

## Swansea University Statement on Changes to Qualifications in Schools and Colleges in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The University has carefully considered the information available so far on qualification reform and on changes to A and AS levels, among other qualifications. We recognise that changes to GCSE's, AS and A levels in England, alongside different qualifications frameworks in Wales and Northern Ireland, present challenges for schools, colleges and Higher Education providers over the coming years.

We anticipate variation in the ways different English schools and colleges plan for the changes and different patterns of study across Years 12 and 13. We similarly acknowledge that while English students will be assessed on a linear basis, pupils in Wales and Northern Ireland will retain access to modular AS and A-level provision.

Experience tells us that applicants increasingly present a portfolio of qualifications; we will always strive to consider each application on an individual basis and to tailor our offers accordingly.

With this in mind the following additional admissions guidance may be helpful:

All students: When considering applicants' qualifications, we will take into account the context in which they have been studying and the educational opportunities that have been available to them. We receive some of this information directly from UCAS, but it will help us if schools and colleges can include any additional relevant information in the reference.

### GCSE's

The current minimum requirement to entry to an undergraduate course at Swansea University is to hold GCSE English or Welsh at grade C or equivalent.

We will continue to require all applicants to achieve at least a grade C in English Language or Welsh GCSE in Wales and at least a 4 in English GCSE taken in England.

In addition to the above, individual Colleges and programmes within the University may set minimum entry requirements for levels of attainment at GCSE or equivalent, particularly in Mathematics.

### AS levels

We can reassure schools and colleges that we will continue to be able to identify and select highly academically able students even where AS grades are not available. Swansea has always found AS grades helpful as part of an overall application, but we make our offers based on final performance and do not ask for an additional AS. Decisions are always based on a wide range of factors, including GCSE or equivalent attainment, predicted grades, the strength of the personal statement and the evidence of achievement and potential provided in the academic reference.

### Students offering A Level qualifications:

1. Typical offers at Swansea will continue to be based on final performance in three A-level subjects. We will continue to be mindful that students apply from a variety of school and college contexts, each offering their students access to a different range and number of subjects at varying levels.
2. Those without interim AS awards will not be at a disadvantage. Additional study, in a variety of forms, can help pupils prepare for the demands of university. Students who are able to extend their three A levels by undertaking additional study, such as any additional A-level(s), AS level, or Extended Project Qualification, are encouraged to do so.
3. We will clearly identify situations where we have a specific stance regarding additional study. We may build the additional study into the terms of an offer by giving a candidate alternative ways to meet our requirements. Offers in these cases come in two parts, one based on three A-level subjects and one, as an alternative, including the additional qualification being undertaken (typically EPQ). In these cases, the grade requirement in one of the three A-levels may be reduced in recognition of the additional study.
4. The University will also look to expand on the number of courses where candidates who have either an Extended Project Qualification or fourth subject at AS or A level receive an alternate offer.
5. In all cases, the Admissions Office may use additional study as part of its final selection process during the summer, in the event that spaces are available for any candidates who have narrowly missed the terms of their offer.
6. Student choices about whether to undertake additional study, what and how much, should rest primarily on their academic best interests. Our admissions and outreach teams welcome enquiries from schools, colleges and students who would like advice on how best to meet our entry requirements.
7. Where candidates are taking an A-level in a Science subject, the University will expect the student to be successfully assessed in any practical skills.

### Students with other qualifications

1. We welcome the new graded Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma and specifically view the Individual Project as an excellent form of additional learning, particularly when the project is based in an area related to an applicants HE course of choice. Applicants will have the choice of a three A Level grade offer or a 2 A Level grade and 1 Welsh Baccalaureate Grade offer. This also applies to entry scholarships tied to academic achievement.
2. The Extended Project qualification is welcomed as additional study as it offers excellent preparation for higher education study. Students should tell us about it in their Personal Statement and we may well take it into account when deciding whether we are able to make an offer ( see A level advice on additional study above)
3. We welcome applications from BTEC students provided the content is suitable preparation for their chosen degree programme. For some programmes, BTEC entry requirements will state additional A level requirements, e.g. Maths A level at B grade for Mechanical Engineering BEng programmes. We welcome enquiries about how any mix of qualifications may meet our more typical entry requirements if not already published on our course pages.

4. The International Baccalaureate is viewed very positively. Many courses require specific subjects and grades at Higher level.
5. We also welcome applications from students with Scottish qualifications. When new Advanced Highers are available, the University will continue to require two of these, in addition to five Highers. Schools, colleges and pupils are encouraged to consider a challenging and full load of studies for the final school year as this is the best preparation for a demanding university experience.
6. We welcome applications from students with Access to HE Diplomas to almost all of our programmes. We are aware that there have been significant changes to the structure of these qualifications this year and, where necessary, our entry requirements have been updated to reflect this. It is particularly important that these students note the GCSE requirements of our programmes and contact us to discuss these if they have any queries.