

## Conservatoire User Group Minutes

CUG/23/A3

### Conservatoire User Group meeting

To be held on Thursday 19 October 2023 virtually on Microsoft Teams

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Chair:	Elly Taylor	Royal College of Music
Attendees:	Aileen Gallagher Ashleigh Rice Claire Jones Edward Kemp-Luck Dean Moody Kam Sahota Nicola Peacock Menghu Zhou Ian Warren Lestyn Henson Luise Moggridge Mhairi Macfarlane Ruth Wootton Alison Finch Clara Bezanilla Charlotte Jeffrey Elisa Wong Ellie Lee Emma Mellor	Royal Conservatoire Scotland Royal Northern College of Music Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance Royal Academy of Music Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Royal College of Music Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama Royal Conservatoire Scotland Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Apologies:	Karen Edmunds Leanne Stirrat Sarah Bowden	Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Royal Conservatoire Scotland Leeds Conservatoire
UCAS Presenting:	Clare Cozens Emma Cole Genia Garrity Gregory Hodges Jenny Garner Louise Cyprien Rebecca Nevin Scott Elliott Samantha Sheppard	Group Product Manager Product Owner Lead Product Manager Service Delivery Officer Product Owner Service Delivery Manager (Admissions) Customer Manager Service Delivery Partner (Admissions) Team Lead Product Owner
UCAS in attendance:	Janet Warne Laura Hawkins	Customer Success Director Customer Engagement Coordinator

**A3/23/01 Welcome and apologies**

The Group was welcomed to the meeting and the apologies were noted.

**A3/23/02 Minutes and action log from previous meeting**

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate reflection of the last meeting. The open actions from the log were discussed:

*CUG226* – UCAS implemented new wording from 'awaiting confirmation' to 'conditional place'. As that part of the cycle hasn't been encountered yet it is an ongoing action for Conservatoires to assess change.

*CUG227* - Guidance was adjusted on UCAS.com with help from Conservatoire members on 'fee waiver process'. Group members said it was hard to assess currently, however if the issues continue to get in contact.

*CUG237* - Nicola Peacock has collated the information from colleagues about fee waivers into a spreadsheet which was shared with institutions. Group members were reminded to add their information to the table if they haven't already.

*CUG238* - Group members are reminded to check if applicants have no point of entry in December. These reports can be made by UCAS Web-Link. Help Text has been added to the process in the meantime which should reduce the number of un-matches coming through. It was noted there is still an issue when a different institution has been given a blank for Point of Entry or Point 5 for year 1.

*CUG239* – To view choices audition dates and decisions applicants can now scroll down on the hub instead of visiting preferences.

*CUG240* – Scott Elliott ran numbers on the statistics behind institutions facing issues with applicants wanting to add another option after they have received their offers and Decline By Defaults (DBDs). The impact to UCs appears to be minimal. This movement is much more common in the UG landscape, and the process is generally accepted. The group are encouraged to monitor this and contact Scott if this becomes more of an issue. [s.elliott@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:s.elliott@ucas.ac.uk)

*CUG241* - UCAS will look into adding 'deferred conditional' as an option for Conservatoires.

*CUG243* - POLAR statistics on the exhibitor dashboard come from two places: by school on the 'who attended' tab, but by individual for the lead's breakdown.

**A3/23/03 Operational Update**

Scott Elliott shared the 2023 cycle statistics and where UCAS are so far for 2024 with the group. These will be circulated with the minutes.

CUG247  
SE / LH

The group requested the following information:

- 1) A data on the split between home vs international applicants.

CUG248

- 2) A breakdown of the top 5 countries of domestic for overseas applicants.

SE

UCAS will look into updating the Video from the HUB on how to make a Conservatoire application and whether these are still being updated. It was noted this would be particularly useful for international students.

CUG249  
JW

### A3/23/04 Product Update – Operational PDP

Louise Cyprien informed the group of a module available on UCAS' online portal (PDP). The operational timeline and development for Conservatoires will be accessible for the group to complete.

UCAS are asking for feedback on its content and whether it is useful. The link for the module will be circulated with the minutes.

CUG250  
LC / LH

### A3/23/05 Product Update

Genis Garrity took the group through the new tool 'UCAS Collect' replacing the current Collection Tool. UCAS are expanding the data collected to offer a discovery journey for students planning to study in the UK, showing students all opportunities available not just through UCAS.

Concerns were raised regarding Conservatoire courses having to be set up on full-time and part-time study, which then takes up 2 of the applicants' choices.

Being able to shut programs down by fee status (home and overseas), by instruments or disciplines would be helpful.

Intergration with record systems was taken positively.

#### 2025 and 2026 Cycle changes to Fees, Residency Nationality & Addresses Changes

The group were shown slides which will be circulated with the minutes.

#### Feedback on Nationality section:

- Applicants who are domicile but put their ethnic background for nationality. It was noted that help texts are being added to this step to improve data quality.

#### Feedback on Addresses section:

- There are incomplete addresses on international students' applications.
- Most international students don't understand the term 'boarding schools.' Using 'on-campus' or 'off-campus' would maybe be clearer for them.
- Addresses are used for education purposes, so Conservatoires don't need to be told whether the applicant has lived there or not.
- It was asked whether the entry to the UK date would be mandatory, as it doesn't provide accurate data when applicants are entering future dates or dates of birth by mistake.

The concerns regarding inclusion of extenuating circumstances within the context of a reference was raised.

#### Document Upload

The consensus from the group was positive in regard to advisers not having to verify the documents themselves.

The group were asked to answer: If a link on the Dashboard to a document management system, is this something Conservatoires would use?

- Concerns were raised regarding confusion for members of the faculty, not just in the admission team. Going into separate parts of the portal will create confusion, so the more streamlined the better.
- A mix of documents and some not, an easy way to see who has qualifications. Could this be more time-consuming than the applicants sending them in individually for Conservatoires?
- Documents attached to applicant records would be preferred. However, further Advice and Guidance from UCAS would be needed on relevance of documents.
- Some Conservatoires aren't interested in GCSE qualifications.

### **A3/23/06 Personal Statement Reform**

Clare Cozens informed the group of the 3 sections in the Personal Statement. The group were in favour of these changes. This will be active by April the latest to give time to roll changes out across student record systems and vendors.

#### Feedback on References

- Could references be turned on and off at course level? In 99% of cases the reference section is missed, and this doesn't impact the admission decision. It was noted turning off the reference completely would be a solution, but course level changes are complex.
- With UCAS Conservatoire Scheme Applicant's (outside of the University) references come outside of UCAS rather than attached to applications, and viewing these in two different ways creates workload for colleagues. It was requested this be reverted back to how it was.
- Better advice and guidance on who should be used for a referee would be helpful.

The Personal Statement was requested to remain as an item on the agenda for the February 2024 meeting. CUG251  
CC

The group were asked to consult academics, programme leads, admissions tutors - all colleagues impacted on Personal Statement and Reference reform. CUG252  
GM

### **A3/20/07 Any other business and Close**

The dates of the 2024 meetings have been agreed and placeholders will be set offline.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

UCAS to investigate whether Conservatoires can align with main scheme and remain open until the end of September.

CUG253  
LC

