

Appendix 7.1.3 Consumer protection: guidance for programme leads

Introduction

This guidance provides an overview for programme leads of the information that UCL is required to provide to its students as part of its obligations under consumer protection legislation, as outlined in the advice provided by the [Competition and Markets Authority](#).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with Chapter 7, Programme and Module Approval Framework, of the UCL Academic Manual, in particular the relevant sections on programme approval and programme and module amendment.

Changes to any the aspects of a programme of study that are listed below are regulated under consumer protection legislation. The easiest way to amend these and still meet the obligations is to make any changes before opening a programme for application. If this not possible, due to a pressing and unavoidable circumstance, the programme lead must assure the relevant approving authority that:

- All applicants have been informed of the proposed change and of the process for transferring to another suitable programme or withdrawing their application;
- All prospective students with an offer have either consented to the proposed change or have been assisted with transferring their application to another suitable programme or have withdrawn their application;
- All current students have been given the chance to consent to the proposed change or have agreed to a suitable collective compromise with the department.

Inclusion in the list below does not mean that the programme or module amendment will automatically be subject to the processes outlined in Chapter 7. Section 4 and Section 5 have indicative lists of programme and module amendments and their approval thresholds.

Material Information required by consumer protection legislation

Material information required under the *Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations, 2008. (CPRs)* and the *Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013.*

To be provided at the research and application stage and again at the point of making an offer.

Programme information, including:

1. Programme title
2. Entry requirements/criteria (both academic and non-academic), and an indication of the standard/typical offer level criteria
3. Compulsory modules for the programme and an indication of the likely optional modules, including whether there are any optional modules that are generally provided each year
4. Information about the programme structure and how it is delivered, and the balance between the various elements, such as:
 - a. The number and type of contact hours that students can expect (lectures/seminars/lab work etc.);
 - b. Expected workload (learning hours);
 - c. Details about general level of experience or status of the staff involved in the delivery of different elements of the programme.
5. The overall method(s) of assessment for the programme (coursework/exams or a combination)
6. The qualification to be received on successful completion of the programme and, if relevant, the awarding body or institution (important in the case of dual/joint degrees)
7. Location of study or possible locations, which should include likely or possible locations of any work placements (if known). This is also essential information under our obligation as a visa sponsor.
8. The programme's duration. This will form the duration of the contract under the CCRs, 2013.
9. Whether the programme and institution (including, where relevant, academic partners) are regulated and by whom. For English HEIs this will be the OfS in the majority of cases.
10. Whether the programme is accredited by a professional, regulatory or statutory body (PSRB), and by whom.
11. Any particular terms contained, such as those contained in the providers rules and regulations (including those of academic partners where relevant) that students may find particularly surprising.

12. The name, address and contact details of the institution(s) the student is entering into agreement with and the address and contact details of any campus, other than the registered campus, that the student will have to attend as part of the programme.

Total programme costs, including:

1. Tuition fees, including where applicable:
 - a. Whether fees in future years will increase;
 - b. If increases will apply to only a certain group, e.g. international students;
 - c. If the future fee is not known, an indication of the criteria for any future changes and how these will be calculated.
2. Other extra costs students are likely to incur, including where applicable:
 - a. An indication of how much these extra costs (for elements such as field trips, year abroad subsistence costs, materials or studio hire) are likely to be;
 - b. Where not known, an indication of how the costs will be calculated and whether they are optional or compulsory for undertaking or passing the programme;
 - c. It is particularly important to highlight any costs that are likely to have a direct impact on the outcome of students' academic success, such as a field trip on which a piece of work will be based.
3. A fee schedule, outlining when and how fees and extra costs are payable and when the student is due to become liable for payment should also be provided.

Targeting particular types of student

When marketing programmes at a particular group of prospective students, such as international students, part-time students or distance learners, UCL is required to take account of factors that are characteristic of those groups and will be relevant to those people's decision, such as:

1. Information about English language proficiency;
2. Visa and immigration requirements
3. Information about the accessibility of learning support facilities, such as library opening times, the programme timetable and the programme's duration.

Taking account of vulnerable groups of students

These regulations prohibit UCL from advertising its programme in such a way that could disadvantage students from vulnerable groups. This includes any disadvantage that is caused by the omission of information that, if presented, could have led to the student making a different decision. Examples of this include:

1. Making inaccurate statements about accessibility to UCL (and partner) facilities;
2. Omitting to mention restrictions on access to buildings where UCL has not been able to make reasonable adjustments to provide access for people with disabilities.

Note that there are additional requirements under the CCRs that are not collected or maintained by the programme and module approval and amendment process, such as the provision of a code of conduct or information about complaint handling procedures. These can be found on pp. 60-62 of the *UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law* document found on the CMA website (linked to above).