 November at the Royal Society, London

Present: Paul Jagger MBE (Pro-Chancellor and Council Chair, University of Bradford) UCAS Council Chair

David Adelman (Principal of Godalming College; member of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum National Council)

Martyn Annis (Chair of the Academic Registrars Council Admissions Practitioner Group)

Chris Carpenter (Assistant Registrar, Loughborough University; Chair of the Undergraduate Advisory Group)

Jennifer Dwyer (Head of Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast)

Marie-Noël Earley (Registry Admissions Manager, University of St. Andrews)

Rod Francis (Head of Milford Haven School, Wales)

Heidi Fraser-Krauss (Head of IT Services and Deputy Director of Information, University of York)

Janet Graham (Director of Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA))

Dr Richard Harvey (Academic Director of Admissions, University of East Anglia)

Christine Giles (Deputy Academic Registrar, University of Portsmouth)

Mike Griffiths (Head of Northampton School for Boys, England; President of the Association of School and College Leaders)

Professor Nigel Healey (Pro Vice Chancellor (International) Nottingham Trent University)

Dr Mark Mabey (Principal of the London College CUK)

Donna McMaster (Head Teacher of Inveralmond Community High School)

Jennie Murray (Principal Lecturer, University of Gloucester; Chair of the UCAS Teacher Training Advisory Group)

Liam Owens (UK Chair of Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA))

Steven Quigley (Academic Registrar, Regents University; member of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) Board of Trustees)

John Ryan (University Secretary and Pro Vice Chancellor Students, University of Worcester)

Professor Alan Speight (Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Experience, Swansea University)

Fiona Waye (Universities UK Policy Adviser)

Dr Wendy Webster (Operations Manager, University of Dundee; Chair of the Postgraduate Advisory Group)

Dr Tim Westlake (Director for the Student Experience, University of Manchester; Chair of the UCAS International Advisory Board)

Robert Wilson (Principal of Limavady Grammar School, Northern Ireland)

Victoria Winterton (University of Hull National Union of Students Higher Education Zone Committee)

Alternates: Vivienne Durham (Headmistress, Frances Holland School) – deputising for Bobby Georghiou

Nick Entwistle (Research and Policy Officer (Higher Education)) - alternate for Joe Vinson and Lucy Bannister

Apologies: Matthew Andrews (Academic Registrar, Oxford Brookes University)

Lucy Bannister (Cleveland College of Art and Design)

Bobby Georghiou (Headmistress of Bury Grammar School for Girls)
Ellen Thinnesen (Assistant Principal 14-19 and Higher Education, University Centre Grimsby)
Joe Vinson (NUS Vice President Further Education)
Professor John Wallace (CUK Chairman and Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

In attendance: Professor Joy Carter (UCAS Trustee)
Mary Curnock Cook (Chief Executive, UCAS)
Steve Jeffree (Chief Operating Officer, UCAS)
Andrew Hargreaves (Director of Marketing Communications, UCAS)
Helen Thorne (Director of Policy and Research, UCAS)
Zenobia Daar (Head of Corporate Governance and Performance, UCAS)
Danya Young (Corporate Governance Manager, UCAS)

The new structure of UCAS Groups and forums

UCAS Executive

Standing Groups and Regional Forums
Standing Groups:
Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
Regional Forums:
North West, Yorkshire & North East, London,
South East & East, South West and Midlands

Advisory Groups
Scheme: Market:
Teacher Training   International
CUKAS   College HE
Undergraduate   Secondary Education
Postgraduate   Qualifications

Advisory Group sub-groups
Cross Advisory Groups:
Technical User Group
Qualifications Advisory Group:
Tariff Advisory Group
CUKAS Advisory Group:
CUKAS Working Group

Change/Project Groups
NQIS Project Advisory Group