



Statement on Qualifications reform in England and Wales, the new UCAS Tariff and admissions to the University of South Wales.

At USW we appreciate that schools and colleges, as well as parents and applicants face a challenging time over the next few years as they adjust to the new curriculum environment in Wales and England from 2015 onwards. This increasingly complex system can be confusing for all concerned so this briefing document is aimed at providing clear advice and guidance in relation to the majority of qualification types that USW expects applicants to apply with for degree level entry from 2017 and beyond. We cannot cover all possible qualification types so if you have any queries please contact enquiries@southwales.ac.uk

General

The University will normally make **a graded offer rather than use the UCAS tariff**. This is so that the offer being made is as explicitly clear as possible to each applicant. The details below provide examples for most common qualifications and some combinations.

GCSE level

- We will expect applicants to normally have achieved a minimum of 5 GCSE passes (A*-C, or 9-4) to include Maths and English or equivalent. From 2017 USW will view the new Grade 4 as being equivalent to a C grade for applicants taking the new English GCSE's. Note some courses (Teaching) will require Grade 5 or "B" in English and Mathematics. For applicants from England USW will not require applicants to have passed the EBacc in addition to the above requirements.
- For 2017 entry USW will define which courses require Welsh applicants to have achieved both the Mathematics and Mathematics Numeracy GCSE (or equivalent¹). It is anticipated that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses will require both but latest course level detail will be made available on the University website. English applicants will be required to pass Mathematics at Grade 4 (or equivalent²).

AS levels and grades

- At present USW uses AS grades in combination with predicted grades to form an opinion as to an applicant's likely level of achievement at Level 3. USW does not require applicants to take AS levels and does not normally include AS levels in its offer making process. The current expectation is that this will continue to be the approach taken.

A Levels 2015-2018

- USW will make offers based on grades of CCC-ABB at A level, depending on the degree applied for. We appreciate that some students may apply to University in 2016-18 with a mix of old and new style A levels and that changes in England are different to Wales. USW would not discriminate between different years/styles. We

¹ Contact enquiries@southwales.ac.uk for acceptable equivalents.

² Contact enquiries@southwales.ac.uk for acceptable equivalents.

will continue to be flexible on entry grades for Firm choice candidates, particularly if students achieve results only marginally short of their offer. If there are significant changes to the numbers of applicants achieving the advertised grades it is likely that the University will review its entry criteria whilst remaining flexible for the existing cohorts.

- USW will make offers based on either three A levels or two A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate, and from 2015 entry USW will request a specific grade (e.g. where a degree advertises that it needs BBB at A level an applicant taking three A levels and the Welsh Baccalaureate could receive an offer of BBB from A levels or BB from A levels and B from the Welsh Baccalaureate).
- Applicants taking four A levels will be made an offer based on three A levels. USW does not expect applicants to take four A levels for entry to any course. Please note some courses do not accept “General Studies” as an A level – entry criteria detail will be provided at course level.

Welsh Baccalaureate

- USW is aware of the current curriculum changes and will continue to treat the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to one A level – the only difference being that we will specify the required grade from 2015. In 2017 when the new curriculum is first awarded USW will be flexible to applicants who miss their course entry criteria by a small margin. The national results will also be monitored to determine if USW course entry criteria need to be reviewed.

Vocational Qualifications and combinations

- USW will continue to accept students with relevant BTEC, Welsh Baccalaureate, Cache, Cambridge Technical and other vocational qualifications as well as a mix of A levels and BTEC/equivalent courses. Offers will be presented in a graded format (e.g. Distinction, Merit, Merit etc)

Access to Higher Education

- USW will continue to accept these qualifications for entry onto its degree programmes. As the qualifications are being reviewed any latest updates on specific grade entry requirements will be made on our website.

Extended Project (EPQ)

- At USW we note that many applicants take either an Extended Project qualification or other independent learning opportunities alongside their A levels. We welcome the academic and research experience these can give students and the opportunity to link their A level subjects together. However USW will not normally include them in offers made but will continue to take additional qualifications into account at results confirmation.

The “new” UCAS tariff

- The new tariff will be introduced for courses starting from September 2017 entry.
- USW will not make tariff offers using the new tariff and will not refer to the tariff in its marketing materials. However USW will continue to refer to the UCAS tariff internally

to aid the assessment of qualification equivalences, set entry criteria and to monitor against national benchmarks.

This briefing document has been collated as a guide but will be subject to possible changes in response to government policy, school/college curriculum models and developments in the UCAS system between 2015 and 2019.

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