

English Language Policy

for courses delivered onsite at any Queen Mary Campus

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Alongside meeting the academic entry requirements, all students being admitted to study at Queen Mary University of London 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 sets out 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.
- 2.7. Ensure Queen Mary follows all compliance requirements related to English for admission to UK Higher Education.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all on campus delivered credit-bearing Queen Mary programmes at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, to include:
 - a. Undergraduate students
 - b. Postgraduate students (taught and research programmes)
 - c. Study Abroad Programme and Exchange Students applying through the Global Opportunities Office and studying with Queen Mary for more than 6 months
 - d. Approved Partnerships - students on study routes approved by the International Partnerships Office. (For this group an annex titled 'Annex to English Language policy for approved partnerships' will also apply. Refer to Admissions Office if you require further info on this).
 - e. Associate students studying on campus for more than 6 months
 - f. Any short course over 6 months in duration
 - g. On Campus Professional development students
 - h. Degree apprenticeship students

- i. Foundation certificate students
 - j. Pre-Masters students
 - k. Pre-sessional English (PSE) courses of any length (including PSE delivered by Distance Learning mode)
- 3.2. **Non-credit bearing Associate study for more than 6 months:** Students to non-credit/award bearing programmes with duration of more than 6 months are expected to demonstrate a satisfactory level of English language in line with UKVI minimum requirements (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/accepted-english-language-tests-and-qualifications/>
- 3.3. Associate students on credit/award bearing programme are expected to meet the standard English requirement for the academic school/institute.
- 3.4. Associate study, Study Abroad Programme Students and Exchange students, or other short courses, that are less than 6 months in duration are covered by a separate policy.

4. Core Principles and Legislative context

- 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 (*see 6.1 below*) recognised English language test or qualification that is valid and meets or exceeds both UKVI and the programme's English language requirements, whichever is higher.
- 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.
- 4.5. The English language policy is in accordance with all Student visa and immigration compliance regulations, and outlines the appropriate evidence required for sponsored Student Visa students.

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, incorporating UKVI requirements and 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 evidences provided to assess the likelihood of English improving or deteriorating.
 - Take in to account any UKVI minimum requirements
 - Any other relevant details in an applicant’s previous history
- 5.3. Any request to waive the English language requirement will 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 Pre-sessional English course entry or 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 UKVI minimum component scores (e.g. IELTS 5.5 in each component) will have to be met.
- 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 UKVI minimum component scores (e.g. IELTS 5.5 in each component) will have to be met.

- 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 Pre-sessional English course entry or 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 UKVI minimum 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 Pre-sessional English course entry or 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/englishlanguage/requirements/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/englishlanguage/requirements/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,

including what we consider the validity period for each qualification, can be found on our English language webpages here: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/accepted-english-language-tests-and-qualifications/>

- 8.2. The listed validity period for the English component of a Queen Mary approved High School qualification can be waived for nationals of a Majority English Speaking Country (MESC, as defined by UKVI)¹, provided they have successfully completed a Queen Mary approved High School qualification with the required grade whilst located in a Majority English Speaking Country (MESC).
- 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 UKVI) will automatically be accepted as meeting English language requirements, provided it has been completed within 5 years of the proposed programme start date.
- 8.4. For nationals of any country **not** listed on UKVI's 'Differential evidence requirement for a Student' list, we can only accept from them an English test (or qualification) from our approved list that can be verified by us at Queen Mary directly at source on the test (or qualification) provider's verification portal. UKVI's 'Differential evidence requirement for a Student' list can be found under section ST 22.1 here: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student.

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.
- 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

¹ As defined by the UKVI. A full list can be found on page 10 of this document.

- 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. All other degree holders, including those with MESC degrees delivered outside of MESC, must meet English Language requirements with a Queen Mary approved English test or qualification that can be found on our English language pages here: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/>
- 9.5. For nationals of any country **not** listed on UKVI’s ‘Differential evidence requirement for a Student’ list, we can only accept from them an English test (or qualification) from our approved list that can be verified by us at Queen Mary directly at source on the test (or qualification) provider’s verification portal. UKVI’s ‘Differential evidence requirement for a Student’ list can be found under section ST 22.1 here: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student.
- 9.6. **Degrees delivered by Distance Learning mode** will not be accepted for meeting English language requirements except for those awarded by Queen Mary University of London, provided it is awarded within ten years of the proposed programme start date. The degree award date will be used when calculating the validity period.

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.

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

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

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 that confirms all of the following:

- Comment if all 4 components of the English language (Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking) are regularly used in the employment. Examples provided of how English is used in the employment will be helpful.
- Comment if proficient in English in all 4 components of the language – Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking.
- 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. For nationals of any country **not** listed on UKVI's 'Differential evidence requirement for a Student' list, we can only accept from them an English test (or qualification) from our approved list that can be verified by us at Queen Mary directly at source on the test (or qualification) provider's verification portal. UKVI's 'Differential evidence requirement for a Student' list can be found under section ST 22.1 here: www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student

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. Degrees delivered by Distance learning mode (excluding those awarded by the Queen Mary University of London).
- 12.6. Registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- 12.7. Work experience in the medium of English considered solely without the applicant previously meeting with an approved academic qualification/English language test.

- 12.8. 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. As a Student visa sponsor, Queen Mary must ensure that all applicants are able to demonstrate a sufficient level of English ability at the relevant level to succeed on the course. Queen Mary will assess any means of meeting English language requirements that does not take the form of a test or qualification in line with Home Office policy.
- 13.2. For main degree programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate level, applicants using an acceptable English language test must meet minimum thresholds (of CEFR B2 level) in each component score to meet the UKVI minimum requirements to be sponsored for a Student visa application. Although CEFR B2 level for English is the minimum acceptable for meeting UKVI regulations to be sponsored for a Student visa application, applicants must also meet the English language requirements for the course of study, many of which are higher than this minimum.
- 13.3. For entry to programmes below degree level (including on campus pre-sessional English and foundation programmes) all English language qualifications must be one of our approved tests that is also a UK government approved Secure English Language Test (SELT)² and must have a minimum of CEFR B1 level in each component score in order to meet the UKVI minimum requirements to be sponsored for a Student visa application. Although CEFR B1 level for English is the minimum acceptable for meeting UKVI regulations to be sponsored for a Student visa application, applicants must also meet the English language requirements for the course of study, many of which are higher than this minimum.
- 13.4. Applicants who are nationals of a country on the Majority English Speaking Country list as set by the Home Office² have met the Home Office's English language requirements for a Student visa (but will still need to meet the programme requirements).
- 13.5. The list of Majority English Speaking Countries (MESCC) as defined by UKVI is as follows:
- Antigua and Barbuda
 - Australia
 - The Bahamas

² <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english>

- 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

13.6. Applicants who do not require a Student visa, but who wish to register for programmes below degree level must still meet the English language requirements for entry. These students may present with a non-SELT English language qualification.

13.7. Applicants who have successfully completed a course of study in the UK as a Tier 4 (child) student or as a student under rules in force before 31 March 2009 (where the course was at least six months' long and completed no more than two years ago) may present with a non-SELT English language qualification.

13.8. All students that require a student visa must have an approved English language test or equivalent qualification or assessment on file with the student record for audit purposes.

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	English Language Policy for Courses delivered Onsite at any Queen Mary Campus.
Related policies and procedures	All related admissions policies are available on the Policy Zone webpages .
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Policy contact	Christopher Sleeman, Director of Admissions & Abul Kalam, Admissions Manager