

Position statement on qualification reform for 2017 entry

Over the next three admissions cycles there is significant qualification reform taking place in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

The types of reform include:

- New qualifications coming on stream
- Additional and different methods of assessment
- Changing grading structures
- Revised national equivalences and new benchmarking aspirations
- Reform of vocational qualifications

The University recognises that this presents applicants and advisors with a number of challenges and this statement aims to provide clarity on our position.

This document is not exhaustive, and the University will continue to monitor qualification reform and governmental educational policies.

[How we use the UCAS Tariff?](#)

[Qualification reform: England](#)

[Qualification reform: Scotland](#)

[Qualification reform: Wales](#)

[Qualification reform: Northern Ireland](#)

[Mixed Qualification Profiles \(all regions\)](#)

[Contact us](#)

How we use the UCAS Tariff?

As of 2017 the University will make Grade Based Offers and use the UCAS Tariff as a comparative tool to assess an applicant's suitability for a course. For example, if a course requires a student to achieve grades BBB from three A-levels the University will accept other grade combinations that equate to the same number of tariff points e.g. ABC or AAD (i.e. 120 UCAS Tariff Points).

Where students are taking other Level 3 qualifications the University will use the UCAS Tariff to assess their equivalence to A-levels in tariff point value.

Qualifications benchmarked as equivalent to 50% of an A-level (e.g. Extended Project Qualification) may still be considered to contribute to the overall point score required. However, this may not form part of the initial offer and results may be considered on a case by case basis at confirmation.

As two AS levels are no longer equivalent in size to one A-level the University will not accept these in lieu of an A-level qualification. However, the tariff point value of an AS level (not studied to A-level) may be considered for borderline cases at confirmation.

Qualification reform: England

A-Level

Between September 2015 and September 2017 first teaching will take place of the new linear A-levels (final assessment at the end of the 2 years). Further details can be found on the [AQA](#) and [OCR](#) websites.

The University welcomes applications from students taking both old (modular) and new (linear) A-levels. We will continue to review our entry requirements in order to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged by reforms and the transitional period.

A-Level Science Practical

From September 2015 A-levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics will include a separate pass or fail result for the practical element of the qualification. This will be recorded on the applicant's statement of results but will not contribute to their final A-level grade.

The University will require students to have achieved a pass in the A-level Science Practical.

AS Level

As of September 2015 the AS qualification will be [decoupled from the A-level](#). This means achievement in the AS will no longer contribute to the overall A-Level grade. Furthermore, the AS level has been repositioned to be worth 40% of the A-level and this is reflected in the new UCAS Tariff (2017).

The University values the attainment of the AS level by applicants, however recognises that some students may not have access to sit the AS level as a stand-alone qualification (depending on the choices made by the School or College). The University will not disadvantage those students who are not taking AS levels and will continue to use predicted grades to assess suitability for entry.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The University values the EPQ and welcomes applications from students sitting this qualification in conjunction with other Level 3 qualifications (in accordance with the specified course entry criteria).

The Extended Project may still be considered to contribute to the overall point score required as part of an offer. However, this may not form part of the initial offer and results may be considered on a case by case basis at confirmation.

GCSEs

From September 2015 the [reformed GCSEs](#) will be phased in with further subjects being added from 2016 and all subjects rolled out by 2017. The reformed GCSEs use a new grading scale from 9 to 1, follow a linear assessment approach and have limited resit opportunities.

For students sitting the reformed GCSEs the University will require a grade 4 for courses which currently state a GCSE grade C and a grade 5 where we currently state a GCSE grade B.

For courses with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body standards (including but not limited to Social Work and Teaching) the University will continue to align ourselves with the recommendations of the relevant body on the suitability of qualifications.

Core Maths

As of September 2014 a new suite of mathematical qualifications (equivalent to an AS level) have been introduced to encourage the continuation of mathematical study post 16:

- AQA Level 3 Certificate Mathematical Studies
- City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate in Using and Applying Mathematics
- OCR Level 3 Certificate in Quantitative Problem Solving
- OCR Level 3 Certificate in Quantitative Reasoning
- Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics in Context
- WJEC Eduqas Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Work and Life

The University will accept Core Maths in lieu of GCSE for courses which have historically required a Maths grade C or above (GCSE grade 4 from 2017 entry).

Vocational Qualification Reform

The University values vocational qualifications (e.g. BTEC and OCR Cambridge Technical suite) and welcomes applications from students sitting these as stand-alone qualifications or in conjunction with other Level 3 qualifications (in accordance with the specified course entry criteria).

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills has recently undertaken [a review of vocational qualification provision in England](#). The purpose of the review was to ensure vocational qualifications and apprenticeships, and the standards on which they are based are relevant, rigorous and recognised as having value by business and learners.

The qualifications are being reformed in two stages, with fully reformed vocational qualifications being available for 2018 entry to Higher Education.

The University will continue to monitor the full reforms to vocational qualifications as they are established and may review our entry requirements in line with any significant changes.

Qualification reform: Scotland

In recent years, Scotland has undergone significant educational reform. The [Scottish Curriculum for Excellence](#) "aims to help every learner develop knowledge, skills and attributes for learning, life and work, which are encapsulated in the four capacities" (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors).

National Qualification

The University accepts [National level 5 Grade C](#) in place of GCSE grade C (GCSE grade 4 from 2017 entry).

For courses with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body standards (including but not limited to Social Work and Teaching) the University will continue to align ourselves with the recommendations of the relevant body on the suitability of qualifications.

Highers and Advanced Highers

The University welcomes applications from students taking Highers and or Advanced Highers. Where a course has a subject specific grade requirement the University will normally expect you to have taken this at Advanced Higher.

Qualification reform: Wales

A-Level

There is no change to the structure of A-levels in Wales and they will continue to have a coupled AS level (i.e. the marks in the AS will count towards the overall grade) however as in England, the AS has been repositioned to be equivalent to 40% of an A-level. The final year of a Welsh A-level is therefore worth 60% of the marks in the overall A-level.

The University welcomes applications from students taking both modular, linear and mixed A-levels profiles.

Welsh Baccalaureate

For 2016 the University accepts the Welsh Baccalaureate Grade A* to C in place of one A-level (120 UCAS Tariff Points).

From first award 2017 the University will accept the reformed Welsh Baccalaureate Grade A*-E in place of one A-level at the recommended new UCAS Tariff point value.

The University welcomes applications from students with both old and reformed Welsh Baccalaureates in conjunction with other Level 3 qualifications (in accordance with the specified course entry criteria).

For acceptability of WJEC Eduqas Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Work and Life see Core Maths under England.

GCSEs

The GCSE qualification in Wales will continue to be graded on an A* - G scale. The University will require students to achieve equivalent grades as outlined in the course entry requirements.

Qualification reform: Northern Ireland

A-Level

There is no change to the structure of A-levels in Northern Ireland and they will continue to have a coupled AS level, with the marks in the AS counting towards the overall grade in the A-level. As in England and Wales, the AS has been repositioned to be equivalent to 40% of an A-level. The final year of a Northern Irish A-level is therefore worth 60% of the marks in the overall A-level.

The University welcomes applications from students taking both modular, linear and mixed A-levels profiles.

GCSEs

The GCSE qualification in Northern Ireland will continue to be graded on an A* - G scale. The University will require students to achieve equivalent grades as outlined in the course entry requirements.

Mixed Qualification Profiles (all regions)

Until 2021 when all reforms are fully embedded the assessment of individual applicants, some applying with both old and reformed qualifications, will present challenges for the University.

In light of the qualification reforms and general qualification trends, the University recognises:

- Some students will apply with a mix of new and old style qualifications.
- Some students may not have the opportunity to sit an AS in any or all subjects.
- Increasing numbers of students will be taking Vocational Qualifications as stand-alone qualifications or in combination with other Level 3 qualifications
- That students will be applying with pre-cursors to reformed qualifications

We strongly recommend that referees carefully check the qualifications declared by the students and also include via the UCAS reference details of any curtailments or particular challenges over which the applicant has no control. Whilst the University acknowledges these issues and will endeavour to ensure students are not disadvantaged, it will need to satisfy itself that the student is suitable for their chosen course and meets the published entry criteria. UCAS have provided guidance to Schools and Colleges about the best way of providing this information without using unnecessary characters.

Contact Us

The University will continue to monitor development in qualification reform and update its published information as and when further information is available. For further information or for clarity please contact the Admissions team at applications@ntu.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0) 115 8484200.