

24 May 2017

2017 Awarding Body Linkage (ABL) results embargo agreement

This is a summary of the main obligations under the Terms of Service you have entered into with UCAS, for UCAS to share results with you prior to publication day. Your Terms of Service with UCAS set out strict contractual obligations in relation to the embargo period and results, which you must comply with.

The following definitions, referred to throughout this Agreement, are taken from the Terms of Service, namely:

- applicant
- embargoed information
- p day (publication day)
- results

‘Breach’ is defined as any intentional or unintentional disclosure of embargoed information which is made other than in accordance with the Terms of Service.

In accordance with the Terms of Service, UCAS has agreed to share results under the conditions that you:

1. use the results for the sole purpose of facilitating the Confirmation processes
2. do not share the results, either intentionally or unintentionally, nor respond to any communications from any third party, including the applicant or their advisers, or any journalist prior to p day, and shall notify UCAS should you receive any such request from a third party
3. implement, maintain, and regularly review adequate operational, organisational, and technical measures to safeguard against unauthorised access, loss, destruction, theft, or inadvertent disclosure of the results prior to p day
4. ensure the security in your IT solutions, and operating procedures implemented by you, are sufficiently robust to safeguard against the serious damage that may be suffered by an applicant and UCAS as a result of a disclosure breach
5. shall comply with any additional restrictions applicable to the embargoed information as may be set out in the Admissions Guide, and/or provided by separate instructions from UCAS

6. do not release information regarding results to applicants before 09:00 on SQA p day and 06:00 on A level p day

In light of the increasing number of breaches of the results embargo and the concerns expressed by the awarding organisations, UCAS has developed and delivered a zero embargo breach strategy designed to create a stronger compliance culture, and to enable a zero breach position in 2017 and onwards.

To support this, and to ensure you meet the terms of this Agreement, we recommend you take a holistic review of all elements of the Confirmation and Clearing results process, including the following:

People

- Deliver training to ensure awareness of the embargo dates and your contractual commitment to uphold the ABL results embargo.
- Ensure everyone who is involved in the Confirmation and Clearing (C&C) results process – both permanent and temporary staff – is aware of the ABL results embargo.
- Ensure senior leadership accountability for the ABL results embargo is in place.

Planning

- Ensure the ABL results embargo is a critical aspect of your Confirmation and Clearing preparation.
- Create and deliver ABL results embargo communication plans to critical teams involved in the C&C results process, e.g. recruitment, admissions, information technology, marketing, accommodation, and faculties.
- Establish a C&C ABL results embargo risk register to ensure visibility of risks and appropriate action plans.

Technology

- Conduct a review of all admissions systems configuration and parameter settings for all 2017 applicants, including undergraduate and post graduate.
- Ensure all applicant-facing communications are reviewed to avoid inadvertent Confirmation decisions, or related onboarding alerts being made available to applicants.
- Consider cyber security vulnerabilities and threats including incident management processes.
- Ensure all vendors and third party suppliers have confirmed their readiness for the ABL results embargo.

Further support and guidance can be found on the 2017 results embargo portal at www.ucas.com/2017-results-embargo.

In the event that you, your employees, third party agents, or contractors leak such information prior to p day, whether intentionally or not, UCAS reserves the right to

withdraw your access to results during the embargo period ahead of p day, or impose any sanction as may be appropriate, including (but not restricted to) a financial penalty.

You must notify us **immediately** if a breach has occurred by contacting your UCAS relationship manager. In addition, if the breach involves Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) results, you must also immediately contact SQA.

Contact details for your relationship manager and SQA can be found on the 2017 results embargo portal at www.ucas.com/2017-results-embargo.

Please sign and return this agreement to acknowledge you agree to the terms. **This document must be printed, signed by your nominated contact, scanned, and emailed to awardingbodylinkage@ucas.ac.uk by Friday 23 June 2017.**

You should retain a signed copy of this agreement to remind you of your obligations.

I acknowledge and agree to the terms in the 2017 Awarding Body Linkage (ABL) results embargo agreement

Signed by:

Name:

Job title:

Provider and code:

Please scan and email a signed copy to awardingbodylinkage@ucas.ac.uk.

If you have any questions about the embargo agreement, please contact awardingbodylinkage@ucas.ac.uk.

A copy of the 2017 embargo agreement is available from the ABL page on ucas.com, at www.ucas.com/abl.