

NORTHERN IRISH POLICY GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

JULY 2021

Security marking: PUBLIC

Document owner: Provider Engagement Coordinator

1. Constitution

The Northern Irish Policy Group (the 'Group') is expected to comprise around 25 members who shall be approved by the Chair/ Group Owner and a UCAS representative.

The membership shall be managed through open recruitment via expressions of interest for named positions and nominating organisations (as set out in 'make-up' below). Members will also be selected based on the quality of their expression of interest and a desire to maintain a variety of relevant skills and experience.

The Group elects its own Chair from among its members that have served a minimum of one year. The elected members will normally serve for two years as Chair. A member may put themselves forward or be nominated by another member, and the nominees should indicate willingness to serve.

Membership of individual members is renewable but shall not normally exceed three consecutive years. Membership can be rolled over where necessary and in agreement with the Chair.

2. Purpose

The Group represents the diverse interests of UCAS' Northern Irish customers and stakeholders and their progression to UK post-secondary education including higher education (HE) and apprenticeships. Its principal role is to influence and inform UCAS' policy positions through a fully representative, nation-specific lens. Together, the four country-specific policy groups supplement and augment the work of UCAS Council, which advises the UCAS Board. The Chairs of each policy group sit on UCAS Council to ensure a consistent flow of information.

The policy group shall:

- > Shape UCAS' strategic response to matters of education policy in Northern Ireland.
- > Provide an opportunity for discussion and consultation on topics related to progression to post-secondary education.
- > Reflect the priorities of the Northern Irish customer and stakeholder community.
- > Guide UCAS' public position on matters of education policy and widening access and participation.

3. Membership and responsibilities

Members of the Group shall:

- > Be expected to represent and discuss a diverse range of views from different Northern Irish customers and stakeholders, noting that consensus may not be achievable nor desirable.
- > Have an interest and knowledge in Northern Irish education policy, with an awareness of UK-wide variances.

- > Have an interest and knowledge in widening access and participation, striving for a fair and equitable admissions process for all.
- > Provide nation-specific expertise to aid and inform discussion at UCAS Council.
- > Act as a conduit for their wider organisation and network – consulting on issues prior to the meeting, and relaying key messages and matters arising.
- > Establish specialist smaller groups to support the policy group/ Council in one-off projects, if required.
- > Have the requisite skills and the time to devote to the role.
- > Exercise discretion where necessary in the discharge of their duties.
- > Refer matters to other fora (such as other advisory groups, Council, or ARC APG) where the policy group feels such matters fall outside of its remit or wider consultation is required.

4. Secretariat

UCAS shall provide secretarial support to the Group. Members of the Group and their Chair are listed on the UCAS web pages, along with terms of reference.

5. Proceedings

The Group shall meet at least twice per year. To accommodate members across Northern Ireland, meetings will be held virtually; or, where there is an option to hold these in person, we will operate a blended approach. Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments.

Where possible, these meetings will take in advance of the Council meeting to allow for key outputs to be further discussed within Council when appropriate.

Meetings shall be between 90 and 120 minutes in duration, with an optional 30 minute follow-on session to allow for UCAS to provide a demo of a new product or service that may be of interest to members.

6. Attendance

Members of the Group who miss two consecutive meetings are at risk of automatic resignation from the Group through non-attendance. This will be reviewed at discretion of the Chair and/or Group Owner.

NORTHERN IRISH POLICY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Makeup

Position	Number
Open recruitment via expressions of interest	
HE education policy expert	2
FE education policy expert	1
Apprenticeships policy expert	1
Employers and business	1
HE university/ college - policy role	3
HE university/ college - admissions role	3
School/ FE college - policy interest	2
Student/ apprentice	2
Policy stakeholders via organisation nomination	
CCEA	1
Department for Education	1
Department for the Economy	1
ASCL	1
NISCA	1
TBC	1
TBC	1

Other sector representatives or subject matter experts may be invited to meetings where the agenda dictates a particular topic.

If unable to attend a meeting, members are to advise UCAS and provide a deputy if possible.