UNIVERSITY of WORCESTER

Guidance on Assessing the Viability of Proposed Courses pre-APPG

There are a number of activities than can be completed before taking potential new courses to APPG.

Identifying your competitors

- KEF category to give an indication of size
- Geographic proximity
- League table ranking
- UCAS points
- Wildcards - which other HEIs have students chosen to go to?

National trend for courses

How popular is the course? Which courses generally are in demand or decline? How is your proposed course doing? UCAS portfolio reviews may be able to help with this. For international students (both UG and PG), check with agents via international office for their insights into where students are going/what they are choosing to study.

Searching competitor offerings

What courses do our competitors offer? Pick the top 10-15 competitors and review what courses they are offering, in their School/department. Most course content will be publicly available on their websites. Look at new courses launched by top universities as this is also likely to be an indication of growing demand.

Ensuring we can offer competitive course

How would our proposed course compare with competitor courses? Review competitors who offer the proposed course and review the course content/ added extras e.g., accreditations/trips/equipment/support. Can we match this? Can we add anything else to differentiate from our competitors? Could the market be tested by offering as a short course for CPD purposes? Can the course be promoted to employers for CPD purposes? Has any market research been undertaken eg of current students and/or students in local Colleges/Schools?

Searches on UW website

How much do people search for our proposed course on the UW website? Ask Communications to assess web traffic/search terms being used on the UW website.

Additional considerations

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- What is your rationale for developing the course? Consider student and employer demand, local/regional job opportunities, synergies with existing programmes, progression routes from level 3 or level 6 if postgraduate. Who is the market for the course: local/regional/national/international? Would online delivery be appropriate for the potential market?
- What is distinctive about the course if to be offered by UW? Why would an applicant want to choose UW to study the course? Does it lead to professional accreditation? What are the employment/further study opportunities that would be open to graduates of the course?
- How much 'risk' does the course have? Consider quick wins- low resource implications e.g., shared modules, no specialist recruitment/equipment needed, collaboration to share risk
- Will there be any other strategic benefit e.g., sustainability, graduate attributes, external engagement?
- How will new courses align with existing staff and their expertise? Will it help sustain existing courses that are aligned to staff expertise/areas of development?

Useful data sources

Data source and brief description	What information is available	Pros and cons	How to access
University of Worcester Power BI A browser-based system that presents complicated data (usually from SITS) in a visual way.	Various reports focusing on both student recruitment and current student numbers.	**Pros** - Live updates - Ability to filter data in a number of ways, including academic school, level, admissions source and fee status - Shows comparative data from previous years/application cycles **Cons** - Can be complicated to navigate - Accuracy issues in comparative data - Relies on occasionally inconsistent course name from SITS - Looks at the University in isolation (no competitor or broader market data)	Power BI is managed by the University's IT team. Requests for access should be directed to them.
HESA The Higher Education Statistics Agency is the sector's	Many reports across key areas of higher education, including: - Students – entrants, qualifiers and total numbers	**Pros** - HESA is the definitive source on a wealth of UK higher education statistics - Data is presented across a range of years making it easier to see trends - Possible to compare a number of universities	Data is published on the HESA website: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis

designated data body. It collects, assures and disseminates data about Higher Education across the UK.	• Staff – demographic and contract characteristics • Graduates – survey results showing the activities of recent graduates • Finances – income, expenditure and financial statements of HE providers • Business and community interaction – intellectual property services and engagement • Estate management – environmental information • Performance indicators – widening participation, non-continuation and rates of employment/further study	• Data downloads are available **Cons** • The most recent data is often at least two years old • Can only drill down to defined subject areas rather than a specific course • The volume of data available can be intimidating	
UCAS public data A range of reports from the main applications source into home	Various reports, primarily focusing on undergraduate recruitment, including: • End of cycle, October 15 deadline, January equal	**Pros** • Lots of data from the main source of home undergraduate recruitment • Most reports include 10 years' of comparative historical data	Data and reports are published on the UCAS website: https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis

undergraduate recruitment	consideration deadline, June 30 deadline and clearing data reports. • Occasional insight reports on issues affecting the sector as a whole. • Daily (non-institution-specific) Confirmation and Clearing reports for two weeks from JCQ results day	• Includes sector-wide data, plus specific information on Nursing, Midwifery and Teacher Training (undergraduate) • Can see a number of metrics, including number of applications, gender, HECoS subject group **Cons** • Only covers UCAS applications (which excludes most postgraduate, part-time or international applications) • Data is from key deadlines, not live • Can only drill down to defined subject areas rather than a specific course	
UCAS institution-specific reports Two additional institution-specific reports	University of Worcester-specific reports on: • The June application deadline • A daily Clearing analysis for the two weeks from JCQ results day	**As the UCAS public data**	A UCAS login is required. Contact the Head of Admissions to request an account.
UCAS Application and Decision Tracker Comprehensive unrounded,	The University of Worcester subscribes to the UCAS Applications and Decision Tracker service. Available from mid-September through to UCAS Extra in July, the system allows us to	**Pros** • In-cycle information • Covers applications, offers and firm replies • Course-specific data with two-years' of comparisons • Competitor and sector information for comparison	A UCAS login is required. Contact the Head of Admissions to request an account.

applications and decisions data – updated weekly throughout the main UCAS application cycle	benchmark and analyse current cycle applications against the sector, competitors and the previous two application cycles.	• Market share information at subject group/subject line levels **Cons** • Most data requires interpretation • University Schools/Institutes (plus any other desired course groups) need to be manually set up each year • Competitor/sector comparisons are only possible at institution/subject group/subject line level, not individual courses • Weekly updates can be frustrating around deadlines • Only covers UCAS applications	
Weekly UCAS application and decisions summary reports from Communications A summary of key data from UCAS Application and Decision Tracker including explanatory narrative	A weekly email that presents the key information available in UCAS Application and Decision Tracker along with explanatory narrative calling out some key points of interest. Distributed from late October until the end of the main UCAS application cycle in July.	**Pros** • Extrapolates and interprets some of the key points of interest from complicated UCAS Application and Decision Tracker data • In-cycle information • Comparisons to last year • Broadly benchmarked against competitors and the sector • Headline School and University data **Cons** • Doesn't feature course-specific information	This is distributed weekly to Heads and Deputy Heads of School. Heads can request additional recipients. Enhanced version distributed to VC and PVC Academics.

Monthly PGT and PGCE application and decisions summary reports from Communications Supplementary to the above, a summary of the postgraduate taught and PGCE application and decisions situation, produced by Communications and based by data provided by the Data Management Unit	Monthly emails, supplementary to the weekly UCAS summary reports, summarising the recruitment situation across postgraduate taught and PGCE courses. Distributed between November and July.	**Pros** • Presents complicated data from the Data Management Unit in an easy to interpret way • Includes explanatory narrative • Includes comparative data from previous cycles **Cons** • Relatively infrequent • Doesn't include any competitor or sector comparisons	These are distributed monthly to relevant Heads and Deputy Heads of School. Heads can request additional recipients.
DfE PGCE information Monthly statistics releases from the DfE on initial	Monthly statistical releases from the DfE detailing national PGCE recruitment statistics.	**Pros** • Provides context to University recruitment statistics **Cons** • No institution-specific data	The data is published each month during the recruitment cycle on the DfE website:

teacher training recruitment		- Each release is specific to a month. There is no comparison built into each report (and only about two years of data is available) - The data is not very user friendly	
SOLE	SOLE summary statistics provides a live summary of current applications and their statuses for a selected course and start date (e.g. CF, UF, C). SOLE workflow gives access to individual applications, including their status, for a selected course and start date.	**Pros** - Summary statistics table gives a clear overview for September start only courses. - In-cycle, course by course detailed information. **Cons** - No comparative data from previous cycles. - Summary statistics tables do not represent multiple intakes in one academic year clearly. - Individual applicant data is presented in a very long list, cannot filter this. - Staff must request access to each course required.	Requests for access to SOLE should be directed to the IT Help Desk and are managed by SOLE Help. Requests for access to specific courses must be made separately to the School's Admissions Manager.
CAS Shield/Enroly	CAS Shield Data Insights provides summaries of international student recruitment data, deposit income and conversion pipelines. CAS Shield Students provides real time tracking information for individual international offer holders through from offer to arrival.	**Pros** - The Data Insights area shows key recruitment data for international students in an easy to interpret way, while the Students area can be reviewed to delve into the context. - Comparisons with previous cycles and competitors are included. **Cons**	Requests for access should be directed to the IT Help Desk. Head of Admissions approves these.

		• There can be a delay in information for the current intake showing on CAS Shield. The issues causing this are being investigated.	