

Queen Mary University of London

A-Level and GCSE Reform in England



Queen Mary recognises the significant challenge to schools and colleges presented by the reforms to A-level and GCSE which are being introduced from September 2015 onwards. While we have not yet determined our entry requirements for 2017 entry, when the first cohort of students who have taken new linear A levels 2015 will join us, we have started the process of considering any changes we may make.

Queen Mary is committed to recruiting students of the highest intrinsic talent and potential, and we have a long-standing commitment to widening participation and fair access. This principle will continue to govern our decisions about our entry requirements and we remain committed to ensuring that well-qualified students from all backgrounds and with a wide range of educational experience are able to benefit from the education we provide.

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A-level and AS-level

Currently only applicants to our School of Medicine and Dentistry are required to achieve a minimum B grade in an AS-level in addition to three A-levels. From 2017 entry we expect to require three A-level passes with a minimum A grade including either Biology or Chemistry and a further Science A-level from Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. We will not require an additional pass in an AS level.

For admission to all other courses we will require three A-level passes and may specify minimum grades in specific subjects, as we currently do.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The EPQ enables students to explore a topic in depth and to develop academic skills that will provide a strong foundation to support their transition to university. We will continue to welcome applications from students with an EPQ, as this provides valuable evidence of their ability and potential. However, we recognise that this option may not be available to all our applicants and will ensure that applicants experience no disadvantage as a consequence of their school or college's curriculum policies.

GCSE

From 2017 entry we expect to require a minimum achievement of grade 8 in three GCSEs and grade 7 in a further three GCSEs, including Biology and Chemistry or Double Science, Maths and English from applicants to our School of Medicine and Dentistry. While GCSE performance is routinely considered in a holistic assessment of applications to all other courses, we do not currently specify achievement of a minimum number of passes at specific grades in GCSE qualifications, beyond minimum requirements in English and Mathematics, normally at current grade B or C. We expect to map these grades to the new grading scheme, treating grade C as equivalent to the new grade 4 or 5. We will publish specific GCSE requirements in our undergraduate prospectus for 2017 entry in March 2016.

General advice to schools and colleges

We would encourage schools and colleges, as well as applicants and their advisers, to continue to refer to the Russell Group's Informed Choices publication, which provides guidance about subjects that are considered to 'facilitate' entry to higher education. While we welcome applications from students offering one or more 'facilitating' subjects, we will consider other subjects offered by students on a case-by-case basis. Specific subject requirements for individual courses will continue to be published in our prospectus and online course finder (www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/coursefinder/).

We recognise the challenges for teachers and schools in delivering a new curriculum and would encourage you to explain any particular changes in school policy about the range of subjects and qualifications on offer in the applicant reference. We would also encourage you to continue to use the reference to explain any circumstances, whether academic or personal, which may have affected an individual applicant.

Making accurate predictions of A-level grades will be more challenging while the new curriculum is introduced in schools and colleges. We would ask you to make every effort to predict accurately, for example by making reference to an applicant's performance in the end of year 12 examinations or by reflecting on the student's overall progress from GCSE to A-level, as this will help us to make fair and informed decisions when offering places to applicants.

Joanne Tallentire

Head of Admissions

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