



English Language Policy:
For courses delivered by Distance
Learning mode and Short Courses.

English language Policy for courses delivered by Distance Learning mode and Short Courses

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SCOPE OF POLICY

All applicants must meet the English language entry requirements for their chosen programme in order to study at Queen Mary University of London.

This policy sets out to:

- a. Create a fair policy regarding the use of English language as an assessment criterion in the university admissions process
- b. Provide guidelines on equivalencies and qualifications, as well as provision of information to applicants on the requirements
- c. Create a fair and transparent process for English language assessment
- d. Provide guidelines on how we apply flexibility

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 suitable for anyone requiring visa sponsorship.**

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.

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 QM campus'*.

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’*.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Applicants will be required to provide evidence that their English language ability is of a sufficiently high standard to cope with the academic demands of the programme for which they have applied. This evidence must be in the form of a Queen Mary recognized, valid English language test or qualification.

The following are the core principles of the English language policy:

- a. All applicants must have a sufficient level of academic English ability in order to be successful on their preferred choice of programme.
- b. All students will have an acceptable level of English language ability, and this will be verified through graded qualifications or tests to the required level in most cases, and with a document on file.
- c. English language requirements and acceptable equivalent qualifications should be advertised transparently, and applications assessed through a fair and consistent approach.
- d. The Admissions team, in conjunction with and guidance from Language Centre colleagues, are to use their professional judgement and guidelines below to determine if an applicant meets the English language requirements.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS

Below are examples of some of the main English language tests we accept:

- IELTS (Academic or UKVI approved)
- TOEFL iBT
- Pearson Test of English (Academic or Academic UKVI approved)
- C2 Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE)
- C1 Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)
- Trinity ISE (UKVI approved)

The above language tests must be taken within **five years** of the proposed programme start date at Queen Mary University of London. All scores will be verified with the respective provider.

Full list of Queen Mary approved alternative English tests that are acceptable can be found here:
<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/alternative-qualifications/>

Combining English Language Tests

Combined scores from two tests may be considered where **all** of 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 must have no component scores below IELTS 5.5 or the equivalent
- There must be no more than 0.5 difference in the writing component score
- There must be 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.

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 can 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 should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.

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 QM approved test e.g. TOEFL) we can 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 should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.

TOEFL and PTE Academic - note on Overall score

- If a student has met the programme requirements in all 4 components we can 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.

PRE-SESSIONAL AND FOUNDATION PROGRAMMES

Applicants who fall marginally short of a programme's English language requirements will normally 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 (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/>)

We will also consider [BALEAP accredited](#) pre-sessional English language courses. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking scores will be evaluated against our standard entry requirements.

Academic English modules contained within Foundation courses may be considered for entry. Modules that are deemed acceptable can be found on our 'alternative qualifications' section of our English Language webpages (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/alternative-qualifications/>)

Pre-sessional and foundation courses must have been taken within **five years** of the proposed programme start date at Queen Mary University of London.

HIGH SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

Select high school qualifications in English language will be considered for entry, provided that they meet programme requirements.

The High school qualifications we can consider are those as detailed in the 'Alternative Qualifications' section of our English language pages (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/>).

Those that meet English requirements in accordance with an acceptable High School qualification will not have a validity period.

UK Qualifications at Majority English Speaking Countries:

Two years of A-Level or BTEC study completed in a Majority English Speaking Country (as defined by UKVI) will automatically be accepted for entry.

DEGREE LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Degree studied in a Majority English Speaking Country (as defined by UKVI)

Degree study and award at an approved institution from a Majority English Speaking Countries (MESC) will be considered as meeting the English Language requirements provided it is delivered within the MESC.

Canadian (or MESC) nationals with degrees delivered and awarded in Canada will be considered under this category. Non-Canadian nationals with Canadian degrees will be considered under the next category – ‘Selected countries where English Language may be the medium of instruction’.

Those that meet English in accordance with this category of MESC degree delivered and awarded in MESC, the degree will not be restricted by a validity period.

Minimum length of study 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.
- 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.

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 have 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 English¹:

- Belgium
- Brunei
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Finland
- Hong Kong
- Germany
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya

¹ <https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>

- 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

Minimum length of study for degrees:

- At least two years of successfully completed undergraduate study (equivalent to UK degree) at an approved institution in one of the above countries 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 may be used to fulfil the English language requirements if the degree was taught and examined in English.

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 have a validity period.

Degrees 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.

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 have a validity period.

DISTANCE-LEARNING DEGREES

All degrees taught by distance learning 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 have a validity period. For degrees awarded by a Majority English Speaking Country, we will not require evidence of medium of instruction.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC) and General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) registration^[2] 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.

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

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Work experience can act as evidence of recent use of English, and so can demonstrate that academic English language that had been previously met has not deteriorated.

Expired Queen Mary approved test/qualification plus recent work experience

If a student previously met programme requirements with a Queen Mary approved test/qualification but this is out of the valid date range we can consider if they can demonstrate appropriate evidence of at least 12 months' work experience using all 4 components of the English language completed no more than 6 months prior to the start date of the programme. If previous language test has a score that is only marginally below entry requirements, this will be considered on a case by case.

(All Queen Mary approved test/qualification that can be found here:

<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/>)

We can 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.

^[2] The GMC, GDC and GPhC have robust procedures to establish language proficiency in all four English language components.

If the employment is in a Majority English Speaking Country (MESC) or from one of the 'Selected countries where English Language may be the medium of instruction (as noted above), we will only need the employer letter to confirm the following:

- 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.

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.

NON-ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

- Formal or informal interviews, including applicant correspondence, are not acceptable for proof of English language ability.
- Written work, such as essays or personal statement, are not acceptable for proof of English language ability.
- References or statements confirming an applicant speaks English are not acceptable proof of English language ability.
- Registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is not accepted for entry.
- Work experience in the medium of English considered solely without the applicant meeting with an approved academic qualification/English language test is not accepted for entry.
- Any acceptable evidence such as Language of instruction letters 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).

EVALUATION PROCESS

In exceptional cases, if an applicant fails to meet the published English language entry requirements, but has a strong profile of English language ability, the Admissions department, School/Institute, the student or their authorised representative may make a case for a language waiver. When assessing such cases the following principles will factor:

- Evidence of sustained use of English in all four English language ability areas
- Evidence presented will be benchmarked against QM 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.
- Previous qualifications or experience in an academic setting in English
- Evidence of recent English language capability
- Assess the profile of scores, and especially be mindful of the 'Writing' component as that is deemed by the Language Centre as an important component.
- Look at timings of the various evidences provided to assess the likelihood of English improving or deteriorating.
- Any other relevant details in an applicant's previous history

Any request to waive the English language requirement will be reviewed by the Director of Admissions (or delegated authority). 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. 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.

STUDENT VISA IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE

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 QM campus'.

Majority English Speaking Countries:

The list of Majority English Speaking Countries, 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
- United States of America

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