Access Programme: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. Introduction to the Access programme and who is eligible

What is the Access programme?
This one-year part-time course is for mature students who would like to obtain a degree but who do not have current, up-to-date qualifications. You will gain the skills and knowledge needed to survive at university and earn a qualification that can give entry to a degree instead of Highers, A levels or similar. You enrol on one of three programmes, depending on which sort of subject you want to study:

- Access to Sciences, Engineering & Nursing
- Access to Law, Business & Accountancy
- Access to Arts & Social Sciences

Who is eligible to apply?
Applicants must have normally been away from full time education for a minimum of 2 years. (Please note: this will be 3 years for the 2018 intake) Otherwise, anybody can apply.
What if English is not my first language
You must have English language skills to be able to cope with the level of English necessary for academic study; therefore it is essential that you have formal evidence of your English language ability in accordance with our requirements including one of the following:

- **International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic module (not General Training):** overall score 6.0, with no single element less than 5.5
- **Common equivalent English language qualifications:**
  - TOEFL: 78; no sub-test less than 18
  - CAE (Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English): Grade C
  - CPE (Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English): Grade C
  - PTE Academic (Pearson Test of English, Academic test): 54; no subtest less than 54
  - GCSE: English language: B minimum
- **UK school qualifications** in English e.g. Intermediate 2, National 5 or preferably Higher in Scotland, (or GCSE in England), at B or better. ESOL qualifications are not sufficient for entry unless you have H4X7 76 ESOL in Study related Contexts Higher Unit Specification SCQF:level6
  Even if you have any of the above qualifications but find you are having trouble understanding these FAQs, you should improve your knowledge of English before thinking of starting Access.

Can I apply if I live in a country outside the EU?
Access is not suitable for people applying from outside the EU

Do I need any previous knowledge to apply for Access?
For most subjects, apart from the Sciences and Mathematics, you do not need any particular knowledge before starting Access although you do have to be ready to start reading and writing in a fairly sophisticated way. If you intend to take Chemistry or Mathematics on Access you must have previous knowledge of the same subject equivalent to Standard Grade Credit level, or Intermediate 2 or National 5. If you do not have one of these qualifications, or are not sure what they mean, you can see previous years’ exam papers at http://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/findpastpaper.htm. We do not insist on paper qualifications because some people will have this knowledge e.g. from work experience but it is ESSENTIAL that you are ready to work at this level when Access starts.

What will I have to do on the Access programme?
You will prepare for university by studying two subjects in depth. You will have to attend two classes per week, one in each subject. Classes start in September and continue until the end of March (22 weeks in total) with final exams during April/May. Most classes last two hours except Science classes (Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology) which are three hours, so that there is time for practical work, demonstrations and skills development. Classes take place during the day and/or the evening, dependent on subject (see the timetable available from the Access webpage, http://www.gla.ac.uk/study/short/accessprogramme/)
You will have to complete coursework during the year (essays, short tests in the class, exercises, etc., as appropriate to the particular subject) and sit a 60-minute examination at the end of the year for each subject.
What will I get at the end of the Access programme?
On successful completion of the Access programme you will receive a certificate and, depending on your results, you will achieve 40 credits at SCQF level 7 (i.e. University Level 1). This is made up 20 credits for each of the 2 subjects on Access. For comparison, a full-time student completes 120 credits in each year of study.

When would I start?
Classes commence week beginning Monday 25 September and you would attend on the days when your chosen subjects are scheduled to take place; see timetable available from the Access webpage.

What should I do to prepare?
Many people do not continue to use formal, grammatically correct English when they finish school. Shorthand, informal English used in emails, texts, Social Media etc is common practice, therefore refreshing your formal English language skills, reading good quality newspapers and books will be advantageous prior to commencing Access. For Science students refreshing your knowledge is essential, see the following section for further advice. You will also have to make some use of IT. See "Do I need IT skills?" below. You will need to be able to access email and internet resources fairly regularly so you should either have access to an internet-enabled computer (possibly in a local library, etc.), or be prepared to come to the university campus to use the facilities here.

I am going to study Chemistry and/or Mathematics, should I be revising before Access starts?
Yes! You want your knowledge of these subjects to be as alive and well as possible when Access starts, so that you are ready for the course to move fairly quickly early on. For Chemistry, you should concentrate on: elements, compounds, chemical formula, basic chemical equations and basic chemical calculations. The book "Chemistry Intermediate 2: Revision Notes" by Sandy Herd and Chris Sparling (Leckie and Leckie) is very useful up to this level. For Maths, you should concentrate on: basic algebra (multiplying out brackets, collecting like terms, factorising), solving linear and quadratic equations, plotting graphs of relations or data, straight line: gradient, intercept; Pythagoras’ theorem; sin, cos and tan; finding unknown sides or angles in right-angled triangles. These topics are covered in "Countdown to Mathematics" by L Graham and D Sargent (BOTH vols. 1 and 2.). Second-hand copies are available for just a few pounds from many sources. On the WWW, some of our students have found the online videos from Khan Academy (http://khanacademy.org) helpful, or the BBC Bitesize material. For Maths, see also http://www.mathcentre.ac.uk

Is it possible to add me to a waiting list if my preferred options are full?
We do not maintain a waiting list or refill places vacated by students withdrawing from their class.
2. Studying on the Access programme

What subjects should I study?
Your choice of subject should be guided by two questions: what degree do I want to do after Access and what will I enjoy studying?

Some degree courses have very specific requirements. For Nursing you MUST take Chemistry and Biology. For a degree in Psychology you would choose Psychology (please note: to apply for a Psychology degree you must have some knowledge of maths so you must have Mathematics Standard Grade, Intermediate 2 or National 5 at Grade A/B from within the last 5-7 years otherwise you must take Mathematics as one of your subjects on Access or arrange to obtain the qualification at college if Access Mathematics is too demanding and you have no previous maths experience.) For Accountancy you must take Mathematics and Economics. For Divinity, Religion and Theology should be one of your subjects and the other should be chosen from the Arts and Social Science subjects. You can apply to Law without taking Law on Access but you will be asked to attain higher grades.

Please also see section 7 – Applying for vocational/career based degrees after Access. Please check with the Access team if you are unsure which subjects to choose.

What kind of assessment is there?
You will have to complete coursework during the year (essays, short tests in the class, exercises, lab reports, etc., as appropriate to the particular subject) and sit a 60-minute examination at the end of the year for each subject. The exams are held under the conditions you can expect to find as an undergraduate student.

What will happen in the classes?
Classes on Access are conducted in a university manner. They may involve lectures (when the tutor speaks and the students listen and take notes), tutorials (when students and tutors discuss some question or problem), practical work, group work on tasks, etc., according to normal practices in the subject and the teaching approach of the tutor. Tutors will introduce the practices in the class, so that Access students start to see how university works. As well as gaining experience in these university styles of working, students will be introduced to what makes each topic exciting, inspiring, and insightful – all the features of university learning one would hope for!

When are the exams at the end of the year?
These will take place during the University exam period which is between 23 April–18 May 2018. These exams will be during the daytime therefore it is important that you are available to attend during this period. This may mean taking time off work or arranging childcare, but we will let you know in advance the dates and times of exams for your specific subjects.

Can I change or transfer my subjects?
Once Access has started it is not permissible to change subjects. Often students find it takes time to settle in to their subjects, but this is normal and your tutors will be on hand to discuss any initial worries you may have with the subject.
Do I need IT skills?
Yes, you must be reasonably comfortable using email, websites and MS Word – these skills are now important for all university study. If you don’t have basic IT skills we would strongly advise that you enrol on an IT course before the course starts. Many colleges and libraries offer short courses. We will also be running some IT sessions designed to help you get started with the University's IT systems, such as Moodle (supports teaching; includes handbooks, handouts, links to other websites, sometimes tests and questionnaires, etc.) and MyCampus (access to your student records). You will get a student email account which we will use to communicate with you. Communication with the Centre will be by secure computer systems and email.

Are there specific subjects I need to take for my future degree?
You need to check with Admissions (at any university to which you intend to apply) that the subjects you have applied for on Access are appropriate for the degree you wish to pursue. This is especially important if you are applying for a specific degree or vocational degree such as Law, Nursing etc (please also see section on Applying for university while on Access). The Access team can also offer advice on this. Please also see section 7 – Applying for vocational/career based degrees.

Are there additional requirements I need for my future degree?
There are often additional requirements for certain degrees and in particular certain vocational (career based) degrees (see sections 6 &7). It may be that you require additional academic qualifications or else relevant experience, so you should research your choices of degree and ask about other requirements in addition to the Access programme. For example if you are applying for Primary Teaching (MEduc) you are asked to have Higher English at B, plus Standard grade Maths at 1 or 2, or National 5 or Intermediate 2 maths at A/B (or equivalents). In addition, you are usually expected to have obtained some relevant experience to demonstrate your suitability for teaching. Similarly, there are additional requirements for Law, Social Work etc. Many of these will be summarised on the University’s website: http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/. University Admissions will also be able to clarify if extra requirements apply, and what these might be; contact details at http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/contact/. Please also see section 7 – Applying for vocational/career based degrees.

Where will my classes be held?
Classes will be held on the University Campus. Details of which building and classroom will usually be sent to you before you start.

How many people will be in my class?
There is usually no more than around 25 in each class. In a few subjects, classes may be larger than this but the numbers are kept considerably lower than normal undergraduate classes to ensure you have good contact with your tutor as well as the opportunity to get to know other people in your class. Peer support is a very valuable part of Access and many students make great friends through their studies.
How much time will I need to set aside for Access?
It is always difficult to give a reliable answer to this question because it can vary a lot from person to person. Also this will vary depending on the subject and when assignments or assessments are due. The number of credits for a course does give you an idea of the necessary commitment, however. Each credit is equivalent to a 10 hour commitment; this comprises lectures, coursework preparation, writing up lecture notes, reading textbooks, exams and exam preparation for example. A student registered on 2 x 20 credit courses should expect to commit a total of 2 x 200 hours over the entire session on work associated with the course. If you worked only during the teaching semesters this would mean approximately 18 hours per week but you will want to work at other times, too, in particular in the run-up to the final exams. It is usually helpful to make a plan at the start of your Access course to try to manage your time and make sure you can realistically build in study time to your week, especially when you are trying to juggle other commitments such as work and family etc.

What kind of people apply?
Your fellow students will be a mix of genders, ethnicity, ages and abilities. Access is an inclusive programme which attracts a broad range of people from all walks of life.

Will there be any help with study support?
Your tutors will build essay-writing and study advice into the subject teaching. We also hope to offer dedicated study skills sessions run by the Student Learning Service (http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/sls/) and you will be able to seek advice from them as well as the Access team.

3. Fees and funding for the Access programme

What does the Access programme cost?
The fee for the Access programme is £480

Am I eligible to apply for help with fees?
If you earn less than £25,000 per annum and live in Scotland you may be eligible for the Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) Part-Time Fee Grant (PTFG) which will pay £428 leaving a balance of £52 which you will have to pay yourself. There may be other sources of support specific to your own personal circumstances (e.g. retraining schemes for people leaving the Armed Forces, employer sponsorship etc) and we may be able to accept these. We cannot provide a comprehensive list of such sources; ask us for confirmation if there is some other source of funding you would like to use. Please see full details on using the SAAS Part- time Fee Grant at http://www.saas.gov.uk/part_time/ug/. We do not accept ILA funding.

Can I get Council Tax exemption if I am a student?
Access will not qualify you for a Council Tax discount. Access is a part-time course. See the University’s own webpage on this topic,
4. Key dates

When does the Access course start?
There is normally a welcome and information evening on Friday 15 September 2017 with classes commencing week beginning Monday 25 September 2017. Teaching takes place during two semesters: 25 September – 8 December 2017 and 8 January – 23 March 2018.

When are the final exams?
The final exams, one for each subject, will take place during the exam period which is between 23 April – 18 May 2018. These exams will be during the daytime therefore it is important that you are available to attend during this period. This may mean taking time off work or arranging childcare, but we will let you know, as soon as we are able, the dates and times of exams for your subjects.

5. How to apply

How do I apply?
Having read the FAQs you may now wish to submit an application form. To APPLY please go to Access website for details [http://www.gla.ac.uk/study/short/accessprogramme/#d.en.381140](http://www.gla.ac.uk/study/short/accessprogramme/#d.en.381140)

If you are unable to apply via the website it is possible to download an application form and send to the address given on the front of the form. Please note: it is preferred that all applications are submitted electronically where possible.

When do I apply and is there a closing date?
Details of when we will be accepting applications are on the website. Certain subjects will be closed for applications earlier than others due to the volume of demand therefore it is advisable to submit your application as soon as possible. Applicants intending to apply for a Nursing degree should note that the number of Access student places on the Glasgow University Nursing degree is strictly limited. After a certain point in the recruitment process applicants will be welcome to enrol for Access Chemistry and Biology but they will not be able to apply immediately to Nursing in University of Glasgow. Applicants will be advised if they apply after this point has been reached.

What happens after I submit my application form?
When you submit your application form we will acknowledge receipt of your application (usually within 3 weeks). Once your form has been processed we will contact you as soon as practicable to let you know if we plan to invite you to attend the University for an informal interview (this could be a group or individual interview) to discuss your application. If you are
offered a place further details and information will be issued including the Terms and Conditions of acceptance.

6. Applying for University and after your Access Programme

How will I apply for university after Access?
All applications for full-time degree study in British universities are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Students will need to apply on-line (www.ucas.ac.uk). The Access team will provide support and detailed guidance on the UCAS process. Normally Access students will commence their UCAS application during November and December. Don’t start your application until we give you the necessary information, however – you are not applying “as a private individual”. Your application should be complete by the start of December, so that we have time to process it and send it on to UCAS. The UCAS deadline is in January but there is a substantial risk that we will not have time to send it on if you leave it close to this deadline.

Will there be help?
We will offer information advice and guidance to complete your UCAS application.

Can I apply to other universities?
Yes, it is often possible to apply to other universities from this Access course. There are NO agreements or guarantees, however; therefore we strongly advise that you check with Admissions officers in the institution to which you intend to apply. Tell them that you intend to enrol on Glasgow University’s “in-house mature student Access course” and ask them if they will accept it for the degree course you are interested in. It would be your responsibility to check on this before you apply.

What will I need to achieve for entry to university?
If you complete your UCAS application by December as we ask, the University will normally make you a “conditional offer”, i.e. they will say, “We will accept you as long as you gain certain grades on the Access programme”. For a few degrees there may be extra requirements to be met before you receive a conditional offer, e.g. perform satisfactorily at an interview (Nursing); sit the LNAT and attain a certain minimum grade (Law – see below). If you receive and accept a conditional offer the university cannot change its mind later: as long as you get the minimum grades requested on Access, your place will be secure. You will gain four grades from Access, a coursework grade and a final exam grade for each of your two subjects. The grades will be assigned according to the University’s 22-point grading scale (more details for those who come on Access in the student handbook). Each grade includes a letter, with “A” meaning, “Excellent”, “B” meaning “Very good”, “C” meaning “Good”, etc. D is a minimum pass grade. You are unlikely to gain a place on any degree in Glasgow University if any of these grades is below B. For some courses you may need one or more A grades, with the rest being at least B. We will supply a full list of the necessary minimum grades at the start of the Access course. Other universities will make their own, internal decisions about what grades to ask for.
7. Applying for specific subjects and vocational (career based) degree after Access

(See also section 2 studying on Access)

Are there additional requirements?
Yes, there are often additional requirements for certain degree subjects and vocational/career based degrees. It may be that you require additional academic qualifications and/or relevant experience, so you must research your choice of degree and ask about other requirements in addition to the Access programme. Degree courses such as those listed below have specific requirements, some others, such as Product Design Engineering or Journalism, for example, will be looking for strong evidence in your personal statement of your suitability, and some may require additional material as part of your application.

What is the LNAT test for Law at Glasgow University?
Applicants to all LLB degrees at the University of Glasgow who do not already hold an undergraduate degree are required to take the LNAT test (likely to be around mid-January 2018 for undergraduate entry Sept 2018). The LNAT is run by a consortium of UK universities and comprises a two-hour on-screen test made up of multiple choice (80 minutes) and essay questions (40 minutes). It is designed to assess verbal reasoning skills and command of written English. The test can be taken by applicants at centres throughout the UK and overseas. Information on how to sit the test can be found at: www.lnat.ac.uk. Your Law tutors will provide further information about this during the first semester Law class.

Can I apply for Medicine/ Dentistry/ Vet Medicine?
Unfortunately, there is no route to these degrees via this Access programme.

What do I need to know about applying for Nursing?
If you are applying for Nursing please note there are limited places in Glasgow University for applicants from Access courses. Applicants must detail their previous Chemistry experience as outlined in section 1. They should also address their suitability for nursing as well as relevant experience in a caring role, paid or unpaid. Please note that applicants invited for interview will be interviewed in conjunction with University of Glasgow Nursing Admissions.

What do I need to know about applying for Teaching?
If you are applying for teaching (Primary or Secondary) please note that you are required by GTCS to have Higher English at B and Mathematics National 5 at B (or equivalents) within the last 5-7 years therefore you will be required to either have these qualifications already or plan to obtain them at a college alongside the Access Programme. Glasgow University Admissions will normally accept Access English Literature in lieu of Higher English but you should check entry requirements with other universities. Please visit http://www.teachinscotland.org/ for more information.
What do I need to know about applying for Social Work?
Although Glasgow University does not offer this degree some universities will accept the Access programme for entry, but may require additional qualifications such as in mathematics and English, as well as relevant experience. Please check entry requirements with relevant universities. Applicants normally use choose Sociology and either Psychology or another Arts/Social Science subject on Access.

What do I need to know about applying for Accountancy?
Applicants usually need to choose Mathematics and Economics on Access, please see section 1 regarding applying for Mathematics on Access.

What do I need to know about applying for Psychology?
Applicants usually need to have mathematics at National 5 level, grade B, or equivalent (eg Intermediate 2 at B, Standard Grade at 1/2) within the last 5-7 years. If applicants do not have these Maths qualifications they have the option to either take mathematics at college alongside the Access programme or, if you have previous knowledge of mathematics which is over 7 years old you could choose Mathematics alongside Psychology on Access; however please see section 1 regarding applying for Mathematics on Access.

What do I need to know about applying for Economics?
Applicants usually need to have Mathematics at National 5 level, grade B, or equivalent (eg Intermediate 2 at B, standard grade at 1/2) with in the last 5-7 years. If applicants do not have any of these Maths qualifications, they have the option to either take mathematics at college alongside the Access programme. Alternatively, if you have previous knowledge of mathematics which is over 7 years old you could choose Mathematics alongside Psychology on Access, however please see section 1 regarding applying for mathematics on Access.

8. Support for students with disabilities

Is there support if I have a disability that may impact on my studies?
The University has a very supportive Disability Service. Once they have been offered and accepted a place on Access, all students can discuss any specific additional support needs they may have with Disability Services advisers (http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/disability/).
However, in the first instance Access applicants are very welcome to contact Access Disability Coordinator Irene Vezza to discuss in confidence any concerns or support they may require while studying on Access. You can contact Irene direct on 0141 330 1823 (Irene.vezza@glasgow.ac.uk)

9. I have further questions
Who should I contact to ask for further advice?
If you have further questions or wish to discuss further you can contact:
Dr Alec MacKinnon (Access Coordinator) Alexander.Mackinnon@glasgow.ac.uk
Mrs Irene Vezza (Access Student Guidance Adviser) Irene.Vezza@glasgow.ac.uk
General enquiries: openstudies-access@glasgow.ac.uk