



**English Language Policy:**  
For courses delivered onsite at any  
Queen Mary Campus

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## English language Policy for courses delivered on site at any QM campus

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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 on campus 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)

**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/>

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.

## **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 QM recognised, valid English language test or qualification, and must meet or exceed both UKVI and programme English language requirements, whichever are higher.

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 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.
- e. 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, incorporating UKVI requirements and employing a degree of flexibility where possible and necessary.

## **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 two 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.
- Also, this rule of combining English Language tests should not be applied to any Preessional English course entry or UG Foundation entry.

#### **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 UKVI minimum component scores (e.g. IELTS 5.5 in each component) will have to be met.
- This rule should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this rule should not be applied to any UG Foundation entry.

#### **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 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 UKVI minimum component scores (e.g. IELTS 5.5 in each component) will have to be met.
- This rule should not be applied in combination with any other flexibility rule mentioned in the policy.
- Also, this rule should not be applied to any Preessional English course entry or UG Foundation entry.

#### **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 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 Preessional English course entry or UG Foundation entry.

#### **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 **two 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 and have been completed within the validity period.

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/>).

These must be taken and valid within **five years** of the proposed programme start date at Queen Mary University of London in order to meet entry requirements.

The five-year validity period can be waived for nationals of a Majority English Speaking Country (as defined by UKVI)<sup>1</sup>, provided they have successfully completed a QM approved High School qualification with the required grade at a in a Majority English Speaking Country.

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, provided that it has been completed within the validity period.

Please note, if you are a national of any country NOT listed on UKVI's '*Differential evidence requirement for a Student*' list, we can only accept from you 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student)

## 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 (MESCC) as defined by UKVI, will be considered as meeting the English Language requirements provided it is delivered within the MESCC.

<sup>1</sup> As defined by the UKVI. A full list can be found on page 8 of this document.

Canadian (or MESC) nationals with degrees delivered and awarded in Canada will be considered under this category.

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.

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

Please note, if you are a national of any country NOT listed on UKVI's '*Differential evidence requirement for a Student*' list, we can only accept from you 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student)

### **DISTANCE-LEARNING DEGREES**

For the purposes of meeting English language requirements, ONLY Queen Mary University of London degrees can be accepted for entry to full-time, part-time and distance learning programmes, 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.

### **PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION**

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.

### **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 QM approved test/qualification plus recent work experience

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

If a student previously met programme requirements with a QM 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.

(All QM 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 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.

If previous language test has a score that is only marginally below entry requirements, this will be considered on a case by case.

Please note, if you are a national of any country NOT listed on UKVI's '*Differential evidence requirement for a Student*' list, we can only accept from you 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](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student)

### **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 for proof of English language ability.
- Distance learning degrees (excluding those awarded by the Queen Mary University of London) are not accepted.
- 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 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 authorized 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 evidence 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

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

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.

For main degree programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate level, applicants using an acceptable English language test must meet minimum thresholds in each component score (CEFR B2 level) in order to meet the UKVI minimum requirements to be sponsored for a Student visa application.

Although CEFR B2 level for English is acceptable for meeting UKVI regulations to be sponsored for a Student visa application, this is the minimum acceptable level for entry. Applicants must also meet the English language requirements for the course of study, many of which are higher than this minimum.

For entry to programmes below degree level (including on campus pre-sessional English and foundation programmes), all English language qualifications must be a Secure English Language Test (SELT)<sup>2</sup> 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 acceptable for meeting UKVI regulations to be sponsored for a Student visa application, this is the minimum acceptable level for entry to programmes below degree level. Applicants must also meet the English language requirements for the course of study, many of which are higher than this minimum.

Acceptable SELTs are only those listed on the Home Office list of approved tests:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prove-your-english-language-abilities-with-a-secure-english-language-test-selt>



Applicants who are nationals of a country on the Majority English Speaking Country list as set by the Home Office<sup>2</sup> have met the Home Office's English language requirements for a Student visa (but will still need to meet the programme requirements)

The list of Majority English Speaking Countries 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

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. They may present with a non-SELT English language qualification.

Similarly, 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.

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.

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.

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

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