Mature Student Access Certificate

Programme Guide 2023-24

Letter of Introduction

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the University of Limerick's Mature Student Access Certificate (MSAC). The MSAC is a one-year full-time pre-degree course designed for mature students who wish to develop or refresh key learning skills and to undertake some foundation level academic studies before applying to a degree programme.

This Programme Information Guide has been prepared to provide information about the MSAC programme, Course structure, Entry Requirements, Fees & Financial supports available. If you have any questions about the MSAC or about the application process, please do not hesitate to contact the Mature Student Office by email mso@ul.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Ryan

Mature Student Officer & MSAC Course Director

Overview of the MSAC Programme:

The Mature Student Access Certificate (MSAC) is a one-year full-time pre-degree course designed for mature students who wish to develop or refresh key learning skills and to undertake some foundation level academic studies before applying to a degree programme.

The MSAC will give you the opportunity to develop core skills which will be very useful to you in third level, such as study skills and IT skills. It also gives you an opportunity to study a specialist subject area such as Humanities, Science or Engineering. You will experience life as a full-time student and will familiarise yourself with the many supports and services available in UL before progressing onto a degree course.

Programme Structure:

The Mature Student Access Certificate consists of a set of core general modules and a set of specialist elective modules. All students on the programme complete four core and one elective module per semester. The MSAC is a full-time programme which means that classes are held during the day, from Monday to Friday, over one academic year. The first semester runs from September to December while the second semester runs from January to May.

Please note that while the MSAC is fully delivered on campus, for the Academic Year 2022-23, there will be blended learning components of the programme.

What subjects can I study on the MSAC?

The modules offered on the 2023-24 programme include the following:

Core Modules - completed by all participants:

- Mathematics
- Computer Skills
- Study Skills
- Educational Guidance

Elective Modules – choose one of the streams below:

Elective Stream	Semester 1 Modules	Semester 2 Modules
Humanities	Politics & Sociology	English Literature & History
Science	Chemistry & Biology	Physics & Biology
Engineering	Manufacturing Tech& CAD	Introduction to Engineering

Maths for STEM Certificate

For MSAC students who are interested in progressing to Science and Engineering undergraduate programmes, we recommend that you also complete the Maths for STEM Certificate in order to attain the minimum qualification in maths which is required for some of these degree programmes. This is a separate part-time programme which is offered collaboratively between UL's Mature Student Office and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). Further information on the Maths for STEM Certificate is available on the MSO's website: https://ulsites.ul.ie/mso/maths-stem-certificate.

If you are applying for a place on the MSAC you don't need to make a complete application for the Maths for STEM Certificate. You can start your application for the Maths for STEM Certificate and indicate that you give permission for your MSAC application to be used to also assess you for a place on Maths for STEM. This will then ensure that you are included on the application list for the Maths for STEM Certificate. If you accept your place on the MSAC you will receive separate communication thereafter as to how to register with LCETB for Maths for STEM.

What are the entry requirements for the MSAC?

1. Applicants must be at least 22 years of age by 1st January 2023.
2. Applicants cannot already hold a third-level qualification.
3. Applicants must qualify for EU Fees Status, see below under Course Fees and Financial Support for more information.
4. No standard educational entry requirements but evidence of motivation to progress to third-level education is desirable.
5. Open to all eligible adult students particularly anyone who does not have the conventional educational requirements to progress to third level and/or who comes from socio-economic backgrounds that are currently underrepresented at third level, including (but not limited to) Irish Travellers, lone parents, members of ethnic minority groups.*
6. Evidence of English language proficiency may be required where English is not the first language of the applicant.

NB: As part of the application assessment process, there will be a possibility of interviews.

Course Fees and Financial Support:

The course fee for the Academic Year 2023-24 is €500. This is paid in two instalments of €250 per semester to the UL Fees Office, after registering for the course. Applicants who are in receipt of social welfare payments and applicants on low income may be eligible for a reduced course fee of € 200, paid in two instalments of €100 per semester to the UL Fees Office after registering for the course. If you wish to be assessed for the reduced course fees please provide relevant supporting financial documentation with your application. Further details on the documents required is available from the MSAC Application Guide 2022-23 attached.

Cost of participating on the MSAC:

The day-to-day costs associated with being a full-time student very much depends on your own individual circumstances. Typical costs can include rent, utilities, food, travel, books and materials, clothes, medical costs and social costs. As a mature student you may need to also factor in additional costs such as your mortgage, childcare costs, family support costs and so on. It is strongly advisable that you spend some time working out the potential costs associated with being a full-time student for your year on the MSAC.

For the most part, class notes for your MSAC modules are provided for you or are made available online. There is no requirement to purchase books or other specialist materials, other than your own personal stationery or stationery required for the presentation and submission of assignments to your tutors. In the current environment, it is also recommended that you have home access to a computer/laptop and internet access in order to be able to participate in this course.

The MSAC is <u>not</u> **an eligible programme under:**

- Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) - the higher education grant scheme
- Student Assistance Fund
- UL Financial Aid Fund
- 1916 Bursary Fund
- UL40 Scholarships
- Uversity Higher Education Scholarships for Adult Learners

EU Fees Status

Applicants must qualify for EU Fees Status, i.e. you must be ordinarily resident in the EU/EEA/Swiss State/UK for at least two of the previous four years at the time you commence the MSAC. You must also <u>currently</u> meet the nationality criteria required to qualify for the Free Fees Initiative for your undergraduate course in the year following the MSAC.

Non-EU citizens currently residing outside Ireland are not eligible to apply for the Mature Student Access Certificate and should refer to the International Foundation Programme

Non-EU citizens currently residing in Ireland must demonstrate that they would qualify for EU Fees Status in order to be considered for the MSAC. See https://ulsites.ul.ie/finance/student-fees for further information on fee status.

UL University of Sanctuary

Under UL's University of Sanctuary, initiative five places are reserved on the MSAC for applicants who are asylum seekers / currently in the International Protection application system. MSAC applicants who wish to apply for funding support under the University of Sanctuary must make a separate application by contacting the team via: ULSanctuary@ul.ie or visiting https://www.ul.ie/courses/university-sanctuary-scholarship for more information.

Back to Education Allowance:

Applicants who are in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment for 3 months (78 paid or credited days of employment) immediately prior to commencing the MSAC may be eligible to apply for the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA), Second-Level Option. Please contact your local DEASP Office or visit Back to Education Allowance | Funding, Governance and Performance | Higher Education Authority (hea.ie) for more detailed information on the BTEA. There is also an annual Cost of Education Allowance of €500 if you are getting BTEA and you have a dependent child.

Note: In order to meet the nationality criteria of the Free Fees Initiative for your intended undergraduate course in the year you complete the MSAC, you must be one of the following:

- A national of

    1. an EU Member State,
    2. a state which is a contracting state to the EEA Agreement,
    3. the Swiss Confederation,
    4. United Kingdom, or

- Persons who have **official refugee status** in this State. Time spent from date of official lodgement of application papers for refugee status will be included for the purpose of meeting the residency requirement.

- **Family members of a refugee** who are granted permission by the Minister for Justice and Equality to enter and reside in the State under Section 18 of the Refugee Act 1996

- Persons who have **permission to remain** in the State as a family member of a Union citizen under the provisions of the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations 2006 and 2008 and Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

- Persons who have been granted **Humanitarian Leave to Remain** in the State (prior to the Immigration Act 1999)

- be a person in respect of whom the Minister for Justice and Equality has granted **permission to remain** following a determination not to make a deportation order under section 3 of the Immigration Act 1999

- be a person granted permission to reside in the State under Regulation 4(4) or 16(3)(a) or 16(4)(a) of S.I. No. 518 of 2006

- be a person granted **certain permissions under the International Protection Act, 2015**

Progression from the MSAC:

Guaranteed progression from the Mature Student Access Certificate (MSAC) is available to the programmes listed below. All programmes listed are Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degrees, other than LM180 which is a Level 6 Certificate.

Students must achieve an overall **QCA of 2.6** on the MSAC in order to secure their guaranteed place on the programme of their choice, subject also to any additional requirements specified.

MSAC students also have the option of applying on a competitive basis to any other UL programme outside of this progression list. Details on mature student entry and assessment requirements to all other UL undergraduate courses are available in Section 7 of the Mature Student Guide 2022 or from https://www.ul.ie/academic-registry/prospective-students/applying-UL/mature-students.

UL programmes to which progression is offered from the MSAC	MSAC elective stream applicable
LM063 Technology Management **LM068** Food Science and Health **LM093** Equine Science **LM066** Environmental Science **LM123** Biological & Chemical Sciences - *Common entry with* choice (subject to restriction) to pursue defined Degree Options in any of the following: • Pharmaceutical and Industrial Chemistry • Industrial Biochemistry • Environmental Science • Bioscience **LM180** Equine Science *(Level 6 Certificate)* •	SCIENCE
LM121 Computer Science (**NOTE 1**) – *Common entry with choice to pursue defined Degree Options in any of the following:* • Computer Systems • Mobile Communications & Security • Computer Games Development	SCIENCE *OR* ENGINEERING

LM122 Creative Media & Interaction Design - *Common entry with choice (subject to restriction) to pursue defined Degree Options in any of the following:* • Digital Media Design • Music, Media & Performance Technology	
LM082 Construction Management & Engineering **LM063** Technology Management	ENGINEERING
LM077 Aeronautical Engineering **LM115** Chemical and Biochemical Engineering **LM116** Engineering - *Common entry with choice, subject to capacity, to pursue defined Degree Options in any of the following:* • Biomedical Engineering • Mechanical Engineering • Civil Engineering • Design and Manufacture Engineering **LM118** Electronic & Computer Engineering **LM125** Physics - *Common entry with choice to pursue defined Degree Options in any of the following:* • Applied Physics • Mathematics & Physics	SCIENCE *OR* ENGINEERING *(with QQI Maths for STEM)* (NOTE 2)
LM002 Arts **(NOTE 3)** **MI002** Arts *(Mary Immaculate College)* **(NOTE 3)** **LM019** Social Sciences **LM039** Journalism & Digital Communication **LM040** European Studies **(NOTE 3)** **LM050** Business Studies **(NOTE 3)** (including Business Studies with French or German or Japanese) **BA / Diploma Arts (Evening)** *Application to this course is made directly to UL, not through the CAO. Tuition fees are €3,090 p.a. Does not come under the SUSI grant scheme. Fees are tax-deductible.*	HUMANITIES

NOTE 1:

Progression to LM121 Computer Science is subject to students achieving an overall QCA of 2.6 on the MSAC AND achieving a min **B2** in both Foundation Maths modules.

NOTE 2:

Progression to these courses is subject to students achieving an overall QCA of 2.6 on the MSAC AND achieving a Merit in the QQI Maths for STEM Award.

NOTE 3:

Students progressing to language options within these programmes must already have Leaving Certificate level language, except where beginner's level languages are offered by the programme.

*Right of entry to your chosen degree course is only guaranteed for two years i.e. the year in which you complete the MSAC and the following year, should you request to defer your place or should you re-apply.