

Universities
Scotland



Scottish Higher Education Sector's Overarching Statement on Curriculum for Excellence

Preface

The introduction of Curriculum for Excellence in schools in Scotland is intended to result in changes to how pupils learn. New and revised qualifications are being introduced and there is a renewed emphasis on wider learning opportunities.

Scotland's higher education sector which includes 15 campus-based universities, a conservatoire, an art school, an agricultural college and the Open University in Scotland is positive about these changes which in many ways reflect trends in university level learning and teaching. The higher education sector looks forward to welcoming new students who have had the Curriculum for Excellence experience.

The changes within Scotland's schools will soon produce university applicants who may have had different educational experiences from previous cohorts. This has implications for higher education institutions in terms of both admissions requirements and also how learning and teaching is delivered. The Scottish higher education sector is working to address both these issues – and is well placed to respond flexibly, given the existing diversity of the student population, which includes students from around the world; young and old entrants; and students with school level qualifications, college qualifications or with experience that qualifies them for entry. It is also useful that higher education institutions already work very closely with schools in many different ways. Universities Scotland's publications *Together at the Heart of Scottish Education* and *Beyond the Senior Phase* contain many examples of good practice in this regard.

Universities Scotland's statement on Curriculum for Excellence summarises the individual statements on Curriculum for Excellence that higher education institutions have produced. In a short statement, it is not possible to set out all the relevant information for each university. It is also important to remember that precise requirements may vary even within institutions, depending on the course as is currently the case, so it will remain important to consult universities' websites and/or prospectuses. Nevertheless, we hope that the statement from Scotland's higher education sector on Curriculum for Excellence will prove to be a useful overview for applicants, parents, teachers and advisers.

Overarching statement

In May 2012, Universities Scotland published *Beyond the Senior Phase*, which examined the implications of Curriculum for Excellence for universities. All Scottish university principals affirmed their continued commitment to fair admissions policies and emphasised that these policies will allow equal consideration of candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills base irrespective of what routes they may have taken through the Senior Phase (S4 to S6) of Curriculum for Excellence.

Since the report was published Universities Scotland has been working with its members, the 19 higher education institutions in Scotland, to implement the recommendations. One key recommendation was that institutions set out their approach to admissions which prospective students should consider alongside the relevant prospectus and higher education institutions have now done so. These statements welcome the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence and envisage that it will produce learners with the skills and knowledge they need to flourish in higher education and beyond.

Minimum requirements continue to be expressed in terms of Highers. The majority of institutions consider a diet of Highers taken over S4 and S5 as equal to a set of Highers taken only in S5. Some universities will require a minimum number of Highers/Advanced Highers to be studied in at least one year of the Senior Phase. Advanced Highers and Baccalaureates are also recognised for their potential to support progression in learning and provide a valuable grounding for study at undergraduate degree level.

Curriculum for Excellence

Universities do not intend to count a candidate's total number of National 5s towards general entry. Some universities or courses seek a minimum level of knowledge in English, Maths and/or other specific subjects at National 5, but will accept a Higher qualification if a candidate has not done a National 5.

Although academic qualifications remain the primary requirement for entry to degree-level programmes, Scotland's higher education institutions will take account of wider achievements in the personal statement and reference when making decisions. Most institutions will also take account of contextual factors which recognise an applicant's circumstances.

Requirements for individual higher education institutions do vary and there may be special requirements for certain subjects or courses. These can be found on university websites and in prospectuses. These will also give more information about courses and a fuller picture of what studying will be like. It is therefore still very important for learners (and those advising them, including teachers, parents and guidance counsellors) to gather information on the entry requirements of all the courses and institutions where they have an interest.

Universities Scotland is the representative body of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions. This statement is made having been developed in consultation with our member institutions.



Universities
Scotland



November 2013

www.universities-scotland.ac.uk