

# Technical webinar

**15 November 2022**

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UCAS



# Contents

Development of services

ODBC-Link decommissioning update

# Development of services

# Recent and pending maintenance

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- **Preparations for HESA data returns**
  - SOC2020
    - Deployed 5 November
- **Bug fix for UCAS Conservatoires**
  - Delivers all ABL data in the same way as UG
  - No development required
  - Expected to increase performance
  - Deployment on 19 November
    - ODBC-Link downtime required to deploy (07:30 – 18:00)

- **Systems improvements programme underway**
  - XML-Link WSDL changes
  - Performance improvements
- **Database upgrade**
  - Oracle upgrade
  - Test environment to be ringfenced for testing end December/Early January
    - For assurance/compatibility
    - Will return to BAU after this period

# Reason for confirmation delay

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- **Providers will be able to submit reasons for a delayed confirmation decision** (from a list)
  - Web-Link and XML-Link only
- **Free text actions field** (500 characters)
- **Available in 2023 C&C**
- **Will introduce:**
  - New XML-Link method to set the reason on the choice
    - New fields in the choice method
  - New reference data endpoint to hold the pre-populated reasons
- **Report will be made available in Web-Link (MVP)**
  - Currently scoping a report to be available in XML-Link
- **Technical briefing document on UCAS.com**

# HESA (Star J) 2023

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- **XML-Link only**
- **UCAS data will be mapped to new HESA data futures codes:**
  - Previous Institution (PREVINST)
  - Ethnic Origin (ETHNIC)
  - Religious belief (RELIGION)
- **UCAS data currently included but not part of the HESA spec will return no values:**
  - National Identity
  - Socio-Economic Classification (SEC) - NOT 2010 or 2020
  - Social Class (SOC) - NOT 2010 or 2020
  - Degree class
- **New data items will be added and mapped to the HESA data futures codes (Scottish and Welsh providers only):**
  - Carer responsibilities (CARER)
  - Estranged from parents (ESTRANGED)
- **Technical documentation expected in November/December**

# Enhanced Gender

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- **For 2024 cycle entry**
- **No change to configuration of existing fields**
- **New responses to existing questions**
  - I prefer not to say (N)
  - Woman (B)
  - Man (C)
  - I prefer to use another term (A)
- **New items in existing reference data**
- **Old values will be retained**
- **Technical briefing document on [UCAS.com](https://ucas.com)**

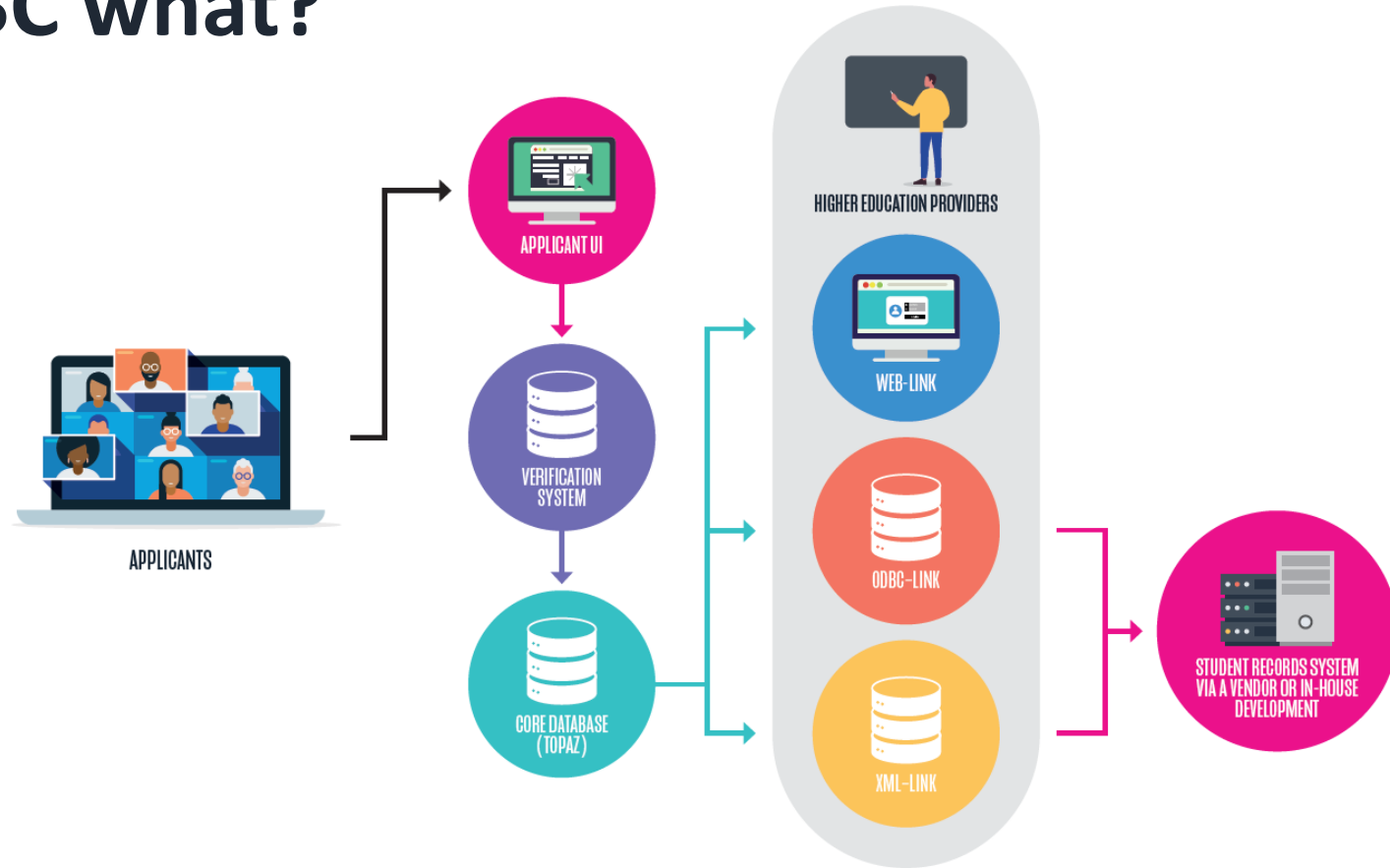


# **Decommissioning of ODBC-Link**

## **Migration to XML-Link**

# ODBC what?

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# Currently used by the majority of student record systems (SRS) connecting to UCAS



# Timeline

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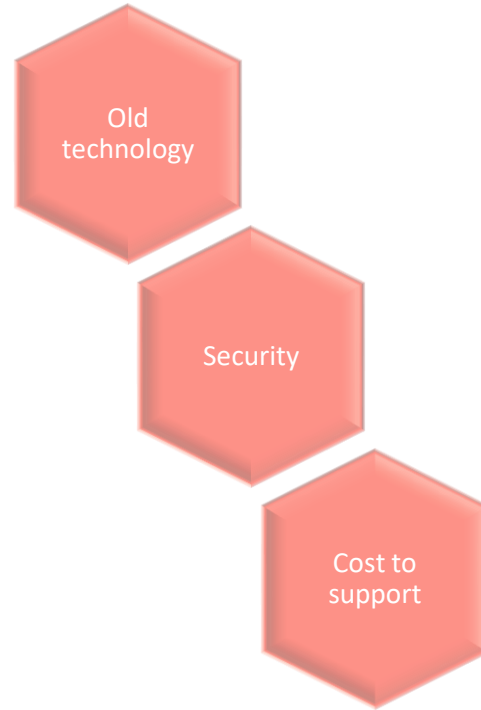
- At the end of the 2023 cycle
- **December 2023**
  - At the conclusion of the cycle
  - When HESA data and Extra Statistical Data has been produced
- ***No 2024 applications will be delivered via ODBC-Link***

2023																											
January							February							March							April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
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May							June							July							August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
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September							October							November							December						
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# Why decommission?

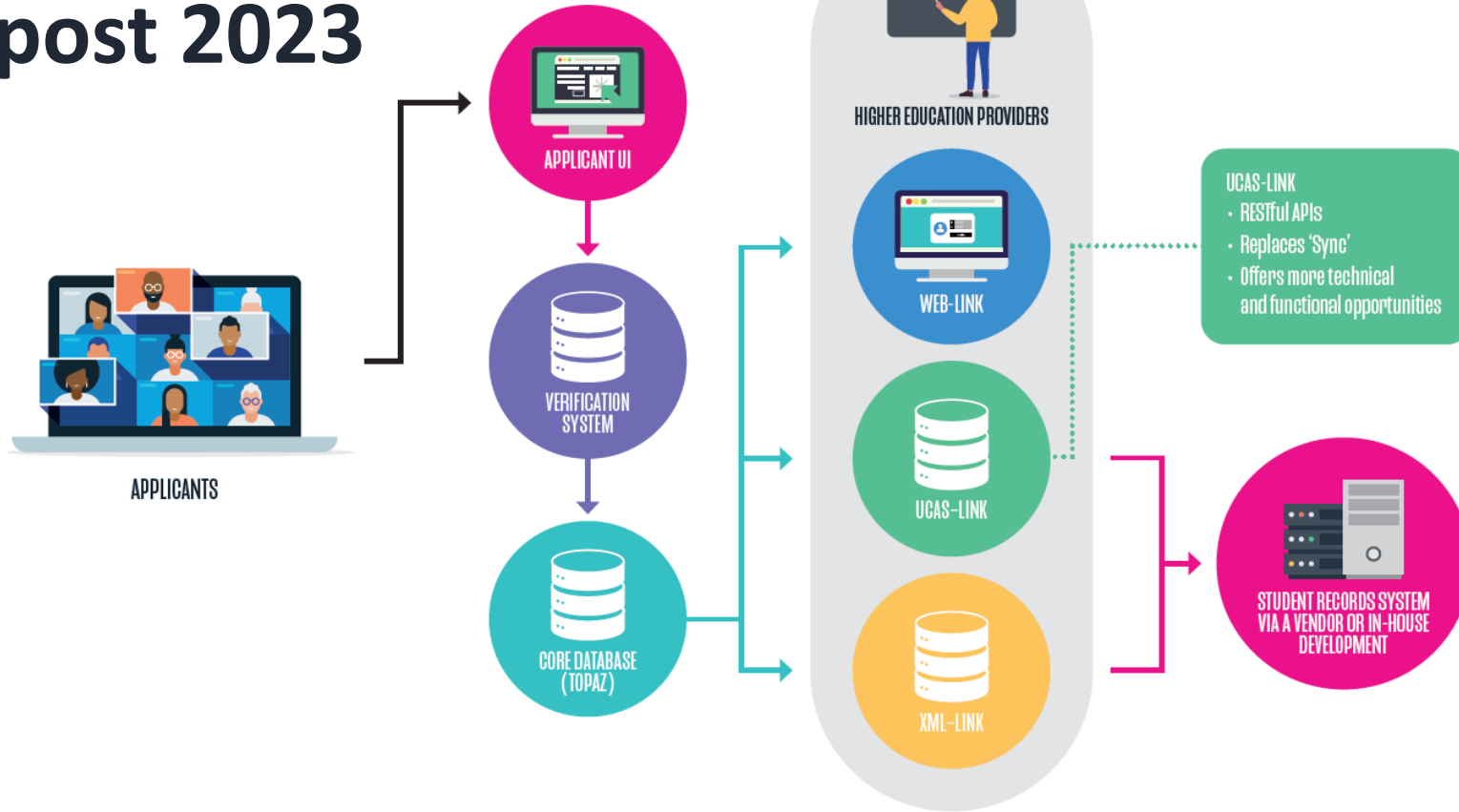
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- Old technology – limits the functionality that we can deliver
- Security – XML-Link offers better security in a time when cyber security is paramount
- Cost to support – moving on to use newer technology so don't want to be supporting another interface
  - Getting harder to support



# UCAS connections post 2023

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# Link product strategy

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## ODBC-LINK

Will be decommissioned at the end of 2023 cycle.

UCAS will only make changes to resolve incidents, deliver mandatory updates, where fairness is at risk or where not doing so will break the existing service.



## XML-LINK

Medium term interface.

Stabilisation programme underway

Enhancements to existing functionality only

Will be incrementally replaced by REST APIs.

Two-year decommissioning plan once feature parity with RESTful API is reached.



## UCAS LINK

We will build all new Link functionality using REST APIs.

We will not be providing a corresponding XML-Link option.

Functionality will be released before parity is reached.

More details and examples on [UCAS.com](https://ucas.com)

# What do HEPs need to do?

- *Update their student record systems to use XML-Link*
- SRS vendors are aware and actively developing and delivering updates
- All expect to have XML-Link functionality ready for the 2024 cycle
- Some vendors have this in place for the 2023 cycle
  - Pilot groups/early adopters



# Next steps for HEPs

## Vendor plans

- When is your vendor releasing an update for XML-Link?
- Do they have a pilot programme a HEP can join?
- Contact vendor for more information

## HEP technical teams

- Will you need to secure technical resource?
  - To plan any infrastructure changes
  - To test system updates
  - To implement updates – test and production
  - Development teams?
- Are they aware of the timescales?
- And the impact?

# Help from UCAS – for vendors

- Lessons learned from existing vendors/HEPs using XML-Link
- Extensive feedback sessions with UCAS technical teams
- XML-Link improvement programme underway
  - Already delivered improvements
- Development resources
  - Best practice guide
  - Field mappings
  - XML-Link manual updates
- Technical documentation
- Test data/environments
- Technical surgeries

# Help from UCAS – for HEPs

- UCAS supporting pilot programmes
- Test data/environments
- Technical documentation
- UCAS support and presence at vendor user groups
- Training course

# Engagement

## Conferences

- UCAS – Admissions conference
- UCAS – Annual Provider Update
- Vendor conferences

## Groups and Forums

- UCAS
- Vendor user group

## UCAS.com

- HEP resources
- Developer/technical resources
- Training course

## Support

- Service Delivery Management (Technical)
- Contact the team - [sdmtech@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:sdmtech@ucas.ac.uk)
- Self-service support portal

## Keep in touch

- **Technical** and **vendor** correspondence bulletins
- Let us know if key staff change

# Questions?

[SDMTech@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:SDMTech@ucas.ac.uk)