



## **UCAS Update**

### **2008 cycle: Changes to Application Form**

Two questions are to be added to the application form for 2008 entry. These concern whether the applicant's parents have any previous experience of HE and whether the applicant has experience of being in care. The information collected will be made available to Universities during the decision making process. Information concerning parental occupation and ethnicity will also be released at this point. (This is a change to the current system which provides this information at the end of admissions cycle.)

### **2008 cycle: Application number**

UCAS had previously proposed removing the application number and replacing it with an application code in tandem with the existing personal id. UCAS are now proposing to make this change for the 2009 cycle.

### **2008 cycle: Reduction in choices**

In the Government response to the consultation on Improving the Higher Education Applications process a number of changes to the process were outlined. The change for 2008 is that applicants applying to the UCAS scheme will be restricted to a maximum of 5 choices (choice numbers 1 to 5 to be used). This will not affect the number of choices for Route B courses - three choices.

Deferred applicants from the 2007 UCAS cycle will still show up to 6 choices.

Applicants will be eligible for Extra if they are not successful in their original five choices. Choice number 7 will continue to be used for Extra and Clearing choices.

### **2008 cycle: NMAS incorporation into UCAS**

The NMAS scheme will cease as a stand alone service at the close of the 2007 cycle and will be absorbed into the UCAS scheme. Consequently, from 2008 entry there will be the following changes for the processing of applications to courses currently in the NMAS scheme:

- applicants will apply to all nursing and midwifery diploma courses through UCAS
- the number of choices available to applicants will change from four to five in line with the UCAS scheme
- institutions will be able to make conditional offers (NMAS supports only unconditional offers)

- applicants 'reply to offers' options will be to accept Firm and Insurance choices (there will be no provisional acceptances)
- the closing date for on-time applications will be 15 January
- course codes will remain the same as currently for 2008 entry, but will be assigned secondary JACS codes for HESA purposes as per current UCAS courses
- a new abbreviation code will be introduced to allow joint diploma and degree offers to be made
- special arrangements will be made for deferred NMAS applicants, details will be communicated at a later date.

### **2008 cycle: Redesign of UCAS Apply - Student, staff and support tools functionality**

Following the integration of NMAS into UCAS the online application system for UCAS has been modified. UCAS have taken this opportunity to make further improvements to the system with the aim of improving the user experience in relation to:

- functionality between registration and application
- entry of qualification details
- provision of Welsh language version
- disability and usability compliance
- data validation in Apply to enable students to correct errors before submission.

### **2008 cycle: Courses and Qualifications data**

UCAS are improving the collection, maintenance and storage of qualifications data. Whilst this will have no direct impact on HEIs, a benefit will be that applicants will be better able to identify UK, EU, international and Access to HE qualifications in their applications.

Course data collection and storage is also being changed for 2009 entry. This means that institutions will have new screens in which to enter and edit course data when the 2009 collection begins in the autumn of 2007..

### **2008 cycle: Web-link / Copy forms**

From 2008 institutions will be able to specify via web-link whether or not they wish to continue receiving paper copy application forms.

### **Contextual Data Sub-Group**

This is a Sub-Group of the Change User Group and Data Advisory Group and has been charged with the task of reviewing the possible provision of additional contextual data to be collected both through additional questions in Apply and by possible linkage to external databases held by bodies such as DfES and the Scottish Executive. The Sub-Group has been working intensively and is currently finalizing its proposals in preparation for a major consultation with both HEIs and pre-HE providers, following which recommendations will be made to the Change User Group and Data Advisory Group.