



Supporting Professionalism in Admissions

**Considering the impact of HEFCE's  
new student number controls on 2012 admissions**

Next Steps in Admissions to HE – 19 October 2011

Dan Shaffer, Senior Project Officer

# Background

- HE White Paper (England) ‘Students at the Heart of the System’ June 2011

***“We will move away from the tight number controls that constrain individual higher education institutions, so that there is a more dynamic sector”***

***“We will manage this transition carefully to avoid unnecessary instability and keep within the overall budget”***

- HEFCE consultation June – September 2011
- HEFCE statement 17 October 2011

# Key proposals

## 1. Students exempted from SNC

- AAB+ in three A Levels *or equivalent*
- IB score of 35 points (not 28)
- No option to mix different qualification types (e.g. 2 A Levels + 1 BTEC NA)
- No group awards that may contain a mixture of existing qualifications (e.g. Advanced Diploma; Welsh Baccalaureate)
- Excludes many qualifications accepted by HE providers (e.g. Access to HE Diploma; most non-UK qualifications; many vocational qualifications)

# Key proposals

## 2. Core SNC allocation

- predicted AAB+ equivalent population removed
- additional number (around 8%) removed for margin
- Protected core of 20%
  - protects institutions that would otherwise be left with little or no core numbers and allows them to continue recruiting students not covered in AAB+ equivalencies

# Key proposals

## 3. Margin SNC allocation

- Cut to create a margin applied to all institutions
  - first 50 of SNC not counted in calculating the margin, to mitigate the impact on small institutions.
  - Any SIVS numbers remaining after removal of AAB+ equivalencies not counted
- Institutions charging average full-time fees of £7,500 or less may bid for additional places

# Key proposals

## 4. Opting out

- Option for small, specialist institutions in the performing and creative arts that assess applicants on performance or portfolio
  - Eligibility judged by HEFCE according to cost centre
- Opt-outs will receive SNC from HEFCE as before (i.e. no reductions based on AAB+ or margin)
  - Cannot bid for any additional margin places and AAB+ equivalent students count towards SNC

# Considerations

## Setting targets, equal consideration and decision/offer making

- SNC excludes all accepted applicants meeting HEFCE's AAB+ equivalence, whether or not those qualifications/subjects were used in the decision or offer-making process
- Entry criteria have been published well in advance and applicants have made their choices based on that information
- A full course may not necessarily mean that SNC has been met
- Different home targets, based on exemption or non-exemption from SNC?

# SPA Recommendation 1

Institutions that have already started making offers under a single Home target should continue to use a single target for 2012 entry, to **ensure all applicants are considered fairly**.

Institutions that have not started making offers may wish to consider whether or not to adopt different Home targets. If different targets are adopted, this should be clearly communicated to applicants and advisors and **grounds for discriminating between applicants justified**.

# SPA Recommendation 2

Large institutions with **flexibility to reallocate SNCs across a broad range of courses** should plan to ensure there is capacity to do so should their most selective courses fill up at Confirmation with AAB+ equivalent acceptances whilst missing their target for SNCs.

Smaller and more specialist institutions without such flexibility should **analyse their risk** of inadvertently filling their courses whilst missing their SNC and adjust their offer-making accordingly for all applicants.

# SPA Recommendation 3

Institutions need to provide reassurance to applicants and advisors that the principles of **equal consideration will not be compromised** by HEFCE's changes. Admissions, marketing, HE liaison and academic staff need to co-ordinate their message and approach throughout the admissions cycle.

# SPA Recommendation 4

UCAS and member institutions should reconfirm a **standard definition of equal consideration** that takes account of HEFCE's changes whilst still acknowledging the wider context of Home students applying across the UK. Consistency and clarity in consideration will be paramount.

## SPA Recommendation 5

UCAS and member institutions should agree a procedural mechanism whereby any Home student applying for a course after the period of equal consideration that is no longer considering their set of qualifications (either because they count towards, or are exempt from, SNC) can **substitute their choice for an alternative**. It would not be fair to reject applicants for reasons they could not have been aware of when they applied.

# SPA Recommendation 6

Institutions should **clearly publish any changes** to their entry criteria as a result of HEFCE's changes and co-ordinate communication via their HE liaison staff.

# SPA Recommendation 7

Offers must be **clearly worded and unambiguous.**

# Further information

Information from HEFCE

[www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2011/snc.htm](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2011/snc.htm)

SPA briefing paper

[www.spa.ac.uk/documents/SPA\\_briefing\\_offer-making\\_2012.pdf](http://www.spa.ac.uk/documents/SPA_briefing_offer-making_2012.pdf)

SPA surgeries for HE – 31 Oct; 1 Nov; 4 Nov



**Thank you**

**What more can we do to help?**

**[enquiries@spa.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@spa.ac.uk) 01242 544891**

**[www.spa.ac.uk](http://www.spa.ac.uk)**