



EDUCATION LEARNING AND LEISURE COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2013

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE – SENIOR PHASE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to

note ongoing developments with Curriculum for Excellence.

2 Background / Discussion

2.1 At the Education, Learning and Leisure (EL&L) Committee on 6 December 2012, elected members requested that progress reports on the implementation of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence be brought to future EL&L Committees. This report outlines progress since the last Committee on 21 March 2013.

2.2 National Picture

At the March Committee meeting, the national picture was outlined. There have been no national changes to developments by Education Scotland or the Scottish Government.

A national Curriculum for Excellence conference is taking place at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh on 13 May 2013. Officers from the EL&L service have been closely involved in the organisation of this event and will be contributing to the programme, highlighting good practice in Aberdeenshire.

In implementing the new national qualifications, a number of course support materials are now available for National 4 and 5 levels from Education Scotland. Aberdeenshire has provided a significant range of courses to the national bank of materials.

Further professional support materials have been provided for schools in implementing the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence by Education Scotland.

In addition, Scottish universities continue to develop statements to describe their response to the changes to the curriculum and qualifications. University has now produced a positive statement (Appendix 1) alongside previously issued statements by a number of other Scottish universities.

2.3 Aberdeenshire Picture

Developments in assessment, profiling, co-operative learning and literacy and numeracy continue to evolve as outlined in the March Committee report. The Broad General Education (BGE) from P1 to S3 continues to be a focus of development for schools at each stage of curriculum development.

2.4 Senior Phase

The Senior Phase of the revised curriculum is about to be implemented in our secondary schools from June 2013 as described in previous reports.

An update report has been provided by the service to Education Scotland on progress in Aberdeenshire as part of a national update. Education Scotland continues to be very positive about the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence in our schools. This has been expressed by senior Education Scotland staff at the Senior Phase Working Group which continues to provide a constructive forum for discussion of key issues and will meet again in May 2013.

Developments in the curriculum continue to be a focus for schools with pupils and parents being involved in developments. Aberdeenshire parental engagement events have taken place which have provided opportunities for further discussion and involvement.

Positively, the service has worked in partnership with Aberdeen City Council in providing training and support for teachers, Principal Teachers, Depute Head Teachers and Head Teachers in the development of the Senior Phase Benchmarking Toolkit, the nationally developing approach to the analysis of the achievements of young people in the latter stages of education which will replace existing performance measures.

The implementation of the Senior Phase is carefully monitored and will continue to be a focus of quality assurance in our secondary schools.

3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report provides an update on reports from previous Committees.
- 3.2 There are no staffing or financial implications directly arising as a result of this report.
- 3.3 The Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer within Corporate Services and the Head of HR&OD have been consulted on the contents of this report and have no adverse comments.

Maria Walker

Director of Education, Learning & Leisure

Report prepared by: - Andrew Griffiths, Head of Service (Education & Staff Development)



STUDENT RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

The University of Edinburgh
33 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh
EH8 9JS

Telephone 0131 650 1000

Or direct dial 0131 650 4360

Fax 0131 651 1236

Email sra.enquiries@ed.ac.uk

www.sra.ed.ac.uk

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Dear colleague

The University of Edinburgh and Curriculum for Excellence

Please find enclosed a brief statement regarding changes to the University of Edinburgh's admissions policies in response to Curriculum for Excellence.

We hope that this document clarifies the University's approach to entry requirements in light of Curriculum for Excellence.

Should you have any questions about the document, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Gaukroger
Head of Admissions
Student Recruitment & Admissions
University of Edinburgh



The University of Edinburgh Curriculum for Excellence admissions statement

Principles for admission and progression to the University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh will welcome the first cohort of undergraduate students from Scotland who have followed Curriculum for Excellence, and taken the new SQA qualifications, in 2015.

The University is one of the most popular universities in the UK, and entry to Edinburgh is amongst the most competitive. Each year we receive many more applications from well-qualified applicants than we have places available.

In this context, we aim to admit the very best students, who demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the unique academic experience we offer.

The University is committed to fair admissions policies and practices and aims to give equal consideration to applicants who have followed different routes to higher education, and to take into account the circumstances in which qualifications are achieved.

The main purpose of the University of Edinburgh's admissions processes is to select those applicants who best evidence the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to succeed on a specific programme of study and contribute to the life of the University.

Whilst University-wide admissions policies apply to all degree programmes, entry requirements and selection criteria necessarily vary by degree programme, given the different prior knowledge and skills required, and the different levels of competition for places between programmes.

When demand exceeds the number of places available, achieving or being predicted to achieve the minimum entry requirements is unlikely to be sufficient to gain an

offer. In these cases, the University will routinely take a number of factors into account in the admissions selection process, including attainment above the minimum requirement, the content of the personal statement and reference, and any relevant contextual data.

In setting its academic requirements, the University takes into account a number of factors, which align closely with the aims of Curriculum for Excellence:

- Relevance of study
 - It is important that entrant students have the requisite knowledge and skills expected when they commence higher education study in order that they are able to access the curriculum and succeed on their chosen programme of study.
- Depth of study
 - It is important that the prior learning undertaken by applicants demonstrates sufficient depth of study. This evidences a commitment to a subject and, more importantly, the ability to understand and analyse complex ideas.
- Breadth of study
 - The traditional Scottish degree is characterised by breadth of study and an interdisciplinary approach. It is therefore important that applicants to these degree programmes can demonstrate abilities across a range of subject areas.
- Rigour and challenge
 - Students must be able to manage the level and volume of academic work in their chosen programme of study at Edinburgh. It is therefore important that prior study demonstrates sufficient rigour and challenge.
- Progression
 - Whilst it may, on occasion, be necessary for students to take a lower level qualification in S5 or S6 in order to satisfy an entry requirement, for example to pick up a required subject, we generally expect a student's

learner journey to evidence progression, by building upon prior learning. This is in the broad interests of a student's development, and also facilitates a smoother transition to HE level study. It also enables students to evidence continued development and the ability to rise to the challenge of study at a higher level.

Whilst prior academic attainment is the most important single factor determining whether or not an applicant will be offered a place to study at Edinburgh, no applicant will be admitted to the University on the basis of grades alone.

We recognise that not all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential in their prior qualifications. To this end, all applications are given careful individual consideration and a holistic decision is made with regard to an individual's academic achievements, taking into account the context and circumstances of their pre-university studies.

Changes to admissions policy in light of Curriculum for Excellence

In light of Curriculum for Excellence, particularly the emphasis on flexible learner journeys in the senior phase, and the principles outlined above, the University of Edinburgh has amended its admissions policies in the following ways:

1. National 4 and 5 qualifications

The University will accept National 5s where we currently accept Standard Grades and Intermediate 2s, with the following equivalences used:

Standard Grade	Intermediate 2	National 5
1	A	A
2	B	B
3	C	C

Our entry requirements and selection criteria will not include National 4 qualifications.

We recognise that some students, particularly stronger students, may progress directly from the Broad General Education to Highers in some, or all, of their subjects, and will therefore not achieve any National 5 qualifications. Our selection criteria and processes will ensure that applicants following this route will not be disadvantaged.

However, ALL applicants are expected to meet any stated subject requirements.

Where an applicant does not hold a subject that is required at National 5, they must have achieved, or be predicted to achieve an SQA Higher or SQA Advanced Higher pass in the subject. Depending upon the grade required at National 5, this may equate to achieving a B or C grade at Higher or Advanced Higher.

2. Early Highers and one sitting requirements

As stated above, the University of Edinburgh values breadth of study, and seeks to identify students who will manage a challenging workload and thrive academically. Therefore, we seek evidence of rigour and challenge in a student's prior studies.

The University currently expresses its minimum entry requirements in terms of achievement in Highers at one sitting, i.e. in a single exam diet.

Following the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, the University will express its minimum entry requirements in terms of achievement of SQA Highers by the end of S5.

For Medicine (MBChB) and Veterinary Medicine (BVM&S), applicants must have achieved at least 5 Highers at the required grades by the end of S5. In other subject areas, where the minimum entry requirement has not been met by the end of S5, Highers in S6 may be used to meet the minimum entry requirement, but the grade requirement will increase, e.g. where the minimum requirement is ABBB by the end of S5, the requirement will increase to AABB or AB BBB by the end of S6.

3. Minimum number of exams

Whilst the University's one sitting requirement will be interpreted more flexibly in light of CfE, as defined above, in order to evidence rigour and challenge, we will expect students to take a minimum number of exams in at least one year of the senior phase.

In at least one year of the senior phase (S4-S6), applicants must achieve, or be predicted to achieve, three or more Highers/Advanced Highers at grade B or better (C or better at Advanced Higher). I.e. an applicant who sits one Higher in S4 and three new Highers in S5 achieving BBB will be eligible to enter the selection process, providing they meet any relevant minimum requirements in terms of grades and subject of study. An applicant who achieves BB at Higher in S4, BB in two new Highers in S5 and BB in a new Higher and an Advanced Higher in S6 will not be considered for entry to any of our degree programmes.

Regardless of the number of Highers taken in each year of the senior phase, we expect applicants to have followed a coherent, rigorous and challenging curriculum that builds on prior learning, demonstrated by SQA qualifications or a combination of SQA qualifications and other achievements.

Policy monitoring and review

As with all of our admissions policies, the effect of these changes will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they adequately reflect the choices available to students following the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and that they enable the University of Edinburgh to continue to identify and select those students who best demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and contribute to, the unique academic experience we offer.

Finding out more about these changes

Information regarding the University's admissions policies, entry requirements and selection criteria is included in the undergraduate prospectus and online. The University also publishes an admissions guide for teachers and advisers in schools and colleges, which is sent to all schools in the UK (<http://goo.gl/qiocg>).

In light of Curriculum for Excellence, a special guide for Scottish teachers and advisers will be sent to all schools in spring 2013.

As in previous years, the University will run a number of admissions briefing sessions for teachers and advisers in 2013, including a session in May for teachers and advisers at schools and colleges in Scotland. This session will provide an opportunity for schools to provide feedback on the changes to our admissions policy. All schools and colleges have been sent information about these events. Further information is available online (<http://goo.gl/Ye4v0>).

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