

Queen Mary University of London

A-Level and GCSE Reform in England

Queen Mary recognises the significant challenge to schools and colleges presented by the reforms to A-level and GCSE which started in September 2015. We have reviewed our policy on entry requirements in light of these changes and reached a number of admissions policy decisions, which we have detailed in the following statement.

Queen Mary is committed to recruiting students of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and we have a long-standing commitment to widening participation and fair access. This principle will continue to govern our decisions about our entry requirements and we remain committed to ensuring that well-qualified students from all backgrounds and with a wide range of educational experience are able to benefit from the education we provide.

A-level and AS-level

• Do I need to take more than three A-levels?

From 2017 entry we will make offers based on three A-levels for all our courses. Only applicants to our School of Medicine and Dentistry who started their A-levels before September 2015 will be required to achieve a minimum B grade in an AS-level in addition to three A-levels. We recognise the value for individual students of taking a fourth A-level or an AS-level alongside three A-levels, but we do

not expect students to present more than three A-levels in their application to Queen Mary. We believe that schools and colleges, in consultation with students, governors and parents, should continue to determine local policy on whether to offer a fourth A-level or AS-level in years 12 and 13.

• Do I need to sit AS-level exams?

We understand that schools and colleges will choose whether to enter students for AS-level examinations for a variety of reasons. However, in order to ensure that our

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admissions process is fair and consistent, we have decided not to take into account declared AS-level grades when making selection decisions, where they relate to a reformed A-level subject and do not count towards the final A-level grade.

• Do I need to pass the A-level Science Practical?

Where applicants are taking Science A-levels offered by awarding bodies in England, we will normally expect a pass in the Practical element in addition to achievement of the overall A-level grade. This will be reflected in our offers.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The EPQ enables students to explore a topic in depth and to develop academic skills that will provide a strong foundation to support their transition to university. We will continue to welcome applications from students with an EPQ, as this provides valuable evidence of their ability and potential. However, we recognise that this option may not be available to all our applicants and will ensure that applicants experience no disadvantage as a consequence of their school or college's curriculum policies.

GCSE

• What are Queen Mary's GCSE requirements?

We have decided to map current letter grades to the new numerical GCSE grades in England as follows:

A*	9,8
A	7
B	6, 5
C	4

• Are there any compulsory subjects?

From 2017 entry all our applicants are required to achieve a grade C or 4 in GCSE English or equivalent. Individual academic Schools may specify additional compulsory subjects, such as Science and Maths.

For admission to our School of Medicine and Dentistry applicants must have at least grade A or 7 in three GCSEs and at least grade B or 6 in a further three GCSEs, including Biology and Chemistry or Double Science, Maths and English. Our requirements for other programmes vary, but we typically require at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C or 9-4. We encourage applicants to check our GCSE requirements on the Queen Mary course finder before submitting an application.

Other qualifications

We accept a range of qualifications for admission to QMUL, including the International Baccalaureate and many international qualifications. However, the list of qualifications accepted for entry to Medicine and Dentistry is limited and applicants are advised to consult the admissions policy for details.

• Does QMUL accept BTECs?

We accept the BTEC Extended Diploma (in relevant subjects) for entry to a small number of courses. For some courses we will consider BTEC Diplomas and Extended Diplomas as long as they are taken in combination with relevant A-levels. There are some programmes for which BTEC qualifications are not accepted. However, we are currently reviewing our admissions policy in light of the changes to the BTEC curriculum from September 2016 onwards.

• Does QMUL accept mixed qualifications?

If you are taking mixed qualifications at level 3, we will consider your academic profile and may make offers on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are advised to make contact with the Admissions Office before making an application so that we can give individual advice.

General advice to schools and colleges

We would encourage schools and colleges, as well as applicants and their advisers, to continue to refer to the Russell Group's Informed Choices publication, which provides guidance about subjects that are considered to 'facilitate' entry to higher education. While we welcome applications from students offering one or more 'facilitating' subjects, we will consider other subjects offered by students on a case-by-case basis. Specific subject requirements for individual courses will continue to be published in our prospectus and online course finder (www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/coursefinder/).

We recognise the challenges for teachers and schools in delivering a new curriculum and would encourage you to explain any particular changes in school policy about the range of subjects and qualifications on offer in the applicant reference. Since there is a character limit for references in the UCAS system, we request that schools and colleges place a general statement about their response to qualification reform on their website and include only information that is relevant to the individual applicant in the reference itself. There is further guidance on this approach in the UCAS Unpacking Qualification Reform publication (<https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-unpacking-qualification-reform-jan-15.pdf>) as well as more specific guidance from Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) at: <https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/quals-reform-reference-guidance.pdf>.

We would also encourage schools and colleges to continue to use the reference to explain any circumstances, whether academic or personal, which may have affected an individual applicant.

Making accurate predictions of A-level grades will be more challenging while the new curriculum is introduced in schools and colleges. We would ask you to make every effort to predict accurately, for example by making reference to an applicant's performance in the end of year 12 examinations or by reflecting on the student's overall progress from GCSE to A-level, as this will help us to make fair and informed decisions when offering places to applicants.

Joanne Tallentire, Head of Admissions, July 2016