

Universities
Scotland



A guarantee of fairness
when applying to a
university in Scotland

Qualifications & other
information used to
apply to university

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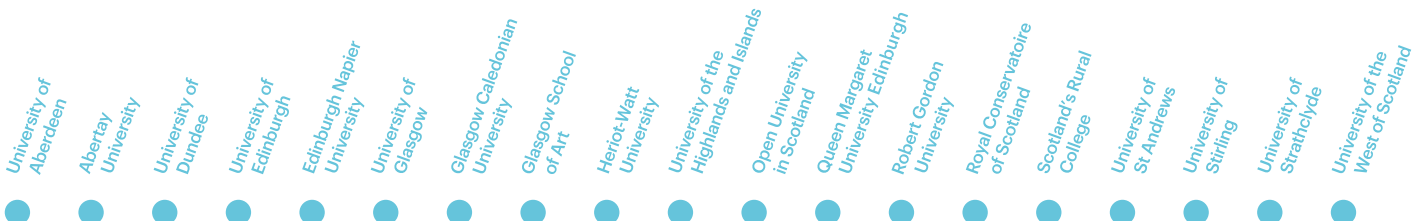
This statement explains how admissions processes at Scotland's universities aim to be fair to everyone who applies to study.

Scottish universities are diverse. We vary in terms of the courses we offer, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities we expect you to have, as demonstrated by your qualifications and achievements.

Universities have a limited number of places they can offer to those wishing to study in Scotland. This means that not everyone can be offered a place even if they meet all the entry requirements.

It is therefore important to set out our shared, common principles so that, wherever in Scotland you want to study, you know broadly what to expect.

1. Our admissions processes aim to be fair to all learners by taking full account of their circumstances. Every application is considered individually to determine whether the applicant has experienced disadvantage that may have affected their ability to demonstrate their full potential.
2. We therefore seek to admit students on the basis of their potential for university level study and, particularly in the case of vocational and professional courses, students' potential to develop the skills and aptitude needed after graduation. Qualifications and grades are important, but they are considered alongside other information that helps universities to identify potential and widen access (and you do not need any qualifications to study at the Open University in Scotland).



3. We are committed to:
 - operating transparent admissions policies and procedures;
 - seeking to ensure that we are accessible to all who have the potential to succeed; and
 - removing all unnecessary barriers to accessing our universities.

4. We are committed to widening access to our universities, particularly to people who may have experienced disadvantage and who have not been able to demonstrate their full academic potential as a result. A person's socio-economic background, where they live, the type of school they attended and their subject choice can all affect their educational attainment. Universities take this context into account, and look for an applicant's potential.

5. Individual universities may also support other groups of learners who are underrepresented in higher education or in certain subject areas, or who are known to have experienced disadvantages that may limit academic achievement. This support takes many different forms, in order that it best meets the diverse needs of learners.

6. Regardless of whether you could be classed as being part of a particular underrepresented or disadvantaged group, institutions will always look at your individual circumstances to determine whether to offer you a place.



Qualifications & other information used to apply to university

This statement is written primarily for applicants living in Scotland. It aims to provide you with general information about certain university entry qualifications.

Universities have been asked to provide information about the following:

- Advanced Highers;
- Foundation Apprenticeships; and
- Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs).

We then provide information on how our admissions processes take account of:

- personal statements; and
- references.

This statement does not offer a comprehensive guide to all qualifications. It does not discuss Highers or National 5 qualifications, for example, which are very important qualifications for very many applicants applying from within the Scottish system. Further, gaining entry to university is not all about your qualifications, it's also about the wider context. And you do not need any qualifications if you want to study at the Open University in Scotland.

Universities take a wide range of qualifications into account when deciding whom to admit, and different universities set different academic entry requirements. It's not possible for universities to list every entry qualification they accept because there are many types of qualification from across the world.

If you are still unsure about how to apply for a course, whether a particular qualification will be accepted or what grade(s) you will need to get in, please do get in contact with the admissions office in the institution concerned as soon as you can and they will be happy to answer any questions. You will find contact details on institutions' admissions webpages. UCAS also provides a wealth of useful information to learners.

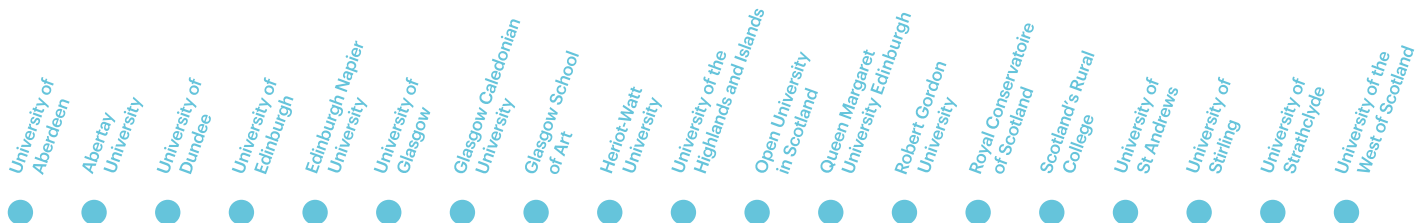
Advanced Highers

For entry to most courses, universities do not *require* Advanced Highers. Some universities do not require them at all. When Advanced Highers are required, or are seen as an advantage, this will be clearly stated in the entry requirements. Likewise, universities will state in their entry requirements how Advanced Highers are treated in the admissions process (e.g. how they are counted when calculating cumulative grades).

For entry to some of their courses some universities might *recommend* that you achieve some Advanced Highers. This is to help prepare you for the move to university level study, and may increase your chances of being made an offer.

Sometimes there is the option of 'advanced entry' for applicants with Advanced Highers. This means that you can skip Year 1 of your degree programme and go directly into Year 2 *if you would like to do so*, and if you have achieved the Advanced Higher subjects and grades required. In other cases advanced entry to Year 2 is not possible; this can be for various reasons (including requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies). If advanced entry is possible, this will be stated in university entry requirements.

Universities know that applicants sometimes cannot achieve a range of Advanced Highers when these are required or recommended in entry requirements, because access to these qualifications is not equal across Scotland. We want to assure applicants who find themselves in this situation that you will not be disadvantaged in the admissions process because of something you cannot control. If this affects you, universities will make every effort to help you demonstrate your achievement to a level equivalent to the stated entry requirement in an alternative way, e.g. through a different set of qualifications. If you have any questions or concern about this then you can contact the university you are applying to and they will be happy to help. Your teachers should also highlight this situation in your UCAS reference.



Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships aim to help young people gain valuable, real-world work experience and access work-based learning opportunities whilst they are still at school. All universities accept Foundation Apprenticeships as entry qualifications to *at least some subject areas*.

Universities treat Foundation Apprenticeships differently in terms of admissions. In fact, the same university may treat Foundation Apprenticeships differently from one subject area to another, depending on the knowledge and skills an applicant needs for a course.

For example, some universities may mention Foundation Apprenticeships in their entry requirements in terms of their equivalence to Highers i.e. a Foundation Apprenticeship may equate to one Higher at a particular grade, or it may equate to two Highers at particular grades. Other universities may refer to them as standalone entry qualifications.

Universities have information on their websites about Foundation Apprenticeships when these are accepted entry qualifications, and about how these are treated in the admissions process.

If Foundation Apprenticeships are not mentioned in entry requirements you should contact the universities to check whether they will be accepted in the subject area concerned.

HN Qualifications

Many learners apply to university with HNCs and HNDs, and all of Scotland's universities recognise these as entry qualifications to some subject areas.

It is sometimes possible for applicants with an HNC qualification to enter directly into Year 2 of a university degree programme, and for applicants with an HND qualification to enter directly into Year 3 of a university degree programme. This is called 'articulation'. Whether this is possible usually depends on how well the college and university curricula 'fit' or 'match' with one another.

In some instances, it may only be possible for HNC applicants to enter Year 1 at university, and for HND applicants to enter either Year 2 or Year 1.

Universities aim to provide clear information about how they treat Higher National Qualifications in admissions. However, as approaches can vary, it is very important that you check entry requirements with universities at the earliest opportunity, so you can be clear whether and how your qualifications will be considered. You are very welcome to contact universities if anything is unclear, or if you would like further information.



Partial HN qualifications and university entry

Universities know that some people apply to university having completed only part of an HNC or HND qualification. Also, some HNC qualifications when completed in full do not carry the number of credits* necessary for entry to a university degree programme. If you are unsure about how your qualifications will be treated in the admissions process, please contact universities for advice, and staff will be happy to help. In some situations applicants will be accepted; in others they will recommend some additional study to boost credit. This could be, for example, a short course of extra maths for entry to engineering and computer science degree courses. It might also be possible to top up on credit through, for example, summer schools or part-time programmes for adult learners. Universities will be clear about this in their entry requirements where it applies.

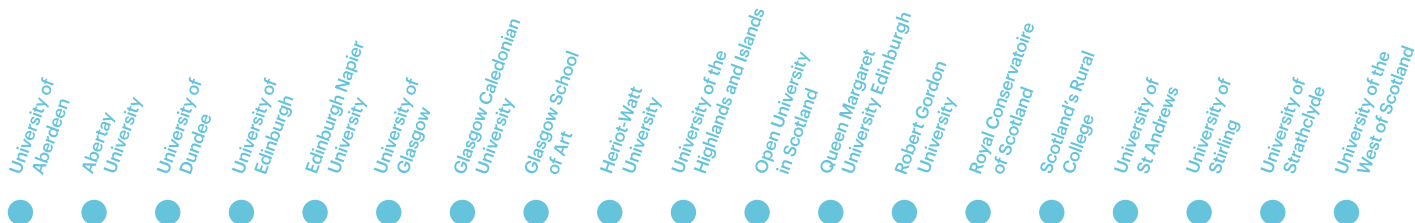
Personal Statements

When you apply to university you will be asked to submit a personal statement as part of your UCAS application (if you are applying to a full-time degree programme). Your personal statement will give the universities you are applying to very useful material. This could include, for example, information about why you are interested in studying a particular subject, any relevant work experience you have undertaken, and extra-curricular activities you have undertaken.

The personal statement forms part of the overall consideration universities give to applications, so universities will not decide to make offers based on the content of personal statements alone. They will consider a wide range of factors in their decision-making process, including your qualifications or relevant work experience as well as your background. Universities will want to get as full a sense as possible of your profile and your potential to succeed on your chosen course of studies.

Universities understand that applicants will have had very different opportunities and experiences from one another, both within and outside school or college. We are interested in how applicants have engaged with and reflected upon these opportunities, not the opportunities themselves.

* Every Scottish qualification is made up of a different number of credits. You can find out more by searching online for "SCQF Ready Reckoner".

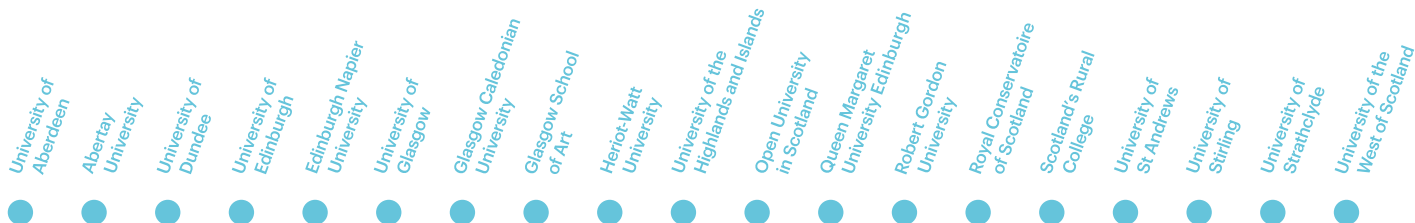


Given the importance of personal statements in the admissions process, it is important that you have a clear sense of what universities are looking for. Universities welcome:

- a clear, enthusiastic statement of why you are applying for the subject area you have chosen;
- what you think studying a particular subject or course will enable you to do;
- how you feel your learning to date has contributed to this choice; and
- a sense of your interests, what you like reading, watching or doing, and how these might benefit you in your university studies.

We understand that completing a personal statement can often be a difficult, time-consuming and challenging task. However, it is also a valuable exercise, giving you the opportunity to think hard about why you want to go to university, what you want to study, and how well you have prepared. The process of writing a personal statement also helps you to develop and demonstrate skills required at university, and may also help you to complete job applications and consider your employability skills. The time commitment made is therefore very worthwhile and **it is crucial that a personal statement represents your own work**. Schools and Colleges have access to the services offered by universities and UCAS to deliver impartial information, advice and guidance on the UCAS application process, including the preparation of personal statements.

We want to assure everyone who submits an application – or who helps with this process – that the information provided in applications, including personal statements, is always considered in full by dedicated teams of admissions professionals and/or subject tutors.



References

The UCAS reference is an opportunity for schools, colleges or employers (depending on circumstances) to say something about the applicant that will support their application. This might include information about their strengths, interests and anything else that will be relevant and useful for universities.

In terms of applicants applying directly from school or college, a reference might include relevant information about curriculum structure, especially where this might not enable pupils to achieve particular qualifications or combinations of qualification, and where it might otherwise impact on their ability to meet entry requirements. It might also include information about specific challenges students have faced, or schools or colleges have faced that may have affected students' academic attainment.

Referees should not view the UCAS reference as a one-off opportunity to communicate with universities on behalf of applicants. They can see it as potentially the start of an ongoing dialogue. Referees are encouraged to contact universities on behalf of applicants at any point in the admissions cycle, and should get in touch as soon as possible if information pertinent to their applications comes to light.

This statement was published in 2019 by Universities Scotland on behalf of all 19 of Scotland's universities and higher education institutions. Contact: info@universities-scotland.ac.uk or T: 0131 226 1111 for more information, but please be advised that Universities Scotland cannot provide detailed guidance on applying to university. For that, you should contact the individual universities or UCAS.

