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Dear Colin (on behalf of the joint associations) -

Many thanks for your letter dated 19 August 2026.

It is encouraging to hear that the overall picture for student progression in the region looks positive, and we appreciate your recognition of the measures UCAS put in place to promote a strong awareness of how qualification grades would be issued in countries impacted by the conflict. As you note, many universities were present at our summer webinar, and communications were issued to colleagues across more than 350 universities and colleges that recruit undergraduate students via UCAS.

We also recognise that these arrangements came against a backdrop of significant disruption caused by the conflict and understand that some students and their families may feel the grades awarded do not reflect their achievement, causing additional uncertainty and concern at an already challenging time. It is important that these students are aware of the support they can access, including through UCAS, and the options still available to them to progress into higher education in the UK.

Thank you also for sharing the information on your recent conversations with Ofqual and Pearson. It is useful to know that the collective associations are making representations to the awarding bodies, with whom responsibility for the awarding of grades sits. I am sure you will already be aware of the post-results processes across the awarding organisations, including appeals processes. In the event that a student is querying a result, I would suggest they contact the university they have applied to, to ensure it is aware.

UCAS has established processes in place whereby results that are appealed and result in amendments to grades are transferred in the same manner as first-round results through the awarding body linkage, and subsequently to higher education providers.

There is a window of reconsideration in place for higher education providers, whereby corrected information can be taken into account for a review of admissions decisions. In many cases, the university will review the updated grades and, should it have capacity, revisit any decision previously made. It is of the utmost importance that applicants communicate this to their selected higher education provider at the earliest opportunity, to stand the best chance of a place being held open for them.

For applicants who require support navigating the UCAS admissions process, whether due to confusion around what their statuses mean or uncertainty about what their next step is, our customer contact centre remains briefed and understanding of the situation. We continue to encourage applicants to contact us via telephone or our social media channels to access this support, should they require it. In addition, we would be happy to speak to those supporting these students, such as a teacher or counsellor, if that would be of use.

For those who are still looking for opportunities to study in UK higher education, there are still many course options available in Clearing across a wide range of institutions and courses. As such, for those who are open to seeking entry

elsewhere, we would encourage them, with the support of their school guidance counsellor, to use the UCAS Hub.

On your final question regarding current trends UCAS is seeing in its data for students from the UAE specifically, the number of acceptances has increased compared to the same point in 2025 and is greater than the increase in the number of additional applicants. Proportionally, therefore, there has been an improvement in progression. There are also fewer students waiting for a higher education provider decision than at this point last year, which indicates providers are processing admissions decisions in a timely way. It is important to note that this is based on high-level data that is correct as of midnight today and, as you know, the position continues to evolve during this confirmation period.

I hope this is of use, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you would value a further conversation.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Jordan
Director of Strategy, UCAS.