

Assessment Handbook

This Assessment Handbook applies to the assessment of all modules starting on or after 1 August 2018. For modules starting on or before 31 July 2018, please refer to the relevant version of the handbook on the [Student Policies and Regulations](#) pages.

It is your responsibility as a student to read this document carefully and to refer to the information and guidance it provides for the different stages of your study. If you need further clarification, you can ask your Student Support Team for advice, or contact one of the named offices referred to in this Handbook.

If you are a continuing student with The Open University, you need to be aware that some aspects of policy, procedure and deadlines relating to assessment matters have changed and you must not assume that arrangements which have applied to your previous study continue to be applicable. You must ensure that you refer to current information, including this Handbook.

This document has been produced by Assessment, Credit and Qualifications at The Open University.

While we have done everything possible to ensure accuracy, the information in this publication may change in the light of altered regulations or policy or because of financial or other constraints.

We may record our phone calls with you to make sure that we have carried out your instructions correctly and to help us improve our services through staff training

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 How to use this handbook

This Assessment Handbook applies to the assessment of all modules starting on or after 1 August 2018.

It outlines The Open University's policies relating to the different assessment tasks you may have to complete for your module and explains the outcomes and/or module result you will receive at the end of each module. You'll find our formal Code of Practice for Student Assessment (along with our other student regulations and formal policies) on our [Student Policies and regulations website](#). At appropriate points in your study you will also be directed to other documents which provide specific information relating to assessment such as the [Exam Arrangements booklet](#), or the [Submitting Examinable Work booklet](#).

This Handbook tells you the **general** rules and regulations for completing and submitting your assessed work and explains the result grades we use, while separate module-specific information such as your Module Guide, Study Planner and Assignment Booklet will tell you about the **individual** assessment tasks in your module.

This Handbook contains three appendices which provide information about The Open University's statement on Plagiarism; How substitution works; and the result statuses which apply to individual modules.

You can also refer to the [Help Centre](#) where you'll find additional information about assessment, for example, a [glossary](#) of some of the phrases, terms and abbreviations used in assessment, and a selection of forms and information sheets. The site also includes links to other useful websites.

This Handbook is updated regularly, and the most up-to-date version will always be available from our [Student Policies and regulations website](#).

1.2 Types of assessment

The Open University uses a range of standard assessment tasks to assess your performance on your module, including:

- assignments
- dissertations
- exams
- speaking assessments
- portfolios
- practical assessments
- projects

There are other types of assessment task, but the above are the most common.

These tasks are used to make up the components of assessment.

Many Open University modules have only one component of assessment which is made up of a number of tasks that you complete during the module. There may be just one type of task – for example, assignments only. Or there may be more than one type of task – for example, assignments and an exam. Your scores from these tasks are used to calculate a single Overall Score.

Other modules have two distinct components of assessment:

1. The continuous assessment component is the tasks (i.e. assignments) you complete during the module. The scores of your assignments are combined to give you an overall continuous assessment score (OCAS).
2. The examinable component is a task (or tasks) completed at the end of your module (i.e. the end-of-module assessment task). This will usually be an exam or a final examinable piece of work such as a project, portfolio or dissertation. The score from this task (or tasks) is your overall examinable score (OES).

The OCAS and OES are both used to calculate your module result.

For more information about assignments and end-of-module assessment tasks see Sections 2 and 3.

You will be able to see the particular assessment strategy used for your module(s) by visiting [StudentHome](#). In the centre panel, under the title of the module you are enrolled on, select 'Assessment' (or 'Assignment scores'), then select 'Assessment strategy'.

1.3 Your StudentHome page

You must make sure that you can sign in to [StudentHome](#) at the start of your module using the username and password we sent you when we confirmed your registration. If you have any problems signing in, you'll find instructions on the screen to help you or you can email our Computing Helpdesk ou-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk.

As well as a wealth of valuable study resources, you will be able to quickly access assessment-related information, including:

- your assignment scores for your current module
- (if your module has an exam) your exam date and time and the address of your allocated exam centre once this information becomes available; you will also be told how to ask for an exam at a non-established centre
- (if your module has an end-of-module assessment task that is not an exam) the cut-off date for your work to be submitted once this information is available
- results for previous modules and the result of your current module, once it is available
- your module website
- information about our modules and qualifications.

1.4 Assessment results

Your scores for assignments will be notified to you throughout your period of study and will be displayed on your StudentHome page. Your final module result will also be displayed in the 'Study' tab of your StudentHome page when it is available. Your StudentHome page will indicate when we expect your final module result to be released. We will usually notify you by email when your module result is available. If your module contributes to a qualification, you will receive an offer of the qualification along with any classification when you have completed the required study. This will normally happen within a week of the issue of the result of your final module.

1.5 Additional needs and assessment

Further information relating to assessments for students with additional needs can be found in [Assessments and exams](#) in the Help Centre or by asking your Student Support Team.

1.6 Assessment and completion of modules

When you register on a module, you are expected to complete all the assessment tasks and finish the module in line with the cut-off dates in your Study Planner.

However, The Open University recognises that in some cases you may start a module but are unable to complete all aspects of study or assessment within the scheduled timetable.

Depending on the circumstances, you may be permitted short extensions to individual assignments (see Section 2).

If you want to suspend or reduce your study intensity, or delay the completion of study and/or assessment, you may be able to withdraw from a module and then rejoin at a later start date to complete it. This is known as 'deferral'. Please refer to our [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).

If you defer, you may be able to carry scores for assignments you have already completed over to your new start date. Carrying scores forward is known as Assessment Banking.

Your final opportunity to apply for deferral is the last working day before the date of the end-of-module assessment task for your module. This will normally be the date of the exam or the cut-off date for submitting your final piece of assessment.

You cannot apply for a deferral if you have already been granted a postponement on the same module, or if you are taking a resit exam or resubmitting the final piece of assessment. In some very limited circumstances, you may be eligible to postpone the exam or submission of the final piece of assessment, but only to the next available assessment period and only on a discretionary basis. You would need to meet Open University criteria and provide third party documentary evidence. You can find more information about this in Sections 3.3 to 3.7.

If you are awarded a 'Fail: Entitled to Resit' or 'Fail: Entitled to Resubmit' module result with a resit/resubmission date scheduled within 12 to 16 weeks of your original exam period or submission date, you may be eligible to postpone this resit/resubmission to the next available opportunity. You can find more information about this in Section 4.6.

Section 2 Assignments

2.1 Continuous assessment

Continuous assessment is what we call the assessment tasks you complete during the module.

The most common assessment tasks during the module are tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and interactive computer-marked assignments (iCMAs).

TMAs are usually essay or short-answer questions, although to build employability skills in to modules there's been a move towards greater variation in the type of task you may be asked to complete. Examples include: creation of a poster, creation of a PowerPoint presentation, production of reports based on group work.

iCMAs are made up of a series of questions and you choose the answers from a given selection. iCMAs can include a range of question types.

You must submit your assignments on or before the cut-off dates given in the Study Planner for your module unless you have been granted an extension before the cut-off date.

Extensions are not permitted for iCMAs.

2.1.1 Formative and summative assignments

'Formative' assignments are set for teaching purposes only. The scores you get for them don't count towards your final result. Some formative assignments are compulsory, so you must submit them even though the scores don't contribute to your result.

Most of your assignments will be 'summative'. The scores for these assignments count towards your final result.

The assessment strategy for your module will tell you which category each assignment falls into. You can access the assessment strategy from [StudentHome](#). In the centre panel, under the title of the module you are enrolled on, select 'Assessment' (or 'Assignment scores'), then select 'Assessment strategy'.

2.1.2 Keeping your assignments

Always check carefully that you are submitting the correct assignment and always keep a copy of each assignment you submit. If you submit electronically you must wait until you get the on-screen receipt to be sure that it has been accepted by the system. Make a note of the receipt number as proof of your successful submission. See Section 2.5.9 for more information.

If you submit an assignment on paper, you should retain a photocopy along with proof of posting (see Section 2.4). This evidence will be required if a document sent in the post is not delivered or is delivered late. The Open University will not accept any responsibility for assignments that don't reach us by the due date. You will be asked to provide evidence that your work was submitted on time if you claim that an assignment is missing from your student record.

Most students keep their marked assignments until at least the end of the module or qualification, largely because they're an invaluable aid to revision. **We strongly advise you to keep your marked assignments, along with your proof of posting or submission, until you have your module or qualification result. We are not able to provide you with copies of your assignments.**

2.2 Assignment scores

2.2.1 Calculating your continuous assessment

Most modules use some form of continuous assessment. Individual assignments are weighted to reflect their relative importance. The assignment score your tutor gives is multiplied by the assignment weighting to produce the figure that will count towards your continuous assessment. You'll be given a zero score for any summative assignment you don't submit, unless your module allows 'substitution' (explained in Section 2.8). You'll also be given a zero for any formative assignment you do not submit.

Your module may have a 'threshold' for one or more of the continuous assessment tasks. This is a minimum score on a particular task or group of tasks that you must reach to pass the module.

The assessment strategy for each module is explained in the module materials. We also provide a summary of the assessment strategy for every module, which can be accessed from the module record page on StudentHome. This information includes the pass mark that is applicable to your module.

On most modules your performance in all forms of assessment is recorded and reported back to you in line with one of the following numerical Open University Scales.

Table 1: The Open University Undergraduate Scale (pass mark 40)

Band	University scale score	Performance standard
A	85-100	Pass 1
B	70-84	Pass 2
C	55-69	Pass 3
D	40-54	Pass 4
E	30-39	Bare fail
F	15-29	Fail
G	0-14	Bad fail

Table 2: The Open University Postgraduate Scale (pass mark 40)

Band	University scale score	Performance standard
A	85-100	Distinction
B	70-84	Merit
C	55-69	Pass
D	40-54	Pass
E	30-39	Bare fail
F	15-29	Fail
G	0-14	Bad fail

Table 3: The Open University Postgraduate Scale (pass mark 50)

Band	University scale score	Performance standard
A	85-100	Distinction
B	70-84	Merit
C	60-69	Pass
D	50-59	Pass
E	40-49	Bare fail
F	25-39	Fail
G	0-24	Bad fail

Some modules use other scales for marking individual assignments, and those will be explained in your assignment material, but the final score for an assignment will be recorded and reported using one of the Open University Scales.

2.3 Preparing assignments

Your assignments serve two main purposes. They help you to learn and they enable The Open University to judge the standard you've achieved.

The preparatory work you do for an assignment and the process of writing it should help you to concentrate on particular aspects of the module and to consolidate what you've learned so far.

The nature of assignments will obviously vary from module to module. Most module teams offer advice and suggestions in the assignment notes about the scope of the question and what's expected of you.

You can also find plenty of useful information on [preparing assignments](#) in the Help Centre on StudentHome.

2.3.1 Discussing assignments with other students

Although you may find that you work best on your own, you can learn a great deal from discussing aspects of your module with others. Opinions and insights formed while discussing a question with other people are no less valuable than those you form while reading books or listening to lectures. There's nothing wrong in discussing assignment questions before you begin your work. But when you sit down to write your assignments you are expected to work alone and not to use the work of others (in its entirety or in part) as if it is your own.

You should never ask another student on the module to check your assignment and, unless it has been specifically agreed, it's not appropriate to send your tutor a draft of your assignment for checking.

2.3.2 Good academic practice and plagiarism

The Open University's Plagiarism Statement can be found as [Appendix 1](#) to this Handbook. Please read it carefully and follow the link to [Developing Good Academic Practice](#). The Open University uses text comparison software to help detect plagiarism. This checks your assignments against the work of other students and against internet sources and other published material. If you submit an assignment that contains work that is not your own without indicating this to the marker you are committing plagiarism and this is an offence under SD1.2 of the Code of Practice for Student Discipline.

2.3.3 Confidentiality of assignments and other assessment tasks

All information you give in assignments and other assessment tasks is regarded as confidential to you and won't be divulged outside of The Open University.

Some modules have additional confidentiality guidelines and data protection rules which you will be told about in the module-specific information.

Assessment for some modules includes work done using collaborative tools such as forums, wikis or blogs. These tools are accessible to anyone with the relevant permissions to the website on which they are hosted. As such, the work done in these media cannot be considered to be confidential.

In your assignments and elsewhere in your module you may be encouraged to apply the module content to your own employment. This means that you may need to give information about, and occasionally to pass judgement on, the company or organisation for which you work or have worked for in the past. The Open University treats such information with complete confidentiality. Tutors may use it only for purposes directly connected with the

teaching of the module, and may not divulge it for any other purpose during or after their service with The Open University.

2.3.4 Processing personal data as part of your studies

You will not usually be expected to process personal data as part of your studies. If you do need to do so (perhaps for the purposes of a project) you must obtain the agreement of your Tutor that the processing is necessary and immediately inform the Data Protection Team (data-protection@open.ac.uk).

The Data Protection Team will advise you about the requirements and implications of the data protection legislation, including the security arrangements appropriate to your set of personal data. The Data Protection Team will also be responsible for dealing with subject-access requests related to personal data you hold.

2.4 Submitting TMAs

2.4.1 There are two different methods of submitting TMAs

1. online via a link on your StudentHome page
2. on paper

Your module materials will tell you which method you should use, or whether you can choose which you prefer. The nature of some TMAs means they can't be submitted online so you may find that you use paper for some and submit others online.

The cut-off date given in your Study Planner is the last date by which each TMA should arrive. We strongly advise you not to leave submission of your TMAs until the last minute.

TMAs not submitted on or before the cut-off date will not be marked and you will not get a score unless you have already had an extension to the cut-off date agreed. For the last TMA – i.e. the TMA you complete before you take your exam or submit your end-of-module assessment (EMA) or end-of-module TMA (emTMA) – your tutor cannot agree an extension beyond the first day of the month in which the module ends (see Section 2.4.4).

No extension can be given for an EMA (see Section 3.8) or emTMA (see Section 3.12).

If you are submitting your TMA online, you should ensure that you submit well before the midday deadline (UK local time) on the cut-off date in case you experience technical problems. However, there is a 12-hour grace period so any TMAs received before midnight on the cut-off date will still be accepted. We strongly recommend that you do not leave electronic submission of your TMA to the last minute as network traffic may be heavy and

may delay receipt of your work by The Open University. We also recommend that you keep all submission receipts.

If you are submitting on paper, you should allow at least three days for delivery and ensure you obtain proof of posting. Don't use any form of delivery which requires a signature on receipt, and do ensure that you put sufficient postage on the envelope.

If you have difficulties submitting your TMA online using the link on your StudentHome page, you can submit by email directly to The Open University (not to your tutor). However, submission via StudentHome is always preferable because it guides you through the process, and receipt by the system is quicker.

Please visit the Help Centre for more detailed information about [submitting TMAs](#)

2.4.2 Submitting TMAs online

You can only submit one file for each TMA. Submitting a second file will overwrite the first one unless your tutor has already downloaded it or the cut-off date has passed. If your TMA consists of more than one file you'll need to zip the files together. You must ensure that your submission contains all of your TMA, that you are submitting the correct version, and that it is in the right file format. If you submit a wrong or unreadable file you will not be allowed to submit another version.

Unless your module materials tell you otherwise, your file must be no bigger than 10MB in size. If it exceeds this size you will not be able to submit it. You can either zip the file to reduce its size, or reduce the size by, for example, converting image files to a different format.

The Help Centre gives further information about [submitting TMAs online](#).

2.4.3 Partly completed TMAs

Unless you're told otherwise, you must submit all parts of a TMA together.

If you have difficulty completing all the parts of a TMA on time you can ask for permission to submit the whole TMA late. To agree a new deadline you must contact your tutor before the cut-off date.

Do not submit individual parts of a TMA separately or in instalments.

A part-TMA submitted as a second instalment will not be marked. If you submit a second instalment on paper, your tutor will return it to you with a note to say that it can't be accepted. If you submit a second instalment via the eTMA system after your tutor has marked the first installment or submission your tutor will not mark it.

Check your TMA carefully before submitting, whether on paper or electronically. If it turns out that you have submitted the wrong file (for example, you accidentally submit an earlier draft instead of your final version) or that you have missed something out, you will not be allowed to resubmit.

2.4.4 Requesting an extension for a TMA

If you find that you are unable to submit your TMA before the cut-off date, you can consider requesting an extension. You should contact your tutor in the first instance when requesting an extension of any length. Try to avoid asking for an extension close to the deadline as your tutor may not be available to authorise this at very short notice. **You must submit your request for an extension before the cut-off date.** If you are asking for an extension on the cut-off date and you cannot contact your tutor, please contact your Student Support Team.

Your tutor will decide if the extension can be authorised. If your tutor authorises an extension they will set a new deadline for you for that assignment.

If you are considering requesting an extension,

[Getting an extension to your assignment deadline](#) in the Help Centre will lead you through the process.

TMA extensions will **not** normally be agreed for routine appointments or events that could be anticipated. No extension will normally be agreed for a module's final TMA unless there are exceptional or serious circumstances (this is the one before an exam, EMA or emTMA). Even if your tutor agrees that you are dealing with exceptional or serious circumstances, no extension to a final TMA can be given beyond the first day of the month in which the module ends (i.e. 1 June for a module that ends in June). Extensions are not permitted under any circumstances for an EMA (see Section 3.8) an emTMA (see Section 3.12) or any iCMA.

For a very small number of modules, substitution is an alternative option but it is not available on all assignments and the effect of substitution is limited (see Section 2.8).

If you have evidence that circumstances beyond your control affected your performance in your TMAs or prevented you from submitting all the assignments for your module, you should consider submitting special circumstances (see Section 2.9)

2.4.5 Non-scored TMA marking and ongoing difficulties with submission

Occasionally, even when it's too late to record a score that can contribute to your assessment, or if the extension request is not authorised, your tutor may still think it useful for your assignment to be marked so that you have the benefit of teaching comments.

If you decide not to submit your assignment, tell your tutor before the cut-off date. You should consider the impact that not submitting may have on your overall assessment, your module result and potentially your qualification classification. Some assignments are compulsory or have a threshold you need to achieve to pass the module. If you fail to submit a compulsory TMA or reach a threshold, you are likely to fail the module unless you can show that there were circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from satisfying the requirement.

If you have evidence that circumstances beyond your control affected your performance in your TMAs or prevented you from submitting all the assignments for your module, you should consider submitting special circumstances (see Section 2.9).

There may be other options available if you find you are falling behind with your studies and not able to submit your TMAs by the cut-off dates. For example, you may be able to suspend your studies and re-join a later start date of your module, and in some cases carry forward the assignment scores you have already achieved. Speak to your Student Support Team in the first instance and they will be able to provide guidance. More details can be found in the Open University's [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).

2.5 Marking of TMAs

2.5.1 TMAs submitted online (eTMAs)

If you submit your TMA online we'll email you when it has been marked and is available for you to collect. When you download your eTMA, you'll also have a separate Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3) file which will contain your tutor's comments on the TMA. Your tutor may also add comments to your eTMA as well. You are likely to get an eTMA back more quickly than TMAs submitted on paper.

2.5.2 TMAs submitted on paper

Your tutor will write comments on your script and on the accompanying Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3) and send both script and form to Walton Hall. Your score is recorded and your TMA and one copy of the Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3) are returned to you. All this can take up to three weeks from the time you post your TMA.

2.5.3 Your marked TMA

When you get your TMA back you should check the scores awarded and read your tutor's comments carefully, taking note (for future assignments) of what seem to be your strengths and weaknesses. If there are comments that you don't understand, or don't agree with, your tutor will be able to discuss these with you.

2.5.4 Monitoring

TMA's marked by module tutors are monitored to ensure a reasonable uniformity of marking standards and an adequate level of teaching comments. Throughout the year some of the TMA's marked by each tutor are checked by the module team. If you are submitting online this shouldn't cause any delay in returning your marked TMA. However, if you submit on paper and your TMA is selected for monitoring, it will need to be photocopied to be checked by the module team, and its return may be delayed by up to two days. The Assessment Processing Centre (contact details are at the end of this Handbook) will be able to tell you if this has happened. If you need your tutor's comments on it to enable you to begin your next TMA, ask your tutor to send a copy of them direct to you.

These photocopies are treated as confidential and are destroyed at the end of each year.

2.5.5 Late return of marked TMA's

Your tutor is expected to mark and return your TMA within ten working days of the cut-off date. Working days do not include weekends, bank holidays in UK nations or Open University closure days.

If you submit your TMA online you'll receive an email telling you that it is available to collect once your tutor has marked it.

TMA's submitted on paper must be sent to your tutor. Once your tutor has completed the marking and feedback, they will send it to Assessment Processing. The Assessment Processing Centre will record your score and return the marked TMA to you within 24 hours of receipt. You should receive the marked TMA back within three weeks of the cut-off date. If you have not received your marked TMA by this time, contact your tutor. If you receive no response from your tutor, contact your Student Support Team.

2.5.6 Querying a TMA score

If you want to query the score awarded for any TMA (except for end-of-module TMA's), you must return the assignment to your tutor within 14 days of the date of return on the Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3), stating the grounds on which you're querying the score. If you don't do this, the assignment can't be sent on appeal for re-marking. The query

should always be sent to the tutor who marked the assignment, not to your Student Support Team, the Assessment Processing Centre, module team chair or anyone else.

If you're not satisfied with your tutor's response, you have the right to appeal. Forward the assignment to the Student Casework Office (address at the end of this Handbook), with the related correspondence from your tutor, the grounds for your appeal and any other relevant information. It must arrive within 28 days of the date of notification of your module tutor's decision. The Student Casework Office will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three days of their arrival, telling you which delegated authority of The Open University has been asked to reply direct to you.

Don't assume that a query or the subsequent appeal will result in an increase to your original score. Scores often remain unchanged, and they can be reduced. You may not submit a revised assignment to try to improve the score.

You should note you can't query the score of an end-of-module TMA (emTMA). If you have good evidence that your module result may be wrong, you will need to complete a module result check form. See Section 4.9.

2.5.7 Modules without tutors

A small number of modules do not allocate personal tutors, but provide support through study advisers or online conferencing. If you are studying this type of module and you want to query a TMA score, forward the assignment to the Student Casework Office (address at the end of this Handbook), together with: a note saying that your module does not provide a personal tutor; the grounds for your appeal; and any other relevant information; to arrive within 28 days of the date of notification of your TMA score. The Student Casework Office will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three days of their arrival, telling you which delegated authority of The Open University has been asked to reply direct to you.

2.5.8 Keeping copies of your TMAs

You are advised to keep copies of your TMAs until after you receive your module result. If you have submitted your TMAs online, these will be available for you to download until 90 days after your module has finished. At this point, your access to your TMAs will be removed. Therefore, you should ensure that you download them before the end of the 90-day period. You should also consider backing up your files in case of PC failure or file corruption. See the article on [Safe and secure computing](#) in the Help Centre for more information. As the system is regularly cleared due to the volume of submissions, Open University policy does not permit the retrieval of TMAs on your behalf.

2.6 Submitting iCMAs

An iCMA must be your own work just as a TMA must be (see [Appendix 1](#)).

You access iCMAs for your module through a link on your module website. iCMAs can be set up in a number of different ways. Some will give feedback after you answer each question or provide feedback for all questions after the cut-off date. Others don't provide feedback at all. In some iCMAs you may be able to have more than one attempt at a question but you are given a lower score for second and subsequent attempts. Most iCMAs will not give you a score on completion; you will be given your score, and any feedback if it's provided, within seven days of the closing date.

You should aim to submit your iCMA well before the midday deadline (UK local time) on the cut-off date given in your Study Planner in case you experience technical problems.

However, there is a 12-hour grace period so any iCMAs received before midnight on the cut-off date will still be accepted. We strongly recommend that you do not leave submission of your iCMA to the last minute as network traffic may be heavy and may delay receipt of your work by The Open University. We also recommend that you keep all submission receipts.

You will not necessarily be given exactly the same questions as other students, so if you want to query a point with your tutor remember to make a note of the question you were asked.

2.6.1 Late submission or late receipt of iCMAs

iCMAs submitted after the cut-off date will not be marked, both for technical reasons and because model answers or other information about the iCMA may have already been sent out to other students. If you were not able to submit an iCMA on time because of serious special circumstances, you should consider submitting special circumstances information to the Module Result Panel, see Section 2.9.

2.7 Marking iCMAs

iCMAs are marked automatically by the system.

For formative assignments, feedback may be provided after answering each question or immediately after submission of the whole iCMA; for summative assignments, feedback may be provided after answering each question or after the cut-off date. Where feedback is provided after the cut-off date you should receive it within seven days of the iCMA's cut-off date. Feedback, if provided, will be available on the module website using the iCMA link.

For formative assignments your iCMA score will be available on the module website using the iCMA link; for summative assignments your score will be available on StudentHome and the module website assessment page within seven days of the cut-off date.

2.7.1 Non-receipt of iCMA scores

If you don't receive your iCMA score within seven days of the cut-off date, or if you want to query your score, you should contact Assessment Processing (contact information can be found at the end of this Handbook). If you want to clarify any academic aspect of your iCMA, ask your tutor.

2.8 Substitution

Most modules do not allow substitution. Even on modules that do allow substitution, certain assignments that are considered especially important are not eligible for it.

All your summative assignments are used for assessment and you get credit for each one you submit. Your continuous assessment is always calculated on the weighted average of **all** the summative assignments on the module, not simply the average of those you complete. It is therefore in your interest to submit work for **every** assignment.

To reduce the impact of a dip in assignment scores and to encourage you to attempt all the assignments, some modules allow your original score for a set number (published in advance) of their summative assignments to be replaced (or 'substituted') by a higher score derived from your assessment scores throughout the module.

The summary of the module assessment strategy available via your StudentHome module page will tell you whether your module allows substitution, and to which assignments it can apply. Substitution only takes place if it's to your advantage and is applied automatically if your module allows it. There's no need to ask to have scores substituted.

It is important to note that the calculation of the substitution score(s) is not simply an average of the scores achieved for your other assignments. The calculation we use is intended to encourage you to submit **all** assignments. Submitting part of an assignment and achieving a low score will still benefit your continuous assessment more than not submitting the assignment at all. This may also in turn affect your final module result and potentially the classification of your final qualification. You should consider this carefully before deciding not to submit a substitutable assignment.

If you have had an assignment score reduced because of a disciplinary penalty, this assignment will not be eligible for substitution.

For more information about how substitution works please see [Appendix 2](#).

2.9 Special circumstances affecting continuous assessment

If any special circumstance has seriously affected your performance in continuous assessment (including iCMAs or residential school work if your module has any), you can ask for the Module Result Panel (MRP) to be told about it when they determine your final module result.

This arrangement is intended to make MRPs aware of matters of a **serious** nature that interfered with your ability to study over a total period of **four weeks or more**. The four main categories of special circumstance information that The Open University considers serious are:

- serious disruption of studies caused by The Open University (such as continual delay in receiving module materials, exceptionally late return of tutor-marked assignments)
- serious and prolonged illness (yourself or a member of your immediate family)
- serious disruption of personal life (such as bereavement)
- difficulties caused by a disability or additional requirement, for which you feel that any adjustments made by The Open University were not appropriate

The Module Result Panel will use the information only to your benefit, usually if your result is borderline. Only limited weight can be given to it. MRPs have generally given no weight to such circumstances as moving house, pressure of work, change of employment or normal pregnancies. So before you decide to go ahead, please consider carefully how far your special circumstances really have affected your performance in continuous assessment.

You should note that Module Result Panels will only consider information that is submitted within the deadlines outlined below and prior to your module result being determined. **You cannot wait until you receive your module result and then decide to ask for special circumstances to be considered retrospectively.**

2.9.1 To report special circumstances relating to continuous assessment

You can report special circumstances relating to continuous assessment using the [online special circumstances form](#).

You must complete the online process of reporting your special circumstances before midnight (UK local time) four calendar days after your final piece of assessment. Supporting third-party evidence must then be received **within 14 days** of your special circumstances submission. Supporting evidence can be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the webform. Submissions received outside of these timeframes will not be considered

unless you can provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting the deadline by circumstances outside of your control.

You must submit special circumstances yourself. Information submitted by tutors won't be accepted.

If you want to submit special circumstances relating to continuous assessment, you must ensure that you meet the above deadline, even if you are applying for postponement of an exam, EMA or emTMA.

If serious circumstances (such as hospitalisation immediately after the exam, EMA or emTMA) prevent you from reporting your special circumstances within the stipulated deadline and/or submitting evidence within 14 days, a late submission may be accepted, at The Open University's discretion. You will be required to provide appropriate evidence of the reasons for the delay. A late submission may also be accepted if an illness or disability you thought was minor at the time has now been confirmed as more serious and could have severely affected your studies.

If your reasons for late submission are not acceptable or supported by evidence, they will not be accepted. You will be notified of this in writing.

The special circumstances information you provide should be supported by evidence such as a medical certificate, otherwise it may not be considered. If you submit evidence by post, you must keep proof of posting. If you submit it electronically you should keep a copy of the email sent.

2.9.2 If you have a disability or additional requirements

If you think that your disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition has seriously disadvantaged you in your continuous assessment, it's in your own interest to complete a special circumstances form.

Information that you provide to The Open University or your tutor about your condition will not be brought to the attention of the Module Result Panel. The only information they will have will be that submitted using the special circumstances process.

2.10 Posting assignments on websites

Posting your own assignments and/or tutor comments on an Open University forum or on any other website is not allowed unless you are required to do so as part of your assignment or you have received written permission from the Module Team Chair. Advertising assignments for sale is also not allowed (see Good academic practice and plagiarism in Section 2.3.2., Appendix 1 and the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)).

Section 3 End-of-module assessment tasks

3.1 Examinable components of assessment

The summary of the module assessment strategy, available via your StudentHome module page, will tell you whether your module has an examinable component of assessment and what format it takes.

The examinable component of assessment may be an exam or a piece of examinable work such as a dissertation, project or portfolio. It may include both an exam and other work. It may be written or spoken.

(Modules that don't have an examinable component may still use exams, dissertations, projects and portfolios as tasks that count towards your overall module result.)

If you don't attend the exam or submit the piece of examinable work (also known as the end-of-module assessment or EMA), you will not be able to pass the module and you will not be offered a resit or resubmission. You will not be offered another opportunity to complete the module unless you have made formal arrangements to defer completion of your module (see Section 1.6) or have had a postponement of your exam or EMA formally approved by The Open University (see Sections 3.3 to 3.7).

If you don't reach a pass standard in the examinable component but have satisfied the other module requirements, including successful completion of continuous assessment and any residential school requirement, you will normally be offered one opportunity to resit or resubmit the examinable component. For postgraduate modules, you may also need to have met a minimum score in the examinable component. See Section 4.6.

3.2 Exams

If your module has an exam it will usually be hand-written and normally last three hours.

The question paper will almost always be an unseen one, but you'll receive a specimen paper with your module materials so that you can familiarise yourself with the appearance of the question paper, what you'll be asked to do and the kind of questions you're likely to find. For some modules you may be able to get copies of past exam papers from the Open University Students Association (OUSA). Contact details are at the end of this Handbook.

Exam periods are the dates between which The Open University holds its exams. For any given start date of a module, the exam takes place in the exam period immediately after the formal teaching has ended. If you're currently studying a module and are unsure when the exam is going to take place, you can find [exam timetable information](#) on the Help Centre.

You will receive notification of your exam centre allocation on StudentHome before your exam. We will email you to tell you when these details are available. If you don't have a registered email address we will send you the details in a letter. If you haven't been told your allocation by six weeks before the exam (or two weeks before for resits), or if you have any queries about your exam allocation, contact your Student Support Team. If you are taking your exam outside the UK please see Section 3.3.8.

3.3 Exam arrangements

3.3.1 Exam dates

The [exam period](#) applicable to your module will be published on the Help Centre before the module start date. You should not plan any holiday or other commitments that coincide with this period. If you are unsure when your exam will take place you can also find this information on StudentHome.

3.3.2 Exam centres and allocation

We will contact you before your exam with details of your centre allocation and the Exam Arrangements booklet. If you want to change to another centre you should contact us as soon as you receive the details of your exam. The list of [available exam locations](#) and [deadlines for changing exam arrangements with relevant contact details](#) are on the Help Centre. We can only allocate you to a different exam centre if you contact us by the deadline date. If you're changing your address and want to attend an exam centre closer to your new address, you must contact your Student Support Team immediately you know your new address and ask us for reallocation.

It's your responsibility to make sure that you attend the right session and the right centre. Misreading your allocation won't entitle you to another exam opportunity or to have extra time if you arrive late.

3.3.3 If you have a disability

If you have declared a disability to The Open University, we will automatically provide you with a link to information about adjustments to exam arrangements. We will ask you to complete a [request form for exam arrangements](#) to tell us if you need any reasonable adjustments for you to be able to take your exam. You must ensure that you complete this form within the given deadline. If you do not do so, we may not be able to make the arrangements you require, and you may need to attend a main exam centre or your exam may need to be delayed, which could affect the planning of your chosen qualification. Our website has lots of information on [services for disabled students](#).

Additional exam arrangements will be agreed based on evidence of need, and you may not be able to have all the arrangements you ask for. If you feel you have grounds for appeal about the arrangements made for your exam, you must write to the Student Casework Office within 21 days from the date of the reply to your original request, stating the grounds for your appeal.

When the Module Result Panel meets to award your results, it will have brief factual details of any additional arrangements we have made for your exam. The script marker is not made aware of any disability or additional requirements that you may have reported to The Open University, nor of any additional arrangements put in place for you. This is so that the Panel has a baseline and independent assessment of the academic merit of the script as presented.

3.3.4 If you're ill or have additional requirements

If you're ill at the time of the exam or you have additional requirements, it may be possible to take your exam at home or in hospital. If you have caring responsibilities (for example, breastfeeding a newborn baby or caring for a disabled dependant) that make it difficult or impossible for you to take your exam at an exam centre, you may be able to take your exam at home. Please see the Help Centre for more information about [caring responsibilities / pregnancy and your exam](#) and [exam arrangements if you are ill or injured](#).

Please consult your Student Support Team to discuss if additional arrangements can be made for you or if other arrangements such as deferral or postponement of your exam may be appropriate. Contact should be made as soon as possible, but no later than the deadlines published in the Help Centre, so that options can be discussed with you in good time. If you have an unexpected illness or injury, it's extremely unlikely that arrangements can be put in place if you tell us less than four weeks before the exam date.

If your personal circumstances (such as a medical condition) prevent you from taking the exam in ordinary conditions, we may be able to make reasonable adjustments to suit your needs. You can [find out more and request adjustments using the online form on StudentHome](#).

Additional exam arrangements will be agreed based on the evidence of need and you may not be able to have all the arrangements you ask for. If you feel you have grounds for appeal about the arrangements made for your exam, you can find out more information about how to do this in The Open University's [Complaints and Appeals](#) procedure.

If you attend the exam but have to leave in the first hour due to illness, you may be allowed to take the exam again at the next opportunity for your module. See section 3.4.2.

3.3.5 Exam rules

When you receive your exam allocation you'll also receive details of the [Exam arrangements booklet and Supplementary Information sheet](#) that explain how the exam will be conducted, what materials you'll need and what you'll be allowed to take into the exam room. You must read both the **general** and the **module** exam rules that apply to your module carefully and be sure to abide by them.

3.3.6 Identification

You must bring an acceptable form of identification (ID) with you to the exam centre.

Acceptable forms of identification are:

- photo driving licence
- passport
- national identity card
- Irish Public Services Card

If you do not have one of the above, you can use photographic identification, but this **must be** accompanied by a **debit or credit card** as proof of signature. Acceptable forms of photo ID are:

- CitizenCard
- Validate UK card
- Blue Badge permit
- Scottish National Entitlement Card
- Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card

No form of photographic identification is acceptable without accompanying proof of signature.

If you are a member of the UK forces sitting your exam within a BFPO base, your military ID will be accepted as proof of identity.

It is **vital** that you provide identification in the required format at the start of your exam. The [Exam arrangements booklet](#) contains up to date information about any additional documents which will be accepted. Don't forget to take it with you because if you haven't got identification **your result can't be released** until your identity has been confirmed. Your invigilator will ask you to complete a Candidate Identity Certificate statement at the exam

then you might also need to take valid ID to a solicitor or notary for verification, which you'll have to pay for. We'll contact you after the exam to confirm if you need to visit a solicitor or notary for ID verification and the deadline for doing this. Please note that even if you provide identification soon after the exam has taken place your result may still be delayed.

There may be occasions at exams when a student wearing a full or partial face/head covering will be required to remove such items of clothing to verify their identity against the photo ID they are required to bring. This will be done in a courteous and appropriate manner in private and by a person of the same sex. For example, if you are a Muslim woman wearing a hijab with a veil covering your face your identity will be checked by a female invigilator in a private room after the exam.

3.3.7 Exam scripts

Like many UK universities, The Open University presents exam scripts to script markers anonymously. Candidates' names are removed from the scripts, which are then identified throughout the marking process by a barcode.

This doesn't apply to projects, dissertations or other kinds of examinable work, which have different marking arrangements.

3.3.8 Exams outside the UK

A [list of established exam centres](#) for each exam period can be found on the Help Centre.

If you live outside the UK, Republic of Ireland or Central Europe and are unable to attend one of the listed established centres, you can apply for an exam at an alternative venue providing your request and fee are received before the deadline shown via the link below.

We will do our best to arrange an exam within a reasonable travelling distance. We cannot guarantee this service, however, and also reserve the right to refuse or withdraw an exam at a non-established centre if the arrangements fall short of the required standard.

If you want to take an exam at a [non-established centre outside the UK](#), please read the information on the Help Centre. For each exam, you need to make your request and pay the relevant non-refundable fee using [Eventbrite](#). Select 'Open University Exam at an International Non-Established Exam Centre' and purchase a ticket. As part of this process, you'll need to tell us your chosen country and choice of three cities.

Even if you've taken such exams before, you must make a separate application for each exam period and each exam you are taking within that period. If you are offered a resit exam, we will let you know the deadline for the application for your resit.

The [key deadline dates](#) for requesting exams outside the UK are available on the Help Centre.

We are unable to deal with late requests because of the time it takes to make the arrangements. If you're posted abroad at very short notice and can't meet the date, you can either:

- Defer completion of your study to the next start date of the module. Please refer to The Open University's [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).
- Apply to postpone your exam to the next available exam period on a discretionary basis. You will be required to provide third-party documentary evidence to support a discretionary claim. Apply using the [discretionary postponement webform](#).

3.4 Absence from exams

If you fail to attend the exam and do not contact The Open University to arrange a formal deferral or postponement, you will be issued with a 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission' module result. You will not be allowed another opportunity to complete the exam, and will not be eligible to repeat study of the module at a reduced fee.

3.4.1 Deferral

For many modules offered by The Open University, you can choose to defer completion of your module. If you want to delay sitting your exam, you may be able to deregister and then register on the next available start date to complete your module. This process is called deferral. If you defer, you may be able to carry the assignment scores you have already completed over to your new start date. Carrying scores forward is known as Assessment Banking. You may apply for deferral at any point up to the last working day before the date of the exam for your module. You cannot apply for a deferral if you have already been granted a postponement on the same module, or if you are taking a resit exam.

For more information refer to our [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).

You will need to receive, and acknowledge that you have received, individual advice before a deferral can be approved, so you must contact your Student Support Team if you are considering a deferral.

3.4.2 Discretionary postponement

If you cannot attend the exam due to circumstances beyond your control, such as illness or bereavement, you may be permitted to postpone the exam to the next opportunity for your module. You will need to provide third party documentary evidence of the circumstances which are preventing you from attending. This process is called discretionary postponement.

Apply for a postponed exam using the [discretionary postponement webform](#).

To be eligible for discretionary postponement you **must** submit a postponement request before midnight (UK local time) on the day following your exam unless you're able to provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting this deadline by circumstances outside of your control. You must provide third party documentary evidence to support your postponement request within 14 days of submitting your form where possible.

If you were ill, this must be a medical certificate for the period concerned, signed by a certified medical practitioner. In cases of bereavement an original of a death certificate is not required, a photocopy is acceptable. In circumstances where a death certificate is not available an obituary notice or funeral service card is acceptable. If your reason was a business commitment, your employer must supply a letter on headed paper to confirm your unavailability. Supporting evidence can either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the online submission tool. Applications which are not supported by independent documentary evidence confirming that you were unable to attend the exam for the reason stated will not be agreed.

You must apply for a postponed exam as soon as you are aware that you are unable to attend the exam, and before midnight (UK local time) on the day following your exam. We will tell you our decision as quickly as possible on receipt of your evidence and will try to ensure that you receive a response before the date of your exam. However, this may not always be possible if you have made your request immediately before the date of your exam, or if there are a very high number of applications received. This is because the discretionary postponement process is not an automatic one. Requests are individually considered and, depending on the circumstances, may need to be considered by The Open University's Assessment Exceptions Group.

You can also apply if you're ill during the first hour of your exam and need to leave. If you stay in the exam for more than an hour, you won't meet the criteria for a discretionary postponement and any work you have done will be marked. You must apply before midnight (UK local time) on the day following your exam and you will need to provide a medical certificate for the day of the exam.

Applications cannot be accepted by telephone. If you require advice or guidance about making a request for postponement, you should contact your Student Support Team.

If you don't attend the exam and you have not had an application for postponement formally agreed in advance, or if you leave the exam early, you must consider the possibility that your application will not be approved. If this happens, you will normally receive a 'Fail: Absent' module result and will have to re-take the whole module to obtain credit.

You must complete your module within 13 months of the original exam opportunity. So, if you postpone your exam and then fail it, you will not normally be eligible for a resit exam if that exam falls more than 13 months after the original exam opportunity. You should check with your Student Support Team if you are unsure how this may affect your study.

3.4.3 Elective postponement

If you are offered a resit exam which is scheduled within 12 to 16 weeks of your original exam period, you may be eligible to postpone this to the next available opportunity. See Section 4.6.

3.4.4 Postponement override

If you sit your exam then any postponement you have applied for will be automatically overridden, even if you have received confirmation that the postponement has been approved. This may result in a slight delay in receiving your final result. You should ensure that you only apply for a postponement if you are not able to sit your exam.

3.5 Special circumstances relating to exams

3.5.1 Special circumstances affecting exams

If you believe that your exam performance was affected by a serious matter that occurred during the exam or in the 21 days immediately before it, you can ask us to take that into account when your module result is determined.

You should report only circumstances of a **serious** nature, occurring in the three weeks up to and including your exam date. The four main categories of special circumstance that The Open University considers serious are:

- the death or critical illness of a dependant or close relative
- a severely debilitating illness during most of the revision period or the exam
- the loss, due to circumstances beyond your control, of more than ten minutes of exam time (you should also have brought this to the attention of the invigilator so that it is included in the report of events and conditions during the exam)
- difficulties caused by a disability or additional requirement, for which you feel that The Open University's adjustments were not appropriate.

This information will be used only to your benefit, but the Module Result Panel can give only limited weight to it.

You should only report special circumstances relating to the examinable component if you have attended the exam. The form cannot be used to report absence or to request formal deferral or postponement.

You must decide at the time of the exam if you intend to submit special circumstances information and notify The Open University within the timescales below. You should note that Module Result Panels will only consider information that is submitted within the deadlines outlined below and prior to your module result being determined. **You cannot wait until you receive your module result and then decide to ask for special circumstances to be considered retrospectively.**

Special Circumstances relating to exams must be submitted for each module. If you are subsequently offered a resit opportunity and are still affected by similar circumstances you must submit another special circumstances form for the exam. The information in an exam-related special circumstances form does not roll over to a resit or other module exams.

3.5.2 To report special circumstances relating to exams

You can report special circumstances relating to your exam using the [special circumstances webform](#).

You must complete the online process of reporting your special circumstances before midnight (UK local time) four calendar days after your exam. Supporting third party evidence must then be received within 14 days of your special circumstances submission. Supporting evidence can either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the webform. Submissions received outside of these timeframes will not be considered unless you can provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting the deadline by circumstances outside of your control.

You must submit special circumstances yourself. Information submitted by tutors or invigilators won't be accepted.

If serious circumstances (such as hospitalisation immediately after the exam) prevent you from reporting your special circumstances within the stipulated deadline and/or submitting evidence **within 14 days**, it may be accepted, at The Open University's discretion, if you provide appropriate evidence of the reasons for the delay. It may also be accepted if an illness or disability you thought was minor at the time of the exam has now been confirmed as more serious and could have severely affected your studies.

If your reasons for late submission are not acceptable or supported by evidence, they will not be accepted. You will be notified of this in writing.

The special circumstances information you provide should be supported by evidence such as a medical certificate, otherwise it may not be considered. If you submit evidence by post, you must keep proof of posting. If you submit it electronically you should keep a copy of the email sent.

3.5.3 If you have a disability or additional requirements

If you think that extra time or other arrangements The Open University made for your exam haven't adequately compensated for your disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition, you should ensure that you submit a special circumstances form explaining this. The Module Result Panel will be informed of any special arrangements that have been made for you. However, information about the impact of the condition that you've told The Open University or your tutor of will not be known to the Module Result Panel unless you provide this information using the special circumstances process.

3.5.4 Special circumstances and your module result

If you submit special circumstances at the appropriate time, this will be reported on your result notification. In some cases, especially if you are completing a resit, your result may need to be delayed while your special circumstances information is received and considered.

3.6 Modules with other examinable work

If your module requires you to submit a piece of examinable work or EMA in place of, or as well as, an exam, it will have a published cut-off date by which it must reach The Open University. You'll be told the arrangements for submitting it, and a link to the [Submitting Examinable Work booklet](#), which you should read carefully, will be sent to you about four to six weeks before your submission date.

3.6.1 Keeping copies of your EMAs

You are advised to keep a copy of your EMA until after you receive your module result. If you have submitted your EMA online, these cannot be accessed again after the cut-off date. You should also consider backing up your files in case of PC failure or file corruption. As the system is regularly cleared down due to the volume of submissions, Open University policy does not permit the retrieval of EMAs on your behalf.

3.7 Late submission of examinable work

Your module materials and StudentHome will tell you the date by which your examinable work must be received by The Open University. The formal deadline on this cut-off date is noon (UK local time). The Open University operates a 12-hour grace period, which means that work received no later than 23.59 hrs (UK local time) on the published submission date will be considered to have been received on time.

Examinable work submitted up to 24 hours after the end of the grace period (00.00 hrs to 23.59 hrs on the day after the cut-off) will be accepted for marking. Up to 10 percentage points will be deducted as a mark penalty for late submission. This deduction will not reduce your score to below the pass mark, so for modules with a pass mark of 40, a score of 59 would become 49 with the penalty, 45 would become 40 and 35 would be unchanged. For modules with a pass mark of 50, a score of 69 would become 59, 55 would become 50 and 45 would be unchanged.

You won't fail the task because of the penalty, but it might have implications for how well you do on the module overall. You could get a lower grade of pass because of the penalty and in some cases you could fail the module. For Level 2 or 3 modules it may even impact your overall degree classification. You should check the assessment strategy summary for your

module on your StudentHome module page to see what you need to do to pass the module and how the penalty might affect your result. You can use the Assessment Calculator to see what impact a lower score might have on your result or grade of pass. Speak to your Student Support Team if you need advice.

If you have submitted in the late penalty period, you may submit special circumstances, see Section 3.9. In some cases, especially if you are completing a resubmission, your result may need to be delayed while your late submission and/or special circumstances information is received and considered.

You should refer to the [Submitting Examinable Work booklet](#) for further details.

Examinable work received 24 or more hours late will not be accepted for marking, and you will be considered to have not submitted.

3.8 Non-submission of examinable work

If you fail to submit any examinable work either before or within 24 hours of the cut-off date and do not contact The Open University to arrange a formal deferral or postponement, you will be issued with a 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission' module result. You will not be allowed another opportunity to submit your EMA, and will not be eligible to repeat study of the module at a reduced fee.

3.8.1 Deferral

For many modules offered by The Open University, you can choose to defer completion of your module. If you want to delay submitting your EMA, you may be able to deregister and then register on the next available start date to complete your module. This process is called deferral. If you defer, you may be able to carry the scores of assignments you have already completed over to your new start date. Carrying scores forward is known as Assessment Banking. You may apply for deferral at any point up to the last working day before the EMA submission date for your module. You cannot apply for a deferral if you have already been granted a postponement on the same module, or if you are resubmitting the EMA.

Please see our website for more information about The Open University's [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).

You will need to receive, and acknowledge that you have received, individual advice before a deferral can be approved, so you must contact your Student Support Team if you are considering deferral.

3.8.2 Discretionary postponement

If you cannot make a late or even partial submission of your examinable work due to circumstances beyond your control, such as illness or bereavement, you may be permitted to postpone your submission to the next opportunity for your module. You will need to provide third party documentary evidence of the circumstances which are preventing you from submitting. This process is called discretionary postponement.

Apply for a postponed submission using the [discretionary postponement webform](#).

To be eligible for a postponement you **must** submit an application before midnight (UK local time) on the day following your EMA submission cut-off date unless you're able to provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting this deadline by circumstances outside of your control. You must provide third party documentary evidence to support your postponement request within 14 days of submitting your form where possible.

If you were ill, this must be a medical certificate for the period concerned, signed by a certified medical practitioner. In cases of bereavement an original of a death certificate is not required, a photocopy is acceptable. In circumstances where a death certificate is not available an obituary notice or funeral service card is acceptable. Supporting evidence can either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the online submission tool. Applications which are not supported by independent documentary evidence confirming that you were unable to submit your examinable work for the reason stated will not be agreed.

You must apply for a postponed EMA as soon as you are aware that you are unable to submit it, and before midnight (UK local time) on the day following the published cut-off date. We will tell you our decision as quickly as possible on receipt of your evidence and will try to ensure that you receive a response before your EMA cut-off date. However, this may not always be possible if you have made your request immediately before the cut-off, or if there are a very high number of applications received. This is because the discretionary postponement process is not an automatic one. Requests are individually considered and, depending on the circumstances, may need to be considered by The Open University's Assessment Exceptions Group.

Applications cannot be accepted by telephone. If you require advice or guidance about making a request for postponement, you should contact your Student Support Team.

If you do not submit your EMA and you have not had an application for postponement formally agreed in advance, you must consider the possibility that your application will not be approved. If this happens, you will normally receive a 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission' module result and will have to re-take the whole module to obtain credit.

You must complete your module within 13 months of the original EMA opportunity. So, if you postpone your EMA and then fail it, you will not normally be eligible for a resubmission EMA if that EMA falls more than 13 months after the original EMA opportunity. You should check with your Student Support Team if you are unsure how this may affect your study.

3.8.3 Elective postponement

If you are offered a resubmission which is scheduled within 12 to 16 weeks of your original submission date, you may be eligible to postpone this to the next available opportunity (see Section 4.6.2).

3.8.4 Postponement override

If you submit your EMA, even partially, before the end of the 24-hour late penalty period then any postponement you have applied for will be automatically overridden, even if you have received confirmation that the postponement has been approved. This may result in a slight delay in receiving your final result. You should ensure that you only apply for a postponement if you are not able to submit your work.

3.9 Special circumstances relating to other examinable work

3.9.1 Special circumstances affecting other examinable work

If your module's examinable component includes (or consists of) work other than an exam and some serious circumstance affected you in the three weeks before the cut-off date, you can ask us to take it into account when your module result is determined.

You should report only circumstances of a **serious** nature, occurring in the three weeks up to and including your cut-off date. Categories of special circumstance that The Open University considers serious are:

- the death or critical illness of a dependant or close relative close to the submission date
- a severely debilitating illness
- difficulties caused by a disability or additional requirement, for which you feel that The Open University's adjustments were not appropriate.

This information will be used only to your benefit, but the Module Result Panel can give only limited weight to it.

You should only report special circumstances if you have submitted your end-of-module assessment. **The form cannot be used to report an absence or to request a formal deferral or postponement.** It is especially important that you submit special circumstances within the deadlines outlined below if you have only been able to make a partial submission.

You must decide at the time of submission of your work if you intend to submit special circumstances information and notify The Open University within the timescales below. You should note that Module Result Panels will only consider information that is submitted within the deadlines outlined below and prior to your module result being determined. **You cannot wait until you receive your module result and then decide to ask for special circumstances to be considered retrospectively.**

Special Circumstances relating to examinable work must be submitted for each module. If you are subsequently offered a resubmission opportunity and are still affected by similar circumstances you must submit another special circumstances form for the examinable work. The information in an examinable work-related special circumstances form does not roll over to a resubmission or other module submissions.

3.9.2 To report special circumstances relating to other examinable work

You can report special circumstances relating to your examinable work submission using the [special circumstances webform](#).

You must complete the online process of reporting your special circumstances before midnight (UK local time) four calendar days after your examinable work submission cut-off date. Supporting third party evidence must then be received **within 14 days** of your special circumstances submission. Supporting evidence can either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the webform. Submissions received outside of these timeframes will not be considered unless you can provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting the deadline by circumstances outside of your control.

You must submit special circumstances yourself. Information submitted by tutors won't be accepted.

If serious circumstances (such as hospitalisation immediately after your submission) prevent you from reporting your special circumstances within the stipulated deadline and/or submitting evidence within 14 days, it may be accepted, at The Open University's discretion if you provide appropriate evidence of the reasons for the delay. It may also be accepted if an illness or disability you thought was minor at the time of your submission has now been confirmed as more serious and could have severely affected your studies.

If your reasons for late submission are not acceptable or supported by evidence, they will not be accepted. You will be notified of this in writing.

The special circumstances information you provide should be supported by evidence such as a medical certificate, otherwise it may not be considered. If you submit evidence by post, you must keep proof of posting. If you submit it electronically you should keep a copy of the email sent.

3.9.3 If you have a disability or additional requirements

If you think that your preparation of your end-of-module assessment has been affected by your disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition, you should ensure that you submit special circumstances.

Information about your condition that you've given The Open University or your tutor will not be brought to the attention of the Module Result Panel. The only information they will have will be that submitted via special circumstances.

3.9.4 Special circumstances and your module result

If you submit special circumstances, this will be reported on your result notification. In some cases, especially if you are completing a resubmission, your result may need to be pended or delayed while your special circumstances information is received and considered.

3.10 Modules with an end-of-module TMA

If your module requires you to submit an end-of-module TMA (emTMA), it will have a published cut-off date by which it must reach The Open University.

emTMAs are submitted in the same way as TMAs (see 2.4.1).

3.10.1 Keeping a copy of your emTMA

You are advised to keep a copy of your emTMA until after you receive your module result. If you submit your emTMA online, you will be able to access it again but not until module results have been released. You should also consider backing up your files in case of PC failure or file corruption. As the system is regularly cleared down due to the volume of submissions, Open University policy does not permit the retrieval of emTMAs on your behalf.

3.11 Late submission of the emTMA

Your module materials and StudentHome will tell you the date by which you must submit your emTMA. The formal deadline on this cut-off date is noon (UK local time). The Open University operates a 12-hour grace period, which means that work received no later than 23.59 hrs (UK local time) on the published submission date will be considered to have been received on time.

emTMAs submitted up to 24 hours after the end of the grace period (00.00 to 23.59 on the day after the cut-off) will be accepted for marking. Up to 10 percentage points will be deducted as a mark penalty for late submission. This deduction will not reduce your score to below the pass mark, so for modules with a pass mark of 40, a score of 59 would become 49 with the penalty, 45 would become 40 and 35 would be unchanged. For modules with a pass mark of 50, a score of 69 would become 59, 55 would become 50 and 45 would be unchanged.

You won't fail the task because of the penalty, but it might have implications for how well you do on the module overall. You could get a lower grade of pass because of the penalty and in some cases you could fail the module. For Level 2 or 3 modules it may even impact your overall degree classification. You should check the assessment strategy summary for your module on your StudentHome module page to see what you need to do to pass the module and how the penalty might affect your result. You can use the Assessment Calculator to see what impact a lower score might have on your result or grade of pass. Speak to your Student Support Team if you need advice.

If you have submitted in the late penalty period, you may submit special circumstances, see Section 3.13. In some cases, especially if you are completing a resubmission, your result may need to be delayed while your late submission and/or special circumstances information is received and considered.

emTMAs received 24 or more hours late will not be accepted for marking and you will be considered to have not submitted.

3.12 Non-submission of the emTMA

If your module requires you to submit an emTMA and you fail to submit it either before or within 24 hours of the cut-off date and do not contact The Open University to arrange a formal deferral or postponement, you will be issued with a 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission' module result. You will not be allowed another opportunity to submit your emTMA, and will not be eligible to repeat study of the module at a reduced fee.

For information about the particular assessment strategy used for your module check the assessment strategy summary which is available on your StudentHome module page.

3.12.1 Deferral

For many modules offered by The Open University, you can choose to defer completion of your module. If you want to delay submitting your emTMA, you may be able to deregister and then register on the next available start date to complete your module. This process is called deferral. If you defer, you may be able to carry the scores of assignments you have already completed over to your new start date. Carrying scores forward is known as Assessment Banking. You may apply for deferral at any point up to the last working day before the emTMA submission date for your module. You cannot apply for a deferral if you have already been granted a postponement on the same module, or if you are resubmitting the emTMA.

Please see our website for more information about The Open University's [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#) and [Assessment Banking Rules](#).

You will need to receive, and acknowledge that you have received, individual advice before a deferral can be approved, so you must contact your Student Support Team if you are considering deferral.

3.12.2 Discretionary postponement

If you cannot make a late or even partial submission of your emTMA due to circumstances beyond your control, such as illness or bereavement, you may be permitted to postpone your submission to the next opportunity for your module. You will need to provide third party documentary evidence of the circumstances which are preventing you from submitting. This process is called discretionary postponement.

If you want to apply for a postponed submission you can do this using the [discretionary postponement webform](#).

To be eligible for discretionary postponement you **must** submit an application before midnight (UK local time) on the day following your emTMA submission cut-off date unless you're able to provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting this deadline by circumstances outside of your control. You must provide third party documentary evidence to support your postponement request within 14 days of submitting your form where possible.

If you were ill, this must be a medical certificate for the period concerned, signed by a certified medical practitioner. In cases of bereavement an original of a death certificate is not required, a photocopy is acceptable. In circumstances where a death certificate is not available an obituary notice or funeral service card is acceptable. Supporting evidence can

either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the online submission tool. Applications which are not supported by independent documentary evidence confirming that you were unable to submit your emTMA for the reason stated will not be agreed.

You must apply for a postponed emTMA as soon as you are aware that you are unable to submit it, and before midnight (UK local time) on the day following the published cut-off date. We will tell you our decision as quickly as possible on receipt of your evidence and will try to ensure that you receive a response before your emTMA cut-off date. However, this may not always be possible if you have made your request immediately before the cut-off, or if there are a very high number of applications received. This is because the discretionary postponement process is not an automatic one. Requests are individually considered and, depending on the circumstances, may need to be considered by The Open University's Assessment Exceptions Group.

Applications cannot be accepted by telephone. If you require advice or guidance about making a request for postponement, you should contact your Student Support Team.

If you do not submit your emTMA and you have not had an application for postponement formally agreed in advance, you must consider the possibility that your application will not be approved. If this happens, you will normally receive a 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission' module result and will have to re-take the whole module to obtain credit.

You must complete your module within 13 months of the original emTMA opportunity. So, if you postpone your emTMA and then fail it, you will not normally be eligible for a resubmission emTMA if that emTMA falls more than 13 months after the original emTMA opportunity. You should check with your Student Support Team if you are unsure how this may affect your study.

3.12.3 Elective postponement

If you are offered a resubmission which is scheduled within 12 to 16 weeks of your original submission date, you may be eligible to postpone this to the next available opportunity (see Section 4.6.2).

3.12.4 Postponement override

If you submit your emTMA within the 24-hour timeframe then any postponement you have applied for will be automatically overridden, even if you have received confirmation that the postponement has been approved. As a consequence there may be a slight delay in receiving your final result. Only apply for a postponement if you are not able to submit your work.

3.13 Special circumstances relating to the emTMA

3.13.1 Special circumstances affecting your emTMA

If some serious circumstances affected you in the three weeks before the emTMA cut-off date, you can ask us to take it into account when your module result is determined.

You should report only circumstances of a **serious** nature, occurring in the three weeks up to and including your cut-off date. Categories of special circumstance that The Open University considers serious are:

- the death or critical illness of a dependant or close relative close to the submission date
- a severely debilitating illness
- difficulties caused by a disability or additional requirement, for which you feel that The Open University's adjustments were not appropriate.

This information will be used only to your benefit, but the Module Result Panel can give only limited weight to it.

Normally you should only submit special circumstances if you have submitted the emTMA for your module. However, if your module does not allow resubmission and there is no threshold on the emTMA you may submit special circumstances even if you have not submitted the emTMA.

If you have submitted an unfinished emTMA as a result of your special circumstances it is especially important that you tell us about this.

If you intend to submit special circumstances you must do so within the timescales below (see 3.13.2). Module Result Panels will only consider information that is submitted within these stipulated deadlines. **You cannot wait until you receive your module result and then decide to ask for special circumstances to be considered retrospectively.**

Special Circumstances relating to the emTMA must be submitted for each module. If you are subsequently offered a resubmission opportunity and are still affected by similar circumstances you must submit another special circumstances form for the emTMA. The information in an emTMA-related special circumstances form does not roll over to a resubmission or other module submissions.

The special circumstances form cannot be used to request a formal deferral (see 3.12.1) or discretionary postponement (see 3.12.2).

3.13.2 To report special circumstances relating to an emTMA

You can report special circumstances relating to your emTMA submission using the [special circumstances webform](#).

You must complete the online process of reporting your special circumstances before midnight (UK local time) four calendar days after your emTMA submission cut-off date. Supporting third party evidence must then be received **within 14 days** of your special circumstances submission. Supporting evidence can either be submitted electronically or in hardcopy as instructed by the webform. Submissions received outside of these timeframes will not be considered unless you can provide evidence that you were prevented from meeting the deadline by circumstances outside of your control.

You must submit special circumstances yourself. Information submitted by tutors won't be accepted.

If serious circumstances (such as hospitalisation immediately after your submission) prevent you from reporting your special circumstances within the stipulated deadline and/or submitting evidence within 14 days, it may be accepted, at The Open University's discretion if you provide appropriate evidence of the reasons for the delay. It may also be accepted if an illness or disability you thought was minor at the time of your submission has now been confirmed as more serious and could have severely affected your studies.

If your reasons for late submission are not acceptable or supported by evidence, they will not be accepted. You will be notified of this in writing.

The special circumstances information you provide should be supported by evidence such as a medical certificate, otherwise it may not be considered. If you submit evidence by post, you must keep proof of posting. If you submit it electronically you should keep a copy of the email sent.

3.13.3 If you have a disability or additional requirements

If you think that your preparation of your emTMA has been affected by your disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition, you should ensure that you submit special circumstances.

Information about your condition that you've given The Open University or your tutor will not be brought to the attention of the Module Result Panel. The only information they will have will be that submitted via special circumstances.

3.13.4 Special circumstances and your module result

If you submit special circumstances, this will be reported on your result notification. In some cases, especially if you are completing a resubmission, your result may need to be pended or delayed while your special circumstances information is received and considered.

Section 4 Module results

4.1 Assessment strategies

The assessment tasks you complete while studying your Open University modules are organised into one or two components of assessment.

Most modules have only one component of assessment. Your scores from all the assessment tasks you complete – which may include an exam as well as assignments – are used to calculate a single Overall Score.

Other modules have two components of assessment. The scores from your assignments are combined to give you an overall continuous assessment score (OCAS); the score from your exam or final examinable piece of work gives you an overall examinable score (OES). Your performance in both components, along with the weighted average (known as 'Rank'), is used to determine your module result.

You will be able to see the particular assessment strategy used for your module(s) by visiting [StudentHome](#). In the centre panel, under the title of the module you are enrolled on, select 'Assessment' (or 'Assignment scores'), then select 'Assessment strategy'. This information includes the pass mark that is applicable to your module.

4.2 Determining results

The following information may be considered in the determination of your module result:

- scores for individual assessment tasks
- final score for the component(s) of assessment
- the weighted average of OCAS and OES (known as Rank) – if applicable
- your performance in any compulsory activities (such as residential school and assignments with thresholds)
- information about any special circumstances that have seriously affected your performance
- Open University policy on assessment and the determination of results including the assessment strategy for the module.

You can find the assessment strategy for your module on StudentHome.

4.2.1 Modules with one component of assessment

Results for modules with only one component of assessment are determined from the (weighted) average of all the summatively assessed work, at least one part of which will be available for scrutiny by the Module Result Panel at its Award meeting.

Some modules may require a minimum score more than 40. If this applies to your module it will be stated in the assessment strategy summary available via your StudentHome module page.

On most modules you may be allowed one opportunity only to resit the exam (if there is one) or resubmit part of the assessment (usually the emTMA or EMA) if you fail.

For more information about the particular assessment strategy used for your module check the assessment strategy summary which is available on your StudentHome module page.

4.2.2 Modules with two components of assessment

To determine results for modules with two components of assessment the Module Result Panel will establish thresholds for performance levels in three elements:

- the overall continuous assessment score (OCAS)
- the overall examinable component score (OES)
- the weighted average of OCAS and OES (Rank)

Your result will be based on all of these and not solely on the basis of your overall weighted average score.

You must achieve a pass score for both your OCAS and your OES to guarantee a pass result. You must also pass any threshold on any part of the assessment, as set out in your module rules (see Section 4.4). However, the Module Result Panel has limited discretion to consider students who have scored 10 points below the pass mark on OCAS if they have passed OES (i.e. they can consider scores of 30-39 on OCAS when the pass mark is 40 and a score of 40 on OES has been achieved, or 40-49 on OCAS when the pass mark is 50 and a score of 50 on OES has been achieved). It is always worth sitting your exam or submitting your EMA, even if you think you have not done well enough on OCAS. You should bear in mind that you can still fail the module if you have not passed your OCAS.

For more information about the particular assessment strategy used for your module check the assessment strategy summary which is available via your StudentHome module page. This information includes the pass mark that is applicable to your module.

4.2.3 Results for resits/resubmissions

Module results following a resit or a resubmission are normally capped at the lowest grade of pass. See Section 4.6.4.

4.3 Module Result Panels

Each module has a Module Result Panel (MRP) that is responsible for recommending module results for individual students. The MRPs use their academic judgement to decide if each student has reached the standard required to be awarded credit for the module.

Each MRP comprises a Chair (usually the Chair of the module team) and internal examiners (usually members of the module team).

If your module has only one component of assessment the MRP will have:

- your individual summative and formative assignment scores
- your Overall Score
- your residential school or Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) information (if applicable).

If your module has two components of assessment the MRP will have:

- your individual summative and formative assignment scores
- your overall continuous assessment score (OCAS) before and after substitution (explained in Section 2.8 Substitution)
- your overall examinable component score (OES) with individual question scores and project scores
- the weighted average of your OCAS and OES (known as Rank)
- your residential school or Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) information (if applicable).

The MRP will also have (if applicable):

- any exam scripts or other examinable work such as EMAs and projects
- information you have provided about special circumstances that affected your work
- various statistical analyses
- information about any additional arrangements made for the exam.

MRPs work within policy approved by Senate, which is The Open University's authority for academic matters. Senate sets the upper and lower boundaries for each grade (see Section 4.5). MRPs have limited discretion to set the lower boundary for each grade of pass below that shown in the tables. This is entirely a matter for the MRP, within the policy approved by Senate, and will remain confidential to it.

Module results are determined by Module Result Panels and are recommended to a 'Cluster' Examination and Assessment Board (Cluster EAB). External Examiners attend the Cluster EAB. External Examiners are senior academics from outside The Open University, usually from another university or higher education institution. The Cluster EABs have a quality assurance role in reviewing and confirming the standards between modules and of the module result process as a whole.

4.4 Your result

4.4.1 Modules with one component of summative assessment

Your module result will be determined from the (weighted) average of all the summatively assessed work, as shown in Section 4.2.

4.4.2 Modules with two components of assessment

Your scores for continuous assessment and for examinable work will place you in one of the result areas shown in the tables in Section 4.5.

Whatever weighting your module gives to each assessment component in the calculation of the Rank score, you must reach the scores shown in Section 4.5 in **both** OES and OCAS to guarantee a pass at that grade.

4.4.3 Special circumstances

If your scores are lower than those shown for a grade in Section 4.5, you might still be awarded a higher result grade if you've given evidence of compelling special circumstances that significantly affected your performance (as explained in Sections 2.9, 3.5, 3.9 and 3.13). The Module Result Panel can give only limited weight to special circumstances and you should not assume that your grade will be improved by submitting them.

When considering special circumstances, the Module Result Panel will not make any changes to the scores awarded to you, but may award a higher result grade.

This consideration will take place before your module result is finalised and reported to you. You cannot ask to have a module result reconsidered on this basis.

If you have not been awarded a pass result, but are eligible for a resit or resubmission, the Module Result Panel may decide to award a non-capped resit/resubmission result on the basis of your special circumstances. See Section 4.6.

Your module result notification will indicate whether special circumstances were presented to the Module Result Panel.

4.4.4 Thresholds

As well as the scores shown in Section 4.5, many modules also require you to achieve a certain minimum score (a 'threshold') for certain assessment tasks to achieve a pass. It is therefore possible to fail such modules even if your scores are above those shown in Section 4.5. The assessment strategy summary available via your StudentHome module page will tell you if thresholds apply to your module.

4.4.5 Residential school attendance

Some modules include satisfactory residential school participation or satisfactory participation in an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) among the requirements for a pass. The module material will tell you about this.

4.4.6 Resits and resubmissions

Module results following a resit or a resubmission are normally capped at the lowest grade of pass. See Section 4.6.4.

4.5 Result grades

Different modules award different grades of pass. Modules may award:

- a Pass grade only
- Distinction and Pass
- Distinction, Merit and Pass
- graded credit of pass grades 1, 2, 3 and 4.

You can check which grades of pass are awarded for each module in [Appendix 3](#) (separate document).

If you are studying for a degree or other qualification, your module result grades will be used to determine your final classification or grade of this award. You can access information about [how classification is determined](#) from the Help Centre.

Some modules require you to reach additional thresholds for some assessment tasks (see Section 4.4). If this applies to your module, you will be told about this in your module

materials and in the assessment strategy summary available via your StudentHome module page. This summary includes the pass mark that is applicable to your module. If you are awarded a pass grade on a resit or resubmission of a module you have previously failed, your result will normally be capped at the lowest level of pass. See Section 4.6.4 Result capping.

The following tables show the scores needed to guarantee a particular grade of pass:

Table 4: Undergraduate fully graded credit (pass mark of 40)

Modules with one component of assessment (overall score)	Modules with two components of assessment (OES and OCAS)
85 = Pass 1 (distinction)	85 and 85 = Pass 1 (distinction)
70 = Pass 2	70 and 70 = Pass 2
55 = Pass 3	55 and 55 = Pass 3
40 = Pass 4	40 and 40 = Pass 4

Table 5: Undergraduate and postgraduate modules that are ungraded (pass only) or award merit and/or distinction (pass mark of 40)

Modules with one component of assessment (overall score)	Modules with two components of assessment (OES and OCAS)
85 = Pass 1 (distinction)	85 and 85 = Pass 1 (distinction)
70 = Merit	70 and 70 = Merit
40 = Pass	40 and 40 = Pass

Note: not all modules award a distinction or a merit

Table 6: Postgraduate modules that are ungraded (pass only) or award merit and/or distinction (pass mark of 50)

Modules with one component of assessment (overall score)	Modules with two components of assessment (OES and OCAS)
85 = Pass 1 (distinction)	85 and 85 = Pass 1 (distinction)
70 = Merit	70 and 70 = Merit
50 = Pass	50 and 50 = Pass

Note: not all modules award a distinction or a merit

4.6 Resits and resubmissions

If you do not achieve the required standard for a pass result, your module may allow you to resit the exam or resubmit the EMA or emTMA if you have:

- successfully completed the other summative assessment tasks, and
- met any thresholds that may apply (if applicable), and
- met any residential school requirements which apply (if applicable)

If your module has two components of assessment (OCAS and OES) and the OES has more than one task you will be required to participate in each task to be eligible for a resit/resubmission.

For undergraduate modules that allow resits/resubmissions, you must attend the exam or submit the EMA or emTMA and meet any other assessment thresholds or residential school requirements to be eligible for a resit/resubmission. For modules with one component of assessment you will also need to achieve an Overall Score of 30 to be offered a resit or resubmission. For modules with two components of assessment, you will need to have achieved an OCAS score of 40 but there is no threshold on the exam or EMA.

You will not be expected to pay a fee for the resit/resubmission. If you are offered a resit/resubmission you will be automatically registered on the next available resit/resubmission start date and this registration will be displayed on StudentHome.

For postgraduate modules there may be a resit/resubmission threshold in the examinable component. If there is a threshold, this will be shown in the assessment strategy for your module, which is available via StudentHome. You may also be required to register and pay a resit/resubmission fee.

Not all modules allow for a resit/resubmission. For information about the particular assessment strategy used for your module check the assessment strategy summary which is available via your StudentHome module page.

4.6.1 Information in the Help Centre

The Help Centre details exam periods and includes information about the [timing of resit exams](#). For modules with other assessment tasks (an EMA or emTMA, for example) you will be informed about your resubmission date, either via StudentHome when your registration is confirmed or by email shortly after you are registered. We will also tell you whether you are required to complete a new piece of work, or whether you are required to improve your original submission.

4.6.2 Elective postponement

If you have been offered a resit or resubmission opportunity which is scheduled within **12 to 16 weeks** of your original exam period or EMA/emTMA cut-off date, you may be eligible to postpone this to the next available opportunity. This is called elective postponement. It is not allowed in any other circumstances.

Elective postponement should not be confused with discretionary postponement (see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.8.2).

You can apply for elective postponement at any point after you are registered for your resit/resubmission but you **must** request it no later than midnight of the day following your exam or EMA/emTMA cut-off date. Requests received any later will not be accepted.

If your resit/resubmission opportunity is not within 16 weeks of your original assessment, or if you are not resitting/resubmitting, you will not be eligible to apply for elective postponement.

If you proceed with a request and confirm that you wish to electively postpone, you will be expected to resit your exam or resubmit your EMA/emTMA at the next available opportunity which could be as much as nine months away. This will be your final opportunity within The Open University timescale to complete a module and you will not be able to apply for a further postponement of the exam or EMA/emTMA. See Section 4.6.3 below.

If you are unsure whether you qualify to request elective postponement or of the impact it will have on your qualification pathway, please contact your Student Support Team to discuss your options further. If your module has a practice element you must always seek advice before requesting elective postponement.

PLEASE NOTE: If you submit the form and are not eligible for elective postponement, your exam or end-of-module submission will not be postponed. If you fail to attend your exam or submit your EMA/emTMA you will fail your module.

You will be able to check and edit the information on your elective postponement request before you submit the form.

Your result notification will confirm whether your request for elective postponement has been successful. If your notification says 'Fail: No Resit/No Resubmission', yet you have applied for elective postponement within the stipulated deadlines and are eligible for it, you must contact the Exams team as soon as possible (contact information can be found at the end of this Handbook).

4.6.3 Resubmission rules

Rules about resit/resubmission opportunities can be found in the [Code of Practice for Student Assessment](#). Open University regulations only allow one resit or resubmission. No resit or resubmission will be permitted more than 13 months after your module's first exam or submission opportunity.

If you have already completed an exam, end-of-module assessment or emTMA and been awarded a resit/resubmission, you are not eligible for deferral.

4.6.4 Result capping

Your module result for the resit or resubmission will normally be capped. This means that you will only be awarded a 'Pass' or 'Grade 4 Pass' result, even if your module offers a range of result grades and your scores would put you in an area above this level in the tables in Section 4.5. If you submitted relevant special circumstances at the time of your first attempt at the exam or end-of-module submission, the Module Result Panel may decide to award you a non-capped resit or resubmission. If this applies to you, you will be informed about this at the point that your original module result is issued.

MRPs do not have discretion to award a non-capped result on the basis of special circumstances information submitted at the time of the resit or resubmission.

4.6.5 Failing the resit/resubmission

If you do not achieve a pass on your resit/resubmission opportunity, you will need to study the module again if you want to be awarded credit for it. You may be able to study the module again at a reduced fee if you meet Open University criteria. You should refer to The Open University's [Fee Rules](#).

4.6.6 If you have passed the module

Resits and resubmissions are not allowed if you've passed the module. The only exception to this will be if you are registered for a qualification which requires you to have achieved a Grade 3 or above to progress and you have achieved a Grade 4. If this applies to you, The Open University will contact you to offer you an exceptional resit/resubmission opportunity.

4.7 Getting your result

Results are usually available about six weeks after the exam period or EMA/emTMA submission date. If you have completed a resit/resubmission within 12 to 16 weeks of your original exam period or submission date, or if you were allowed to postpone your first exam or submission to a resit/resubmission period within 12 to 16 weeks of your original exam period or submission date, we will aim to make these results available within 14 days.

If you submit Special Circumstances, your result may need to be delayed while your special circumstances information is received and considered, especially if you are completing a resit/resubmission.

Towards the end of your study of each module, your StudentHome page will give you an estimated date for the issue of module results. You will be sent an email to advise you when your module result has been made available on your StudentHome page.

Please make sure, before your results are due, that you can log in to StudentHome so that you have time to resolve any access problems.

For modules with two components of assessment you'll be given your final overall continuous assessment score and examinable component score, as well as the module result. You'll also be advised if substitution has been applied (see Section 2.8).

No results will be given by telephone.

4.7.1 Performance profile

Some modules provide an online 'performance profile' which is a summary of performance on each assessment task in the exam or EMA. If a performance profile is available for you there will be a link to it displayed immediately below your module result on your module record page. Clicking on this link will take you to the performance profile system.

Normally, your performance profile will be accessible for 180 days after your final module result has been released. If you want to keep a copy you should either print it off or save the web page.

4.7.2 Pending results

Occasionally a Module Result Panel may not have enough information or evidence to reach a decision about the result (for example, an assignment score or exam information delayed by script marking may be missing from your record) or the Panel may want you to take a viva voce assessment (see Section 4.8). In these cases you'll be given a 'pending' result and we will take urgent action to provide the Panel with the information it needs. We aim to release your final result within six weeks of your pending result but it may take longer in some cases.

4.8 Viva voce assessments

Viva voce assessments are offered at the discretion of the Module Result Panel. You can't ask to be given one. They enable the Panel to obtain additional information so that it can reach a decision about a candidate who, for example, is on a borderline between two results.

These assessments are conducted by a member of The Open University's academic staff. The Panel decides on the format of the task - it may be written, spoken or both.

Arrangements for the viva voce assessment will be sent to you separately from your module result.

4.9 Module result checks

Since Module Result Panels are responsible, on behalf of The Open University Senate, for determining students' results, their decisions are final. There's no right of appeal to any other Open University body against the academic judgement of the MRP. Careful checks are made at every stage of the award process to make sure that the Panel's decisions rest on full and accurate information.

Please read the information in this handbook about how module results are determined before you request a module result check.

You can also find more information about [module results](#) in the Help Centre.

If you have evidence that an error has been made in determining your result, such as a missing TMA score, or if you have evidence that you submitted special circumstances that are not recorded on your student record, you can query your result by completing a module result check form. You must submit the module result check form, along with the appropriate evidence, to arrive **within four weeks of the date of the release of your module result**.

Module result checks can't be dealt with by telephone. You can access a [module result check form](#) from the Help Centre.

You should carefully read the guidance provided before deciding to submit a request for a module result check. The chances of your module result being incorrect are extremely small. Open University policies and procedures do not permit the following:

- the return of exam scripts or other assessed work to students
- re-marking/reconsideration of any assessed task
- acceptance of late TMAs
- challenges against academic judgements
- an appeal made by another person on your behalf.

It is not possible to obtain more detailed information about your performance.

4.10 Formal module result appeals

4.10.1 If you have evidence that an error has been made you should first request a module result check (see Section 4.9 above).

If you are not satisfied with the response to your module result check you may request a review by the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel. For a review to be accepted for consideration there must be information or evidence that the decision was determined in an inappropriate way - for example, on incorrect or incomplete information. Your discontentment with the outcome of the module result check response is not evidence of any procedural irregularity concerning the way in which the decision was made.

If there's evidence that your result was awarded improperly and your case is upheld, the Module Result Panel will be asked to reconsider your result.

4.10.2 To make an appeal

If you feel you have grounds for review, refer to the [Complaints and Appeals](#) section of the Help Centre for more information on the grounds for a review and how to submit an appeal within 28 days of the date of your module result or of the reply to your module result check.

The Student Casework Office will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three days of their arrival, telling you which delegate authority of The Open University has been asked to reply direct to you.

4.11 Aegrotat credit

Exceptionally, if for medical reasons you are unable to complete your module, The Open University may consider awarding aegrotat credit under a code of practice approved by the Senate. Such exceptions are limited to students who are permanently unable to continue their studies for medical reasons, are registered for the final module that would complete (no more than 20 per cent towards) a qualification, and have been assessed on at least part of the module. You should contact your Student Support Team if you wish to consider making an application for aegrotat credit.

Summary of changes

September 2018

Section 3.3.4 If you're ill or have additional requirements - clarification on deadlines and timescales for asking the University to provide additional arrangements if you have an unexpected illness or injury.

March 2019

Section 2.5.5 Late return of marked TMAs – clarification of the process for TMAs submitted on paper.

Section 2.5.8 Keeping copies of your TMAs – the time period available for you to download TMAs submitted on-line after your module has finished has been extended from 30 days to 90 days.

Section 3.4.1 Deferral – clarification about when you cannot apply for a deferral.

Section 3.5.3 If you have a disability or additional requirements – clarification about using the special circumstances process to provide information about the impact of your condition to the Module Result Panel.

Section 3.7 Late submission of examinable work – clarification on the possible impact of late submission of your examinable work on your overall module result.

Section 3.8.1 Deferral – clarification about when you cannot apply for a deferral.

Section 3.11 Late submission of the emTMA – clarification on the possible impact of late submission of your emTMA on your overall module result.

Section 3.12 Non-submission of the emTMA – advice added about checking the assessment strategy for your module on your StudentHome module page.

Section 3.12.1 Deferral – clarification about when you cannot apply for a deferral.

Section 4.2.1 Modules with one component of assessment – advice added about checking the assessment strategy for your module on your StudentHome module page.

Section 4.6 Resits and resubmissions – advice added about checking the assessment strategy for your module on your StudentHome module page.

Any reference to Overall Assessment Score amended to Overall Score.

June 2019

Section 1.6 Assessment and completion of modules – changed wording to clarify that not every module with an early resit/resubmission is eligible for an elective postponement.

Section 2.4.4 Late submission of TMAs – clarified rule around extensions to the cut-off date of a final TMA. Made clear the difference between the final TMA and an end-of-module TMA (emTMA).

Section 2.5.6 Querying a TMA score – corrected guidance on end-of-module TMA score to make clear it can't be queried in the same way as other TMA scores.

Section 2.9.1 To report special circumstances relating to continuous assessment - deadline for submitting special circumstances has been extended from 14 days after the cut-off for the final piece of continuous assessment to four calendar days after the final piece of assessment. Added information about late submissions.

Section 3.4.2 Discretionary postponement – clarified process and timescales. Added information about evidence in cases of bereavement.

Section 3.4.3 Elective postponement - changed wording to clarify that not every module with an early resit/resubmission is eligible for an elective postponement.

Section 3.5.2 To report special circumstances relating to exams – deadline for submitting special circumstances has been extended from the day after the exam to four calendar days after the exam. Added information about late submissions.

Section 3.7 Late submission of examinable work – clarification that 'late' refers to submission within the 24 hour penalty period and further clarification on late penalty calculation.

Section 3.8.2 Discretionary postponement - clarified process and timescales. Confirmed that module must be completed within 13 months of the original EMA opportunity.

Section 3.8.3 Elective Postponement - changed wording to clarify that not every module with an early resit/resubmission is eligible for an elective postponement.

Section 3.9.2 To report special circumstances relating to other examinable work - deadline for submitting special circumstances has been extended from the day after the EMA cut-off date to four calendar days after the EMA cut-off date. Added information about late submissions.

Section 3.11 Late submission of the emTMA - clarification that 'late' refers to submission within the 24 hour penalty period and further clarification on late penalty calculation.

Section 3.12.2 Discretionary postponement - clarified process and timescales. Confirmed that module must be completed within 13 months of the original emTMA opportunity.

Section 3.12.3 Elective Postponement - changed wording to clarify that not every module with an early resit/resubmission is eligible for an elective postponement.

Section 3.13.2 To report special circumstances relating to an emTMA - deadline for submitting special circumstances has been extended from the day after the emTMA cut-off date to four calendar days after the emTMA cut-off date. Added information about late submissions.

Section 4.6 Resits and resubmissions – clarified that assessment thresholds and residential school requirements must be met to be eligible for resit or resubmission. Confirmed requirement to achieve an Overall Score of 30 or more on modules with one component of assessment. Confirmed there is no threshold on the exam or EMA on modules with two components of assessment. Confirmed resit or resubmission will be at the next available opportunity.

Section 4.6.2 Elective postponement - changed wording to clarify that not every module with an early resit/resubmission is eligible for an elective postponement. Confirmed elective postponement does not apply except in cases of early resit/resubmission.

November 2019

Section 2.2 Assignment scores - updated to reflect the change to the pass mark for some taught postgraduate modules from 40 to 50.

Section 2.4.4 Requesting an extension - re-worded to make the guidance clearer.

Section 2.4.5 Non-scored TMA marking and ongoing difficulties with submission - re-worded to make the guidance clearer.

Section 3.7 Late submission of examinable work - updated to provide examples of how the late submission penalty will apply for modules with a pass mark of 50 and to clarify that 'late' means after the end of the grace period.

Section 3.11 Late submission of the emTMA - updated to provide examples of how the late submission penalty will apply for modules with a pass mark of 50 and to clarify that 'late' means after the end of the grace period.

Section 4.1 Assessment strategies - Updated to signpost students to the Assessment Strategy text on StudentHome to find out the pass mark for their module.

Section 4.2.2 Modules with two components of assessment - updated to reflect the change to the pass mark for some taught postgraduate modules from 40 to 50.

Section 4.5 Result grades - updated to reflect the change to the pass mark for some taught postgraduate modules from 40 to 50.

Section 4.6 Resits and resubmissions - updated to reflect the fact that some postgraduate modules have a resit threshold on the OES.

Tables 1-3 and 4-6 updated to reflect the change to the pass mark for some taught postgraduate modules from 40 to 50.

January 2020

Section 1.1 How to use this Handbook – clarification that this Assessment Handbook applies to all modules starting on or after 1 August 2018.

Tables 4-6 and tables 7-8 in Appendix 2 reformatted for accessibility purposes.

March 2020

Section 1.1 How to use this handbook – added a link to the Glossary of assessment terms.

Section 1.2 Types of assessment – re-worded to make the guidance clearer and reference to ‘Assessment scores’ corrected to ‘Assignment scores’.

Section 1.6 Assessment and completion of modules – clarification about when you cannot apply for a deferral.

Section 2.1.1 Formative and summative assessments – reference to ‘Assessment scores’ corrected to ‘Assignment scores’.

Section 2.2.1 Calculating your continuous assessment – additional information about formative assessment.

Section 2.3.4 Processing personal data as part of your studies – updated to bring guidance in line with Data Protections Team’s recommended wording. Section 2.4.3 Partly completed TMAs – re-worded section to make the guidance clearer.

Section 2.7 Marking iCMAs – correction of the timescales for receiving iCMA score and feedback from ten days to seven days.

Section 3.1 Examinable components of assessment – minor restructure of content to make the guidance clearer.

Section 3.3.4 If you're ill or have additional requirements – removal of reference to the Meeting Your Assessment Needs booklet and hardcopy form, and addition of a link to an online request form for reasonable adjustments.

Section 3.3.5 Exam rules – Added a link to the Exam arrangements booklet and supplementary information sheet.

Section 3.3.8 Exams outside the UK – Change of process for requesting and paying to take an Open University exam at an international non-established exam centre.

Section 3.6 Modules with other examinable work – Amendment to text to reflect changes that have been made to the Submitting Examinable Work booklet.

Section 3.7 Late submission of examinable work – reference to midnight changed to 23.59 hrs to accurately reflect the policy.

Section 3.11 Late submission of the emTMA – reference to midnight changes to 23.59 hrs to accurately reflect the policy

Section 3.13.1 Special circumstances affecting your emTMA – re-worded section to make the guidance clearer.

Section 4.6 Resits and resubmissions – removal of inaccurate content regarding information sent to students about resits/resubmissions for postgraduate modules.

Section 4.8 Viva voce assessments – references to 'viva voce exams' corrected to 'viva voce assessments'.

Minor amendments throughout to simplify the language and clarify understanding.

Contact information – updated contact details for the Disability Support Team (previously the Disabled Resources Team) and for the Data Protection Team (previously the Data Protection Coordinator).

May 2020

Section 3.3.4 If you're ill or have additional requirements – added confirmation that students may apply for discretionary postponement if they have to leave an exam within the first hour due to illness.

Section 3.4.2 Discretionary postponement – guidance added around applying for discretionary postponement where a student has had to leave an exam within the first hour due to illness.

Appendix 1 - Plagiarism

What constitutes plagiarism or cheating?

If you submit an assignment that contains work that is not your own, without indicating this to the marker (acknowledging your sources), you are committing 'plagiarism' and this is an offence. This might occur in an assignment when:

- using a choice phrase or sentence that you have come across
- copying word-for-word directly from a text
- paraphrasing the words from a text very closely
- using text downloaded from the internet
- borrowing statistics or assembled facts from another person or source
- copying or downloading figures, photographs, pictures or diagrams without acknowledging your sources
- copying from the notes or essays of a fellow student
- copying from your own notes, on a text, tutorial, video or lecture, that contain direct quotations.

Although you are encouraged to show the results of your reading by referring to and quoting from works on your subject, copying from such sources without acknowledgement is deemed to be plagiarism and will not be accepted by The Open University. This means that you must make it clear which words and ideas are yours and which have come from elsewhere, through the use of quotation marks as well as in-text citations.

Such poor academic practice may occur due to inexperience. So you should study the [Developing Good Academic Practice](#) website. You should also read carefully all the module specific study advice that you receive in your mailings, especially statements concerning plagiarism and how to reference your sources. Where plagiarised material is included in assignments, tutors are likely to notice the shifts in style and may be aware of the source. Seek their advice on this early on in your study. The Open University also uses text comparison software which it applies to electronic assignments as well as scanned or retyped assignments.

The temptation to plagiarise may arise from lack of self-confidence or from a lack of understanding about the aims of the assessment and about what is required of you. Assignments provide a vehicle for assessing your performance during your module and contribute to your overall module result. However they also assist you in understanding your subject and aid your learning on the module. When you attempt to use the ideas and terms of the module independently you learn more thoroughly and develop your own writing style.

You are likely to perform better in exams if you have learned how to write your own answers to questions in assignments. By submitting work that is not your own you are denying yourself the benefit of this valuable learning strategy. Copying the work of others would be counter-productive to your goal of understanding the module work and to real achievement. Most students will not wish to take such a negative approach to studying, and The Open University does not tolerate it.

You are encouraged to collaborate with others in studying, but submitted work copied from or written jointly with others is not acceptable, unless collaboration is required in the particular assignment. Therefore you will be asked to acknowledge a statement to confirm that all assessment work you have submitted is your own and that you have not cheated.

Submitting work that has been done by someone else and persistent borrowing of other people's work without citation are obvious instances of plagiarism and are regarded as cheating. Copying answers from social networking sites is cheating. Paying for work from other sources and submitting it as your own is also cheating. It is intellectually dishonest to cheat and thus give one student an unfair advantage over others. Passing on your assignments to others, with the knowledge that another student may plagiarise the assignment will also lead to a penalty. If a case of plagiarism is proven, this is a serious offence and the Open University disciplinary procedures will be followed, as described under [Code of Practice for Student Assessment](#) SA 1.6 and [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#) SD 1.2.

Appendix 2 - Substitution: how it works

How it works

Substitution involves up to three stages:

1. A check is made to see whether any of your assignment scores are eligible for substitution. This is done by finding which substitutable assignments (if any) have a score lower than your overall continuous assessment score based on your actual assignment scores (also known as your preliminary overall continuous assessment score (POCAS)). If none of your assignment scores are lower than your POCAS, there is no need to progress to stages 2 and 3: substitution will not take place because it will not benefit you.
2. A decision is made on which of the assignments identified by the check in Stage 1 should be substituted. It isn't always simply a case of picking the one(s) with the lowest score.
3. For each assignment chosen in Stage 2, the original score is replaced by the average of the original score and your POCAS.

Example

Here, we show the effect of substitution for a student on a module whose continuous assessment consists of eight tutor-marked assignments, all equally weighted, Substitution is allowed for two assignments excluding TMA 03.

The weighted average of the student's assignment scores (i.e. the POCAS) is 61.25%.

Table 7 Scores before substitution

TMA number	Maximum Mark	Student's scores
01	100	80
02	100	55
03	100	50
04	100	75
05	100	90
06	100	0
07	100	60
08	100	80

POCAS = 61.25

For each of the substituted assignments, the new score is the average of the POCAS (in this example 61.25) and the original score for the assignment.

TMA's that are not eligible for substitution will be excluded. If there are several assignments eligible for substitution, the system will automatically select the combination that gives the biggest increase in OCAS.

In the example in table 8, TMA03 is not eligible for substitution. TMA's 02, 06 and 07 all have scores lower than the POCAS. Substitution has been applied to TMA's 02 and 06 because this leads to the biggest increase in OCAS for the student. The final score for TMA 02, which had an original score of 55 is much higher than the final score for TMA 06, for which the original score was zero. The overall effect of substitution in this case is to raise the overall continuous assessment score from 61.25% to 65.47%. OCAS is then rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 8 Scores and substitution

* in the following table denotes the substituted scores

TMA number	Maximum Mark	Revised Scores
01	100	80
02	100	58.13*
03	100	50
04	100	75
05	100	90
06	100	30.63*
07	100	60
08	100	80

OCAS = 65.47

You can assess the potential impact of substitution on your overall continuous assessment score (OCAS) by using the Assessment Calculator (if it's available for your module) on the module page of [StudentHome](#).

The calculator will allow you to estimate scores for TMAs which you have not yet submitted.

Contact information

Student Support Teams

You can contact your student support team from the [Contact us](#) page in the Help Centre.

Central offices and departments

The address for mail that is not directed to a particular office or department is:

The Open University

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6AA

Phone +44(0)1908 274066

Fax 01908 653744

Website www.open.ac.uk

Evening advice line 0870 333 1444

Assessment Processing

The Open University

PO Box 722

Milton Keynes

MK7 6ZT

Phone +44(0) 1908 655291

Email assignments@open.ac.uk

Policy Advice Centre

The Open University

PO Box 83

Milton Keynes

MK7 6BF

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Exams team

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Student Casework Office

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Data Protection Team

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Disability Support Team

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Open University Students Association (OUSA)

Phone +44(0)1908 652026
Fax 01908 654326
Email ousa@student.open.ac.uk
Website www.open.ac.uk/ousa

Effective from 1 August 2018

Updated May 2020

Student Recruitment

Phone +44(0)300 303 5303

Fax 01908 654914

Email from www.open.ac.uk/contact

[Appendix 3 - Module grading information - separate document](#)

[Effective from 1 August 2018]

[Owned By: Assessment, Credit and Qualifications]