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April 2013

Dear colleague

**The University of Edinburgh and Curriculum for Excellence**

Please find enclosed a brief statement regarding changes to the University of Edinburgh's admissions policies in response to Curriculum for Excellence.

We hope that this document clarifies the University's approach to entry requirements in light of Curriculum for Excellence.

Should you have any questions about the document, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Gaukroger  
Head of Admissions  
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## The University of Edinburgh Curriculum for Excellence admissions statement

### **Principles for admission and progression to the University of Edinburgh**

The University of Edinburgh will welcome the first cohort of undergraduate students from Scotland who have followed Curriculum for Excellence, and taken the new SQA qualifications, in 2015.

The University is one of the most popular universities in the UK, and entry to Edinburgh is amongst the most competitive. Each year we receive many more applications from well-qualified applicants than we have places available.

In this context, we aim to admit the very best students, who demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the unique academic experience we offer.

The University is committed to fair admissions policies and practices and aims to give equal consideration to applicants who have followed different routes to higher education, and to take into account the circumstances in which qualifications are achieved.

The main purpose of the University of Edinburgh's admissions processes is to select those applicants who best evidence the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to succeed on a specific programme of study and contribute to the life of the University.

Whilst University-wide admissions policies apply to all degree programmes, entry requirements and selection criteria necessarily vary by degree programme, given the different prior knowledge and skills required, and the different levels of competition for places between programmes.

When demand exceeds the number of places available, achieving or being predicted to achieve the minimum entry requirements is unlikely to be sufficient to gain an

offer. In these cases, the University will routinely take a number of factors into account in the admissions selection process, including attainment above the minimum requirement, the content of the personal statement and reference, and any relevant contextual data.

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

- Relevance of study
  - It is important that entrant students have the requisite knowledge and skills expected when they commence higher education study 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, more importantly, the ability to understand and analyse complex ideas.
- Breadth of study
  - The traditional Scottish degree is characterised by breadth of study and an interdisciplinary approach. It is therefore important that applicants to these degree programmes can demonstrate abilities across a range of subject areas.
- Rigour and challenge
  - Students must be able to manage the level and volume of academic work in their chosen programme of study at Edinburgh. It is therefore important that prior study demonstrates sufficient rigour and challenge.
- Progression
  - Whilst it may, on occasion, be necessary for students to take a lower level qualification in S5 or S6 in order to satisfy an entry requirement, for example to pick up a required subject, we generally expect a student's

learner journey to evidence progression, by building upon prior learning. This is in the broad interests of a student's development, and also facilitates a smoother transition to HE level study. It also enables students to evidence continued development and the ability to rise to the challenge of study at a higher level.

Whilst prior academic attainment is the most important single factor determining whether or not an applicant will be offered a place to study at Edinburgh, no applicant will be admitted to the University on the basis of grades alone.

We recognise that not all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential in their prior qualifications. To this end, all applications are given careful individual consideration and a holistic decision is made with regard to an individual's academic achievements, taking into account the context and circumstances of their pre-university studies.

### **Changes to admissions policy in light of Curriculum for Excellence**

In light of Curriculum for Excellence, particularly the emphasis on flexible learner journeys in the senior phase, and the principles outlined above, the University of Edinburgh has amended its admissions policies in the following ways:

#### *1. National 4 and 5 qualifications*

The University will accept National 5s where we currently accept Standard Grades and Intermediate 2s, with the following equivalences used:

<b>Standard Grade</b>	<b>Intermediate 2</b>	<b>National 5</b>
1	A	A
2	B	B
3	C	C

Our entry requirements and selection criteria will not include National 4 qualifications.

We recognise that some students, particularly stronger students, may progress directly from the Broad General Education to Highers in some, or all, of their subjects, and will therefore not achieve any National 5 qualifications. Our selection criteria and processes will ensure that applicants following this route will not be disadvantaged.

However, ALL applicants are expected to meet any stated subject requirements.

Where an applicant does not hold a subject that is required at National 5, they must have achieved, or be predicted to achieve an SQA Higher or SQA Advanced Higher pass in the subject. Depending upon the grade required at National 5, this may equate to achieving a B or C grade at Higher or Advanced Higher.

## *2. Early Highers and one sitting requirements*

As stated above, the University of Edinburgh values breadth of study, and seeks to identify students who will manage a challenging workload and thrive academically. Therefore, we seek evidence of rigour and challenge in a student's prior studies.

The University currently expresses its minimum entry requirements in terms of achievement in Highers at one sitting, i.e. in a single exam diet.

Following the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, the University will express its minimum entry requirements in terms of achievement of SQA Highers by the end of S5.

For Medicine (MBChB) and Veterinary Medicine (BVM&S), applicants must have achieved at least 5 Highers at the required grades by the end of S5. In other subject areas, where the minimum entry requirement has not been met by the end of S5, Highers in S6 may be used to meet the minimum entry requirement, but the grade requirement will increase, e.g. where the minimum requirement is ABBB by the end of S5, the requirement will increase to AABB or ABBBB by the end of S6.

### *3. Minimum number of exams*

Whilst the University's one sitting requirement will be interpreted more flexibly in light of CfE, as defined above, in order to evidence rigour and challenge, we will expect students to take a minimum number of exams in at least one year of the senior phase.

In at least one year of the senior phase (S4-S6), applicants must achieve, or be predicted to achieve, three or more Highers/Advanced Highers at grade B or better (C or better at Advanced Higher). I.e. an applicant who sits one Higher in S4 and three new Highers in S5 achieving BBB will be eligible to enter the selection process, providing they meet any relevant minimum requirements in terms of grades and subject of study. An applicant who achieves BB at Higher in S4, BB in two new Highers in S5 and BB in a new Higher and an Advanced Higher in S6 will not be considered for entry to any of our degree programmes.

Regardless of the number of Highers taken in each year of the senior phase, we expect applicants to have followed a coherent, rigorous and challenging curriculum that builds on prior learning, demonstrated by SQA qualifications or a combination of SQA qualifications and other achievements.

#### **Policy monitoring and review**

As with all of our admissions policies, the effect of these changes will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they adequately reflect the choices available to students following the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and that they enable the University of Edinburgh to continue to identify and select those students who best demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the unique academic experience we offer.

#### **Finding out more about these changes**

Information regarding the University's admissions policies, entry requirements and selection criteria is included in the undergraduate prospectus and online. The University also publishes an admissions guide for teachers and advisers in schools and colleges, which is sent to all schools in the UK (<http://goo.gl/qiocg>).

In light of Curriculum for Excellence, a special guide for Scottish teachers and advisers will be sent to all schools in spring 2013.

As in previous years, the University will run a number of admissions briefing sessions for teachers and advisers in 2013, including a session in May for teachers and advisers at schools and colleges in Scotland. This session will provide an opportunity for schools to provide feedback on the changes to our admissions policy. All schools and colleges have been sent information about these events. Further information is available online (<http://goo.gl/Ye4v0>).

April 2013