

**A way to avoid the UCAS rip off 0871 number is found
Mobile users can call 0330 333 0230 - 'free' for many**

UCAS uses a Premium Rate Services number - 0871 468 0 468 - for telephone access to the clearing system - see [Two expensive UCAS Helplines](#). Annoyance at this exploitation of callers who are facing much bigger issues than the cost of a telephone call has been reported by the [Daily Mail](#) (look below the familiar pictures of leaping pretty girls) and [the Guardian](#).

SayNoTo0870.com to the rescue

The **fair telecoms campaign** does not believe that secondary availability of alternative numbers is the answer to the problem of rip-off numbers - the primary offence must be removed. We are however ready to draw attention to the fact that some people are able to avoid being ripped-off.

Two alternative numbers for 0871 468 0 468 have been found and published by contributors to [SayNoTo0870.com](#) - [search for "UCAS"](#).

- ① 01242 222444 - This is the **UCAS switchboard number**. Callers may ask to be transferred to the Clearing Hotline, however they will be asked to re-dial the 0871 number.
- ① **0330 333 0230** - This is advertised as being **the number to call from overseas**. Calls from UK landlines are **deliberately blocked** by **UCAS** (to protect the subsidy obtained from the 0871 number). **Calls from UK Mobile numbers are connected**, although this is not stated.

Most students will be calling from a mobile. Those on a voice calls tariff will find that calls to 03 numbers are always included, whenever 01/02 numbers are included. They are able to contact the **UCAS Clearing Helpline on 0330 333 0230 with NO CALL CHARGE**. Others pay the "basic rate".

Our comment

This absurd situation must be rectified. UCAS must now publish 0330 333 0230 as the number for the Clearing Hotline and remove the block on calls from landlines.

03 numbers are the standard for all those who need a non-geographic number and cannot justify imposition of a Service Charge on callers.

When the new **Ofcom** regulations for transparency (opposed by some telephone companies, notably **EE**) come into effect, the value of this **Service Charge** and also the **Access Charge** added by the caller's telephone company will both have to be declared.

In the case of the UCAS 0871 number -

- The **Service Charge** is roughly 11p per minute, regardless of how the number is called.
- **Everything Everywhere** adds an **Access Charge** of up to 29p per minute.

When facing the requirement for clarity we believe that neither of these charges may be sustained. Furthermore, we see no reason why those who wish to be clear and open need to wait to be compelled to be so.

Exactly the same situation applies to other telephone companies and many other providers of enquiry and "customer" enquiry numbers, notwithstanding specific regulatory provisions. There are a number of universities who must reconsider their use of 084 numbers for applications lines.

