

FIXED AND FLUID DEGREE SUBJECTS

SUBJECT ¹	HOW FIXED IS THE SUBJECT? ²	WHAT TYPE OF QUALIFICATIONS DO ACCEPTED APPLICANTS HOLD? ³	PATHWAY ⁴
Medicine & Dentistry (A1 & A2)	Very fixed	Almost all accepted applicants have general qualifications in specific subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A levels in biology and chemistry are held by almost all accepted applicants (94%) and many also hold an A level in maths (64% hold all three). > In Scotland, almost all accepted applicants hold Highers or Advanced Highers in biology/human biology, chemistry, and maths – most with at least two of these subjects to Advanced Higher level. > IB Higher Level Diplomas in biology and chemistry offer an alternative route.
Maths (G1 & G2)	Very fixed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > An A level in maths is almost always required (98% of accepted applicants hold this), often with further maths (64% hold both A levels). > In Scotland, 91% of accepted applicants hold an Advanced Higher in maths, and the remainder a Higher in maths. > IB Higher Level Diplomas in maths offer an alternative route.

Economics (L1)	Fixed	Almost all accepted applicants hold general qualifications in one of a few subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > An A level in maths and/or economics is usually required. Almost 60% of accepted applicants hold both qualifications and the remainder hold one or the other (fewer than 8% hold neither). > In Scotland, 90% of accepted applicants hold Higher or Advanced Higher in maths.
European Languages (R)	Fixed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > At least 89% of all UK accepted applicants hold an A level in French, Spanish or German. > No clear vocational pathway into studying languages – 96% of accepted applicants hold an A level. > In Scotland, over 90% of accepted applicants hold a Higher or Advanced Higher in French or Spanish.
Engineering (H)	Fluid	Two distinct routes: accepted applicants can hold vocational or general qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 16% of accepted applicants hold no A levels. The most commonly held vocational qualification by English students is the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Engineering. > For those applying with A levels, maths and physics are usually required. Overall, 62% of accepted applicants hold both. > In Scotland, 96% of accepted applicants hold a Higher or Advanced Higher in maths. Most also hold a Higher/Advanced Higher in physics (and/or, less commonly, engineering).
Nursing (B7)	Fluid		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 43% of applicants hold no A levels. The most commonly held vocational qualification by English students is the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care. Students with post-16 vocational qualifications in health and social care are highly likely to choose a nursing degree. > For those applying with A levels, the subjects vary – the most commonly held are biology and psychology, with 36% of all accepted applicants holding at least one of these A levels. > In Scotland, 76% of accepted applicants have a Higher or Advanced Higher in biology or human biology. Almost all hold a Higher in English, but this is a commonly held subject for all accepted Scottish applicants.

Sport and Exercise Science (C6)	Fluid	Two distinct routes: accepted applicants can hold vocational or general qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 48% of accepted applicants hold no A levels. The most commonly held vocational qualification by English students is the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Sport. > For those applying with A levels, the most commonly held is PE – 29% of all accepted applicants hold this A level. Other subjects frequently presented include biology and psychology. > In Scotland, most of accepted applicants (82%) hold Higher or Advanced Higher PE.
Computer Science (I)	Fluid		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 32% of accepted applicants hold no A levels. Vocational qualifications in IT or computing are particularly relevant. > 40% of accepted applicants hold an A level in computing, and 43% hold an A level in maths. > In Scotland, over 70% of accepted applicants hold Higher or Advanced Higher in computer science, often alongside maths, engineering and/or physics.
Education (X)	Very fluid	No specific qualifications needed. Accepted applicants hold a wide range of vocational and general qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Accepted applicants hold a wide range of qualifications. > 36% of accepted applicants hold no A levels. The most commonly held vocational qualification by English students is the NCFE CACHE Technical Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education (Early Years Educator). > For those applying with A levels, the most commonly held subjects are sociology and psychology, with 36% of accepted applicants holding one of these A levels alongside a number of other subjects. > In Scotland, the most commonly held Higher/Advanced Higher subject is English, which 99% of accepted applicants hold – although this is a commonly held subject for all accepted Scottish applicants.
Business (N)	Very fluid		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Accepted applicants hold a wide range of qualifications. > One in four accepted applicants hold no A levels. The most commonly held vocational qualifications by English students are the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate and the Extended Diploma in Business. > Only 35% of all accepted applicants hold an A level in business studies. > In Scotland, more than three in four accepted applicants hold a Higher in business management – suggesting business is slightly less fluid in Scotland.

Law (M)	Very fluid	No specific qualifications needed. Accepted applicants hold a wide range of vocational and general qualifications	Accepted applicants hold a wide range of qualifications. A minority (12%) of accepted applicants hold no A levels. Some applicants hold vocational qualifications, for example a Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Applied Law or WJEC Level 3 Applied Diploma in Criminology. For those applying with A levels, the most commonly held subjects are English literature and psychology. Only one in four accepted applicants hold an A level in law. In Scotland, the most commonly held Higher/Advanced Higher subject is English, which 96% of accepted applicants hold – although this is a commonly held subject for all accepted Scottish applicants.
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¹ Subject groupings included here chosen to group JACS3 detailed subject groups where accepted students hold similar qualifications.

² The category subjects fall into is determined by the proportion of accepted applicants who hold specific A level subjects. For very fixed subjects – over 90% of accepted applicants have a specific set of A levels, for fixed – around 90% have at least one of a small selection of A level subjects, for fluid subjects - A levels are less commonly held but those who do hold A levels often have similar subjects, for very fluid subjects - almost all post-16 qualifications are held.

³ 'General qualifications' are designed to provide knowledge and understanding of an academic subject, and include A levels, the International Baccalaureate (IB), and SQA Highers and Advanced Highers. 'Vocational qualifications' are work-related subjects available in a wide range of career areas. More information on the types of qualifications offered in schools in each country across the UK can be found in Appendix B.

⁴ Unless otherwise specified, 'accepted applicants' applies to 18 year old accepted applicants from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.