

Access to Life/Biological Sciences (including access to Allied Health Professions)

Who is SWAP for?

SWAP is for adult learners who want a second chance at education and who aim to fulfil their academic potential by studying for a higher education qualification. Our programmes are designed to provide a supportive environment for adults returning to education and you don't usually need any formal qualifications for entry.

SWAP Eligibility Criteria

SWAP access programmes are specifically aimed at adults who have been out of fulltime education for some time and who have not studied at university before. A SWAP access programme could be for you if:

- You don't have any qualifications above SCQF level 5 (Standard Grade/Intermediate 2, GCSE, National 5) **and** you have been out of full-time education for 3 years of more*. **OR**
- You have qualifications at SCQF level 6 or above (Highers, A Levels, HN) **and** you have been out of full-time education for 5 years or more.
- You are able commit to college on a full-time basis (around 18-20hrs per week).
- You aim to progress to university or HNC/D level study.
- Please note that if you wish to use this route to access undergraduate Secondary Education for Biology & Chemistry degrees, you should apply for a Life Sciences programme that includes the Communications/Literature 1 units (unless you have an existing English Higher pass). You must also have an existing Maths National 5/Intermediate 2 (Grade B) qualification or be planning to undertake this exam alongside your access programme.

**Please note that students who have recently undertaken a Level 4/5 course are still eligible to be SWAP, provided they were out of f/t education for 3 or 5 years (check criteria above) prior to beginning the level 5 course.*

You are NOT eligible to be a SWAP student if you already have a university degree (Ordinary or Honours). If you previously only completed 1 or 2 years at university, you may still be eligible but you **MUST** phone the SWAP office to discuss this further.

If you are unsure if you meet the SWAP eligibility criteria, please contact us for advice.

About the Programmes

All SWAP access programmes are made up of at least 18 units and involve a range of academic subjects. You must pass each of the units in order to successfully complete the programme. Each SWAP programme includes:

- **Core units** in communications, maths and IT. The number of units you study and the level you study at may vary depending on what you intend to move on to.
- **Academic units** in a range of relevant subjects such as biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, environmental science, or biotechnology. The units studied will vary from college to college and from year to year.
- **Preparation for Higher Education.** Alongside academic units, you will work through a variety of personal development and study skills materials aimed at helping you develop the skills and confidence you will need to succeed at university level study.

At the end of the programme each student is awarded a SWAP profile grading ranging from AAA-DDD. These grades are a reflection of your performance in each of the main science subjects (Maths, Biology and Chemistry) throughout the year.

What does it lead to?

The access to life sciences / biosciences programmes lead on to hundreds of different degree at Scottish universities as well as HNC/D programmes at colleges. To find out what degrees you can study and where, and what you will need for entry, have a look at the [SWAP progression route search](#) on the SWAP East website.

Before applying to a SWAP programme we'd recommend that you do some research on the degree programmes you might like to move on to. It is a good idea to have a look at university websites, speak to university admissions offices and attend university open days. The [UCAS search facility](#) will help you find out which degrees are offered where.

There is **no guarantee** that you will be offered a place at university, however each year the vast majority of SWAP students who successfully complete the programme do secure a place on one of their chosen degree programmes. Universities will take into account the strength of your UCAS personal statement and your tutor's reference when deciding whether to offer you a place, and offers are normally conditional on your achieving specific SWAP profile grades at the end of the programme.

Degrees in the health related professions

SWAP Life Sciences Access Programmes can provide a route into a number of degree programmes in the health-related professions, e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, radiography, and speech & language therapy. There are few universities in Scotland which offer these programmes and entry is therefore highly competitive.

Universities will want to see that applicants have researched their chosen subject area and have a good understanding of the role and responsibilities of the related profession.

Applicants who have gained relevant experience, for example, through paid employment, voluntary work or work shadowing, stand a much greater chance of success. It is therefore **STRONGLY ADVISED** that you gain this experience **BEFORE** you embark on the access programme as there will be little time to do this between the start of your access programme and the completion of your personal statement for your UCAS application.

Funding

The funding you are entitled to will depend on your individual circumstances. Course fees are fully funded for the vast majority of SWAP students, and most students are also entitled to a college bursary to help with living costs. We'd strongly recommend that you get in touch with the relevant college student funding team for advice on what funding

support you will be entitled to. You don't need to wait until you apply before you do this - indeed it's probably best to know exactly what the situation is *before* you apply. In the first place, read our [college](#) and [university](#) funding guides.

How do I apply for a SWAP access programme?

Once you know which programme you want to join, you apply directly to the college you want to study at. Application is normally via the college's online application system on the college website. You are likely to be invited for an interview at the college, which will also provide an opportunity for you to ask any questions you have about the course. Applicants are normally also given a short test to check that they have the level of communications and maths needed to cope with the demands of the programme. SWAP programmes tend to be popular so it's a good idea to apply early as you can – colleges usually open for applications around Jan / Feb and aim to have courses filled by the start of the summer break in June.

If you have any questions or would like further information on anything SWAP related please get in touch with us at SWAP East:

Tel: 0131 650 6861 or email: swap.east@ed.ac.uk

Or have a look at our website www.scottishwideraccess.org