

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 11 August
Paper Title	Glasgow Applications Processes
Agenda Item	9
Paper Number	BM2-H
Responsible Officer	Julia Henderson, Advisor to the Board
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Decision

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1** To provide the Board with information in relation to the UCAS Progress application system and how it might be a useful model to manage application processes in Glasgow.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is suggested that the Board instructs that the feasibility of the project be further explored with the assigned colleges and that an exploratory workshop be arranged with UCAS Progress in September 2014, as per their attached proposal.

3. Discussion

- 3.1** UCAS Progress has successfully worked with Colleges to establish 'end to end' application systems, most recently in Wales. Earlier this year UCAS Chief Executive Mary Curnock Cook met with the Chief Executive of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and some other colleges in Scotland. As a consequence of this visit and on the recommendation of the SFC, the Chair and the Advisor to the Board met with Mary Curnock Cook and Gina Bradbury, Head of UCAS Progress, in June 2014. The attached proposal was produced at the request of the Chair for the Board's consideration.
- 3.2** It is important that the practitioners involved in applications and admissions processes across Glasgow are involved at the outset in shaping this project to understand and work through the detail of what would and could be involved and to understand the benefits and risks.
- 3.3** A scoping workshop would enable UCAS to share their experience of implementing online Search and Apply services and to work through the detail outlined in this proposal to

establish a shared understanding of the opportunity and, very importantly, Glasgow's unique service and student needs.

4. Risk Analysis

4.1 This would be a key component of any project initiation proposal.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 This would be a key component of any project initiation proposal.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 As per the UCAS Proposal, there would be an annual license of between £7.5k to £20k for the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board – dependent on whether UCAS Progress engages with students and sending schools. Additional pump-priming (to be defined) would be required to secure any bespoke content and support initial course upload and engagement at local level. Further detail would require to be scoped as part of the project initiation proposal.

UCAS Progress

Proposal to support Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board

30th July 2014

Introduction

This document outlines a proposal to show how UCAS Progress can be used to support students and the Glasgow Region's Colleges. This project could be used as a demonstration of what can be achieved and then could be offered to additional regions over time and as appropriate.

Background

In Glasgow at present there is no central administrative system that enables individual colleges or the regional board to plan provision and assess student demand effectively. Learners have to search multiple websites to understand and assess their options, and there is no service which enables them to apply for multiple courses online. The lack of ability to track and support individual learners means that there is no visibility at regional level of what is happening, in particular the levels of demand and offers made/accepted. Consequently it is difficult to plan provision to meet demand, track student destinations or target support on those students at risk and reduce numbers of people not in education, employment or training.

UCAS Progress offers a ready-made solution to these problems that would give Glasgow colleges visibility over their application pipeline and the ability to manage supply and demand much more effectively. The UCAS Progress service could generate financial benefits for colleges by reducing administration and marketing spend, and improve learner engagement and retention, as learners are better able to find and apply for courses that meet their needs and aspirations.

Our understanding of requirements

The region's college could benefit from an online service that can enable each college to establish control over their application pipeline and processes. This means that colleges need to be able to:

- Display, customise, market and advertise their courses, including rich information about those courses, to prospective applicants. (At present, applicants have to trawl multiple websites that are not built for this purpose)
- Define application requirements to meet their specific needs
- Receive, process and record outcomes of applications and enrolments and view and monitor students' applications at all stages in the application cycle.
- Have access to real-time management information on learner preferences, applications, offers and destinations, to inform planning and provision
- Streamline administration, enabling staff to focus more of their time on work that is productive and beneficial to learners and the success of the

organisation. Used effectively, UCAS Progress should enable a significant improvement in how admissions staff resource is used as less time is spent on managing paper flows)

- Support a parallel 'offline' service alongside the online web based system for those applicants with limited or no internet access.

From the learner's perspective, any new system needs to enable learners to:

- View and explore information on each college and each course without necessarily having to log in to a secure, personal account
- Search for courses using various criteria including location, level, sector, course type and college and login to select and save favourites
- Apply online for their chosen courses
- Apply via a parallel paper-based process – this would consist of printing paper application forms (essentially, copies of the on line application) with the application process managed offline. Admissions staff and applicants would receive and send communications by mail.

It might also be helpful to sending schools if the service enabled them to:

- Upload core student data to create student user accounts which enable them to track and support students in their ongoing learning, including through the decision making and application process.

Non-school-based applicants will be able to self-register to use the application service. Going forward, this will enable the full range of 16-24 year old target applicants (as well as older adults) to apply and providing the colleges with a full service.

How UCAS Progress can help

UCAS Progress can already meet all of these requirements. You can view the service online at www.ucasprogress.com

In outline it covers the following:

- **Information & Advice:** pages to give learners information about their options and inspire them as they think about what to do next. These can be customised to local and regional needs.
- **Search:** we can accommodate all courses, including post-16 and adult, academic and vocational, part-time/full-time, short courses, and with a range of start dates.
- **Apply:** can accommodate all courses and all applicants; with flexible application/applicant management tools. We also provide a range of reports to enable planning and reporting.

A full outline of the UCAS Progress Service is summarised at Annex A.

Our Approach

We suggest working in collaboration with the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board and the colleges to develop a pilot to show how the UCAS Progress service works.

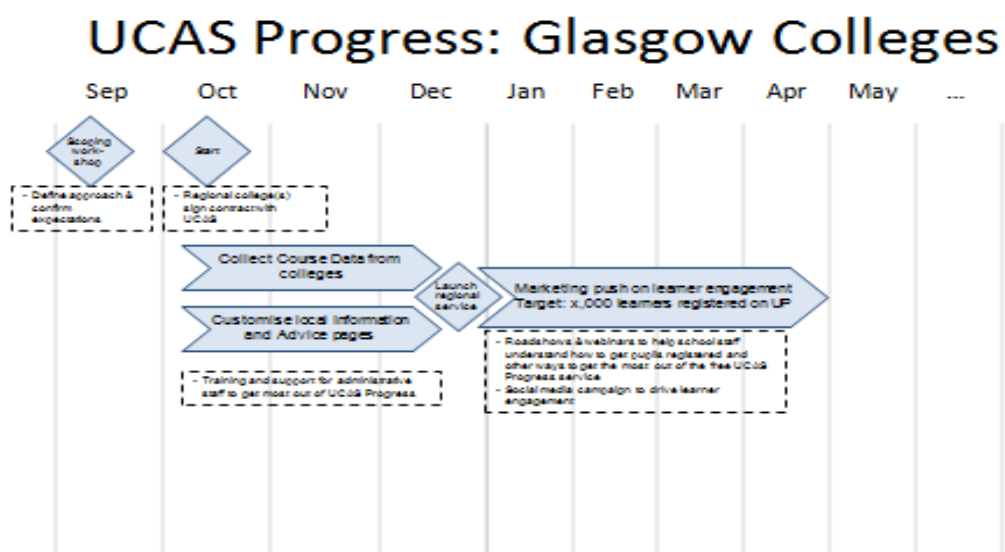
To enable all parties involved in the Glasgow college application and admissions process to understand and work through the detail of what would be involved and how best to focus time and effort, we suggest a scoping workshop in the near future, which we would facilitate free of charge. This would enable us to share our experience of implementing online Search and Apply services and to work through the detail outlined in this proposal to establish a shared understanding of the opportunity and service needs. This will enable key decisions to be made (see below) about the scope and timescales for the work.

Our experience of successfully implementing Search and Apply services has been in the variety of local contexts which naturally evolve in the education and training sector. This has informed the range of proven implementation approaches we advocate because they offer flexibility and ensure the colleges are able to have a smooth transition which blends with their current processes and ways of working.

A key element of getting the system running well is collaboration with schools (teachers and advisors) and direct with young people in the community to raise awareness and encourage use. We would encourage consideration of this approach of working closely with multiple stakeholders to achieve this objective. This would include groups we identify as needing more 'off line' support.

An outline approach for this is set out in the diagram below. We would seek to firm this up at the scoping workshop.

Diagram 1: proposed approach to scoping and delivering UCAS Progress for Glasgow



Key decisions we would seek to reach during the first workshop (or shortly afterwards) are:

- The end to end application process, at least at top line, and an understanding of any bespoke software features or configuration that may be needed to support this
- The 'offline' paper based application process to run in tandem with the online system. To include communications around online access points for users without internet access.
- The number of colleges to be involved in the initial demonstration phase
- The scope and number of courses to be uploaded in the initial demonstration phase (eg Post-16 or all courses)
- Target student applicants (eg S4 in schools, S4 and S3, 16+ adults)
- Existing sources of course and student data – best/most efficient approaches to accessing this data.
- Key dates that need to be met in setting up and delivering the service
- Governance arrangements (we would propose establishing a user group to work with UCAS on an on-going basis to drive engagement and agree additional enhancements to the service)
- Identify the key stakeholders and user groups currently/to be involved in the Colleges' application and enrolment services going forward.
- Project and service management arrangements and roles – anticipated structures and roles. Key contacts and responsibilities.
- Existing and required communication channels and engagement routes – such as forums or networks which could or should be utilised.

Potential costs

Annual license of between £7.5k to £20k for the Glasgow Regional Colleges Board – dependent on whether UCAS Progress engages with students and sending schools. Plus pump-priming (to be defined) to secure any bespoke content and support initial course upload and engagement at local level.

Next steps

If Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board would like to take forward this outline proposal, we would suggest the following next steps:

- Initial call to prepare for workshop – who to invite, timing, any key questions / concerns – w/c 18th August
- Workshop – September
- Agree contract start- exact date TBC

[signed]
Date