

Clearing 2016: precision marketing data service FAQs

What is it?

This service is an extension of the service trialed by UCAS in 2015. It will allow you to reach applicants who are without a confirmed place on 18 August, and who could provide a good fit with the Clearing places you have available.

This service is an additional data service for Clearing and does not impact on the normal Clearing process.

How does the service work?

The service seeks to connect you to applicants 'similar' to those you or a selected provider have previously accepted to a subject group/line. To do this, the qualification profile (strength/subject and/or type of qualification) of an unplaced applicant is compared to that of applicants who have previously been accepted on courses in the same subject group/line over the last three years. You may also request that the similarity comparison includes the applicant's main scheme subject choices.

Once you have placed your order and this comparison is made, we will transfer the details of applicants, along with their contact information, via our secure transfer service, Move IT. You are then able to proactively contact suitable applicants from A level results day – 18 August – rather than waiting for them to come to you.

How does this fit with Clearing currently?

This experimental service is additional to the Clearing process. Applicants are encouraged to continue their research and contact providers during Clearing, and may sign up to this service as an additional route to gaining a place.

How long will the service be offered for?

You can place orders on working days starting from Monday 8 August (for delivery 18 August) until Friday 2 September. Orders placed on a Friday will be delivered on a Monday with the exception of Friday 19 August, which will be delivered on Saturday 20 August by special request.

You will receive applicant details until the end of the period covered by the UCAS daily Clearing analysis; namely Friday 2 September. Applicants can be contacted until Friday 9 September.

Which applicants will be included in the service?

Applicants will not automatically be included – all applicants have been sent an email to opt in. Eligible applicants are:

- applicants who have applied through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme
- applicants who are **unplaced** and are **eligible** for Clearing (e.g. have paid the full £23 fee, or are willing to top up the single choice fee)
- applicants who have submitted their application by 30 June
- applicants who have completed A levels, Scottish Highers, or BTECs

Will other qualifications be included in the service in future?

Depending on customer demand and the viability of adding a particular qualification, UCAS will consider expanding the service to include a wider selection of qualifications in 2017.

How are applicants chosen for each university?

You can select a subject group/line on the order form and a provider offering courses with this subject group/line. Based on this selection, the service will look at the qualifications the provider accepted during the previous three cycles for this subject group/line, and will seek similar unplaced applicants from the service.

There are three matching processes you can select from:

1. Applicants who are similar in terms of qualification strength and subject (subject refers to the proportion of subjects in science/maths).
2. Applicants who are similar in terms of qualification type, as well as strength and subject.
3. Applicants who are similar in terms of qualification type, strength, subject, and whose main scheme choices are similar to the pattern of subject choices typically made by applicants accepted onto the subject group/line.

Options one and two are therefore not based on the applicant's choice of course. It is possible that someone who applied for a history degree, but with maths, physics, and chemistry A levels, could be matched to a physical sciences course. It is then up to you to decide whether to contact the applicant based on the content of their applicant details form. The applicant details form will contain details of the applicant's main scheme choices.

Option three incorporates the applicant's main scheme choices in the same way used for matching their qualification subjects. It removes those who have similar qualifications but dissimilar main scheme choices.

Will you be able to identify applicants with essential subjects required for a course, or exclude certain applicants?

The algorithms we use identify applicants who are similar to the specified subject group/line in terms of the grades and proportion of subjects in science/maths areas that are held. If you have courses within the subject group/line that need a specific subject, the applicant details

form contains further information of qualifications held, and the pattern of original subject choices made, so you can assess the candidates before making contact.

You mention arts subjects versus science subjects. How do you factor in the social sciences?

The service uses a single subject dimension for the qualifications held. This measures the strength and proportion of grades that are in broadly science or mathematics areas – this is the single most important dimension in differentiating between courses. This means that if you request unplaced applicants around a ‘course’ which has a low proportion of science or mathematics qualifications, you may receive applicants holding mainly arts, mainly humanities, or a mixture of the two.

Are the applicant details forms supplied as individual files or as one PDF with all applicants' details?

They are supplied as one PDF and a CSV file. Applicants will only be supplied to you once. We will then supply you with a ‘suppression list’ daily following your order to keep you informed as to those applicants who are placed and unavailable to call.

Is the PID on the applicant details form?

No, it is not included, although there is a unique reference number for you to use to identify a particular individual within the data. The applicant details form is designed to contain sufficient information for the purpose of deciding whether to contact an applicant proactively or not. It is not intended to provide the complete set of information you need to make an admissions decision. Once you have decided to contact an applicant, you can request the applicant’s PID during the call, as you would if you received an incoming Clearing call.

Can I select applicants who live nearby?

You can now exclude applicants who live far away if you wish to. Information on where the applicant lives and their distance from you are on the applicant details form, if you wish to take this into account rather than excluding these applicants from your order.

How many applicant details can I request?

Each provider will be given a dynamic quota, related to demand for the service, based on the number of applicant details received. This is to ensure optimal usage of the service with the objective that applicants have the best possible chance of receiving a call.

How frequently will the applicant data be updated in the unplaced applicant count guide?

Last year, you told us that the unplaced applicant count was only really useful as a guide to placing your first order. Therefore, this will be provided once in advance of 18 August for you to use as a guide when placing your first order.

How can I contact potential applicants?

Applicants have opted in to receive a telephone call from those providers to which we distribute their details. The applicant details form will contain a telephone number (where an applicant has provided one). The applicant's email address is also included on the applicant details form as a secondary means of communication where no telephone number is available. You are required to follow the [code of conduct referred to in the terms and conditions](#).

A 'code word' is included on the applicant details form. An applicant can ask you to quote that at the beginning of the conversation to ensure you are a bona fide caller.

We have also advised applicants that they can ask for a contact name if they have any doubts, so they can call you back using your university's main Clearing number.

How will applicants refer themselves to me?

Once you have spoken to the potential applicant, they will be able to refer themselves to you through Track in the normal way, after 15:00 (UK time) on 18 August 2016.

How many students will a university be able to enrol?

This is impossible to say because it depends on how many of the applicants who have signed up to the scheme are 'unplaced', and the courses a university is looking to recruit to. Our advice is that this service is supplementary to normal Clearing activities, and that you should not rely on this service as any sort of replacement for your usual Clearing recruitment.

Why have you decided to run the service again this year?

We asked providers for their feedback via a survey and followed this up with a workshop. Two thirds of providers said they 'definitely' or 'probably' would use the service again if we ran it for Clearing 2016. The remainder wanted to see some changes to the service, especially around the precision of the matching. We have responded to this by introducing

qualification type and main scheme choice into the similarity options, as well as offering some additional filters to exclude previous applicant types and those who live too far away.

Is this service included in the capitation fee?

No. The service can be purchased through UCAS Media as an additional, paid for marketing service. If you are considering using UCAS' precision marketing data service to complement your Clearing recruitment this year, we would encourage you to contact your UCAS Media account manager as soon as possible to ensure you have enough time to prepare for it.

How will the pricing structure be derived?

The core pricing for the service is driven by the principle of payment by results, in which you are only charged if an applicant whose details are supplied to you goes on to be accepted at your university. The cost is £300 excluding VAT per accepted applicant. This reflects the precise nature of the targeting and the fact that UCAS is uniquely positioned to know the outcome in terms of which applicants end up where.

Will I be charged if a 'lead' contacts me independently?

A charge will be incurred for every applicant placed at your university at the end of the cycle, whose contact details were supplied to you as part of this service. On 21 October, you will be issued with a draft invoice and the profiles of those who we believe were placed via the service. You will have until 21 November to ask us to review anyone on the list who you do not believe was recruited via this service. Evidence will need to be provided for UCAS to check against when challenging an applicant on the invoice.

UCAS has always said that you do not sell personal data. How does this fit with that policy?

Applicants are required to sign up for this service. It is entirely optional and complements the existing Clearing service – they have specifically consented to us sharing their details on their behalf. Providers then have access to exactly the same information as they would during Clearing. This service is only available to UCAS customers, and applicants can opt out at any time.

How is UCAS engaging with the sector on the development of this service?

Engagement will continue through your UCAS Media account manager and your relationship manager. Furthermore, formal feedback on the service will once again be sought and will inform the service in future years.

How will the trial evaluation work?

We will use three methods:

- statistical analysis
- a survey of providers
- a survey of applicants

We will discuss these at the Annual Review Meeting in November 2016, and will follow up with a workshop if necessary.

How should I refer to the Precision Marketing Data Service when contacting applicants?

The service for applicants is being referenced as the 'direct contact service for Clearing'. This is the name you should be using when you contact applicants.

Who should I contact if I have a question?

If you have any questions about this service, please contact your UCAS Media account manager.