

## CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE STATEMENT

As the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence is introduced, the University of Cambridge wishes to reaffirm its commitment to fair admissions and to ensuring that there will be no disadvantage to those pupils undertaking the new curriculum in Scotland. The University of Cambridge welcomes the introduction of the Senior Phase, especially insofar as it will provide increased depth of learning that we anticipate pupils will undertake and flexibility for pupils to proceed via different pathways. We hope that it will enable a broader range of pupils to realise their full academic potential and to gain the qualifications required for entry to higher education at the highest level that their potential allows.

We understand that secondary schools may operate varying models of delivery of the Senior Phase. The University of Cambridge will endeavour not to disadvantage any applicant due to the school's curriculum. We are committed to fair admissions policies which will continue to allow for the equal consideration of candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills base irrespective of what routes they may have taken through the Senior Phase (S4 to S6).

In setting its academic requirements, the University of Cambridge takes into account a number of factors:

- We seek to admit only those students who have the requisite knowledge and skills necessary successfully to commence study on our courses in order that they are able to access the curriculum and succeed on their chosen programme of study.
- It is also essential that the prior learning undertaken by applicants demonstrates sufficient depth of study. This evidences a commitment to a subject and, more importantly, the ability to understand and analyse complex ideas.
- Students must be able to manage the level and volume of academic work at Cambridge. It is therefore crucial that prior study demonstrates sufficient rigour and challenge.
- Assessment of applicants is holistic and takes into account the context in which the student has studied and developed.
- Except where pre-Clinical requirements obtain, we will not expect any particular pattern of results in National 5 examinations.
- The University understands that some schools may wish pupils to sit one or two Higher exams after one year of study in S4. In order to provide evidence of rigour and challenge and provide evidence that the applicant can cope with the breadth and depth of study undertaken by students at the University, however, the University's preference will be for at least four Highers taken in one sitting and for five Highers in all. This requirement will be interpreted flexibly in light of CfE where school policy has dictated a different pattern. The University accepts Highers studied in greater breadth and depth over S4 and S5 with examinations in S5 as having been attained in one sitting.
- Although there is no formal requirement, we anticipate that results in Highers will indicate a potential for a student to progress to achieve our standard offer of AAA at Advanced Higher.

- The University will require certain subjects or combinations of subjects that will prepare the student for their academic studies and decline applicants with subject combinations that are unsuitable for our degree programmes.
- The University will require evidence of academic rigour, preferably in the form of a suitable diet of exams at the end of S6. The combination of the diet is entirely dependent on the context of the school curriculum: this would most commonly be 3 Advanced Highers but where school policy or availability of subjects may have restricted a student's choices we may make offers based upon a mixture of Advanced Highers and Highers within the constraints of particular course requirements.
- Decisions will be based on results achieved in S6.
- The University of Cambridge will thus continue to place most emphasis on the Advanced Highers component of the Scottish Baccalaureate. The Baccalaureate itself will not be an entry requirement. Whilst we recognise the progression in knowledge and skills that undertaking the Scottish Baccalaureate provides learners, applicants must still be able to present with the required number of different subjects at specific grades.
- The University will require school profiles from all Scottish Schools that are following the Curriculum for Excellence in order for Admissions Officers to contextualise applicant's academic attainment.

We believe our response to be broadly in line with the advice from Government, SQA and, Education Scotland.

### **Wider Achievements**

We welcome the structured approach of CfE to facilitating the engagement of young people with their communities and for experiential work-placed learning. Academic attainment will remain central as evidence of suitability for an offer of a place at Cambridge. Wider Achievements may be one of a number of additional factors considered if they are of direct academic relevance to the proposed course of study. In such cases applicants should be able to demonstrate this relevance through their personal statement or in interview discussion. There is no requirement to demonstrate Wider Achievements.

### **Policy on Contextual Data**

Our commitment to the use of contextual data at the point of considering and evaluating applications is stated elsewhere in our admissions information. Given the importance of using conditional offers to ensure that students have the requisite knowledge and skills represented by the high grades we demand, this will not usually result in our varying the standard offer. The exception would be where limits on the availability of three Advanced Highers in schools may cause us to make offers based on a mixture of Advanced Highers and Highers and/or using the Project component of the Scottish Baccalaureate to substitute for an Advanced Higher. Please note that in the latter case schools or applicants should consult us to investigate whether and how a project could fulfil our requirements.