UCAS 2018 science practical technical briefing document
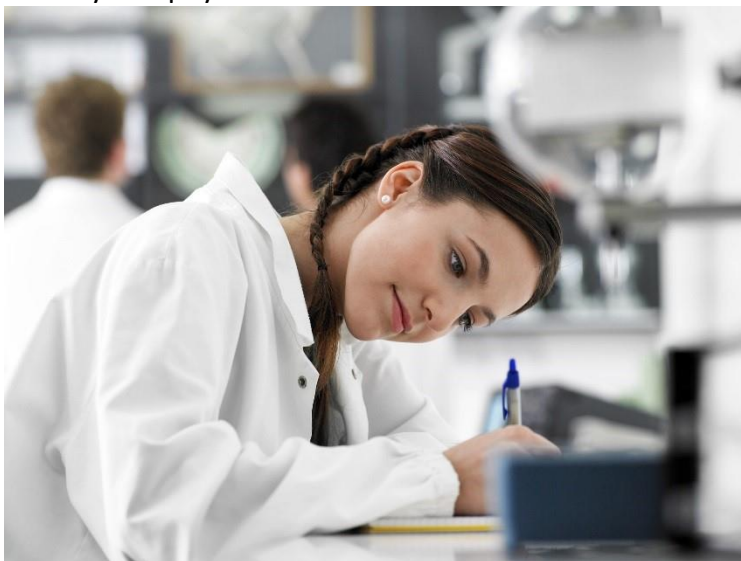## odbc-link and xml-link changes to support A level science practical grades

Summary

Starting from the 2017 academic cycle, students in England will be assessed for their practical skills in the science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics.

The science practical assessment (practical endorsement) will be represented alongside the grade. It will be possible to attain a 'pass' grade for the science practical endorsement, but there will be no 'fail' grade – this will be described as 'not classified'.

We have to represent these new A level grades in Apply, and all supporting applications, including odbc-link and xml-link.

We have made some small changes to the underlying data structure for both systems.

Changes

The impact for the 2017 cycle was for referee predicted A level science practical grades, as nobody will have attained the science practical grade until the 2018 cycle.

For the 2017 cycle, in xml-link we added 'predictedPracticalGrade' in the ApplicantQualification web service and 'predictedPracticalGrades' in both the getUCASApplicantReferees and get UCASApplicantReferees_U web services.

In odbc-link, we've added a new column to the ivFormQuals table named PREDICTEDPRACTICALGRADE. We've also added PREDICTEDPRACTICALGRADES to the ivReference and ivReferenceU tables. If you want to view predicted practical grades, you will have to update your systems to take account of these new fields from the 2017 cycle onwards.

If you would like to receive achieved 2018 science practical grades and have not done so already, you'll need to make the changes below for the 2018 cycle.

In this case we've added 'practicalGrade' in the ApplicationQualification web service for xml-link and the PRACTICALGRADE column in the ivFormQuals table for odbc-link.

The following tables indicate the field length and data type of the column changes in odbc-link:

A.2.1 (ivFormQuals)

Name	Type	Size	Nulls?	Description
PracticalGrade	varchar2	20	Y	Practical grade for this qualification as entered by the applicant – see note 7 in the odbc-link manual
PredictedPracticalGrade	varchar2	20	Y	Predicted grade for practical as entered by referee – see note 7 in the odbc-link manual.

A.2.14: (ivReference)

Name	Type	Size	Nulls?	Description
PredictedPracticalGrades	varchar2	300	Y	The predicted grades for practical subjects given by referee.

A.2.26: (ivReferenceU)

Name	Type	Size	Nulls?	Description
PredictedPracticalGrades	varchar2	300	Y	The predicted grades for practical subjects given by referee.

The following indicated the field length and data type of the changes in xml-link:

1. Add the below change against ApplicantQualification:
   practicalGrade --String – 20-- contains the practical grade for the qualification
   predictedPracticalGrade – String-- 20-- contains the predicted practical grade for the pending qualification
2. Add the below change against UCASApplicantReferee, which covers methods: getUCASApplicantReferees and getUCASApplicantReferees_U (Unicode version)
   predictedPracticalGrades – String-- 300-- the predicted practical grades as given by the referee.

These changes are also detailed in the xml-link and odbc-link manuals.
If you have any queries, please contact your technology relationship manager.