

HUGE (NOT GOOD) QANTAS FREQ FLYER CHANGES 2020-021

Qantas Frequent Flyer members will soon earn fewer Qantas Points and status credits on some domestic flights, while also requiring more Qantas Points for selected business class upgrades.

On affected fares, those upgrades will cost more than twice as many Qantas Points as they do today, with status credits similarly slashed in half for impacted travellers.

As the changes centre on a tweak to the airline's domestic 'fare families' – as opposed to a revamp of Qantas Frequent Flyer itself – here's what you need to know.

It can be quite confusing , but expanded data is below or just refer what you need to Axis Travel Centre advisors to advise and assist you.

Qantas domestic fares: what's changing?

For flights booked or ticketed from November 4 2020 – at 12:01am AEDT, to be precise – some fares that had previously been sold under the Flex (flexible economy) banner will instead move to the Red eDeal (discount economy) category.

This applies to all 'M' class fares sold across the Qantas domestic network, covering all routes long and short. M class is currently Qantas' lead-in flexible economy fare, providing travellers with some wiggle room in the event of flight changes or cancellations, as well as a serve of Qantas Points and status credits at the higher 'flexible economy' rates, and with fewer Qantas Points needed for an upgrade.

From November 4, however, these tickets are instead being rezoned as 'discount economy' for new bookings and changed flights, which triggers the reduction in rewards and the increase in the Qantas Points required to upgrade. In a memo distributed to travel agents, Qantas says the rejig "better reflects changed market conditions as the airline delivers on its three year recovery plan."

Qantas domestic fare changes: who they'll impact?

In recognising that its new M class fare will differ from the current offering, "M class will move to the Red eDeal family, which means it will no longer be a flexible fare, with fewer benefits so it will cost less," a Qantas spokesperson confirmed

The airline's lead-in flexible economy airfare will instead become a 'K' class ticket, which Qantas advises will be priced at the same level as M class is today, in almost all cases.

This means passengers purchasing a 'Flex' airfare from Qantas after November 4 will still be assured all benefits of that fare, including earning Qantas Points and status credits at flexible economy rates, and with upgrades to business class requiring fewer Qantas Points than from discount economy tickets.

"There has been no change to the number of status credits or points earned booking on any of our domestic fare families," the Qantas spokesperson reiterates.

"Passengers who book a flexible ticket will still earn the same amount of status credits and points and will not require more points to upgrade to Business."

As only advanced frequent flyers generally notice their ticket's specific fare letter – and can't see this by default on the Qantas website, except by using third-party software, or booking via a travel agen't website instead – this will help ensure that travellers' expectations are met, as to their rewards and upgrade costs, when buying a new flight.

"Individual customers can't book specific fare classes, they can only book Red eDeals, Flex, or Business" on the Qantas website, the airline's spokesperson highlights, with M class to be sold under that 'Red eDeal' category from November 4.

Cuts to Qantas Points, status credits on M class economy

With Qantas Points and status credits earned based upon a traveller's fare type and the distance of their flight – rather than specifically being based on the price of their ticket – there are some changes to the points and status credits earned by travellers who book M class tickets.

Here's how those changes an entry-level **Bronze** frequent flyer member across a variety of routes, when booking an M class airfare today (as flexible economy), versus booking an M class airfare from November 4 (after the change to discount economy):

Route vs Bronze reward	Current reward (M class)	New reward (M class bookings made 4/11-)

Short flights E.g. Sydney-Melbourne	1,200 Qantas Points + 20 status credits	800 Qantas Points + 10 status credits
Mid-length flights E.g. Melbourne-Brisbane and Brisbane-Cairns	1,200 Qantas Points + 30 status credits	800 Qantas Points + 15 status credits
Long flights E.g. Sydney-Perth	2,200 Qantas Points + 40 status credits	1,450 Qantas Points + 20 status credits

For **Platinum** members – who normally earn double Qantas Points when the reward exceeds Qantas’ ‘minimum points guarantee’, here’s how the same change plays out on M class bookings before and after November 4:

Route vs Platinum reward	Current reward (M class)	New reward (M class bookings made 4/11-)
Short flights E.g. Sydney-Melbourne	1,200 Qantas Points + 20 status credits	800 Qantas Points + 10 status credits
Mid-length flights E.g. Melbourne-Brisbane and Brisbane-Cairns	2,200 Qantas Points + 30 status credits	1,400 Qantas Points + 15 status credits
Long flights E.g. Sydney-Perth	4,400 Qantas Points + 40 status credits	2,900 Qantas Points + 20 status credits

All figures are for one-way flights, so for example, a Qantas Platinum member would earn 1,500 fewer Qantas Points per one-way Sydney-Perth flight on an M class fare booked from November 4, versus an M class fare booked prior to that date.

Of course, at the time of publishing, many of the routes above are subject to travel restrictions or quarantine requirements: but such restrictions are only temporary, whereas Qantas changes are not tied to travel restrictions.

More Qantas Points needed for business class upgrades

Once M class fares are moved from ‘flexible economy’ to the ‘discount economy’ camp, upgrading to business class on these tickets will command significantly more Qantas Points than required today.

Here’s how that looks across various domestic routes, for Qantas Frequent Flyer members of all tiers booking an M class airfare today, versus booking M class from November 4, when the fare letter moves to the Red eDeal/discount economy category.

Route	Upgrade cost (today, from M class)	Upgrade cost (M class bookings made 4/11-)
Short flights E.g. Sydney-Melbourne	5,400 Qantas Points	10,900 Qantas Points
Mid-length flights E.g. Melbourne-Brisbane and Brisbane-Cairns	8,100 Qantas Points	19,000 Qantas Points
Long flights E.g. Sydney-Perth	10,900 Qantas Points	27,200 Qantas Points

Qantas has confirmed to *Executive Traveller* that M class fares purchased prior to November 4 will continue to be treated as 'flexible economy' even after that date: including when it comes to earning points and status credits, and upgrading flights.

However, M class fares purchased from November 4 will be treated as 'discount economy' for the same – thus, these changes in earning and upgrade rates.

For clarity, there's **no change** to the number of Qantas Points required for an upgrade from any other fare types or fare letters, including all other tickets currently sold as flexible economy (that's Y, B, H and K fares, for advanced frequent flyers), which will continue to be treated as flexible economy.

Similarly, the number of Qantas Points and status credits earned on the remaining flexible economy fares (again, Y, B, H and K) will remain as-is: as will earning rates for current discount economy tickets, to which M class fares will be aligned and priced.

As a reminder, the changes above are triggered by Qantas' decision to move what is currently a type of flexible economy fare into the 'discount economy' basket, which affects earning rates and upgrade costs – as opposed to any changes to the 'earning tables' or 'reward tables' themselves.

What does an M class economy fare cost on Qantas?

On Qantas domestic flights, M class economy fares are sold at a range of fare prices on each route, and those ranges vary from one route to the next.

On what's now Australia's most popular domestic route, Brisbane-Cairns, pre-tax pricing of M class economy currently sits between \$305 and \$341 one-way, while from Sydney to Melbourne – what's *normally* Australia's busiest domestic route – pricing before tax is instead between \$459 and \$522.

Looking at longer flights like Brisbane-Melbourne, M class economy fares are normally sold for between \$518 and \$580 one-way, while on Sydney-Perth, base M class costs from \$695 to \$765 (all plus taxes, fees and charges).

Qantas advises that the price of M class economy will reduce from November 4, to better-align with its new place in the 'discount economy' category.

As such, today's next-highest flexible economy fare letter, K, will become the airline's lead-in Flex fare, and in most cases, will be sold at a price point currently attached to M class.

Given economy travellers select either 'Red eDeal' or 'Flex' when booking a ticket on the Qantas website, this change will maintain travellers' expectations as to how many points and status credits they can earn given the 'fare family' of their ticket, even when booking M class.

However, as more advanced frequent flyers often seek to book specific fare letters to maximise their rewards, those seeking the lowest-cost flexible fare to effectively double their status credits will need to hunt for those 'K' fares after November 4.

Book M class from November 4 and the rewards earned will instead be the same as the cheapest fares on the Qantas network, as outlined above.

Axis Travel Centre has all the details, as we process Frequent Flyer points for all major Airlines, secure flights and have tickets issued on behalf.

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