



MILLFIELD Sixth Form International Students at Millfield

Studying A levels and/or BTEC courses in the Sixth Form is both an exciting and challenging time. You will be able to immerse yourselves in your subjects of choice, but you may feel at times you require some more support with English Language, in order to access your courses. The EAL Department is here to help.

You may also be looking ahead to your life beyond Millfield and what you are planning to do after the Upper Sixth year. If you are thinking of continuing your education at university or a Higher Education college in the UK, you may require certain qualifications in English Language to show you are proficient and can cope with the demands of an academic course delivered in English at that level. Again, the EAL department can help you.



We are in A Block on the First Floor.

This leaflet contains some important information regarding English Language requirements for plans beyond Millfield. Please read this carefully. It is so important that you are aware of what you may need, and how you can acquire this, whilst you are still here at Millfield. The EAL Department can help and you are always welcome to pop along and speak to one of the members of staff.



University Entrance Requirements: English Language

Universities want to know that you have the language and academic skills to cope with and to complete your course. Most courses demand high standards of language skills, which is why they ask international students to take an English language test.

Many universities will now accept a GCSE (or iGCSE) in English as a First Language so long as the grade is deemed 'acceptable' – this is usually a minimum of a 4 (C) or a 5 (B). Often, they require that this was taken in the UK.

If you have a GCSE in English as a Second Language, again with an acceptable grade, then some universities may accept this for some courses, but others will require a higher-level qualification, such as the IELTS qualification.



Generally, each university and course will have its own requirements, so it's really important that you begin to think about where you would like to study and which course. You can then look at the website and see the general English Language Entry requirements for a particular course to see if you are on track, or contact the International Admissions team at the university to enquire.

Some universities may still want you to have the IELTS qualification, alongside your GCSE First Language. This is particularly the case if you are applying for a course where there will be a lot of academic reading and writing, such as courses in History, English and Philosophy, for example.

The requirement for a suitable qualification in English Language is in addition to the grades you require in your A level / BTEC subjects.

For more information on levels of English Language for UK universities, have a look here:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/international-and-eu-students/what-level-english-do-i-need-get-uk-university>

Student Visa requirements: English Language

You may also require an IELTS qualification for a student visa (formerly called a Tier 4 visa) when you enter university, and the IELTS qualification will meet these requirements for study in the UK, so long as it is still valid (i.e. within 2 years of taking the test). The rules are complex, and we urge you to seek your particular requirements with the relevant agencies. However, some general guidelines are given below:

1. If you have a GCSE First Language, taken in a UK school when you were under 18 years of age, then this is usually enough. However, if the GCSE was taken outside of the UK, at an international school or a school in another nation state, then this is not likely to be sufficient.
2. If you are from one of the designated countries as listed by the UK government, then you do not need to prove your level of English. This list includes the UK, USA, Australia and Ireland. For a full list and more information, see <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>. This information is also available on our school Minerva site.

So what?

If you do not have the correct qualifications and choose not to take the IELTS course whilst you are at Millfield, you may find yourself unable to meet university entry requirements and/or student visa requirements, regardless of subject grades, and with little time to study and prepare for the IELTS exam. We therefore strongly recommend that all international students opt for IELTS preparation lessons as part of their Lower Sixth curriculum, so that they can study for and gain this qualification before their Upper Sixth year. This will offer the reassurance in terms of both university English Language entrance requirements and Student Visa needs.

Lower Sixth Students – what are your options?

Not sure what to do? You have some options. You could:

1. Join IELTS prep classes whilst in Lower Sixth, so as to avoid the pressures of Upper Sixth and UCAS etc. and take the IELTS exam when ready. Then you will have the necessary documentation should you need it when applying for a student visa for university. It's likely that if you have a First Language GCSE this will meet university entrance requirements in terms of English Language. There may be the very odd occasion when universities require something more, but this cannot be predicted as each university and course will have different requirements. However, having the IELTS in place will cover this (so long as you get the required bands). This is our recommended route. For more information on the IELTS course, see: <https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org>



2. In terms of university entrance, wait until Upper Sixth, find out what your particular university course requirements are for English language and then prepare for and take IELTS. This is not ideal and we do not recommend this as you will be busy. We feel it is better to get this done in Lower Sixth.

We really recommend obtaining the IELTS qualification in your Lower Sixth year. You can attend classes alongside your A level / BTEC classes.

Upper Sixth Students – what are your options?

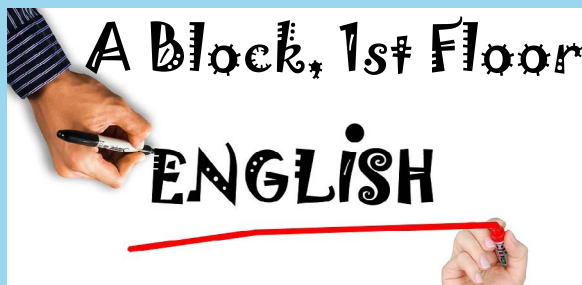
If you have already gained the required grade of IELTS for your university offers, or you have a GCSE in First Language English, then congratulations! This should be enough for you to satisfy the university entrance requirements for English Language proficiency. Please do check with your chosen universities that the grade is enough for the course you wish to attend. You can do this by contacting the International Students Admissions office or Student Services.

If you haven't yet gained the required grade in IELTS but are taking classes, keep at it! Once you have taken the exam and achieved the required grade, you can stop classes and know you have enough for university. Make sure you are clear on what grade you need to get for your chosen university and course.

If you haven't got an IELTS and are not enrolled in EAL classes, come and speak to a member of the EAL Department *urgently*. This is important, as you may not be able to start university without this qualification.

You could wait until you leave Millfield and undertake an English Language testing service for your student visa – there are other qualifications you could take for a student visa but we don't offer them here at Millfield – and take this over the summer, prior to joining university. Some universities offer pre-sessional courses (at an additional cost) for international students who have not secured the required English language proficiency qualification. You could enquire about this and study before you go to uni. Or, some students choose to take the exam over the summer before starting university. This is risky because you may not achieve the required grade.

Come and see us in the EAL Department so we can help you further and ensure you have the English Language qualifications you need for your next stage of education.



You can also look on Minerva for more information on the above on the EAL Page/English Language Requirements for Higher Education and Student Visas.