

# Certificate in Health Science

## Definitions and frequently asked questions

### Definitions

#### **'First generation to attend higher education'**

*Q. What does 'first generation' mean?*

You count as first generation to attend higher education, even if the following have attended higher education:

- brothers or sisters
- husband, wife or partner
- biological parents of applicants who have been adopted
- foster parents
- care workers
- uncles, aunts and other members of your extended family.

You do not count as first generation if the following have attended higher education or are currently doing so:

- parents
- step parents, a parent's unmarried partner living in the household and adoptive parents who throughout the three year period prior to the start of your university course have been living in the same household as you.

*Q. What does 'attending higher education' mean?*

'Attending higher education' means studying for a higher education qualification equivalent to at least one year full-time. This is normally equivalent to at least 120 points at higher education level and can be a certificate, diploma, degree or above. This includes for example Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas (HNCs and HNDs) and Diplomas in Nursing.

A person is counted as attending (or having attended) higher education,

- regardless of whether the study is in the UK or overseas, and at a University, Polytechnic or Higher Education College
- regardless of when the study took place: it could be at any time up until the point of application, and includes study as a mature student
- regardless of how s/he is studying: the study could be by distance learning or e-learning or involve attending lectures and classes.

A teacher or tutor at your school or college needs to confirm your statement that you are first generation. If you are unsure whether you are first generation, please contact us.

### **'School or college without a tradition of high academic achievement'**

This means that the average achievement at A/AS level (at the school or college where you completed your A levels or equivalent) is less than the English average. For applications from autumn 2008 for 2009 entry, we will regard an average point score per student of 731 as average. We use data provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. You do not need to provide evidence of this as we can obtain this information ourselves. You can check your school's or college's average achievement on the DCSF website: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/>

### **'Eligible to receive the Education Maintenance Award or equivalent'**

This means that you are currently receiving the EMA or, if you are over 18, receiving the Adult Learning Grant or a similar means-tested benefit linked to post-16 study.

If you are no longer studying, then we will consider means-tested benefits received by you or your parents (if you are living with them) or partner or spouse. The benefit will need to show that you are assessed to have an income of no more than £30,810 a year (for the 2007-2008 tax year – the figure for the 2008-2009 tax year will be a little higher). Means-tested benefits include for example:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

You will need to provide evidence of your assessment.

### **'In care'**

This means being a young person looked after by a local authority. This might involve living with foster parents, in a foyer or youth hostel, or living independently on benefits or by working and studying. We regard you as in care if you are currently in care or will have been in care at some point in the three-year period prior to the start of your university course.

We will need confirmation that you are (or have been) in care and will normally check with your local authority.

### **'Refugee'**

This means that you have been recognised as a refugee and/or granted asylum by the Home Office.

You will need to provide evidence, normally a copy of the letter from the Home Office and/or a copy of the relevant entry in your passport. We need documentation with your name on it.

### **Needing to study in Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire**

This is normally for family, cultural or financial reasons, for example to care for dependent family members or because your parents will not permit you to live away from home.

### **Home postcode**

We may check your home postcode, as entered on your UCAS form, against the MOSAIC tool. This provides information about the area in which you live. It looks at a relatively small area of up to 15 households and provides information about average incomes, occupations, qualifications, health and housing.

### **Other disadvantaging circumstances**

These could include for example

- the death of a parent, partner or sibling in the past year
- long-term care of a sick or disabled family member
- serious disability or illness (subject to fitness to practise considerations)
- being from a travelling family.

This list is not exhaustive.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **A. Special circumstances**

#### **I meet only one special circumstance. Will I be considered?**

No, unfortunately not. Only applicants who meet at least two of the special circumstances (and are able to provide evidence of eligibility as requested) will be considered.

#### **Is there anything that automatically rules me out – or makes me eligible?**

No. There is no one circumstance that makes an applicant automatically eligible or ineligible and we assess each applicant on an individual basis.

#### **I attend an independent school. Will I be considered?**

Yes. We recognise that schools in the independent sector can vary a lot. We also recognise that individual students' circumstances vary. We therefore assess each applicant on an individual basis. However, you should bear in mind that the Certificate is for students who have experienced disadvantaging circumstances.

### **B. Other questions**

#### **I am an international student / I am not a UK student. Will I be considered?**

No, unfortunately not. The Certificate aims to widen access to competitive health-related courses so is open only to UK nationals. EU migrant workers and refugees may be eligible.

**I am re-sitting my A-levels to get the necessary grades – is that OK?**

The Certificate in Health Science route into Medicine and Veterinary Medicine is intended for students who are sitting A-levels or equivalent for the first time. Applicants will not be considered who are re-sitting the same qualification or taking a similar level 3 course. 'Similar' means a qualification with significant science content. So, for example, you could not do Science A-levels and then progress straight on to an Access to Medicine course.

However, you could do non-Science A-levels and then return to school or college to do Science A-levels.

If you did A-levels or equivalent a number of years ago and are now returning to education to do a similar qualification, you may be considered. Please contact us for advice.

It is acceptable to re-sit individual modules within your A-level course.

If you want to progress to one of the other courses linked to the Certificate, it is acceptable to be re-sitting your A-levels.

**I have already done a degree or other higher education study. Will I be considered?**

If you have attended or are currently attending higher education, for a qualification worth at least 120 points, you will not normally be considered. For details please see the definition of 'attending higher education' on page 1. If you are not sure how this definition applies to you, please contact us for advice.

You will still be considered if you are only studying for a few credits, for example doing an Open University unit.

**I am doing an Access course/a BTEC course. Is this an acceptable entry qualification?**

Access courses should be in Science or Health Science. The majority of your level 3 units should reflect the requirements of the course to which you wish to progress. That means they should be in Biology and/or Chemistry as appropriate. If you are unsure, please contact us.

If you are doing a BTEC and want to progress to Dietetics, Genetics, Medicine, Pharmacy or Veterinary Medicine, you will need a grade of at least MMM. For other subjects, you will need at least MMP.

The BTEC Diploma in Applied Science is acceptable for all courses, as long as you have successfully passed the following units:

- Fundamentals of Science
- Chemistry for Biology Technicians
- Genetics and Genetic Engineering
- Physiology of Human Body Systems
- Physiology of Human Regulation and Reproduction.

The BTEC Diploma in Animal Management is acceptable for progression to Veterinary Medicine and Science, as long as you have successfully passed the units above. You would need to 'import' the last two units from the Diploma in Applied Science.

The BTEC Diploma Sport and Exercise Sciences is acceptable for progression to Nursing and Physiotherapy.

**Are the new Diplomas or GNVQs acceptable?**

Level 2 qualifications: for Genetics, Midwifery and Nursing, one of the GCSE Science subjects may be replaced by one of the following qualifications: GNVQ Health and Social Care, the GNVQ Science, the GCSE in Health and Social Care or the Diploma in Society, Health and Development level. Applicants need to achieve a merit grade.

Level 3 qualifications: the Diploma in Society, Health and Development level 3 is acceptable only in addition to A-level or equivalent learning in the required subject(s).

*This information was correct at the time of writing.  
1 August 2008*