



Scottish Wider
Access Programme

SWAP East Student Handbook 2017-18

The SWAP East Office is there to help you throughout the year.
If you have any questions about any of information in this
booklet or need further advice at any point then please get in
touch.

Call us on [0131 650 6861](tel:01316506861) or email swapeast@ed.ac.uk

www.scottishwideraccess.org/east

1. SWAP registration

You have enrolled yourself at college, but now we need you to register with SWAP too. All SWAP East students need to register themselves with SWAP East so that we know you are a SWAP East student and so we have your contact details. Once you have started your course, please register with SWAP East as soon as you can.

Online registration is quick and easy via the SWAP website:

<http://www.scottishwideraccess.org/east-current-students>

1. Click on “Register Now”. This should bring up an online form.
2. Fill in your details. Some of the information fields are compulsory and you won’t be allowed to submit the form until they are complete.
3. Once you have completed the form, press submit. The next screen will say that you have successfully completed the form. All done!

If you encounter any problems, please get in touch with the SWAP East office.

2. Progression routes

Progression routes refer to the university degrees you can progress to once you’ve successfully completed your SWAP access programme. For some SWAP students these routes will be more obvious than for others. Nursing students, for example, will normally progress to nursing degrees, whereas arts, humanities, social sciences or life sciences students have a much broader range of possible degree options to choose from.

To see the available options have a look at the progression route search on the SWAP East website:

<http://swapsurvey.org/progression/east>

Type in the subject you want to study to see which SWAP East partner universities offer related degree courses and what the entry requirements are (see Section 3). N.B. To find out about degree courses at the University of St Andrews, type in “General”.

Non-partner universities

The progression route finder only includes information for SWAP East partner universities. You can apply to other universities but there is no guarantee they will consider your application – it will depend on the individual university and the subject. For very popular programmes (e.g. primary education, physiotherapy and nursing) you are unlikely to get an offer from a non-partner university. However, for less popular degree programmes you may well get an offer.

If you decide to apply to a university outside Scotland or if your chosen degree course does not appear in the progression route finder, please speak to SWAP for advice before you apply.

3. SWAP profile grades

At the end of the SWAP programme, your course tutor will award you three profile grades. These grades are an assessment of your performance across the course and throughout the year.

Profile grades indicate your ability to succeed academically at degree level and are used by universities to make decisions on admissions. Entry to university will depend on you achieving specific SWAP profile grades (e.g. AAA, AAB or ABB). It is

important to note that SWAP Profile Grades are not the same as SQA Higher exam grades.

All students must successfully complete the programme to be given an overall SWAP profile grading. Students who withdraw early from the programme or who fail a unit cannot be given a profile grading.

3.1 Profile grading for students in arts, humanities, social sciences and nursing.

You will be awarded three grades (A-C) reflecting your performance in the three key academic skills of Knowledge, Understanding, and Analysis.

Knowledge

The ability to quickly absorb new information and acquire and develop broad knowledge of a variety of subject areas.

Understanding

The ability to develop a depth of understanding of the central concerns and approaches to a variety of subject areas.

Analysis

The ability to evaluate differing points of view with insight and engagement.

Your performance will be assessed according to the evaluation criteria (see table on page 5). The grade awarded for each key skill will be an average of your performance across all of the subjects you have studied.

Grade	Grade Descriptor	
A	Summary	Very able overall performance suggesting that degree level work will be well within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work consistently exceeds the minimum requirements and demonstrates very effective independent study skills.
B	Summary	Able overall performance suggesting degree level work will be within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work always meets and sometimes exceeds the minimum requirements and demonstrates effective independent study skills.
C	Summary	Diploma level work may be more appropriate for this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work meets the minimum evidence requirements and demonstrates independent study skills.

3.2 Profile Grading for students in science and engineering.

You will be awarded four grades (A-D) reflecting your performance in the three main subjects of your programmes as follows:

SWAP programme	Subject areas assessed
Biological / Life Sciences	Maths, Biology, Chemistry
Physical Sciences	Maths, Physics, Chemistry
Engineering	Maths, Engineering, Technology

Each subject grade is based on an average of your performance across all units studied. Grades will be determined according to the science and engineering evaluation criteria (see table on page 6).

Grade	Grade Descriptors	
A	Summary	Achieved the units with great ease and displayed a very able overall performance. Degree level study should be well within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work is submitted on time and is usually complete and accurate. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Assessments are sat on time and passed at the first attempt and with no or only a few minor errors. Student demonstrates good practical laboratory skills.
B	Summary	Achieved the units with relative ease and required little or no assistance. Displayed an able overall performance. Degree level study should be within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work contains some errors, but shows a clear understanding of most topics. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Student demonstrates satisfactory practical skills. Student may have been required to retake an assessment. Assessments are of an acceptable standard with little revision required.
C	Summary	Achieved the units but required considerable assistance. Diploma level study may be more appropriate than degree level work for this student at this stage.
	Evidence	Assessed work is adequate. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Student required to repeat most assessments following remediation.
D	Summary	Achieved some units or some outcomes but with great difficulty. Student is not yet ready for higher level study.
	Evidence	Much of the assessed work is either unsatisfactory or not completed. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Assessments frequently require to be repeated. Assessed work is frequently submitted late and / or is of a poor standard or incomplete. Considerable assistance is required to enable the student pass units or outcomes.

4. UCAS

If you are applying to university, you must apply through the SWAP school within UCAS. You should start researching your options as early as possible. If you are able to, it's a good idea to attend university open days (see dates in the *Current Student* section of the SWAP East website, within Information & Guidance).

It is very important that you apply to UCAS as a SWAP East student. You'll need to register with UCAS using the SWAP East buzzword. You'll also need to know the SWAP East centre number in order to fill in the education section.

Buzzword = swapeast2018 Centre no. = S75367T

Your college will have a different buzzword and centre number but you **must** use the SWAP East details so that universities can see you are a SWAP East student and so that SWAP East can monitor your application.

The final deadline for applications is 6pm on 15 January 2018.

UCAS guidance

Guidance on applying to UCAS can be downloaded from the *Current Student* section of the SWAP East website. Please use this to help you complete the application correctly. The education section can be particularly tricky for SWAP applicants; the guidance notes will help.

Your college will probably have guidance or support staff who can help with UCAS applications. The UCAS website has some useful tips and the UCAS helpline can help with technical queries. SWAP

East staff are happy to help too and you should feel free to contact the office with any questions or problems.

UCAS website: <https://www.ucas.com>

UCAS student helpline: 03714680468

5. Getting into university

There's no guarantee of a place at university. To give yourself the best possible chance you need to make sure that you:

1. Complete all units of the SWAP programme. This includes any preparation for higher education or college personal development units. You should also aim to attend the relevant SWAP study skills day in November or December.
2. Provide a strong, well-written and relevant personal statement on your UCAS application which gets across how committed you are to your chosen subject area and highlights the relevant skills and experience you have.
3. Prove you are committed. For example, attend classes, be punctual, complete assignments on time, do your assignments well, contribute to class discussions, organise your time effectively. Your tutor will be taking these things into account when writing your UCAS reference.
4. Get the SWAP profile grades required for the degree programme you want to do. Make sure you know what they are!

Alternatives to University

You might not want to go to university or maybe you just don't want to go straight away. Perhaps you would prefer to progress to an HNC/D programme at college. If that is the case, speak to your tutor or college guidance staff for advice about your options. Look at college websites to see what's on offer. HNC/D programmes often fill up quite quickly, so aim to apply as early as you can in 2018.

6. Finance

Funding for the SWAP Programme

Most SWAP students are entitled to have tuition fees paid for their SWAP access programme. Most are also entitled to a college bursary to help with living costs. The funding you are entitled to will depend on your personal circumstances. Decisions on funding eligibility are taken at college level and so you should speak to the student funding team at your college for advice.

College funding: advice and support

College student support staff and student associations are an important source of help for matters relating to funding. Most colleges offer some form of additional support for students with childcare commitments and they may also offer some limited assistance with travel costs. Colleges usually set aside a small amount of hardship funding to help students experiencing serious financial difficulties. If you are concerned about your finances, ask for help.

Full-time study can affect your entitlement to benefits. If you are in receipt of benefits, you should find out whether this applies to you.

Funding for university or HNC/Ds at college

Decisions on eligibility for funding at university or higher education programmes at college are taken by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). Most SWAP students will be entitled to have their university tuition fees funded, but again this will depend on your personal circumstances. The best thing to do is to contact SAAS for advice: <http://www.saas.gov.uk/>

You don't need to wait until you are applying to university to do that.

Universities offer a range of student bursaries and scholarships. These vary between universities and subjects and some will have very specific eligibility criteria. Details of these can be found on university websites.

Information on all of the above can be found in *Funding Guidance* in the *Current Students* section of the SWAP East website.

7. Study skills

In November and December each year, SWAP East arranges four study skills events for current SWAP Students. These day-long events are hosted by a different university partner each year and are organised according to academic discipline (i.e. humanities, nursing and science). They are a valuable opportunity to find out what it's really like to study at university, get some tips and advice on study skills, speak to university support staff and meet former SWAP students who are now studying at university. Feedback from previous years has been overwhelmingly positive; attendees tell us afterwards that they feel more confident and more enthusiastic about the prospect of going to university. See the comments below:

"Really valuable experience. I definitely hope that these will be continued for future students" (Feedback from Humanities, December 2016).

"I enjoyed the academic writing workshop most of all. I loved the interaction and the knowledge gained from the SWAP study skills" (Feedback from Humanities, 2015).

"I think all the sessions were useful. I thoroughly enjoyed the clinical skills experience as this is something we do not see at college. The note taking session gave me a great insight on what will be expected of me at university" (Feedback from Nursing, 2015).

"A good experience and well worth making the effort to come. A friendly atmosphere with everyone willing to help" (Feedback from Science, 2015).

You will be invited by email to attend one of the 2017 study skills events. Details will also be published on the SWAP East website.

8. Mentoring

As a current or former SWAP East student you can participate in our mentoring scheme, as either a mentor or a mentee.

Mentors are former SWAP East students who are now studying at university. Mentees are current SWAP East students. For mentees this is an excellent opportunity to meet someone who has been there and done it. Their role is to provide you with encouragement, guidance and support that will help you get through your access programme and make the transition from college to university. And for mentors this is a chance to make a real difference to someone's life. Your mentee will benefit from your knowledge, experience and enthusiasm.

To discuss the mentoring scheme or to request a mentor, contact the SWAP East Co-ordinator.

In addition, as a current SWAP East student, you can also use the SWAP East peer support group on Facebook. This is a forum for current and former SWAP East students to communicate with each other, ask and answer questions, share experiences and organise activities. This is a very useful resource and a great way to interact with the SWAP East community.