

PROGRESS REPORT NO 1 – NOVEMBER 2006
CHANGES TO THE CURRENT APPLICATIONS SYSTEM

	Summary of actions on each recommendation	Time scale
1	<p>Entry Profiles UCAS to continue their work to encourage the provision of clear, comparable entry requirement information, with a view to moving toward 100% provision of information for students wishing to enter HE in 2008/09.</p> <p>Action The DPSG noted that significant progress on this recommendation had already been made with entry profiles on the UCAS website for approximately 50% of courses already and a further 22% were due to be published during 2007. To support further progress by 2008 the Group agreed to establish a Working Group, in conjunction with UCAS and SPA, to work on recommendations for EP development and provide further support for institutions.</p>	<p>Working Group to be established immediately to support HEIs in moving towards 100% by 2009 entry</p>
2	<p>Financial information In the context of the end-to-end review of student finance delivery in England, further consideration to be given to how to realise the principle of giving students researching their possible HE applications easy access to timely, accurate and reliable information, preferably in one place, about all the financial support they may receive whilst in HE.</p> <p>Action DPSG to keep in touch with a number of initiatives relating to this proposal under consideration across the UK (and including reference to cross border issues). This includes the different funding arrangements across the UK eg as applicable to Scottish and Welsh domiciled students.</p>	<p>Some financial information already available on UCAS website</p> <p>2008 entry cycle for possible sharing of data between UCAS and SLC.</p>
3	<p>Teaching Quality Information HEFCE to commission early research on how students and their advisers are using the information on the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website, to ensure it is meeting the needs of students and their advisers and to inform its further development from 2006.</p> <p>Action DPSG to keep watching brief. Final report on the impacts and effectiveness of Teaching Quality Information from the Quality Assurance Framework Review Group, published November 2006.</p> <p>UCAS to report on developments to DPSG.</p>	<p>Completed research published on HEFCE website November 2006</p> <p>Site hosted by UCAS from summer 2007</p> <p>UCAS to report at meeting on 14 December 2006</p>
4	<p>Feedback to applicants HEIs to develop more informative letters to feed back to students, detailing particularly why their applications have been rejected.</p> <p>Action DPSG acknowledged that QAA had revised the Code of Practice on admissions Section 10: Admissions to higher education available on http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section10/</p> <p>Also noted that a small JISC Scoping Study by UCAS had been approved to look into good practice in the provision of feedback to applicants, and in the use of technology to support this. DPSG agreed to commission a paper in partnership with SPA, on the differing views, current practice on provision and possible methods of delivering feedback.</p>	<p>Paper to DPSG meeting May 2007</p>

PROGRESS REPORT NO 1 – NOVEMBER 2006

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	<p>in prospectuses, websites, HEIs internal electronic data systems etc and be communicated to potential applicants and their advisers.</p> <p>UCAS to change the number of choices from six to five.</p> <p>DPSG to monitor the impact of the reduction on applicants.</p> <p>In the longer term, DPSG to hold discussions on whether it would be possible to reduce the number of applications to four, which would require consultation with the sector and other stakeholders and an assessment of the impact on applicant behaviour and institutions.</p>	<p>For 2008 entry</p> <p>Monitor following 2010 cycle</p>
8	<p>Further applications Students who receive no offers from their initial applications to be able to submit an unlimited number of additional applications, one at a time, until they secure an offer, up to the end of June.</p> <p>Action UCAS EXTRA process already allows unlimited numbers of further applications. DPSG to liaise with UCAS regarding a re-launch of information on UCAS EXTRA.</p>	For 2008 entry
9	<p>HEIs to publish monthly vacancy lists, from the end of March until the end of Clearing.</p> <p>Government response Recommend the implementation of this proposal taking into account suggestions for greater frequency of provision of information and to start as soon as reasonably practicable after the deadline of 15 January.</p> <p>Action Vacancies available in EXTRA are already available on the UCAS website, although separate listings could be produced if thought necessary. DPSG to liaise with UCAS. Initial work to be started for 2007.</p>	For 2008 entry
10	<p>Pre-qualified home and EU students HEIs to continue their work to ensure against unfair competition for places between pre-qualified and other home and EU students.</p>	
11	<p>Overseas non-EU students HEIs to continue to consider applications from pre-qualified overseas non-EU students as they do now and, where appropriate, offer them places on an unconditional basis.</p> <p>Action DPSG to consider whether it would be helpful to commission a paper on the possible implications of the reform process for international students in liaison with BUILA, Guild HE International Network, UUK International Policy Committee, UCAS International Group etc</p>	Summer 2007
12	<p>Offers Students to continue to hold up to two offers.</p> <p>Government response Recommend applicants continue to hold two offers, but that this could be revisited in light of changes to student behaviour.</p> <p>Action No action required immediately. There will need to be an assessment of applicant behaviour over time, and annual consideration of the use and take up of the CI choice. DPSG to find out details of the 8% who take up their insurance offer.</p>	Monitor applicant behaviour following reduction from 6 to 5.
Q4	<p>Should students who hold only one offer following their initial applications be allowed to submit additional applications until they gain a second offer?</p> <p>Government response Recommends that this is implemented in order to facilitate choice and accessibility for students</p>	

PROGRESS REPORT NO 1 – NOVEMBER 2006
CHANGES TO THE CURRENT APPLICATIONS SYSTEM

	<p>Action DPSG agreed that in the light of the findings arising from the monitoring of student behaviour detailed above, consideration would be given as to the future use of insurance choices and whether their use should be extended to students applying through UCAS Extra.</p>	Monitor student behaviour from 2009
13	<p>Ranking offers Students holding two offers to continue to rank them as firm and insurance choices.</p> <p>Action No action required.</p>	
14	<p>Facility to make fresh applications Students who achieve higher grades than required by their conditional offers to be able to make a new application and have their original firm conditional offer protected whilst they do so.</p>	Working Group to present paper on options in June 2007
15	<p>New application round A confirmation and new application round to be run ahead of Clearing.</p> <p>Action Working Group to be established to consider this question and the best method of implementation. Working Group to consider Recommendations, 14,15, 18, 19, 20.</p> <p>This recommendation will require a fundamental change to UCAS confirmation and clearing processes, which will require substantial consultation and agreement with HEIs prior to development. This may mean a long-lead time for implementation. Behaviour of applicants and institutions will need to be modelled in order to assess the volume of new applications made in the post-qualification adjustment round, the impact this has on HEIs and changes in the use of insurance choices.</p> <p>Will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional buy-in. • major communication effort to ensure guidance personnel pre-HE are aware of the changes. • Identification of the dependencies in order for the process to work eg. Differential dates of release of examination results and start dates of HEIs. • Identification of the impacts to be evaluated and what the success factors are. • Extensive testing prior to go-live. (The changes will be highly technology-dependent.) 	
16	<p>Simplifying arrangements for Art and Design The two-route application system for Art and Design to be replaced by a single admissions system, which retains sequential applications and an opening date for applications at the beginning of September and a closing date in late March.</p> <p>Action A Working Group to be established to consider the development of a single admissions system for Art and Design, within UCAS, in collaboration with the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design.</p>	For 2009 entry
17	<p>Reforming Clearing Clearing to operate on the basis of three consecutive application rounds in which students submit one application in each round.</p> <p>Action Not action (Government noted that this proposal was seen as cumbersome and overly complicated.)</p>	
18	<p>Changing the time at which exam results are published The results of AS, A-levels, Highers and Advanced Highers to be published at least one week earlier than at present.</p> <p>Action DPSG to meet with awarding bodies, regulators. and school workforce unions to</p>	For 2008 entry

PROGRESS REPORT NO 1 – NOVEMBER 2006

CHANGES TO THE CURRENT APPLICATIONS SYSTEM

	<p>progress this point and ascertain timescales. This recommendation will also be considered within the Working Group looking at Recommendations, 14,15, 18, 19, 20.</p> <p>DPSG to note that the results of Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers are published one week earlier than A levels so now this will ensure A levels and Highers would be available in the same week.</p>	
19	<p>Entry via non –A level qualifications</p> <p>Work to be undertaken to look at what might be done to inform those taking non-A level qualifications, whose timetables it is not feasible to bring in line with the HE admissions cycle, of the requirements of that cycle, with the aim of allowing them, where possible and appropriate, to timetable their learning and accreditation accordingly.</p>	
20	<p>Work to be started now with the express purpose of ensuring that, by 2008/09, the results of non A-level portfolio based qualifications are published earlier than they are at present.</p> <p>Action</p> <p>DPSG to pursue these proposals, via Working Group looking at Recommendations 14,15, 18, 19, 20. To include collaboration with the awarding bodies offering alternative qualifications including vocational qualifications and the new diplomas. Attention was drawn to the need to ensure that the needs of those taking alternative qualifications are understood and safeguarded.</p>	<p>Scoping Paper by Awarding Bodies for meeting in February 2007</p>