

A charter to support transparency and fairness in undergraduate admission

UCU recognises the autonomy of higher education providers and their right to self-govern admission policies and practices within two key parameters. First, the ethical imperative to ensure that admission policies and practices are transparent, fair and accessible. Second, the need for greater public accountability. These parameters are justified by the fact that universities, as publicly funded institutions, must comply and respond to equalities legislation, the open data movement, and the significant financial burden now inherent in undertaking higher education study.

UCU is calling on higher education institutions to sign up to this charter to support greater transparency, and fairness in the higher education admission process.

- Ask UCAS to move to a post-qualification application (PQA) process by September 2020.
- Ban making applicants unconditional offers prior to completion of, or results from, awards published as entry requirements for applicants for the 2017/18 cycle onwards. This includes conditional offers with a guarantee to convert to unconditional if the applicant accepts as firm.
- Trial a name-and-nationality blind application process beginning with 2017/18 applicants.
- Review the necessity of applicant interviews on a course-by-course basis for 2017/18 applicants onwards. Where interviews do take place, adhere to Supporting Professionalism in Admission (SPA) good practice in interviewing applicants for admission to higher education.
- Publish immediately a clear statement in light of reforms to A level qualifications to give potential students, their teachers and advisors a clear understanding of how parity will be ensured between applicants with and without AS level qualifications. Such a statement should recognise that a sole focus on GCSE attainment can have a negative impact on widening participation.
- Ask UCAS to provide an additional statistic highlighting the percentage of students achieving 5+ GCSEs at A*-A including English and maths (or equivalent in Scotland) at the applicant's education institution for 2017/18 cycle onwards.
- Publish immediately a statement to give students a clear understanding of, if, and how contextualised information will be used in the decision making process.
- Immediately work to ensure all staff with a role in admissions undertake Equality Challenge Unit training on unconscious bias in colleges and higher education.
- Publish annual institution level data on the institution website to show degree-qualified and first or upper second degree by the following student characteristics (available for review by applicants for the 2017/18 cycle onwards):
 - Participation of local areas (POLAR3) classification of young participation in HE
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Disability status
 - School type
 - Qualifications on entry
 - Mature student status
 - Part-time student status
 - Carers