



The University of Edinburgh's response to qualification reform in England

Background

The University of Edinburgh has a long tradition of welcoming students from throughout the UK to study our degrees. In 2015, the University received the second highest number of applications of any UK university and over a quarter of these were from applicants in England. We receive, by far, the greatest number of applications from learners in England of any other Scottish University and accept the most students. Whilst degree places are in high demand from learners in England, we value highly the skills and attributes, and the diversity these students bring to the University.

Our admissions principles

The University of Edinburgh is committed to admitting the very best students, who demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the academic experience we offer. Central to our admissions principles, is that we offer equality of opportunity to all applicants.

Following the introduction of curriculum reform, we expect applicants applying for entry in 2017 and beyond, to have varied educational experiences and access to reformed qualifications. We also recognise that for a variety of reasons, some schools may not be in a position to provide learners with the opportunity to undertake AS qualifications. In this context, the University of Edinburgh will work to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged in our selection process as a result of the curriculum being delivered in their school.

The value of the AS

We understand that there are different factors that schools are considering that will determine whether or not they will be in a position to offer AS qualifications, such as school and cohort size, funding, logistics and more. We also respect that schools have the best understanding of the needs of their own learners and will endeavour to do what is in their best interests.

The University of Edinburgh does not seek to directly influence the decisions that schools take about their future curriculum provision. However, our appraisal of the value of the AS in admissions is that it benefits learners by providing:

- breadth of study with most learners typically studying four or more AS levels
- an opportunity to decide which subjects learners have the most aptitude and enjoyment for with a narrowing of focus for A level
- a confidence boost beyond GCSEs contributing to the decision of some learners to progress to A level studies – and subsequently higher education, thus supporting widening participation.

Whilst the University recognises the benefits for learners in studying for AS levels, learners who apply without AS results from 2016/17 onwards will not be disadvantaged in the admissions selection process in relation to learners who have AS results.

A Level requirements

The University requires achievement at specific grades in three A Levels in one sitting (i.e. from the same examination session) for entry to our degrees.

How we assess qualifications in our selection process

We require applicants to have achieved passes in some named GCSE subjects at specific grades. This forms part of the minimum requirement that applicants must meet to be entered into the selection process. Once an applicant has entered the selection process, we do not assess whether they have taken AS qualifications. Instead, we use predicted A level grades in our selection procedure; as well as considering other factors such as the UCAS personal statement and reference, and contextual factors.

Applicants applying to the University of Edinburgh with certificated AS qualifications are therefore not advantaged compared to those applying without AS level results.

The A level Science Practical

The University of Edinburgh offers an extensive range of undergraduate degrees in science and engineering. We recognise the importance of practical skills in the study of lab-based subjects and the value of the Science Practical. We believe that A level students entering our programmes with the required grades in science A levels will have achieved at the appropriate level overall. As such, a requirement to pass the Science Practical component of science A levels does not feature in our offer conditions.

GCSE grades accepted for entry

The University requires certain subjects to be achieved to a minimum of GCSE at specific grades. We equate non-reformed alphabetic grades with reformed numeric grades as follows:

Non-Reformed		Reformed
Grade C	-	Grade 4
Grade B	-	Grade 6
Grade A	-	Grade 7
Grade A*	-	Grade 8

Core Maths

Some degree programmes in the University require Mathematics at GCSE at grade A or B. Where an applicant did not achieve the required grade in Mathematics at GCSE, Core Maths will be accepted in lieu of this; at grade A where an A was required at GCSE, and at grade B where grade B was required at GCSE.

Core Maths will not be accepted in lieu of AS or A-Level Mathematics.

Further information

Please contact, Gillian Simmons, Head of Admissions, Student Recruitment and Admissions, gillian.simmons@ed.ac.uk

First published February 2015.

Information on GCSE grading and Core Maths was added in September 2016.

The requirement for a fourth AS for entry to Medicine was removed in April 2017.

This version published May 2019.