

# Qualification Reform

---

**Title:** The University of Southampton Curriculum for Excellence Scotland Statement

---

**From:** Nicky Stecker-Doxat (Educational Policy Development Officer) **Date:** July 2016

---

In line with the advice from Government, [SQA](#) and [Education Scotland](#), the University of Southampton has reviewed its selection criteria for students from Scotland who have followed the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and taken the new SQA qualifications. In order for Scottish applicants to be able to make informed choices about qualifications to support their entry to university, the UoS has reviewed its academic requirements to ensure that applicants undertaking the new curriculum will not be disadvantaged.

The UoS is committed to fair admissions policies and will give equal consideration to Scottish candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills irrespective of what routes they may have taken through the Senior Phase of the CfE. Whilst prior academic attainment will be the most important single factor in determining whether or not an applicant will be offered a place to study, we recognise that not all applicants will have had an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential in their prior qualifications, and as such will give careful consideration to an individual's academic achievement, taking in to account the context and circumstances of their pre-university education.

In setting its academic requirements, the UoS will take into account a number of factors, which align closely with the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence:

- **Relevance of Study:** We will seek to admit only those applicants who have the requisite knowledge and skills to commence study on our programmes, in order that they are able to access the curriculum and succeed on their chosen programme of study.
- **Depth of Study:** It is important that the prior learning undertaken by applicants demonstrates sufficient depth of study. This evidences a commitment to a subject and importantly the ability to understand and analyse complex ideas.
- **Rigour and Challenge:** Applicants must be able to cope with the level and volume of academic work in their chosen programme of study, and therefore crucial that prior study demonstrates sufficient rigour and challenge.
- **Progression:** Whilst it may, on occasion, be necessary for applicants to take a lower level qualification in S5 or S6 in order to satisfy an entry requirement, we generally expect their learner journey to evidence progression, by building upon prior learning. This is in the broad interests of an applicant's development, facilitating a smoother transition to degree-level study, and evidences continued development and an ability to rise to the challenge of study at a higher level.

Taking in to account the CfE's emphasis on flexible learning, the UoS recognises that different patterns of provision and attainment stage among applicants are likely to emerge, and as such:

- Offers will be based on exams being taken at the end of S6. However subjects taken and qualifications achieved in S5 will be reviewed at application stage to ensure that applicants have

followed a broad curriculum and that any subjects, other than where they are required at Advanced Higher level, have been met.

- If a required subject(s) is not taken at Higher level during S5, it may be requested as an additional Higher to be achieved by the end of S6.
- Where there is a subject pre-requisite(s) required at a more advanced level, Advanced Higher(s) may be requested.
- Where a mixture of specific subjects are required at different levels, a combination of Highers and Advanced Highers may be requested.
- It is expected that applicants show breadth of study in achievement in their qualifications, and therefore a Higher and Advanced Higher in the same subject may not be appropriate. Similarly subjects that contain a high proportion of common material may also not be deemed acceptable as two separate qualifications.
- Where Highers are taken over two years we may require higher grades to be achieved, particularly in any specific subject(s) required.
- Unless a more advanced level (Higher or Advanced Higher) is specified in the stated entry requirements, all applicants\* will be required to have achieved a pass in Mathematics and English at National 5 Grade C. Lifeskills Mathematics at National 5 level is not accepted. \*Some degree programmes (for example some Medicine programmes) will require applicants to have achieved higher grades in certain subjects at National 5 level.
- We recognise that some applicants may progress directly from the Broad General Education (S1-S3) to Highers in some, or all of their subjects, and will therefore not have achieved any National 5 qualifications. Our selection criteria will not disadvantage students following this route.
- Where degree subjects stipulate specific subject(s), all applicants are expected to meet these requirements. Where an applicant does not hold a subject that is required at National 5, they must have achieved, or be predicted to achieve a Higher or Advanced Higher pass in the subject. Where degree subjects stipulate specific additional GCSE minimum grades, the following equivalencies will apply.

National 5	Standard Grade	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2	GCSE
A	1	-	A	A
B	2	-	B	B
C	3	A	C	C

Further information regarding the University's admissions policies, entry requirements and selection criteria can be found in the [University of Southampton Admissions Policy](#) and on the individual [course webpages](#). As with all of our admissions policies, the UoS will continue to monitor and review the changes as a result of Curriculum for Excellence to ensure that it is fulfilling its aim of attracting the most talented students, irrespective of background.