



Guaranteed offers for care-experienced applicants

In July 2019, Scotland's 18 universities and higher education institutions¹ agreed to guarantee offers to care-experienced applicants who meet minimum entry requirements. This means that if you are care-experienced and you apply to study for a first degree at a university or other higher education institution in Scotland, you are guaranteed an offer of a place, providing you meet the minimum entry requirements set by the institution for the course you are applying to.

There are some very limited circumstances where the guarantee cannot apply, and these are explained below.

Who is 'care-experienced'?

'Care-experienced' means anyone who has ever been, or is currently, in care. This includes people from looked after backgrounds, and adopted children who were previously looked after. Care may have been provided in one or more of many different settings, such as residential care, foster care, kinship care, or being looked after at home with a supervision requirement.

If you are care-experienced, you will be eligible for the guarantee. There is also no age limit on eligibility.

What exactly is the offer?

Wherever possible, the institution will guarantee you a place on the specific degree programme you have applied to, if you meet the programme's minimum entry requirements. Very occasionally, this may not be possible if, for example, you have applied to a course with lots of applicants eligible for a guaranteed offer and not many places, or because the course is not running. If the institution cannot offer you a place on the specific course you have applied to, they will work with you to identify whether there is an alternative course that is of interest and suitable to you.

In some courses, the decision to offer an applicant a place is based mainly on their performance in an interview or audition, or on a successful portfolio assessment, and these additional steps in the application process cannot be skipped. So, if you are care-experienced and you are applying to a degree programme where entry is determined primarily by interview, audition, portfolio assessment or similar, assuming you meet any minimum entry requirements stated previously, the institution will guarantee to progress you to that part of the application process.

¹ Excluding the Open University in Scotland, which does not set entry requirements for undergraduate degree programmes as other universities and higher education institutions do.



What are 'minimum entry requirements'?

All institutions state on their websites and in other materials such as prospectuses what their minimum entry requirements are for each course. Minimum entry requirements reflect the level of knowledge, skill and/or experience an applicant needs to be able successfully to complete their course of studies.

If you are unsure whether you meet the minimum entry requirements, you should contact the relevant institution(s) to discuss your situation, as they have procedures in place for recognising prior learning and experience which can particularly benefit people who do not hold traditional entry qualifications (like Highers), and people who gained their qualifications well in the past.

Institutions may also display 'standard entry requirements' alongside their minimum entry requirements, and there may also be other terminology, such as 'gateway' entry requirements. For the purpose of the care-experienced guarantee, the *minimum* entry requirements must be met.

Minimum entry requirements often refer to a set of grades in school or college qualifications, but they also often go beyond that, so you should check all of the minimum entry requirements for the course you are applying to very carefully. These will tell you what grades you will need to achieve in which subjects, and whether the application process includes additional steps, such as a test (e.g. UCAT for Medicine or LNAT for Law), an interview, an audition, a portfolio assessment, the need for work experience, a fitness to practise test, and so on.

If you have any questions about the minimum entry requirements for a course you are interested in then you should contact the relevant institution(s) for help, including if the qualifications you hold or are studying towards are not listed in the published minimum entry requirements, or if you do not yet have the stated qualifications and would like to discuss possible access routes into university.

Articulating students

The care-experience guarantee is for all care-experienced applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements, regardless of where you live or which entry route you take to university. Articulation represents one type of route, and specifically refers to students who move (articulate) directly from college with either a HNC or a HND qualification to a degree programme at a university or other higher education institution. The articulation could be directly into Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 of the degree programme, depending on a number of factors.

If you are a care-experienced student working towards an HNC or HND qualification at college and would like to articulate to a degree programme at university (the possibility of which will be highlighted to you at college), the care-experience guarantee is open to you. You will have to meet the minimum entry requirements of the articulation arrangement, and entry requirements will be course-specific, so your HNC or HND qualifications could guarantee you an offer to enter Year 1, 2 or 3 of a degree programme depending, again, on various factors.

In some circumstances, colleges (not universities) decide who gains entry to the HN stage of an articulation programme. In this case our care-experience guarantee cannot apply. Universities still strongly encourage care-experienced learners in this situation to apply to the college, however, because the college and university partners may have agreements in place regarding care-experienced applicants. Colleges and universities will make this clear in their applicant communications. The



university partner will guarantee progression through the articulation pathway as long as you successfully complete the college components.

If you need help

If you have any questions about the care-experienced guarantee – what it is, how it works, and how it might apply in the circumstances of your own application – please contact the universities or other higher education institutions you have applied to. They will be happy to give further information, advice and guidance.

