

Condition F1: Transparency information

Annex A: Prototype transparency information publication tables: Detailed information and definitions

Introduction

This document gives additional information about the submission and publication of data relating to Condition F1, transparency information, mainly based on questions we have received so far from providers. We will publish more detailed technical guidance in February 2019 which will supersede this document. We welcome questions about the information below, as this will help us make the final guidance as complete as possible.

Which applications should be included in the transparency information?

You should include all applications from UK domiciled students for courses which lead to a recognised undergraduate higher education award. A student is UK domiciled if their permanent, home address is in the UK. Undergraduate awards are first degrees (including foundation degrees), integrated masters' programmes, and other awards at, or below, the level of a first degree that do not normally require a previous undergraduate qualification. You should include applications for apprenticeship programmes, where these are at higher education level. You should include applications for a foundation year only where these are integrated into a full higher education qualification. You should not include applications for postgraduate courses or solely for the study of credit. You should not include applications for courses that will be delivered wholly overseas.

When should we include applications from subcontracted students?

You should only include applications that will, if successful, lead to registration with your provider. If you teach students that are registered with another provider under a subcontractual arrangement, these students and the related applications should not be included in your transparency information.

A subcontractual arrangement (sometimes described as a 'franchise arrangement') is a relationship, based on a formal contract, in which a body with degree awarding powers (the lead provider) allows another provider (the delivery provider) to deliver all or part of a programme which has been designed, approved and owned by the degree awarding body. The lead provider or subcontracting provider retains overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

Subcontractual arrangements may include progression agreements from, for example, a foundation degree delivered by the delivery provider to an honours degree at the lead provider. Some of those agreements may offer guaranteed progression on successful completion of the foundation degree. In such cases you should record students progressing from one to the other as a new application if those students take up the option to continue onto the full degree programme. For other agreements which do not include guaranteed progression, students should be counted as a new application if they are offered a place on the degree programme.

How should we record applications for joint courses?

‘Joint courses’ are courses made available by two (or more) providers with degree-awarding powers, in which each provider has responsibility for the provision of education to students and which lead on successful completion to a joint award, or dual or multiple awards, from each provider involved. Teaching may be provided in varying proportions by the providers involved.

For joint courses, the provider with which a student is registered means the provider to which the student is assigned for data reporting purposes when they start their course. Providers should determine at the outset what proportion of the initial entry cohort should be reported by each provider. Reflecting this proportion, each student should then be assigned to a single provider when they start their course, and retain this assignment until they finish it. Applications that do lead to a registration should be returned in the applications, offers, acceptances and registrations data by the provider to whom they would have been assigned for data reporting purposes had they led to a registration. The same application must not be recorded multiple times by different providers, and providers should ensure they record how they determined which applications would be reported by each provider. Students on courses provided under the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees scheme¹ should be registered with and reported by the provider with which they initially start the course.

What counts as an application?

For the purposes of the transparency information, we are interested in the number of applications rather than the number of individuals making an application. For example, a single individual who applies for two courses at a single provider would be counted in the data as two applications.

An application is any formal, documented request to be considered for a place at the provider. Typically, this will be through UCAS or through a formal application process hosted by the provider. Sometimes application processes are more informal, and discussions with providers may lead to an offer of a place. When this is the case, you should record the discussions as an application only if an offer has been made. Along similar lines, informal discussions with potential students in the context of the UCAS Clearing process should not be counted as applications unless the potential student adds you as a clearing choice through UCAS.

Only applications to start in the relevant academic year should be included. Deferred applications should be included in the data for the year in which the student intends to start the course.

What counts as an offer?

You should record an application as leading to an offer when you have formally offered a place to the student for the relevant academic year, regardless of whether or not this is conditional on forthcoming results. If a prospective student applies for two courses and you offer a place on a single course, this should be recorded as a single offer. All offers must be linked to applications, so the number of offers recorded cannot be greater than the number of applications.

What counts as an accepted offer?

You should record an offer as accepted when the prospective student formally accepts a place at the provider for the relevant academic year. If a prospective student formally accepts an offer but

¹ See <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/outside-uk/erasmus/joint-masters-degree> for further details.

defers taking up their place until a later year, their application should not be included in the table but instead recorded in the data for the year they intend to start the course. For UCAS applications, an offer is defined as accepted when an applicant is placed to that application choice at the end of the cycle. All acceptances should be linked to offers, and so the number of acceptances cannot be greater than the number of offers.

What counts as a registration?

You should record an application as leading to a registration if the student begins their course and does not leave within two weeks of the start date. This ensures that the number of registrations for a given year will align with the number of entrants as calculated by the Office for Students (OfS) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in various other analyses. All registrations must be linked to accepted offers, and so the number of registrations cannot be greater than the number of offers accepted.

What ethnicity groupings will be required in the transparency information?

You should group applications into the following ethnic groups: White, Black, Asian, Mixed, Other or Unknown, as per the applicant's self-declaration. The Unknown category should be used only exceptionally, typically for applications for the 2018-19 year which were not accepted and ethnicity data never gathered. Tolerance of unknowns is likely to reduce in the future, because we will expect providers to gather more complete data about the ethnicity of applicants.

These same groupings are used by UCAS, and map to the HESA and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) ethnicity codes as follows:

Ethnic grouping	HESA codes	ILR codes
White	10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,19	31, 32, 33, 34,
Black	21, 22, 29	44, 45, 46
Asian	31, 32, 33, 34, 39	39, 40, 41, 42, 43
Mixed	41, 42, 43, 49	35, 36, 37, 38
Other	50, 80	47, 98
Unknown	90, 98	99

What is the Index of Multiple Deprivation?

For the purposes of the transparency condition the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015 will be used. The English IMD measures relative deprivation for small areas in England, and ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). Further information about the English IMD is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>.

There are similar measures of deprivation available for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland but these are not directly comparable with the English IMD. We therefore require IMD to be returned only for English-domiciled applicants.

How do I determine the IMD quintile for each application?

We require an IMD quintile to be returned for each application. UCAS and the OfS are working together to explore whether UCAS can add IMD quintiles to the datasets they provide to their members as standard; see below. For applications that do not come through UCAS, you will need to derive the IMD quintile from the applicant's postcode.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government offers a free IMD look-up tool, here: <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/>. This provides IMD data in a single download for up to 10,000 postcodes. Note that these downloads group IMDs into deciles. You will need to convert these deciles into quintiles in order to return the transparency information (with decile 1 and 2, for example, mapping to quintile 1).

Students domiciled in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should be placed in IMD 'N/A' category.

How should gender be returned?

Applications should be returned in the following gender groups: Male, Female or Other, as per the applicant's self-declaration. Following guidance from the Equalities Challenge Unit, we advise the use of 'Other' for people who associate with the terms intersex, androgynous, intergender, ambigender, gender fluid, polygender and genderqueer. Only the gender categories of Male and Female are available for UCAS applicants, although providers may if necessary adjust the data provided by UCAS.

Can we use UCAS data as part of this submission?

For providers that use UCAS, much of the transparency information is collected by UCAS and shared with providers through the Provider EXACT record supply (PERS) extract, which is made available by UCAS in February of each year. This extract contains the ethnicity and gender of each applicant; we are exploring with UCAS the possibility of adding IMD quintiles. The PERS extract can then be used as the basis for compiling the transparency information.

The PERS extract will contain full-time applications via UCAS and also non-UCAS full-time applications that register with the provider (as they will have been reported to UCAS as a 'Record of Prior Acceptance'). The UCAS data will not contain part-time applications, or non-UCAS full-time applications that do not lead to a registration (for example, because the student does not receive an offer). In compiling the transparency information, you will need to add the information about these individual students to the data provided by UCAS.

Do we need to return data about attainment and completion?

Providers only need to return the application to registration transparency information. The other transparency tables – attainment and completion – will be compiled by the OfS using data submitted to HESA and through the ILR, and then shared with providers for publication on their websites.

The OfS cannot compile the application to registration transparency information, as we do not hold information about applications, offers and acceptances. However, we will assist providers by developing a tool which, when populated with individualised student data, will generate the application to registration tables for submission.

When will the template be available for download?

We are aiming to make the fully functional template available for download from the OfS portal in June 2019. This will then need to be completed and submitted by 22 August 2019.