

Minutes

SAG/23/M2

Student Advisory Group meeting

Held on Monday 5 June 2023 virtually through MS Teams

Chair:	Wayne Gouro	University of Oxford
Attendees:	Amina Riasat Amy Vince Holly Cobb Salma Ghassan Al Azmeh Maya Blackmore Colin Omorodion Abishek Saha	Manchester Metropolitan University University of Hertfordshire University of Oxford Goldsmith University of London Swansea University University of Southampton University of Oxford
Apologies:	Giula Folino Molly Jenkins Lauren Jones Bethany Furlong Sophie Banks George Obolo Alex Dunn Samantha Croucher	Birkbeck University of London University of Oxford Swansea University Edge Hill University Lancaster University University of Manchester University of Bristol TUI Degree Apprenticeship
UCAS in attendance:	Courtney Shephard Samantha Sykes	Head of Customer Contact Customer Success Manager
Presenting:	Samantha Sheppard Emma Cole Jenny Garner Kate Bevan Rachel Harris Finlay Willicott	Team Lead Product Owner Product Owner Product Owner Product Owner Product Owner Marketing Product Lead

A2/23/01 Welcome and apologies

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and the apologies were noted. Alex Dunn, Holy Cobb, Samantha Croucher and Maya Blackmore were welcomed as new members.

A2/23/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate reflection of the last meeting.

The open actions from the log were discussed:

- SAG035 Dan and the team are actively looking into using links to the student union within the new guides and personalisation of the Hub. A target date of the end of Q3 has been put in place. The two actions include adding to the provider pages and adding content to subject guides around relevant societies and social life.
- SAG036 Future opportunities for members of the group have been proposed and the next in-person meeting in November at UCAS will include a meal and a chance for networking.

A2/23/03 Developments Update

Samantha Sheppard, Jenny Garner and Emma Cole delivered updates on UCAS' product developments.

Education and qualifications

UCAS are liaising with providers and advisers to look at how the education section can be improved, or additional guidance added, and where applicants are currently struggling.

Changes that are being made:

- Added Qualification group filters
- Added International qualifications
- Rewording of qualification questions
- Guidance in 'places of education' such as exam centre numbers and countries where the schools exist
- Specify Qualification date – awarded vs expected results
- Course Modules for certain providers

The members had the following suggestions:

- A 'tutorial mode' taking the student through the application step by step.
- Some mature students' qualifications or schools don't exist anymore. If the 'add address' feature is developed this would help to add the school/college
- Can UCAS add a prompt when an international student or someone that has accessibility difficulties can't find their qualification. Such as a help chat or steps to follow.
- A postcode search tool would be useful to find the school/college/institution easily.
- Other qualifications should be available to input e.g. ASDAN credit.

Document management

JG delivered a presentation on UCAS' document management plan. Undergraduate and Conservatoires will have upload sections within the relevant stages of the application process.

The members feedback for this development were as follows:

- Could UCAS add a section to upload diagnoses for disability documents.
- A clear outline of what documents will be required from the applicant beforehand, so they are prepared when starting the application process.
- Adding a space for Primary carer roles documentation in the 'more about you' section. If the applicant doesn't have these then UCAS could have links to charities that could help them with advice and guidance.
- Identify how the personal data will be shared and stored for students' piece of mind.

Fees and Residency information

The group suggested information on the following would be useful

- Guidance around applicants with separated parents or parents going through a divorce.
- Postcode demographic affecting polar scores.
- Details on student finance and what counts as 'household income'.
- What address an applicant should use if they have no fixed abode.
- Outgoing rental amounts students are paying at current places of accommodation.

To prevent confusion around nationality and ethnicity questions, a prompt towards finding the information on the passport had been added. The group discussed a drop-down box of options and also a question around the family's nationality in order to make it clearer.

A2/23/04 Entry Grades Tool Demo

Kate Bevan and Rachel Harris delivered a demo on the new entry grades tool. This is currently in a user testing environment with students. Slides were shared with the group.

Members suggested students may be deterred from applying for a course because of the likeliness or unlikeliness of them being accepted. For students who have qualifications outside of A-Levels and BTECs a grade transfer tool could be helpful.

Data questions that were raised

- Does the application data consider contextual admissions or additional qualifications? For example, if a student is from a POLAR 4 region, and received a lower offer, would this affect the average or distribution of data?
- Is the data going to be updated for more recent years? Grades post 2019 (where there were centre assessed grades) will be slightly skewed compared to 2017 - 2019.
- How granular is the data? Does the average data include "required" grades for each course i.e. courses that may stipulate you need a certain grade in maths. Does it breakdown the grades by subject?

UCAS confirmed that COVID didn't make a significant impact on data enough to remove those years. The group agreed this would be useful to include on the tool.

The group are encouraged to contact k.bevan@ucas.ac.uk for further questions.

A2/23/05 Discover Brand

Finlay Willicott delivered a presentation on the discover brand tool. Slides circulated to the group.

It was confirmed that students will be able to favourite certain recommendations. In the future additional buttons for dislikes may be added. The potential of the tool being influenced by applicant's personality was put forwards as an idea. Course description and UCAS code along with the name of a course is considered when showing recommendations to applicants.

Group members were all in agreement that it was a valuable development, and they wish they had had access to this whilst they were applying.

A2/23/06 AOB and Close

LH
SAG037

The date of the next meeting will be agreed offline. It will take place in person and the group are reminded that travel expenses will be reimbursed. There will be a dial in option for those who have a barrier to allowing them to come in-person.

