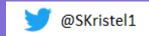# NEON: Meeting the 2020-21 Higher Education Admissions challenge

Sander Kristel – Chief Operations Officer, UCAS

@SKristel1

UCAS

What just happened?

An overview of the impact of COVID-19

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Our COVID-19 experience

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Coordinating announcements
Ofqual, Government, OFS, UUK, British Council, SQA…

Going social:
FB Live sessions
BBC Bitesize content
80% increase in social interactions

many organisations across the four countries to get answers to those queries as soon as

-0:20

46,328
People Reached

4,060
Engagements

Boost Post

Supporting stability
Extending deadlines
Data led decisions
Student first approach

Maintaining services:
Successful services, despite furlough of workforce
Running multiple results cycles

Sentiment vs reality

What they said

- **8%** of students told UCAS in June they wanted to **defer**

- **One in five** said in June they would change their firm choice decision

- **35%** of students said they anticipated they would need to use Clearing

What happened

- **5.7%** of students deferred (up from 5.4% in 2019)

- Fewer than **one in 10** used 'decline my place' to change a choice

- **11%** of placed students used clearing

A reassuringly normal recruitment cycle

515,650 students placed by Day 28 – an increase of 4%.

No 'spike' in UK deferrals

36.4% of UK 18 year olds entered HE – the largest increase in a decade.

22.5% of 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged areas placed – a record high.

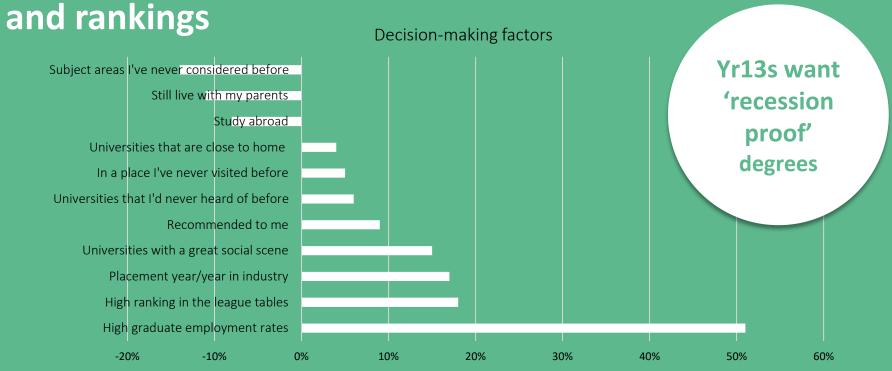89% of students who received a grade increase now placed at original or comparable choice.

9% increase in placed students from outside of the EU – driven by a 27% increase from China.

Source: UCAS Day 28 data
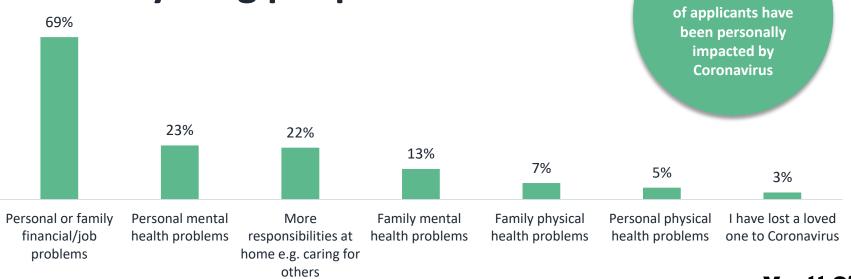
COVID-19 is changing priorities: jobs, placements, and rankings

Decision-making factors

Factor	Value
Subject areas I've never considered before	(negative, small)
Still live with my parents	(negative, small)
Study abroad	(negative, small)
Universities that are close to home	~4%
In a place I've never visited before	~5%
Universities that I'd never heard of before	~6%
Recommended to me	~9%
Universities with a great social scene	~15%
Placement year/year in industry	~17%
High ranking in the league tables	~18%
High graduate employment rates	~51%

X-axis: -20%, -10%, 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%

Yr13s want 'recession proof' degrees

11 November 2020

October 15 - Increase in applicant numbers

- We have seen an overall increase in applicants to October deadline courses of **12%** year-on-year.

- Applicant numbers have risen by **8,250** from **68,690** in 2020 to **76,940** this cycle.

Polar 4 (age 18)

Q1:Q5

- 19% more Q1 applicants
- 15% more Q2 applicants
- 8% more Q3 applicants
- 7% more Q4 applicants
- 8% more Q5 applicants
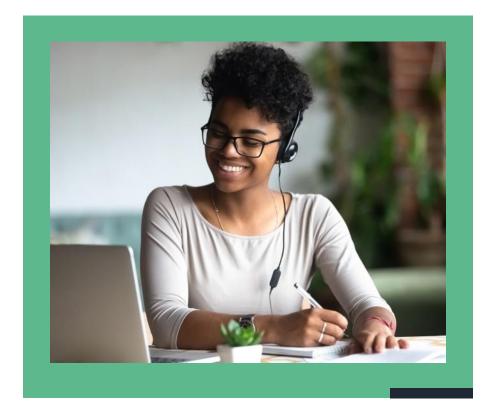- 6.2 times more Q5 than Q1 applicants, decreased from 6.82 last year

- 13% more Male Q1 applicants
- 23% more Female Q1 applicants
- 1.46 times more Female than Male Q1 applicants, increased from 1.35 last year

Our support for students and providers in 2021

- Enhanced wrap-around package of information and advice – UCAS: 'the application coach'

- Speeding up reference writing

- Visibility of Grades on Entry in adviser tools

- January start date filter

Where next for policy development?

The applicant of 2026

+14%
(100,000)

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Ratio of
1:1.14 (707,888: 805,819)

Demand for over
50,000 more HE places by 2030

Potential additional fee income of
£1,387,500,000
based on current top rates

Likely increase in selective institutions, increasing focus on WP

On the horizon: HE policy landscape

1   Skills white paper

2   Youth unemployment (the return)

3   Higher and technical education reform

4   Focus on ROI for HE generally and apprenticeships specifically

Class of 2020

800,000 18-24-year-olds are expected to leave education this year with youth unemployed project to hit 600,000 next year (twice as large as the increase following the financial crisis) – *Resolution Foundation*

What next for HE?

- COVID recovery

- Impact of COVID on inequality

- More diversity of delivery

- International market implications of COVID
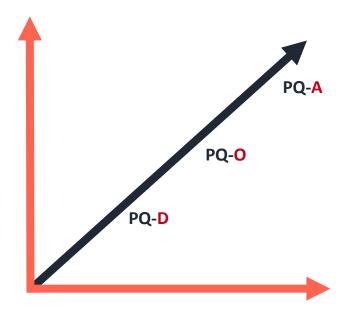
What next for UCAS?

- New normal digital applicant journey

- Complete applicant profile presentation

- Parity of pathway presentation

- Step-change for UCAS as international gateway to UK HE

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Post-qualification admissions

PQX: PQ admissions comes in many forms

PQ-A

PQ-O

PQ-D

Post-qualification admissions comes in many forms:

- ❑ **Post-qualification decisions**: Students decide which offer they wish to accept after they have received their results.

- ❑ **Post-qualification offers**: Universities make offers to students after they get their results, and the student then decides which to accept.

- ❑ **Post-qualification applications**: Student applies to university or college after they receive their results. Student receives offers and then decides which to accept.

Thank you

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