UCAS' verification service – 2018 update on progress

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Overview

UCAS' verification service provides a valued and necessary service to students and the higher education sector, to help prevent anyone gaining an unfair advantage, or securing a place by deception. In May 2018, as part of our commitment to openness and transparency, UCAS published a detailed report about the operation of the verification service, and five years of data about the numbers and proportion of applications flagged for investigation and cancelled, by students' ethnicity.

This report showed that, overall, the number of applications flagged and cancelled is small. Over the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, only 0.18% of a total of 2,913,525 UK domiciled applicants had their applications flagged (5,160 people) and 0.07% had their applications cancelled (2,085 people).

Our analysis also found that, for all ethnicities, the percentage of applications cancelled is broadly proportionate to the percentages flagged in each ethnic group, suggesting that the verification activities undertaken by UCAS are generally robust and fair.

However, this analysis also found that whilst ethnicity is not used in any of the processes that can lead to an application being flagged, there were differences by ethnicity in the number of applicants flagged. A greater proportion of flagged applicants were Black (52%), compared to the proportion of Black applicants in the applicant population (9%). Our investigation showed that a students' ethnicity could not be a factor in application flagging in several of the processes employed (for example, identification of duplicate applications, and analysis of the text of personal statements), but that where software is used to screen applications against reference data, the accumulation of historical data might be an issue.

UCAS takes this issue very seriously and, as reported in May 2018, actions were taken to enhance the fraud detection software used for the 2019 admissions cycle, and to cleanse the underlying reference data in line with industry standard retention policies. We committed to continue to investigate the underlying causes of the patterns observed in the flagging and cancellation of undergraduate applications, and improve communications,

engage with the higher education sector and representative groups, and publish data every year about performance and progress. This report is the first of these annual updates.

Update on actions

i)   Further analysis of 2017 flagging and cancellation data
In undertaking further analysis of the 2017 data, we identified that there is a strong relationship between the age of students and the likelihood of their applications being flagged for investigation. While 18 year olds made up the largest proportion of UK applicants (49.4%), only 4.8% of flagged applicants were in this age group, whereas 87.0% of applicants flagged were aged 20 and older, with 46.1% aged 30 and over.

Black applicants are significantly more likely to be mature students, compared to White applicants. In 2017, 55% of UK domiciled Black applicants were aged 20 and over, compared to 23% for the White cohort. This is borne out in the analysis of the verification data – 28% of all flagged applicants in 2017 were Black students aged 30 and older.

This additional analysis suggests the primary reason why a greater proportion of flagged applicants are Black, is that Black applicants are overrepresented among the population of applicants aged 20 and older, and that it is these older applicants whose applications are significantly more likely to be flagged for investigation.

Additional investigation has shown that applicants aged 20 and older are much more likely to be applying to higher education independently, i.e. without the support of a college or registered education provider that understands the admissions process, and can quality check the information included. Older applicants are also more likely to experience challenges in providing information about their prior qualifications.

ii)   Engagement with students and stakeholders to improve communications

In August 2018, UCAS convened a roundtable of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic representative groups, including The Runnymede Trust and Higher Education Race Action Group, along with sector experts, to discuss our findings and updated analysis, and ask for advice on how UCAS can continue to support the diverse range of individuals who wish to benefit from HE. As a result, a number of additional actions were agreed to enhance and improve information and advice for mature and independent students, review the tone and language used in communications, and strengthen the diversity of UCAS' governance and engagement bodies.

In response, we have published a range of information and advice resources to support independent and mature students in applying to HE, and are aiming to maximise diversity in the recruitment of members to our new student advisory group. Changes have also been made to the tone and content of communications to students whose applications are flagged, to encourage a dialogue about missing or incorrect information.

iii)   Analysis of the 2018 flagging and cancellation data

We made a number of operational changes during the 2018 admissions cycle. These include the removal of historical data from fraud detection software, a change in approach to encourage applicants to correct inaccurate qualification information, improvements to

communications, and an enhanced peer review process around applications considered for cancellation.

The 2019 entry cycle will be the first complete admissions cycle that these changes are in place – the outcomes of which will be published in January 2020, as part of our 2019 end of cycle resources. Analysis of the 2018 data shows a number of movements since 2017 which are likely to be due, at least in part, to the enhancements made to the verification service.

In the 2018 entry cycle, the number and proportion of UK domiciled applicants whose applications were flagged was broadly the same as in previous years (1,255, 0.22%), however, the proportion of applications cancelled fell by 54%, to 0.035% (195 applicants).

Compared to 2017, the proportion of flagged applicants who were Black has fallen from 39% to 29%, with the proportion of those cancelled having fallen from 41% to 38%.

Analysis of applicants by age clearly demonstrates that it is older age groups who are proportionally far more likely to be applying independently, and have their applications flagged and cancelled.

As part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, during 2019, UCAS will continue to monitor and enhance its verification service by surveying students who have been contacted as part of it. In addition, we will encourage and promote good practice in this area through workshops at our Annual Admissions Conference by convening a working group to create resources to support admissions practitioners, and produce resources to support mature and unsupported applicants.

1. Introduction

On behalf of students, universities, and colleges, UCAS screens applications for false, missing, or misleading information to maintain the integrity of UK higher education and to prevent fraud. Our aim is to avoid anyone gaining an unfair advantage, or securing a place by fraud or deception. Our counter-fraud activities complement those undertaken by universities and colleges, and other service providers, such as the Student Loans Company. Each cycle, UCAS receives over 2.7 million applications from 700,000 applicants, for full-time undergraduate courses, of which fewer than 0.1% are cancelled.

Applications submitted to UCAS are normally subject to two separate sets of automated checks. They are evaluated using fraud detection software, and personal statements are screened using similarity detection software. Information about ethnicity does not form part of any of these checks.

If an issue is detected with an application, it is 'flagged', and becomes subject to investigation for potentially fraudulent activity. Applications can also be flagged where they appear to be duplicate applications if universities, colleges, or UCAS staff have concerns about an application, or if a third party (such as a school or employer) raises a concern about an individual. These are termed 'Alerts'.

When applications have been flagged, UCAS' Verification Team asks applicants or their referees for additional information – for example, to provide original documentation or other details. We aim to give everyone the opportunity to resolve issues with us. In the majority of cases, these Alerts are resolved through the provision of additional information. However, if information is not provided, or false or misleading information is found, applications are cancelled. All applications are subject to a review prior to a cancellation decision, and applicants whose applications are cancelled have the right of appeal.

In response to questions about the ethnicity of students whose applications are flagged and cancelled, UCAS published comprehensive data about its verification service in May 2018.

Although this deep dive demonstrated the robustness of the processes used to investigate flagged applications and decisions about cancellations, it also identified significant issues in relation to ethnicity and application flagging. This analysis found that although the proportion of applications flagged and cancelled is very small, a higher proportion of applications from UK domiciled Black students were being flagged for investigation and cancelled, compared to the Black applicant population, and the applicant population of other ethnic groups.

In response, UCAS committed to a number of actions, including the annual publication of data about the verification service, and reporting progress in understanding and addressing the differences in application flagging data.

2. Overview of the May 2018 analysis

As noted above, UCAS published a report on its verification service in May 2018. The key findings of this analysis were as follows:

- The number of applications flagged and cancelled every year is small. Over the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, only 0.18% of a total of 2,913,525 UK domiciled applicants had their applications flagged (5,160 people), and 0.07% had their applications cancelled (2,085 people).
- Typically, around 40% of flagged applications were cancelled. This is true for all ethnicities, and the percentage of applications cancelled is broadly proportionate to the percentages flagged in each ethnic group. For example, 16% of flagged applications come from the Asian ethnic group, and 18% of cancelled applications are from Asian applicants. This suggests that the verification activities undertaken by UCAS are generally robust and fair. UCAS also reviewed all cancelled applications from 2017 and 2018, and confirmed that all cancellations were made for genuine reasons.
- While ethnicity is not used in any of the processes that can lead to an application being flagged, there are differences by ethnicity in applicants flagged. A greater proportion of flagged applicants (52% across all flagging processes) are Black, compared to the proportion of Black applicants in the applicant population (9%).
- UCAS uses specialist software for fraud detection, which screens applications against historical reference data about fraudulent applications. This does not include information about applicants' ethnicity or nationality. Over the five years analysed, a disproportionate number of flagged applicants (65%) were from the Black ethnic group. While there are likely to be a number of reasons for this, UCAS identified that the accumulation of historical data, and the inclusion of all applications that have not been cleared in the reference dataset, could have contributed to the results observed. This has now been addressed, and processes are in place to ensure this reference data is regularly reviewed.

Following this analysis, UCAS undertook further investigation on the profile of applicants who had been flagged or cancelled through the verification service during the 2017 entry cycle. Through this analysis, we identified:

- 87% of students flagged as part of the verification service were aged 20 and over. This group forms the largest cohort of flagged applicants across all ethnic groups, ranging from 77% (Mixed) to 90.5% (Black).
- 46.1% of those flagged were aged 30 and over, compared to 4.8% for 18 year olds.
- The single largest group flagged was Black students aged 30 and over – this cohort accounted for 28% of all flagged students in 2017.

In addition, in 2017:

- 32% of UK domiciled applicants were aged 20 and over.
- 55% of UK domiciled black applicants were 20 and over. This compares to 23.1% for the White cohort.

It is therefore likely that the overrepresentation of Black students being flagged is characteristic of the age of applicants (many of whom would likely be applying independently) rather than their ethnicity. Understanding this has allowed UCAS to not only focus on how we support students from all ethnic backgrounds, but also how we support both independent and mature applicants in navigating the admissions process.

3. Progress against the recommendations made in the UCAS verification service report (May 2018)

As part of the recommendations from the 2018 report, UCAS committed to increasing transparency around the verification service, ensuring it remains fit for purpose, and continuing to engage with groups representing the diverse range of individuals who wish to benefit from higher education. Many of these activities are ongoing and UCAS will continue to take these forward over the next year. We intend to report further progress next year, as part of our 2019 end of cycle releases.

Progress against these actions are as follows:

UCAS will implement an annual review and cleanse all reference data used as part of its verification service in advance of the opening of each admissions cycle.

For the 2019 admissions cycle, UCAS has enhanced the fraud detection service, and cleansed the reference data, so the service matches applications against six years of historical data. This six-year period reflects the industry best practice, likely patterns of fraudulent applications, and recognises that a single application cycle runs over an 18-month period. Going forwards, UCAS will continue to cleanse this data on an annual basis in line with best practice.

In addition, UCAS has reviewed the processes, practices, and governance around the verification service to ensure they remain fit for purpose. This includes unconscious bias training for staff associated with the verification process, as well enhancements to our complaints and appeals processes, with all decisions peer reviewed prior to any cancellation.

UCAS will reach out to a number of organisations that work specifically with Black, Asian, and minority ethnic students to seek their advice on how to ensure the voices of all students are reflected in UCAS' decision-making and processes.

In August 2018, UCAS convened a roundtable of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic representative groups, including The Runnymede Trust and Higher Education Race Action Group, along with academic experts and admissions practitioners, to discuss the findings of our May 2018 report. At this session, we presented the findings of our May 2018 report and the additional analysis that suggests the findings observed are linked to mature and independent applicants who are more likely to be flagged as part of the verification service.

The roundtable provided UCAS with robust and valuable challenge and critique, while offering a range of suggestions on how to continue to support the diverse range of applicants who use its services. These include:
- enhancing the information and advice we provide to mature and independent applicants, to support them through the admissions process
- continuing to drive forward our personalisation strategy, to ensure more targeted information and advice across all applicant cohorts
- reviewing our tone of voice in communications to applicants, to ensure it is appropriate
- strengthening appropriate formal governance and representation across UCAS' engagement structure

- sharing our insight and experiences with other providers of verification services, to allow for cross-sector understanding and consideration

Progress to date is outlined below.

UCAS will introduce an annual survey for applicants whose applications are flagged. This will help improve our communications about verification activities, and information and advice for students who may need additional help to make good quality applications.

Since April 2018, UCAS has undertaken a range of activities to enhance the information and advice we provide to students from all backgrounds, particularly those who are mature and independent. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **updating the information and advice we provide to applicants**, to provide assurance on the purpose and use of the fraud and verification service[1]
- revising the **communications sent to students who have been flagged** as part of the verification service, to ensure these are consistent and appropriate
- **our ongoing mature student campaign** in which UCAS highlights the unique characteristics of applicants aged 21 and above, including where they apply, the point in the cycle at which they typically apply, and for which courses. For example, mature students are more likely to live closer to the higher education provider(s) they apply to, to live at home, and to apply later in the cycle. By understanding this, the sector and UCAS are better able to tailor the experience of these students to better meet their needs
- **creating new content for mature students** to help them successfully navigate the admissions process[2]
- **working with partners to develop resources to support independent applicants** – for example, we have recently worked with Stand Alone to develop information and advice resources to support estranged students when applying to higher education[3]

Over the coming year, UCAS will:
- following the 2019 entry cycle, which will be the first full complete cycle where improved information and advice and business process have been in place, **launch a bespoke survey of applicants flagged as part of the verification service to inform continuous improvement**. We will highlight the findings of this survey next year, as part of our end of cycle releases
- **accelerate our personalisation strategy** – we are continuously enhancing the information and advice we provide to all customers, and the way we deliver this. Our approach to personalisation allows us to send and surface timely and bespoke information, supplied by industry experts, to inform higher education choices based on the information we know about them. For example, in the future, if an applicant flags that they are applying independently, we will be able to provide them with more relevant content and resources
- in addition to the survey, continuously gather feedback from students through focus groups and the newly formed student advisory group, to ensure we understand

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[1] https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity and https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement
[2] https://www.ucas.com/mature-students
[3] https://www.ucas.com/estranged-students

their changing wants and needs. As part of the formation of this group, we are specifically seeking to ensure membership is reflective of the diverse range of individuals who apply to HE

We will share our findings with the higher education sector, to encourage the development of good practice on raising Alerts, and verification activities more generally.

If universities and colleges have concerns about an application – for example, if qualifications appear to be faked or inflated – they can raise this issue with UCAS' Verification Team, to have the application flagged and investigated. At the point at which these concerns are raised with UCAS, universities and colleges do not have information about an applicant's ethnicity, as this information is only shared after admissions decisions have been made. Additionally, the Verification Team may be contacted about individuals by a number of different organisations, including schools, colleges, employers, banks, and, sometimes, the police. In 2017, 87% of alerts came from universities and colleges.

In our May 2018 report, UCAS highlighted that, in 2017, Alerts were spread widely across 67 different providers, and that the majority of providers flagged only one or two applicants. In almost all instances, patterns of ethnicity were broadly representative of application patterns by ethnicity. Where a provider raised a relatively high number of alerts, UCAS engaged directly with that provider to understand their process and rationale.

We will continue to raise awareness of the use of our verification service through the provision of our end of cycle statistics. At our Annual Admissions Conference in April 2019, UCAS will host workshop sessions with admissions practitioners to highlight these statistics, as well as to encourage and promote good practice in this area.

In addition, following on from the workshop at the UCAS Admissions Conference, we will convene a group of admissions practitioners to develop good practice resources, and produce resources to support mature and unsupported applicants.

UCAS will publish annual statistics about the verification service, including a breakdown by ethnicity, sex, age, and socioeconomic background (POLAR4) as part of our end of cycle reporting.

In our May report, we committed to publishing annual statistics about our verification service. These statistics are intended to provide information about the number of applicants that are flagged as part of our verification service, and the characteristics of these students.

The applicant characteristics included are:
- age
- Apply centre (independent or from a registered centre)
- ethnic group
- sex
- socioeconomic background (POLAR4)

All statistics presented are for UK domiciled students, excluding the Isle of Man and Channel Islands. This is consistent with our End of Cycle Report. Therefore, the figures presented will

differ slightly to those presented in May 2018[1]. We have produced these statistics for the 2014 to 2018 entry cycles.

Below is an overview of the statistics for the 2017 and 2018 entry cycles. Full statistics for previous cycles can be found on ucas.com.

UK domiciled applicants

Table 1: Total number of UK domiciled applicants

Entry cycle	Applicant baseline	Flagged applicants		Cancelled applicants		Percentage of flagged cancelled
		Number	%	Number	%	
2014	579,325	1,325	0.229%	500	0.086%	37.74%
2015	593,535	1,300	0.219%	560	0.094%	43.08%
2016	592,035	1,205	0.204%	525	0.089%	43.57%
2017	573,610	1,360	0.237%	425	0.074%	31.25%
2018	562,870	1,255	0.223%	195	0.035%	15.54%

As noted above, for the 2018 entry cycle, UCAS introduced a range of initiatives to enhance the verification services we offer. This has included updating the relevant products and services that form part of our overall verification service, as well revisiting processes for cancellation. Many of these changes came into effect in mid-cycle from April 2018, by which point, 87% of UK domiciled students had applied. The 2019 entry cycle will be the first complete cycle where these changes have been in place.

For the 2018 entry cycle, we observed an 8% year-on-year reduction in the number of applicants flagged, and a 54% year-on-year reduction in the number of cancelled applications. This means that for the 2018 entry cycle, 0.22% of UK domiciled applicants were flagged, and 0.035% were cancelled, as part of our verification service.

As noted in Table 1, 2018 saw a 54% reduction in the number of applicants who had their application cancelled through the verification service. While there is no one reason for this, contributing factors could be:
- enhanced business processes around applications being considered for cancellation, including:
  - changes to the approach around inaccurate qualification entry, where we increasingly seek to facilitate correction of this information to encourage resolution
  - enhanced peer review processes around applications being considered for cancellation
  - revised communications sent to flagged students that seek to encourage dialogue and resolution, and reduce cancellations through non-response

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[1] The numbers published in this report differ from those published in May 2018. Consistent with UCAS' end of cycle reporting, all figures relate to applicants in a given HE application cycle – previously, reported figures attributed applicants to a reporting year for the fraud and verification service. Applications are routinely rechecked after the close of a cycle, particularly where an applicant is deferring entry. It is expected that the numbers of flagged and cancelled applicants will increase after the close of a cycle.

- a continuation of the trend from 2015 of a reducing number of cancelled applications, with 2017 observing a 19% decline in the number of cancelled applications compared to 2016

Applicants whose applications are cancelled can appeal to UCAS. In 2018, three cancellation decisions were appealed by UK applicants, with two applicants being reinstated.

UK domiciled applicants by Apply centre (i.e. with the support of a school or college)

Table 2: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by Apply centre (2017)

Apply centre	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Apply centre	410,120	71	380	28	40	10
Independent	163,490	29	980	72	385	90
Total	573,610	100	1,360	100	425	100

Table 3: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by Apply centre (2018)

Apply centre	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Apply centre	394,445	70	165	13	20	11
Independent	168,425	30	1,090	87	175	89
Total	562,870	100	1,255	100	195	100

When a student applies to higher education via UCAS, they can either do so via an Apply centre (typically a school or college), or as an independent applicant. When a student applies through an Apply centre, there is an additional check whereby a teacher or adviser will review the application prior to submission. This acts as a useful quality assurance mechanism undertaken by experienced advisers. Those students are also more likely have access to wider support, including face-to-face guidance on completing the application. The vast majority of 18 year old applicants apply through an Apply centre, whereas mature applicants are more likely to apply independently.

As noted above, independent applicants account for a significant proportion of those applicants who have their applications flagged or cancelled. This could be due to the applicant not completing the application correctly, or not having ready access to all the information requested, such as the details of a qualification. In light of this, UCAS is developing a range of information and advice resources for these applicants to better support them in submitting high quality, accurate applications.

UK domiciled applicants by age

Table 4: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by age band (2017)

Age band	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
17 and under	2,065	0	0	0	0	0
18	282,615	49	195	14	15	4
19	103,105	18	160	12	35	8
20	41,115	7	95	7	25	6
21+	144,705	25	910	67	345	82
Total	**573,610**	**100**	**1,360**	**100**	**425**	**100**

Table 5: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by age band (2018)

Age band	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
17 and under	2,040	0	0	0	0	0
18	277,775	49	35	3	5	3
19	98,725	18	220	17	25	12
20	40,010	7	195	16	15	7
21+	144,320	26	805	64	155	79
Total	**562,870**	**100**	**1,255**	**100**	**195**	**100**

In any given cycle, young applicants (those aged 18, 19, and 20) typically make up between 72% to 74% of UK domiciled applicants, with 18 year olds representing the largest proportion of this group.

As noted above, independent applicants (i.e. those not applying from a school or college) are more likely to be mature applicants. In line with these statistics, mature students (those aged 21 and over) are more likely to be flagged or cancelled as part of the verification service.

UK domiciled applicants by ethnic group

Table 6: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by ethnic group (2017)

Ethnic group	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	66,610	12	250	18	95	22
Black	50,665	9	525	39	175	41
Mixed	25,160	4	70	5	30	8
Other	10,985	2	85	6	35	8
White	412,300	72	400	29	80	19
Unknown or prefer not to say	7,890	1	35	3	10	2
Total	573,610	100	1,360	100	425	100

Table 7: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by ethnic group (2018)

Ethnic group	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	67,990	12	195	16	45	22
Black	49,435	9	360	29	75	38
Mixed	25,435	5	65	5	10	4
Other	11,145	2	55	4	10	6
White	398,575	71	525	42	55	28
Unknown or prefer not to say	10,300	2	55	4	5	2
Total	562,870	100	1,255	100	195	100

Table 8: Percentage of flagged applicants that result in a cancelled application by ethnic group

Ethnic group	2017			2018		
	Flagged	Cancelled	%	Flagged	Cancelled	%
Asian	250	95	38.0%	195	45	23.1%
Black	525	175	33.3%	360	75	20.8%
Mixed	70	30	42.9%	65	10	15.4%
Other	85	35	41.2%	55	10	18.2%
White	400	80	20.0%	525	55	10.5%
Unknown or prefer not to say	35	10	28.6%	55	5	9.1%
Total	**1,360**	**425**	**31.3%**	**1,255**	**195**	**15.5%**

It is important to note that none of the verification services use information about ethnicity.

In the 2018 entry cycle, the proportion of flagged applicants who were Black declined 10 percentage points, whereas the proportion of flagged White applicants increased by 13 percentage points. The proportion of cancelled applications from Black applicants also decreased by 3 percentage points, from 175 applicants to 75. The proportion of cancelled White applicants increased by 9 percentage points. The decline in the proportion of flagged Black applicants is a continuation of a trend observed since 2016, with the proportion declining 23 percentage points.

The percentage of flagged Black applicants that result in a cancellation has also declined, from 33.3% in 2017 to 20.8% in 2018.

As noted above, applicants flagged via our verification service are more likely to be independent and/or mature. It is important to note that Black students are overrepresented in these categories. For example, in the 2017 entry cycle, 42% of Black applicants were 21 years or older, compared to 21% of White, and 16% of Asian applicants.

UK domiciled applicant by POLAR4 group

Table 9: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by POLAR4 group (2017)

POLAR	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	73,325	13	205	15	65	15
2	92,415	16	230	17	65	15
3	109,980	19	290	21	80	19
4	130,220	23	365	27	125	30
5	165,065	29	270	20	85	20
Unknown	2,610	0	5	0	0	0
Total	573,610	100	1,360	100	425	100

Table 10: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by POLAR4 group (2018)

POLAR	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	72,180	13	175	14	15	8
2	90,485	16	205	17	25	14
3	106,580	19	270	21	35	19
4	128,505	23	295	24	55	29
5	161,870	29	300	24	60	30
Unknown	3,250	1	5	0	0	1
Total	562,870	100	1,255	100	195	100

When looking at the number of applicants flagged or cancelled by POLAR4 group, the spread of these is broadly in line with the volume and proportion of applicants in each group, and broadly consistent with previous years.

UK domiciled applicant by sex

Table 11: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by sex (2017)

Sex	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	330,590	58	675	50	195	46
Male	243,020	42	685	50	230	54
Total	573,610	100	1360	100	425	10

Table 12: UK domiciled undergraduate applicants, total flagged, cancelled, and proportion by sex (2018)

Sex	Applicant baseline		Flagged		Cancelled	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	325,525	58	635	51	85	44
Male	237,345	42	620	49	110	56
Total	562,870	100	1,255	100	195	100

As can be seen from the tables above, the split of males and females being flagged, or having their application cancelled as part of the verification service, is broadly equivalent, and has remained broadly similar between 2017 and 2018.