



The University of Buckingham: student entry in a new age of A Levels, GCSEs and Vocational Qualifications

www.buckingham.ac.uk/teachers

We appreciate that schools and colleges face continued challenges and opportunities as they adapt to the new environment and plan their curriculum models for 2017, 2018 and 2019 entry to university and/or employment. We also note that schools and colleges are facing financial constraints with regard to the post-16 curriculum.

In the light of the reforms, this document outlines to schools, academies and colleges the University of Buckingham's admissions policy and entry requirements for 2017 and beyond.

Buckingham is a popular choice and receives over 2,500 undergraduate applications each year for around 400 places, of which around 80% receive offers. Typical offers are AAB-BCC, depending on the subject. For most courses we accept a range of other qualifications including BTEC, Cambridge Technical, IB and a wide range of international qualifications. We also offer Foundation Programmes in most subjects.

At Buckingham we strive to look at applications on an individual basis and invite students to informal selection days, interviews and open days as part of the decision making process. Our Medical School (4.5 year MB ChB programme) hosts selection days throughout the year involving MMI (Multiple Mini Interviews).

As the UK's only independent university with a Royal Charter, we are famous for offering two-year degrees (four terms a year rather than three as with most other UK universities), an Oxbridge-style tutorial system and sector-leading results for student satisfaction (see National Student Survey). Buckingham was awarded *The Times and Sunday Times* 'University of the Year' for Teaching Quality 2016.

A Levels

A Levels are consistently the most popular entry route to university (including Buckingham) and are also valued and understood by employers. We appreciate that some schools and colleges may not be able to offer four full A Levels because of financial constraints and we are keen not to disadvantage these institutions and students.

Buckingham does not expect students to take four or more full A Levels to gain entry; we make offers based on the best three A Levels taken. Students who have additional AS Levels, A Levels or other qualifications may show greater breadth in their studies and spread their risk across a wider range of subjects, for example if one of their A Level grades is not as strong as expected.

We recommend that schools and colleges briefly refer to their curriculum model on AS Levels, A Levels and vocational qualifications in the UCAS reference for 2017 and 2018 entry to give our admissions tutors additional context and help ensure fairness.

The University of Buckingham does not have an overarching list of preferred A Level subjects. Our undergraduate prospectus and website outlines specific subject requirements. See our course finder: www.buckingham.ac.uk/find-a-course/.

AS Levels and grades

We appreciate that there are continuing challenges in co-teaching AS Levels in the linear structure from 2015. We understand, too, that a range of options are available to schools and colleges in relation to whether certain AS Level exams are completed/certified.

Buckingham will not discriminate against schools, colleges or students who have not taken stand-alone AS Levels in Year 12. If a school or college chooses to enter its students for AS Levels then this should be stated on the UCAS form and in the UCAS reference. Students are also welcome to take additional AS Levels in Year 13 (if time and resources allow) to broaden their studies and increase UCAS tariff on entry.

Schools and colleges who have not entered students for AS exams may wish to refer to internal assessments students have taken in the UCAS/direct applicant reference when making predicted grades.

‘Old’ and ‘new’ A Levels during 2016-18

Buckingham will continue to make offers based on grades of AAB-BCC at A Level, depending on the degree. We appreciate that some students may apply to University in 2016-18 with a mix of old and new style AS/A Levels. We will not discriminate between different years or styles. We will be flexible on entry grades for firm choice candidates, particularly if students achieve within one or two grades of their offer.

Vocational qualifications and mixes

Buckingham will continue to accept students with relevant BTEC, Cambridge Technical and other vocational qualifications as well as a mix of A Levels and BTEC or equivalent courses. The entry criteria will reflect the A Level requirements for these courses, for example we will expect students to aim for Distinction grades at BTEC/Cambridge Technical.

Buckingham also strongly welcomes applications from International Baccalaureate (IB) students with typical offers ranging from 31-35 points.

Extended Project (EPQ) and similar qualifications

At Buckingham we note that more students are applying to us with an EPQ qualification or similar 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. For example, some schools have developed a three A Level plus EPQ curriculum model for 2016/17 and/or with an opportunity for an additional award in Y12/13. Buckingham will continue to take additional AS/EPQ qualifications into account at results confirmation and when making offers but they may not be part of the offer itself. Offers at Buckingham will normally be made in terms of grades and not via the UCAS tariff.

Core Mathematics qualification/studies

While we would not discriminate against students who do not/are unable to take a Core Maths course from 2015, we welcome the ethos behind this development. For example, students in social sciences, business, psychology and sciences who are not taking AS/A Level Maths may find the Core Maths element useful in preparing for university study where a working application of maths or statistics may be required.

GCSE reforms from 2015-2019

Buckingham will not require students to achieve the EBacc equivalent for entry in 2016-2019, but a breadth of subjects at grade C or above will continue to be required over the next few years. In 2017 and beyond we will view the new Grade 4 as being equivalent to a C grade. We will require students to achieve at least the proposed new grade 5 “international standard” if the subject is relevant to our degree programme. For example, GCSE Mathematics is relevant for degrees in Accounting, Economics and Computing.

Schools and colleges are welcome to get in touch with us with any queries or comments. **We will also be running an Admissions Conference for Advisers and Teachers on 17 June 2016.**

Booking details at: www.buckingham.ac.uk/teachers.

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This briefing sheet is intended as a guide and is subject to possible changes in government policy, school/college curriculum models and developments in the UCAS system between 2016 and 2022. April 2016 V3