Response ID ANON-RF2V-G6XQ-6

Submitted to **Post-Qualification Admissions Reform Consultation**
Submitted on **2021-05-13 16:38:36**

Introduction

Proposal: A Post-Qualification Admissions System

Not in Scope

About You

1 Please provide your name.

Name:
Jeremy Yallop

2 Please provide your email address.

Email:
jeremy@heqa.uk

3 Are you responding as an individual, or as part of an organisation?

Other Organisation

4 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please provide the following:

Organisation name:
Home Educators' Qualifications Association

Organisation postcode:

Role:

5 If you are responding as an individual, please confirm whether you are a:

Not Answered

6 Are you happy to be contacted directly about your response?

Yes

7 How did you hear about the consultation?

Please explain:

8 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Initial Questions

1 On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 = highly dissatisfied and 5 = highly satisfied), how satisfied are you with the present admissions system?

Not Answered

2 Would you, in principle, be in favour of changing the current Higher Education admissions system to a form of post-qualification admissions, where students would receive and accept university offers after they have received their A level (or equivalent) grades?

Yes

Reason:
Home-educated applicants are heavily disadvantaged by the current system, since they do not have teachers to provide predicted grades. Changing to post-qualification admissions is likely to have a significant positive impact on this group of students.

PQA Delivery and Implementation

1 If you think these issues should not rule out consideration of the model above, please explain why, providing supporting evidence where possible.

Please explain:

Illustrative models for a PQA system

Model 1: 'post-qualification applications and offers'

1 Do you think this system would be better than the current system, worse, or no significant improvement? In the text box below, you can refer to the potential costs, adverse effects or implementation challenges of such a reform.

Better than current system

Please explain:

2 Please provide your views on Level 3 results day being brought forward to the end of July, in order to provide time for students to apply to Higher Education, with their Level 3 results already known. What effect do you think this could have on students, teachers, schools and colleges and how best could this be facilitated?

Please explain:

Bringing Level 3 results day forward to the end of July so that students could apply to Higher Education with their Level 3 results already known would be significantly better for home-educated applicants than the current system, since it would eliminate the need for predicted grades.

3 Please provide your views on the support applicants will need to make their applications to Higher Education under this model, and do you have views on when and how this could be offered? How could students best prepare their application for HE before they receive their Level 3 (A Level and equivalent) result?

Please explain. This can include reference to support for researching and completing applications, deciding which offers to accept, and support put in place before they start HE. It could also refer to ensuring that all applications are treated fairly by higher education providers.:

4 Do you have views on any additional factors that should be considered in relation to potential effects on disadvantaged groups, and students with disabilities, mental health issues or other special needs?

Please explain:

5 Please provide your views on how additional entry tests, auditions and interviews could be accommodated under this model.

Please explain:

6 Under this model, would you expect there to be implications for the way in which students apply, which for most undergraduate students is currently through a centralised admissions service (UCAS), rather than directly to higher education providers?

Not Answered

If yes, what implications and why?:

7 Should there still be limits on how many courses they can apply to?

Not Answered

If yes, what limits and why?:

8 If you are a higher education provider, we would be interested in your views of how quickly applications could be processed under this model.

Please explain:

9 Please provide your views on any additional implications under this model for students, higher education providers and courses not already covered above.

Please explain:

Model 2: 'pre-qualification applications with post-qualification offers and decisions'

1 Do you think this system would be better than the current system, worse, or no significant improvement? In the text box below, you can refer to the potential costs, adverse effects or implementation challenges of such a reform.

Better than the current system

Please explain:

2 Please provide your views on the support applicants will need to make their applications to Higher Education under this model, and do you have views on when and how this could be offered?

Please explain:

3 Do you have views on any additional factors that should be considered in relation to potential effects on disadvantaged groups, and students with disabilities, mental health issues or other special needs?

Please explain:

4 Please provide your views on how students could make choices on which courses and institutions to apply for under this model. Your answer could reference the use of ongoing assessment, mock exam grades and prior attainment (e.g. at GCSE).

Please explain:

5 Under this model, would you expect there to be implications for the way in which students apply, which for most undergraduate students is currently through a centralised admissions service (UCAS), rather than directly to higher education providers?

Not Answered

If yes, what implications and why?:

6 Should there still be limits on how many courses they can apply to?

Not Answered

If yes, what limits and why?:

7 If you are a higher education provider, we would be interested in your views of how quickly applications could be processed under this model.

Please explain:

8 Please provide your views on how additional entry tests, auditions and interviews could be accommodated under this model.

Please explain:

9 Under Model 2, offers would be made to applicants after results day, outside of term time. Please provide your views on the support students will need to make their applications to Higher Education under this model, and do you have views on when and how this could be offered?

Please explain:

10 Please provide your views on any additional implications under this model for students, higher education providers and courses not already covered above.

Please explain:

Although it is not entirely clear from the description, HEQA understands that the intention is for predicted grades to be eliminated under this model. Based on that understanding, our view is that changing from the current system to this model would be a significant improvement for home-educated applicants.

Further Questions

1 Please provide your views on how the education sector could support the implementation of a PQA system. This can refer to the roles of schools, further education colleges, higher education providers and charities/representative bodies and can include suggestions around staffing, infrastructure and funding.

Please explain:

2 Should personal statements be removed from the application process?

No

Please provide a reason for your answer:

Home-educated applicants are much more likely than school-educated applicants to have unusual profiles, and the personal statement is a valuable opportunity for them to present their applications in ways that rigidly-structured forms don't support well.

For example, it is common for home-educated applicants to have an unusual profile of formal qualifications compared to their school-educated peers. The personal statement gives an opportunity to explain this, and to describe the elements of the applicant's education that did not lead to grades. In some cases, these aspects may represent a significant strength of the application. Eliminating personal statements would remove the opportunity for home-educated applicants to describe those parts of their education and achievements that would show most clearly why they are well-suited to the courses for which they apply.

3 Please provide your views on the impact of schools and colleges no longer using predicted grades to guide students in their higher education choices.

Please explain:

4 International students are not currently in scope of proposed PQA for a number of reasons (international exams work to different timetables outside the UK, many international students do not apply for UK courses via UCAS and international students require additional time ahead of term starts to apply for/be granted visas etc). Do respondents agree this is the correct approach given circumstances? If not, what are the key reasons as to why international applicants should be included in scope?

Please explain:

5 Please provide any views that you have on treating applications from students who do not currently apply through UCAS, and in particular whether a move to a PQA system would imply changes in how applications from non-UCAS applicants are considered.

Please explain:

6 Please provide any additional thoughts, ideas or feedback on the policy proposals outlined in this document.

Please explain:

For the same reasons that we favour eliminating predicted grades from higher education applications, we also favour eliminating supporting statements from teachers. For home-educated applicants, teachers' references pose another significant difficulty, since they do not have teachers to provide them. Although it is often possible to find someone who knows the applicant well enough to provide a supporting reference, it is more difficult for home-educated students to find referees who are as familiar with the requirements and expectations of UCAS applications as the teachers in schools who provide many such references each year.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Questions

1 Please provide any representations and/or evidence on the potential impact of our proposals on people with protected characteristics for the purposes of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

Please explain:

Further Analytical Questions

Questions for Schools and Further Education Colleges

1 What types of costs could be incurred in delivering support for students with applications over the summer? Please also see questions a) & b).

Please explain:

a) What factors are likely to influence these costs?:

b) How significant do you think costs associated with familiarising staff and students with a PQA system could be (e.g. training, providing and reading guidance)?:

2 Are there any circumstances under which a PQA system (under either model) could lead to cost savings and what would these be?

Please explain:

3 Are you able to provide an estimate of the amount of time spent delivering support to students with HE applications, including personal statements? Please also see question a).

Please explain:

a) Are you able to provide estimates of the costs which you currently incur delivering this support to students with HE applications, including personal statements?:

4 Do you envisage any other impacts and costs that could be incurred as a result of changes to the HE admissions system? Please also see question a).

Please explain:

a) What form would these wider impacts and costs take and how significant would they be? Are you able to provide any estimates of these wider impacts and costs?:

Questions for Higher Education Providers

1 How significant do you think the costs associated with familiarising HE admissions staff (e.g. training, providing and reading guidance), could be?

Please explain:

2 Are you able to provide estimates of the costs incurred processing and responding to student applications? Please also see questions a), b) and c).

Please explain:

a) What factors are likely to influence these costs?:

b) Are there any circumstances under which the costs of processing student applications could increase under a PQA?:

c) How might the compression of the HE admissions timetable affect costs and what could the likely size of impact be?:

3 Could streamlining the admissions system, through a model of PQA, lead to cost savings? Please also see questions a) and b).

Please explain:

a) What factors of a PQA system could influence cost savings?:

b) Are you able to provide any estimates of the potential size of these cost savings either in absolute or relative terms?:

Questions for Awarding organisations and HE sector agency bodies (with a statutory, regulatory or service delivery function)

1 How significant do you think the costs of familiarising staff (e.g. training, providing and reading guidance) could be?

Please explain:

2 What are likely impacts of moving results days for level 3 qualifications on your operations, infrastructure and processing systems?

Please explain:

3 What are the main types of costs that could be incurred as a result of moving to a PQA system? Please also see questions a) and b).

Please explain:

a) What factors are likely to influence the type and size of the costs which could be incurred?:

b) Are you able to provide any estimates of what the implementation costs could be?:

4 To what extent could moving to a new HE admissions system generate cost savings? Please also see question a).

Please explain:

a) Are you able to provide any detail on the potential size of cost savings either in absolute or relative terms?: