

Do I have the qualifications/experience required?

For many students the question they most need answered is how (and if) they will be able to gain a place on a degree course. Many students are thrown by the 'typical entry' requirements heading in university prospectuses which often focus on Higher and A Level qualifications, often offered in schools. Our Admissions office welcomes applications from students with other qualifications and entry requirements may be relaxed for applicants who have other relevant experience, skills or qualifications. Those who have relevant work experience and can provide evidence of the ability to succeed at degree level study may gain a place without having to undertake additional preparatory study.

However, applicants are usually more likely to gain a place if they can provide evidence that they have studied successfully recently and that this study has included relevant subjects (e.g. evidence of science-based study is usually required for entry to a healthcare based degree).

The following sections should give you an overview of some of the options open to you if you haven't studied recently or you don't feel ready to apply yet.

Access Courses

If you are over 21 and don't feel that you have related work experience or qualifications which could assist you to gain entry, a college based Access course is often a popular option. Access courses are also suitable for those without any formal qualifications. They are most commonly offered full-time over one year (although there are some part-time courses) and usually run in Further Education (FE) Colleges. In Scotland, these courses are part of the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP). SWAP is an independent body whose role is to promote access to Higher Education for mature students.

SWAP Access courses help you to develop the skills you will need to succeed in higher education. There are two broad types of courses - Access to Humanities or Access to Science.

Access to Humanities

Successful completion can give progression to Psychology, Sociology, Public Relations & Media, Marketing, Retail Business, Business Management, Consumer Studies, and much more at QMU and to

a number of other courses at a number of universities.

Access to Science

Successful completion can give progression to Nutrition, Human Biology, Dietetics and Pharmacology at QMU, and to a number of other courses at a number of universities.

Specialist Programmes

There are also specialist programmes which enable you to progress to specific degree courses. Locally these would be:

- Access to Health Related Studies (Edinburgh's Telford College)
- Access to Health and Life Sciences (Carnegie College, Fife - formerly Lauder)
- Access to Digital Media (Telford College & Jewel & Esk Valley College)

To find out more about SWAP in your area check out: www.scottishwideraccess.org or call Freephone **0800 731 0949**



You can also contact your local FE colleges directly to enquire about the Access courses they offer.

In the Edinburgh area there is also an adult residential college, Newbattle Abbey College, where mature students have the option of living in while studying with a small group of other students.

Check out www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk or call **0131 663 1921**

HNC/D courses

Another route you may wish to consider is a college based Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) course. HNC/D courses cover a wide range of subjects – some are practical (and are described as vocational) such as HNC Health Care while others are more generic e.g. HNC Social Science.

An HNC is usually seen as being equivalent to 1st year degree level, while an HND is roughly equivalent to 2nd year degree level.

If there is a particularly close match between an HNC and a degree course it is sometimes possible to start your degree studies directly in year 2 and with an HND it is sometimes possible to start your degree in year 3.

For example an HNC in Business Administration can lead to 2nd year entry on our BA Business Management degree, whilst an HND in Social Science can gain entry to the 3rd year of our Psychology and Sociology degree programme.

QMU's undergraduate prospectus highlights on each subject page where HNC/D's are accepted and what level students may enter the course.

If you decide to apply to a degree course in an area unrelated to your HNC/D studies, it may still be possible for you to enter the University in year 1 or 2. Please contact our admissions team for further guidance on entry to our degree programmes from HNC/D level.

QMU have a number of articulation agreements with local colleges which set out in what circumstances a student will be admitted onto a degree course at the University, and which year students would be eligible to enter.

QMU has articulation links with the following colleges in Scotland:

Telford College Jewel & Esk Stevenson
West Lothian Lauder (Carnegie) Perth College
Adam Smith Elmwood College Forth Valley College
Borders College

A full list of our current articulation agreements, and information on which HNC/Ds are accepted for entry to each of our degrees is available online at http://www.qmu.ac.uk/prospective_students/student_already.htm “

Other study options Highers or A Levels

These are usually available on a part-time, full-time or open-learning basis from local schools and colleges and are often offered as part of the local adult education programme. Remember to speak to Admissions Staff first, to ensure that you take the

right subjects and check how many subjects they would recommend you take.

Distance based learning

Students sometimes use Open University (OU) courses as a way of gaining qualifications for entry to other degree courses. Again, whether you feel this route is right for you or not will depend on your circumstances and your goals. As well as a broad range of undergraduate degree courses, the OU has a number of 'Preparation for study' courses which are particularly geared towards those who haven't studied before or who haven't studied for some time. To find out more about OU courses check out www.open.ac.uk

First Steps

In addition to the options described above there may be opportunities to study more informally in your local community or through a pre-access course. It's worth contacting your local colleges and universities and any adult learning centres or community centres to see what they have to offer. A short course can be ideal if you are unsure about making a move into more formal study and would like some time to develop your confidence.

It may also be possible to gain entry to a degree at QMU through undertaking a combination of the options described above. The key thing that admissions tutors are looking for is that you have demonstrated that you are capable of sustained study. How you prove this will vary depending on your individual circumstances and the course that you are applying for.

Want to discuss your own educational background and experience?

Contact our Pre-entry Guidance Adviser, Jenni Murray on, **0131 474 0000** or email: jmurray@qmu.ac.uk.

Contact our College Articulation Officer, Jackie Forsyth on **0131 474 0000** or email: jforsyth@qmu.ac.uk

You can also contact our Admissions Team on: **0131 474 0000** or email admissions@qmu.ac.uk