

Dear Principal,

I am pleased to confirm that Universities Scotland's language sub-group has completed its work on developing common text for inclusion in institutions' prospectuses for 2020 entry, as discussed at our Main Committee meeting in August. The feedback that you provided then has been very much taken on board.

This work aims to provide prospective learners and their advisers with clear and consistent information about our admissions policies, in line with the commitments we made in *Working to Widening Access*.

I have annexed to this letter covering guidance for institutions (prepared by Rebecca Gaukroger, the chair of the sub-group) alongside the common text. The guidance provides further detail on the rationale for this work and also makes clear that individual institutions may wish to adapt the sample text according to their own policies and practices. In order to assist colleagues, some institutions have already prepared adapted versions of the text, and I also annex these for your consideration. **While these examples demonstrate some institutional variance, for this exercise to have the maximum impact it would be beneficial if institutions could use as much of the sample text wording as possible.**

*Working to Widening Access* pledged that we would work with learners to deliver our actions. I am pleased to confirm that school pupils, college students and guidance teachers all played an important role in the development of this material. Colleagues from the University of Edinburgh and the Glasgow School of Art recently hosted a workshop to user test the text with S5 pupils, college students, including adult returners, and guidance teachers. I am grateful for their contribution and for the efforts made by all those involved in this work.

I am asking you to forward this letter and its annexes to all those within your institution with a role in admissions policy and in developing prospectuses; Universities Scotland will separately copy it to those staff with whom it has had direct contact on this work. We will also ensure that relevant stakeholders are informed.

I am aware that some institutions are working to a very tight deadline for preparing their prospectuses for 2020 entry. Others have more time and the sub-group would be happy to answer any questions or reflect on any comments you may have.

By adopting the text institutions will send out this clear message to everyone with the desire and the ability to undertake undergraduate study at Scotland's universities: we welcome your application and you will be treated fairly and equitably.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sally Mapstone', is written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Sally Mapstone

# Annex A: Final guidance / common text

## Guidance on the creation of dedicated prospectus content

Principals have agreed that universities should include information in their 2020/21 entry undergraduate prospectuses that uses simple, consistent and inclusive language on access and admissions. This information should be in a prominent position, most likely towards the front of the prospectus, and close to relevant information about student funding (in response to student feedback).

This work has been progressed by Universities Scotland's Language sub-group and we recommend that the focus should be on widening access students, in line with the recommendation in *Working to Widen Access*<sup>1</sup>.

On the following page is sample text that may be adapted by individual universities according to their own policies, practices and context to form the main body of the information provided (although, to make this exercise meaningful, we encourage institutions to retain as much of the sample text as possible). The order and content of the information should be adapted according to the positioning of this text alongside other admissions guidance in a university's prospectus. Additional guidance for universities is provided within the text.

The text will:

- Explain why the university is committed to widening access. This will be specific to each university and might, for example, reference diversity, social justice, and widening access and/or widening participation.
- Explain in general terms what an applicant needs in order to apply.
- Explains what entry requirements are, and how those listed in the prospectus should be interpreted.
- Detail how widening access applicants are identified in the University's admissions process for additional consideration, i.e. the criteria that are used. This will include information about any datasets or definitions used by the University, and/or will reference where further information can be found, either elsewhere in the prospectus or on the University website.
- Describe what additional consideration widening access applicants will receive in the admissions process, i.e. what consideration they are given during selection/offer-making/at confirmation.

This text should be inclusive, and should avoid implying that there are usual and alternative routes to university, and usual and alternative qualifications. It should be written, as far as possible, in everyday language, avoiding technical language used within the sector (e.g. "contextualised admissions", "sittings").

Where a university's operation of contextualised admissions results in two levels of offers being made, one contextualised and one not, it is recommended that the terms "standard entry requirement" and "minimum entry requirements" are used.

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<sup>1</sup> "1. Scottish higher education institutions will develop clear and consistent information about contextualised admissions. We will work to publish a set of terms and descriptions in 2018 that pass user testing and are ready for use to inform the application cycle for 2020/21 entry."

Where a university lowers offer conditions for widening access applicants on the basis of attendance/successful completion of a pre-entry programme, this should usually be described as an “adjusted offer”. This term should be clearly explained, including any relationship between “adjusted offer” and “minimum entry requirements”.

In addition to the text itself we highlight that, at a workshop with school pupils, college students and guidance teachers, there was some confusion about the term ‘prospectus’. Institutions may, therefore, prefer to adopt a plain English description, such as “guide”, “guidebook”, etc.

## **PROPOSED TEXT**

### **Q: What do I need to apply for the course I want to study?**

A: You'll need qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. For some specific courses you may also need to:

- come to an interview or audition;
- submit an art/design portfolio;
- sit an admissions test;
- provide evidence of relevant work or voluntary experience.

If English is not your first language, you will normally need to provide evidence of your English language skills through qualifications.

We call these our entry requirements.

You also need to apply on time.

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*Guidance note: universities should adapt this text to reflect their own offering, and specific additional requirements. Universities should indicate what is meant by "on time", i.e. including the 15 October deadline, where relevant, together with the 15 January deadline and, where relevant, the 30 June deadline.*

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### **Q: What qualifications and grades do I need?**

A: The qualifications or grades you need will vary by course and may also depend on whether you are a widening access student.

### **Q: Am I a widening access student?**

We aim to identify each applicant's full talent and potential and look beyond grades to do this. We consider you to be a widening access student if you:

- have successfully completed a pre-entry programme;
- live in a target post code area; or

- have experience of being in care.

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*Guidance note: universities should adapt this text to reflect their own widening access/contextualised admissions criteria, and be specific wherever possible, e.g. detailing recognised pre-entry programmes, including any geographical restrictions. They may wish to include more text about WA/ WA criteria/how used/what students need to get in. etc., and/or links to more detailed information or lookups on their website.*

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In this prospectus we list the entry requirements for each of our courses. This is an example of how this information is presented:

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*Guidance note: at this point, universities should insert an example of a course entry requirement, as listed in the prospectus, and annotate this information to indicate how a student should interpret the information.*

*If there is a standard and minimum entry requirement, these should be identified along with a note of who they apply to. Any standard entry requirements might note “Unless you are a widening access student, your grades will usually have to be as good as or better than these grades.” Any minimum entry requirements might note: “We call these our minimum entry requirements. A student should be able to successfully complete the course if they have these grades. If you are a widening access student, you will need these grades to get in.”*

*References to “sittings” should be avoided. Instead, universities should be explicit about any requirements relating to when/in what combination qualifications are achieved. For example: “these qualifications should normally be achieved first time”, “we do not normally accept resits” or “these qualifications should normally be achieved by the end of S5/in S5/in S6”.*

*It is unlikely that course entry requirements in the prospectus will detail all accepted qualifications/preparation. General information about accepted qualifications and preparation relevant to widening access students that are not listed in course entry requirements in the prospectus should be included here. This might include general information and/or examples of about Access and HN qualifications, for example, and include a weblink or contact details for further information.*

*Where a university distinguishes between requirements for unconditional and conditional offers, these should be explained, either by using the text provided by UCAS, or by including the following link to the information on UCAS website: <https://wwwucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/ucas-undergraduate-types-offer>.*

*Workshop participants did not generally understand the terms ‘unit’ and ‘module’. Universities that use these terms to describe entry routes for mature students should consider further defining them on associated web pages. For example:*

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Many Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), which are qualifications taken in college, allow you to enter the second or third year of a university degree programme, though this is not possible with all HNC and HND qualifications. Check our website for more information: [www.xx.ac.uk/xxx](http://www.xx.ac.uk/xxx)

If you have had a break of a few years in your formal education since school, you may be able to enter university with qualifications such as an access course or Open University modules. Check our website, or get in touch, for more information: [www.xx.ac.uk/xxx](http://www.xx.ac.uk/xxx)



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*Guidance note: where a university makes adjusted offers based on widening access criteria and successful completion of a pre-entry programme, and this is not listed in the course entry requirements in the prospectus, this should be mentioned here, with specific information about the pre-entry programme, for example:*

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If you complete one of these programmes, you will be eligible for an **adjusted offer**:

- Top Up Programme [or]
- Dundee University Access to Learning Summer School

**Annex B:**

**University of Edinburgh**

## **The University of Edinburgh**

We believe everyone deserves an equal opportunity to study at Edinburgh and we want you to come as you are.

The University is committed to widening access to higher education, and admitting the very best students, who demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the academic experience we offer. This means that no student is admitted on the basis of grades alone.

### **Q: What do I need to apply for the degree programme I want to study?**

A: You'll need qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. For some specific degree programmes you may also need to:

- come to an interview, for nursing, oral health sciences, teacher education, veterinary medicine;
- submit a digital mini portfolio, for art, design and fine art
- sit an admissions test, the UKCAT, for medicine
- provide evidence of relevant work or voluntary experience, for professional degree programmes

You will need to provide evidence of your English language skills through qualifications.

We call these our entry requirements.

You also need to apply on time:

- 15 October 2019 – deadline for applications for medicine and veterinary medicine
- 15 January 2020 – deadline for all other UK and EU applicants
- 30 June 2020 – deadline for all other international applicants

### **Q: What qualifications and grades do I need?**

A: The qualifications and grades you need vary by programme and may also depend on whether you are a widening access student.

### **Q: Am I a widening access student?**

A: We consider you to be a widening access student if you:

- live in a target postcode area, or
- attend a target school or college, or
- attend the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP: [www.scottishwideraccess.org/](http://www.scottishwideraccess.org/)), or
- are care experienced, or
- have refugee status or are an asylum seeker

You can find out more about all of these terms, and see if we will consider you to be a widening access student, on our online checker: <https://admission-checker.is.ed.ac.uk/>

In this prospectus we list the entry requirements for each of our programmes. This is an example of how this information is presented:

The diagram shows a central yellow box with a red header 'Advice for applicants'. It contains three sections: 'Standard entry requirements', 'Minimum entry requirements', and a 'Please note' section. Three blue callout boxes with arrows point to these sections, providing additional context.

**Advice for applicants**

**Standard entry requirements**  
SQA Highers: AAAA to ABBB  
A levels: AAB to ABB  
IB: 40 points (grades 766 at HL) to 34 points (grades 655 at HL)

**Minimum entry requirements**  
SQA Highers: ABBB  
A levels: ABB  
IB: 34 points (grades 655 at HL)

**Please note** This indicates the overall standards required to consider you for entry. Entry requirements are explained on page xxx. Full, detailed entry requirements, including the **subjects** you need, vary by programme. Please check the full details before you apply: [www.xx.ac.uk/xx/](http://www.xx.ac.uk/xx/)

Unless you are a widening access student, you will need these grades to get in.

If you are a widening access student, you're guaranteed a place if you have these grades.

This bit is important! Make sure you check the detailed requirements for your programme, which apply to everyone.

If you are taking Higher and Advanced Highers, you will find more detailed information about our entry requirements here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/highers>

We accept lots of different qualifications, and can't list them all in detail in this prospectus. Check our website for more information: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/entry-requirements>

**Q: Do you accept HNCs and HNDs?**

A: You can enter many of our degree programmes with Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs). These are qualifications usually taken in college. Direct entry into the second or even third year of some programmes is possible, depending on the HNC or HND subject and Graded Unit. Check our website for full details: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/hn>

**Q: I'm a mature student, can I apply?**

A: We welcome learners of all ages. If you have already left school (however long ago) you can still apply to university. If you are an adult returning to education after a break of at least three years in your formal education, you need to have undertaken some recent academic study. Some of the qualifications we accept include:

- access programmes, such as the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)
- the University's part-time, open studies Credit for Entry scheme
- our part-time access programme (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Open University credits
- HNCs and HNDs

- other qualifications, such as SQA Highers or A levels.

Find out more here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/mature>

**Annex C:**

**Edinburgh Napier University**

### **Q: What do I need to apply for the course I want to study?**

A: You'll need qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. For some specific courses you may also need to:

- come to an interview or audition;
- submit an art/design portfolio;
- provide evidence of relevant work or voluntary experience when applying for vocational courses such as Nursing or Veterinary Nursing.

If English is not your first language, you will normally need to provide evidence of your English language skills through qualifications or a Secure English Language Test.

We call these our entry requirements.

Students from the UK and European Union should apply by the application deadline of the 15<sup>th</sup> January as applications made after this date cannot always be considered. International applicants (outwith the EU) should apply by the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Q: What qualifications and grades do I need?**

A: The qualifications or grades you need will vary by course and may also depend on whether you are a widening access student (see below for more information).

In this prospectus we list our Year 1 Scottish Higher entry requirements in two ways - our **standard** and our **minimum** entry requirements. Both reflect the grades you will need to achieve by the time you enter the University, however the **minimum** entry requirements only apply if you are widening access student.

Example: BA (Hons) Accounting

Year 1 Standard Entry Requirement: BBBB including National 5 Maths and English at Grade C

Year 1 Minimum Entry Requirement: BBCC including National 5 English at Grade C

We also list any specific subjects you must have studied by the time you enter the University to be considered for entry to the programme.

If you have already achieved the entry requirements which apply to you, you may receive an unconditional offer from the University. This means the place is yours if you want it, although there may be other steps you also need to complete such as a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check or medical requirements depending on the course you have applied to. Alternatively, if you need to achieve further qualifications to meet these entry requirements you may receive a conditional offer from the University. These conditions will be the academic qualifications you need to achieve in your current studies to get your place confirmed.

You should also remember that:

- only Higher Grade C passes or above are counted towards your Higher tally. For Advanced Highers only Grade D or above is counted.
- where you have achieved an Advanced Higher at Grade D this equates to a B-pass at Higher. An Advanced Higher Grade C or above equates to an A-Pass at Higher.
- unless you are a widening access student, where you apply with both a Higher and Advanced Higher in the same subject, we will only count the subject once, and will use the highest

grade (or equivalent grade) achieved when reaching our decision. For widening access applicants we will count all Higher and Advanced Higher grades when calculating a student's achievement, even where these are in the same subject, however you must have achieved the required grades in a minimum of three different subjects at Higher (or equivalent) in order to qualify for entry.

The majority of our courses also allow entry directly into year 2 or 3 of study with a relevant HNC or HND qualification. Our course listings will tell you which qualifications are accepted and any specific grades you are required to achieve within your HNC/D qualification.

#### **Q: Am I a widening access student?**

We aim to identify each applicant's full talent and potential and look beyond grades to do this as part of our commitment to addressing the current under-representation of certain groups (widening access students) within Higher Education in Scotland. We consider you to be a widening access student if you:

- have spent time in care;
- are a Young carer - Young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction;
- have taken part in the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) and been identified as LEAPS-eligible;
- have completed a Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP);
- have attended a Scottish school which has low numbers of students progressing to higher education (See <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/access-priorities/low-progression-schools/low-progression-schools.aspx> for a list of eligible Schools);
- have Government recognised refugee or asylum status;
- live in a target postcode area which identifies you as living in an area of high deprivation (most deprived 20% in Scotland) as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Go to [www. http://simd.scot/2016](http://simd.scot/2016) and enter your postcode to see whether you live in a target postcode area.

If you meet one of the above criteria the entry requirements which apply to you are our **minimum** entry requirements which reflect the minimum academic grades required to succeed on your chosen programme of study.



**Annex D:**

**University of Glasgow**

**Q: What do I need to apply for the course I want to study?**

A: You'll need qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. For some specific courses you may also need to:

- Come to an interview or audition
- Sit an admissions test
- Provide evidence of relevant work or voluntary experience
- Apply and complete the above by the deadline specified on the University of Glasgow website programme pages

**Q: What qualifications and exam results do I need?**

A: The grades or qualifications you need will vary by course and may also depend on your personal circumstances.

If English is not your first language, you will normally need to provide evidence of your English language skills through suitable qualifications.

School qualifications: you will need to achieve the entry requirements to be considered for an offer. Qualifications and Entry Routes are outlined as follows:

- SQA Higher and Advanced Higher Entry Requirements
- A-level and International Baccalaureate Entry Requirements
- Advanced Entry Requirements
- Faster Route Entry Requirements

Example – for entry to Arts:

SQA Highers: AAAA by the end of S5; AAAAAB by the end of S6 (These grades must include the mandatory entry requirements for Arts – these are shown on page 89)

We call these our **standard entry requirements**.

If you do not achieve the standard entry requirements by the end of S5, you will need to achieve the University **minimum entry requirements** by the end of S5, to be considered for a conditional offer based on further grades achieved in S6. Please note, depending on the competitiveness of a subject, we may not consider applicants with minimum grades.

Example: for entry to Arts - S5 minimum entry requirements:

SQA Highers ABBB by end of S5 (conditional offers would be made at AAAAAB by end of S6)

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) will allow you to enter either the first or second year of your course, dependent upon the HNC/HND programme and the course to be studied at the University. Applicants will need to achieve the stated entry requirements to be considered for an offer. These can be found at: *URL to be inserted*

Example: University of Glasgow and Glasgow Kelvin College HNC in Applied Sciences with Graded Unit at A, plus completion and passes in University of Glasgow additional modules, will lead to entry to year 2

University of Glasgow and FE College Access courses will allow you to enter the first year of some courses. Applicants will need to achieve the stated entry requirements to be considered for an offer. These can be found at: *URL to be inserted*

Examples – for entry to Engineering:

University of Glasgow Access to Sciences, Engineering and Nursing – BB

Scottish Wider Access Programme Access to STEM at Glasgow Kelvin College - ABB

### **Q. Am I eligible for an adjusted offer of entry?**

The University of Glasgow is committed to widening access. We believe all applicants should have an equal chance of entry to the University and value diversity within our student body. We aim to identify all applicants' full talent and potential, regardless of background or life circumstance. For individual applicants living in Scotland, we consider all circumstances which may have prevented them meeting our standard entry requirements and make them **adjusted offers of entry** which may allow them to join a course with different grades from the standard tariff. Those **GUARANTEED** an adjusted offer are those who:

- have successfully completed a pre-entry programme,
- live in a specified postcode area,
- have experience of being in care,
- are estranged from family and living without family support

Example – for entry to Arts:

SQA Highers: AABB or ABBBB in S5 or S6 plus successful completion of the Top-Up Programme or Summer School

We call these our **adjusted entry requirements**.

Applicants meeting the above eligibility criteria, will be made an adjusted offer. This will include successful completion of one of our University of Glasgow pre-entry programmes:

- Top-Up
- Summer School
- Reach (Access to Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine)
- Access to a Career (Accountancy & Finance, Teaching, Engineering)

We may also accept successful completion of a comparable pre-entry programme at another university instead of a University of Glasgow programme.

You will find further information and the Entry Requirements in full for our **standard and adjusted entry requirements** for applicants with SQA Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications on pages 88-97.

**Annex E:**

**University of the Highlands  
and Islands**

**Q: What do I need to get onto the course I want to study?**

You will need qualifications, a personal statement and a reference. For some specific courses, you may also need to:

- Come to an interview or audition
- Submit an art/design portfolio
- Provide evidence of relevant work or voluntary experience

**Q: What qualifications and exam results do I need?**

The qualifications, subjects and grades you need will vary by course and may also depend on your personal circumstances.

If English is not your first language, you will normally need to provide evidence of your English language skills through suitable qualifications. (see page XX)

Specific entry requirements are listed on each course page in this prospectus. The published standard entry requirements have been set at the minimum required to successfully complete the course. You will normally need to achieve grades as good as or better than these to be made an offer.

Example: humanities degrees

SQA Highers: BBC

A levels: BC

However, we consider each applicant individually to identify their full talent and potential, regardless of background or life circumstances, and look beyond grades to do this. If you do not have the published standard entry, we can offer many alternative routes to degree study, for example:

- You may be asked to complete a summer school or a short online course, or undertake a written assignment as part of your offer. Additionally, depending on your personal circumstances, you may be assessed as a widening access student (see below) and, for some courses, may get a lower or adjusted offer.
- We also have a range of access courses, including Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), which can help you gain entry to your chosen degree. Many HNCs and HNDs will allow you direct entry to second or third year of a university degree programme. Details of subjects and grades required are listed on the relevant degree course pages.

**Q: Am I a widening access student?**

We consider you to be a widening access student if you are from a group that is under-represented in higher education. We welcome, encourage and support applications from widening access students. You will be assessed as a widening access student if you:

- Live in a specific Scottish postcode area which identifies you as living in an area of high deprivation (url provided)

- Have experience of being in care (see page XX)
- Have taken part in a Schools for Higher Education Programme, such as ASPIRENorth (url provided)
- Have attended a Scottish school, which has low numbers of students progressing to higher education (URL provided)

If you are in one of these groups, your application will be given additional consideration. This applies to applicants who do not have the standard entry requirements for the course, or where there is competition for places. It may result in you joining the course with lower grades than the standard entry requirement and/or undertaking additional work before starting your course.