

UCAS

at the heart of connecting people to higher education

ADMISSIONS
PROCESS
REVIEW
**RESPONSE
FORM**

We hope to receive a high level of response to this consultation from all those who have a stake in the higher education admissions process. We want to understand as fully as possible those aspects of the proposals which you support and those which cause concern. Where there are perceived problems, we encourage you to put forward preferred solutions. All your responses will be carefully analysed and a summative report will be published in March 2012.

In order to assist with the analysis and evaluation of responses, we would be grateful if you would provide us with the information requested below. Please note that any information given will be held by us and will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research. You are not required to provide your name but we will treat your identity in confidence if you do give it to us.

Name	James Harrison
Job title	Vice President (Learning and Development)
Organisation	Glasgow University Students' Representative Council

Are you replying as an individual or on behalf of your organisation?

On behalf of my organisation

Please indicate which of the following categories applies to you/your organisation?

Higher Education - University
 Higher Education - College
 Higher Education – Private provider
 School
 FE college
 Applicant or potential applicant
 Parent of an applicant or potential applicant
 Government body
 Non-Government body
 HE sector body
 Other (please state)

Please enter one of these categories below:

Higher Education - University

Application post-results: proposed system

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.1)

A system of application post-results would deliver a fairer admissions process because the applicant would submit actual results and the reliance on predicted grades would be removed

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.2)

Applying post-results will not necessarily have positive impacts on equality and diversity.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 1
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.3)

Two choices is an adequate number for Apply 2, allowing applicants both an aspirational and a more realistic application.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 3
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.4)

A system of application post-results may encourage a mechanistic approach to admissions with contextual and other data used less effectively.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.5)

The lack of flexibility in the proposed post-results system may mean that HEIs are forced to reject candidates they might have accepted in the current system.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.6)

Giving young applicants more time to make application decisions recognises how much they mature over the final year at school or college.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.7)

A post-results system will not be agile enough to provide a better experience for all groups of students; those with A levels, those with Scottish Highers and those with other academic or vocational qualifications.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 23.6.8) Please specify any particular group of students whose needs would be less well met in a post-results system

We believe that the post-results system could harm those young people from less well-off backgrounds, and those with low self-esteem. The fact that schools are able to guide the applicants throughout the process in their final year of school can give the applicants a confidence boost as they are able to work diligently on their personal statement with their peers, and it gives them clear goals to work towards in their final year. Leaving the application process until after results will mean many applicants will feel they are rushing the process, and may not have the sufficient time to prepare themselves for the prospect of applying to university. Let us not forget, for many young people, deciding to go to university, and which one to apply for, can be a life changing decision, and will be one that they won't want to make all of a sudden at the end of their academic year. While we appreciate that the proposals suggest that having a post-results application system will actually give more time to decide, the reality is that many applicants may apply at the last minute in a rush. The current system allows the applicants to prepare for many months for the move to higher education, and the conditional offers they receive also give them clear goals to work towards in their final year.

For those from less well-off backgrounds, by the time they have received their results they may have already made steps to enter the world of work, and may find themselves without the morale to apply by the time it is June.

In addition to this, moving the term start date to October will mean the applicants will have longer to wait until they can start to receive their student loan, which could put pressure on their personal finances.

There are wider implications of moving the academic year for continuing students who are on benefits as the benefits regulations (for housing benefit, income support, jobseekers allowance and employment support allowance) specify that the academic year starts on 1 September each year, and

if students have to wait until late October to get their student loan this could put many into hardship. We recognise that while the benefit regulations may be changed, this could take a considerable amount of time.

Please enter any further comments about this section below

Application post-results: widening participation

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 24.8.1)

A wider group of applicants would be encouraged to make more aspirational applications with the confidence of knowing they have achieved appropriate qualification results.

- 1- strongly agree
- 2- agree
- 3- disagree
- 4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Consultation ref 24.8.2)

Applicants would be deterred from making aspirational applications by having to make decisions quickly and being restricted to two choices.

- 1- strongly agree
- 2- agree
- 3- disagree
- 4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

1

(APR Consultation ref 24.8.3)

Applicants may not understand the importance of contextual data and would be deterred from applying for some courses if they have not achieved the grades.

- 1- strongly agree
- 2- agree
- 3- disagree
- 4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Consultation ref 24.8.4)

Widening participation would be supported by more constructive and focussed advice and guidance.

- 1- strongly agree
- 2- agree
- 3- disagree
- 4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 24.8.5) How do you think a system of application post results could be managed to enable it to promote widening participation?

We would welcome any specific efforts to promote widening participation, however we believe it will be more difficult to achieve results under the new proposals opposed to the current system

Please enter any further comments about this section below

Application post-results: Efficiency improvements

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 25.18.1) A post-results system is an efficient system as fewer applications require processing by HEIs.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Consultation ref 25.18.2) A more efficient streamlined process would enable HEIs to make financial savings.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Consultation ref 25.18.3) A more streamlined process would make the process easier for applicants to navigate.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Reference 25.18.4) What disadvantages in terms of process efficiency, if any, could be experienced by HEIs, applicants or advisers as a result of a post-results system?	
<p>While we understand that savings could be made by the changes, as well as further simplicity, we do not believe these changes are necessary or appropriate. Higher education impacts on hundreds of thousands of students in the UK each year, and it is important that the applicants have the ability to have a varied amount of applications. Having a limit of only 2 applications is far too small. We also anticipate that as a result of the increase in tuition fees, Higher Education Institutions can expect a smaller amount of applications in the near future, and will receive savings as a result, reducing the need for these changes. The extra income from these fees would mean that savings won't need to be made by reducing the amount of applications.</p>	

Please enter any further comments about this section below

--

Application post-results: International and part-time students

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 26.5.1) It is desirable for international applicants to apply through a centralised system and not direct to HEIs.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Consultation ref 26.5.2) It is desirable for part-time applicants to apply through a centralised system and not direct to HEIs.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Consultation ref 26.5.3) Access to improved data about international and part-time applications will be a benefit of being part of a central admissions service.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2

(APR Consultation ref 26.5.4) The proposed new process has the capacity to offer greater flexibilities which will support international and part-time admissions.	
1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 3

Please enter any further comments about this section below
<p>While we see the benefits of international and part time students being able to apply through a centralised system, we also think that the current system works reasonably well, and is not in urgent need of change.</p>

The proposals could actually damage the experience of international students. With the term date moving to early October, this would limit the experiences of those students that come from abroad to study for one semester. Moving the dates would mean they will lose three weeks of their experience studying in the UK which they would have otherwise had.

Application post-results: Examination, results and applications timetable

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 28.7.1)

The changes to the examination timetable should not have a major impact on the accuracy of assessment; with appropriate changes to their systems, awarding bodies should be able to maintain accuracy and rigour in a shorter marking period.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Consultation ref 28.7.2)

The option of starting the HE term for first year students in late October is worthy of consideration.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

4

(APR Consultation ref 28.7.3)

The option of starting the HE term for first year students in January is worthy of consideration.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

4

(APR Consultation ref 28.7.4)

The resources available in schools and colleges will be sufficient to give students support to make applications and manage offers in the timescale proposed.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Reference 28.7.5) What provisions could be made within the educational and qualification structures in Scotland to make a UK system of application post-results workable for Scottish students?

The time results are distributed would have to be at the same time as England to avoid any bias in favour of a student from one country to the other, however we believe any changes to the status quo are unnecessary.

(APR Reference 28.7.6) What steps could be taken to secure parity for Northern Irish applicants whose school term currently ends at the end of June?

Please enter any further comments about this section below

We are opposed to any changes in the education calendar. It would be a huge shake up that could affect the entire sector, and we do not believe it is necessary. Moving the semester to October or even January could have a huge impact on peoples jobs, job prospects in the wider market, including abroad. There would also potentially be exceptional difficulties in the year of transition.

Application post-results: Proposed timetable changes

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 29.4.1)

An earliest start date of circa 8 October for first year students would not have a serious impact on the delivery of HE courses.

- 1- strongly agree
- 2- agree
- 3- disagree
- 4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Consultation ref 29.4.2)

Universities could make appropriate resources available to make offer decisions and process applications between mid-July and end August.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3

(APR Consultation ref 29.4.3) Please give any suggestions about what needs to be done to ensure that interviews can be successfully completed within the proposed model of applications post-results.

It would have to be done with specific resources allocated and provisions for interviews to be done by non-traditional methods, ie video conferencing online in order to accommodate applicants that would not be able to travel in the short space of time.

(APR Consultation ref 29.4.4) Please give any suggestions how to accommodate applications for courses requiring auditions or the submissions of portfolios.

As above.

Please enter any further comments about this section below

The current system allows the institutions time to consider the applicants effectively.

Having a semester that started in January would not be acceptable as this would not match with most other timetables abroad, and could cause real problems for students applying from abroad, or for students applying to take a year or semester of their studies abroad.

An October start would also damage the quality of education. Already universities face a tight schedule in the first semester, and at the university of Glasgow there have been plans to bring the semester forward in order to allow for appropriate study time throughout the year in addition to appropriate levels of revision time. A move to October would likely either result in a cut back of education received, or result in the examinations being moved into the second semester (which would not benefit the university or the students as examinations had recently been moved to semester one to accommodate international students studying at the university for a semester).

Application post-results: Benefits and risks of the proposed 2014 year of entry enhancements

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 31.3.1)

A single offer date for all applications would help minimise the real or perceived advantages of applying as early as possible in the cycle.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 31.3.2)

The current process can be improved with a more disciplined approach to deadlines, service level agreements for decision-making by HEIs, with no informal agreements to relax them.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 31.3.3)

The replacement of Clearing with a managed process of applications with equal consideration for places available at that point would give students a more positive experience and achieve a better match of applicants to courses.

1- strongly agree
2- agree
3- disagree
4- strongly disagree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

2

(APR Consultation ref 31.3.4)

A short break between Confirmation and Apply 3 would help to improve the process to place applicants after they have received their results.

1- strongly agree
2- agree

Enter number between 1 – 4 below:

3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	2
-------------------------------------	---

Please enter any further comments about this section below

While we appreciate there may be perceived disadvantages, we believe that having the applying process after results may actually lead to rushed decision making. The current system allows students to work with their peers to discuss applications to university and work with school staff and others to focus on their application while they study.

The insurance choice

Option	Description	Benefits	Disadvantages
Keep insurance choice as is	A contractually-binding 2 nd choice, intended to offer a safety net to applicants not meeting the conditions of their firm choice	Supports applicants in making aspirational choices	Evidence shows that it is not well understood by applicants and is not used wisely
Remove insurance choice	Applicants accept one conditional offer and enter Clearing if they don't meet the conditions	Facilitates HEIs in managing their numbers	Does not support applicants in making aspirational choices; disadvantages recruiting institutions for whom the insurance choice may represent an important pool of applicants
Enforce correct use of insurance choice	Application system ensures that applicant has included at least one choice with lower entry requirements	Supports applicants in using the insurance choice as it was intended; fewer applicants needing to enter Clearing	Simple business rules don't reflect complexity of offers and what appears to be an unwise insurance choice may in reality not be, for instance for courses like medicine where the option for entry with lower grades does not exist.
Make insurance choice optional for HEIs	HEIs choose whether applicants can accept them as an insurance choice or only as a firm choice	HEIs for whom insurance choice is beneficial can continue with it; applicants can choose to apply to HEIs that accept insurance	More complex than current process and has capacity for unfairness

		choice	
Replace insurance choice with priority wait list option	Applicant chooses one firm choice and can be added to wait list for up to four others. HEI gives priority to waitlisted applicants once CFs have been confirmed	Provides some back-up for applicant but not contractually binding on HEI so facilitates number management	Provides less certainty for applicants than current process. Is complex and would be difficult to implement

(APR Consultation ref 32.5)

In light of the information given above, please rank the options above in your preferred order (using 1 as the most effective through to 5 as the least effective).

Option	Rank 1 to 5
Keep insurance choice as is	1
Remove insurance choice	5
Enforce correct use of insurance choice	2
Make insurance choice optional for HEIs	4
Replace insurance choice with priority wait list option	3

Please enter any further comments about this section below

Timetable for reform

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

(APR Consultation ref 33.2.1)

2016 year of entry is a manageable start date for a system of applications post-results.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 3
--	---

(APR Consultation ref 33.2.2)

2014 year of entry is a manageable date to be ready for the proposed changes to the current system.

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 3
--	--

**(APR Consultation ref 33.2.3)
We believe that the proposed changes for 2016 year of entry and 2014 year of entry are workable solutions.**

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 4
--	--

**(APR Consultation ref 33.2.4)
If the proposal for 2016 year of entry does not go ahead, further refinements are needed to the 2014 process.**

1- strongly agree 2- agree 3- disagree 4- strongly disagree	Enter number between 1 – 4 below: 2
--	--

Please enter any further comments about this section below

We are opposed to the proposals for post-qualification admission in the proposals outlined. We believe that much more work and consultation is needed, however over we think a system which moved the start of an academic year to October or even January is simply not feasible.

For more information about the UCAS admissions process review, please visit:

www.ucas.com/admissionsprocessreview

Responses must be received in UCAS by 20 January 2012.

Please complete, save and return this document via email to:

admissionsprocessreview@ucas.ac.uk

Or if you wish, print out a hard copy and return the document to:-

APR TEAM
UCAS
NEW BARN LANE
CHELTENHAM
GL52 3LZ