

English Language Policy

for courses delivered by Distance Learning mode and Short Courses

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of the policy
3. Scope of policy
4. Core principles
5. Roles and responsibilities and the evaluation process
6. English language tests and routine flexibility rules
7. Pre-sessional and Foundation Programmes
8. High School qualifications
9. Degree level qualifications
10. Professional Registration
11. Professional Experience
12. Non-acceptable evidence
13. Student Visa Immigration Compliance

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Alongside meeting the academic entry requirements, all students being admitted to study at Queen Mary University of London (Queen Mary) must also meet the minimum English language entry requirements for their chosen programme.
- 1.2. The English language requirements for our programmes are indicated by English

bands, and therefore the specific test and score acceptable is based on the band assigned to the academic department within which the course of study is administered. Note that for some academic departments there are programmes with non-standard English language requirements. Degree programmes that are jointly run by two academic departments will follow the English band requirements of the 'Home' department.

- 1.3. We accept a range of English tests and qualifications categorised in our English bands for applicants to demonstrate their level of English Language proficiency.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy aims to:
- 2.2. Create a fair policy regarding the use of English language as an assessment criterion in the university admissions process.
- 2.3. Provide guidelines on equivalencies and qualifications, as well as provision of information to applicants on the requirements.
- 2.4. Create a fair and transparent process for English language assessment
- 2.5. Provide guidelines on how central Admissions is to apply flexibility in a fair and consistent manner.
- 2.6. Provide clarity on roles and authority in the admissions decision-making process.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Queen Mary programmes at the undergraduate or postgraduate level that are delivered by online Distance Learning mode. **This policy is not applicable to anyone requiring visa sponsorship.**
- 3.2. This policy also covers Associate study, Study Abroad Programme and Exchange Students applying through Global Opportunities Office and studying at Queen Mary for less than 6 months, or any other short courses or study periods, that are less than 6 months in duration delivered on campus or online.
- 3.3. Pre-sessional English courses, including those delivered by Distance Learning mode, are covered by a separate the policy titled: '*English Language policy for courses delivered on site at any Queen Mary campus*'.

- 3.4. **Any non-credit bearing study on site for less than 6 months duration or non-credit bearing study by Distance Learning mode of any length:** These students are expected to demonstrate a satisfactory level of English language of IELTS 5.5 in each component or equivalent. Other tests and qualifications equivalent to this level may be considered in place of IELTS – for a full list of these see: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/> Please note the exception to this is for **non-credit bearing postgraduate research associate students enrolling for a period of less than 6 months**, who do not require a Student Route visa – for these students please refer to the policy titled: *‘English Language Policy for Postgraduate Research Associate Students enrolling for less than 6 months’*.
- 3.5. Associate students on credit/award bearing programme are expected to meet the standard English requirement for the academic school/institute.
- 3.6. Associate study, Study Abroad Programme Students and Exchange students studying for 6 months or more in duration are covered by a separate policy - *English Language Policy for courses delivered onsite at any Queen Mary Campus for 2026 entry’*.

4. Core Principles

- 4.1. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of their English language ability which Queen Mary deems is of sufficient standard to cope with the academic demands of the programme for which they have applied.
- 4.2. The evidence of English ability provided by students must be in the form of a Queen Mary recognised English language test or qualification that is valid and meets or exceeds the programme’s English language requirements.
- 4.3. The evidence of English ability provided by student will be checked and verified to ensure the required levels are met and, in most cases, include the adding of a document as proof to the applicant record.
- 4.4. English language requirements and acceptable equivalent qualifications will be advertised transparently and applications assessed through a fair and consistent approach.

5. Roles and responsibilities and the evaluation process

- 5.1. The Central Admissions Office will use their professional judgement to apply the English language policy to determine if an applicant meets the English language requirements, employing a degree of flexibility where possible and necessary.

- 5.2. In exceptional cases, if an applicant fails to meet the published English language requirements for entry, but has a strong profile of English language ability, the Admissions department, School/Institute, the student or their authorised representative may make a case to the Central Admissions Office for a language waiver. When assessing such waiver requests, the policy implementation lead in Central Admissions will ensure the following principles factor in the decisions-making:
- A check if there has been a sustained use of English in all four components of language (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening).
 - Evidence presented will be benchmarked against Queen Mary approved tests and qualifications to determine the academic level of English at a given point, so to form a basis for evaluating if the non-standard evidence can be considered.
 - Factor in previous qualifications or experience of English in an academic setting
 - Look for evidence of recent English language capability
 - Assess the profile of scores and especially be mindful of the ‘Writing’ component as that is deemed by our Language Centre as an important component.
 - Look at timings of the various evidence provided to assess the likelihood of English improving or deteriorating.
 - Any other relevant details in an applicant’s previous history
- 5.3. Any request to waive the English language requirement must be reviewed by the Director of Admissions or their representative, acting under delegated authority. The Central Admissions Office may seek advice from the Head of the Language Centre where appropriate especially if the academic level of English presented is not clear, but the Central Admissions will have the final decision on any cases reviewed. Approval will only be granted in cases where the applicant has clearly demonstrated language proficiency in line with standard entry requirements.

6. English language tests and routine flexibility rules

- 6.1. Queen Mary will consider English tests such as IELTS Academic, TOEFL iBT or Pearson Test of English (Academic). A full list of Queen Mary approved English language tests, including what we consider the validity period for each test, can be found on our English language webpages here:
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/accepted-english-language-tests-and-qualifications/>
- 6.2. **Combining English Language Tests**

Combined scores from two tests that meet the overall **and** component requirements may be considered where **all** the following apply:

- Both tests are within validity period
- Both test results are from the same test provider (i.e. two IELTS tests or two TOEFL tests)
- Both tests have no component scores below IELTS 5.5 or the equivalent
- There is no more than 0.5 difference in the writing component score
- There is no more than 0.5 difference in the overall score
- The rule of combining English tests should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this rule of combining English Language tests should not be applied to any UG Foundation entry.

6.3. **Meeting Overall Score and Writing Score**

- If up to a maximum of two **non-writing** component score is below programme requirements by no more than IELTS 0.5 (or the equivalent in another Queen Mary approved test e.g. TOEFL) we will consider provided the ‘Overall’ score and the ‘Writing’ score and one other component score meets.
- In this scenario all component scores will have to be met at IELTS 5.5 or above (or the equivalent).
- This rule must not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this rule must not be applied to any UG Foundation entry.

6.4. **Exceeding in the ‘Writing’ component**

- If the ‘Overall’ score is below programme requirements by no more than IELTS 0.5 (or the equivalent in another Queen Mary approved test e.g. TOEFL) we will consider provided the ‘Writing’ component score has exceeded by IELTS 0.5 (or the equivalent) and also all other component scores meet.
- In this scenario all component scores will have to be met at IELTS 5.5 or above (or the equivalent).
- This rule must not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this rule must not be applied to any UG Foundation entry.

6.5. TOEFL and PTE Academic - note on Overall score

- If a student has met the programme requirements in all 4 components we will accept as evidence if the 'Overall' score in TOEFL or PTE is below requirements by no more than 2 marks.
- In this scenario all component scores will have to be met.
- This rule should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this flexibility rule should not be applied to any UG Foundation entry.

7. Pre-sessional and Foundation Programmes

- 7.1. Applicants who fall marginally short of a programme's English language requirements may be permitted to undertake a Queen Mary pre-sessional English programme in order to meet the required English language level. Our Pre-sessional requirements are programme-specific and can be found on our English language webpages here: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguagerequirements/presessional-english-requirements/>
- 7.2. We will consider BALEAP accredited pre-sessional English language courses on a case by case basis. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking scores will be evaluated against our standard entry requirements.
<https://www.baleap.org/about-baleap/accredited-institutions>
- 7.3. Academic English modules contained within Foundation courses may be considered for entry. Modules that are deemed acceptable, including details of validity periods, can be found on our English language webpages here:
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguagerequirements/accepted-english-language-tests-and-qualifications/>

8. High School qualifications

- 8.1. Queen Mary will consider the English component from select High School qualifications. A full list of Queen Mary approved High School qualifications can be found on our English language webpages here:
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguagerequirements/accepted-english-language-tests-and-qualifications/>

- 8.2. The validity period will not apply to those that meet the programme's English requirements in accordance with the English component of a Queen Mary approved High School qualification.
- 8.3. Two years study of 3 A-Levels (from a UK exam board) that we accept for academic purposes, or BTEC study (that is equivalent to 3 A levels), successfully completed whilst located in a Majority English Speaking Country (MESC, as defined by UK Visa and Immigration) will automatically be accepted as meeting English language requirements.

9. Degree level qualifications

- 9.1. Degree study and award, that is equivalent to UK degrees, at an approved institution from a Majority English Speaking Country (MESC) as defined by UKVI, will be considered as meeting the English language requirements provided it is delivered within the MESC. Such degrees will not be restricted by a validity period.
- 9.2. Canadian (or MESC) nationals with degrees delivered and awarded in Canada will be considered as meeting the English language requirements. Such degrees will not be restricted by a validity period. (Non-Canadian nationals with Canadian degrees will be considered under the category below – 'Selected countries where English Language may be the medium of instruction').
- 9.3. Minimum length of study required for MESC degrees:
 - At least the final year of the degree awarded by an approved MESC institution must be studied whilst located in the MESC. For our Study Abroad and Summer School programmes we will accept 1 year of successful degree study in any year at an approved MESC institution, but this must be studied whilst located in the MESC
 - At least nine months of postgraduate degree study (equivalent to UK PG Diploma or Masters level) successfully completed at an approved institution in a MESC will automatically be accepted to meet the English Language requirements.
- 9.4. **Selected countries where English language may be the medium of instruction** - Degree study from select countries mentioned below that have been taught and examined in English may be used to satisfy English language requirements. In order to be considered under this category, applicants will be asked to provide an academic transcript or confirmation letter from a 'central office' of the university such as registry or exams office or student administration office, stating that their degree was taught and examined in English. Degrees from this category will not be restricted by a validity period. Nationals of Canada (or other MESC nationals)

presenting a degree delivered and awarded in Canada do not need to provide confirmation of medium of instruction.

The following countries are known to offer degree-level study in English:

- Belgium
- Brunei
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Finland
- Hong Kong
- Germany
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Luxembourg
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mauritius
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Norway

- Pakistan (only those from institutions in Appendix A)
- Philippines
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- South Africa
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

9.5. Minimum length of study required for degrees for those that meet from 'Selected countries where English language may be the medium of instruction':

- At least two years of successfully completed undergraduate study (equivalent to UK degree) at an approved institution in one of the countries listed in 9.4 above may be used to fulfil the English language requirements if the degree was taught and examined in English.
- At least nine months of successfully completed postgraduate degree study (equivalent to UK PG Diploma or Masters level) at an approved institution in one of the above countries listed in 9.4 above may be used to fulfil the English language requirements if the degree was taught and examined in English.

9.6 **All other countries where English language may be the medium of instruction -**

Degree study from all other countries (not listed in above categories) that have been taught and examined in English may be used to satisfy English language requirements if the applicant **prior** to entering the degree had previously met the requirements in accordance with a QM approved English test/qualification even if the test was out of the valid period. (QM approved test/qualifications can be found here: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/>). If previous language test has a score that is only marginally below entry requirements, this will be considered on a case by case. In order to be considered under this category, applicants will be asked to provide an academic transcript or confirmation

letter from a 'central office' of the university such as registry or exams office or student administration office, stating that their degree was taught and examined in English. If the applicant meets under this category, the degree will not be restricted by a validity period. For minimum length of degrees in this category 9.5 above will apply.

9.7 Degree taught overseas but awarded by an institution from a Majority English

Speaking Country - Degrees awarded by recognised institutions from a Majority English Speaking Country but delivered overseas can be used to meet English language requirements. In order to be considered under this category, applicants will usually be asked to provide an academic transcript or confirmation letter from a 'central office' of the university such as registry or exams office or student administration office, stating that their degree was taught and examined in English. Queen Mary degrees taught overseas and University of London external programmes will not need to show evidence of medium of instruction. If the applicant meets under this category, the degree will not have a validity period. If the applicant meets under this category, the degree will not be restricted by a validity period. For minimum length of degrees in this category 9.5 above will apply.

9.8 US degrees awarded by institutions outside of the US can be considered for meeting English Language requirements provided the degree is accredited by a US Exam Board (e.g. Middle States Commission on Higher Education). In order to be considered under this category, applicants will usually be asked to provide an academic transcript or confirmation letter from a 'central office' of the university such as registry or exams office or student administration office, stating that the degree was taught and examined in English. If the applicant meets under this category, the degree will not be restricted by a validity period. For minimum length of degrees in this category 9.5 above will apply.

9.9 **Distance Learning Degrees** - All degrees taught by distance learning mode will only be considered for entry to Queen Mary distance learning programmes provided the degree is considered for academic entry and falls within one of the categories above where we can consider English Language as medium of instruction. Applicants will usually be asked to provide an academic transcript or confirmation letter from a 'central office' of the university such as registry or exams office or student administration office, stating that the degree was taught and examined in English. If the applicant meets under this category, the degree will not be restricted by a validity period. For minimum length of degrees in this category 9.5 above will apply. For degrees awarded by a Majority English Speaking Country, we will not require evidence of medium of instruction.

10. Professional Registration

- 10.1. General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC) and General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) registration [1] with a licence to practise can be considered in lieu of an academic English language qualification for entry to full-time, part-time and distance-learning programmes. The GMC, GDC or GPhC registration with a licence to practise or re-registration with a licence to practise must have been obtained within the past 5 years to be considered valid.
- 10.2. Membership of the Royal Colleges of Physicians (MRCP) registration with a licence to practise can be considered in lieu of an academic English language qualification for our courses delivered by Distance Learning only. MRCP registration with a licence to practise or re-registration with a licence to practise must have been obtained within the past 5 years to be considered valid

11. Professional Experience

- 11.1. English use in a professional context can act as evidence of recent use of English and demonstrate that academic English language that had been previously met has not deteriorated. We may consider professional experience if the following conditions are met:
- 11.2. If a student previously met a programme's English requirements with a Queen Mary approved test/qualification but it is out of the valid date range, we may consider if they can demonstrate appropriate evidence of at least 12 months' work experience using all 4 components of the English language, that is completed no more than 6 months prior to the start date of the programme. We may consider such students with an appropriate employer letter or email from a company address that confirms all of the following:
 - Confirm if English language is used in the employment. Examples provided of how English is used in the employment will be helpful.
 - Confirm the length of time the employment was held, including start and end dates (and if currently still employed)..
 - Confirmation of above details on an official letter (- on letterhead and signed) or from a company email address

In such cases, if previous language test has a score that is only marginally below entry requirements, these will be considered on a case by case only.

- 11.3. If the employment is in a Majority English Speaking Country (MESCC) we will only need the employer letter to confirm the following:
 - Confirm the length of time the employment was held, including start and

^[1] The GMC, GDC and GPhC have robust procedures to establish language proficiency in all four English language components.

end dates (and if currently still employed).

- Confirmation of above details on an official letter (- on letterhead and signed) or from a company email address.

If the employment was in a Majority English Speaking Country for at least 3 years (and the student previously met our according to a Queen Mary approved test/qualification) there will be no validity period for of this employment evidence.

12. Non-acceptable evidence

- 12.1. The following forms of evidence are not considered acceptable proof of English language ability:
- 12.2. Formal or informal interviews, including applicant correspondence
- 12.3. Written work, such as essays or personal statement.
- 12.4. References or statements confirming an applicant speaks English.
- 12.5. Registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- 12.6. Work experience in the medium of English considered solely without the applicant previously meeting with an approved academic qualification/English language test.
- 12.7. Any acceptable evidence accompanied by a more recent language test which falls more than 0.5 below our entry requirements in one component (reading, writing, listening, speaking or overall).

13. Student Visa Immigration Compliance

- 13.1. Though programmes delivered by Distance Learning mode are not subject to Student Visa and immigration compliance, please note students will not be able to switch a programme that has on campus delivery (even if it is the same programme with different delivery mode). The exception will be if it is academically viable to make the change and if students meet the English Language requirements in accordance with the titled: 'English Language Policy for courses delivered on site at any Queen Mary campus'
- 13.2. The list of Majority English Speaking Countries (MESCC) as defined by UKVI for reference where this is mentioned above, is as follows:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- British Overseas Territories
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Ireland
- Jamaica
- Malta
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- UK
- United States of America

Appendix A:

University/DAI Name	Main Campus Location	Consider for English Exemption with appropriate MOI letter (as per 9.4 above)
Aga Khan University, Karachi	Karachi	Yes
Air University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Bahria University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Beaconhouse National University, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Forman Christian College, Lahore (university status)	Lahore	Yes
Foundation University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences & Technology, Topi	Topi	Yes
Government College University, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
Institute of Business Administration, Karachi	Karachi	Yes
Institute of Space Technology, Islamabad (IST)	Islamabad	Yes
International Islamic University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Iqra University, Karachi	Karachi	Yes
King Edward Medical University, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
Lahore School of Economics, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore	Lahore	Yes

National College of Arts, Lahore (NCA)	Lahore	Yes
National Defense University, Islamabad (NDU)	Islamabad	Yes
National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
National University of Sciences & Technology, Rawalpindi (NUST)	Islamabad	Yes
NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi	Karachi	Yes
Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences, Islamabad (PIEAS)	Islamabad	Yes
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Sc. & Technology (SZABIST), Karachi	Karachi	Yes
Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad	Islamabad	Yes
Sir Syed University of Engg. & Technology, Karachi	Karachi	Yes
University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore	Lahore	Yes
University of Engineering & Technology, Taxila	Taxila	Yes

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	English Language Policy for Courses delivered by Distance Learning mode and Short Courses.
Related policies and procedures	All related admissions policies are available on the Policy Zone webpages .
Approval level	Education Quality and Standards Board
Approval date	July 2025
Effective date	September 2025 for entry in the academic year September 2026/27
Next review due	April 2026
Policy owner	Christopher Sleeman, Director of Admissions.
Policy contacts	Christopher Sleeman, Director of Admissions & Abul Kalam, Admissions Manager