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Alternative Format

If you require this Changing Your Study Plans policy document in an alternative format please [Contact Us](#) (visit www.open.ac.uk/contact), telephone us on +44 (0)300 303 5303, or get in touch with your [Student Support Team](#) via StudentHome if you are a current Open University student.

Welsh-speaking Students and Learners are welcome to speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on +44 (0) 29 2047 1170. Rydym yn croesawu cyswllt yn Gymraeg.

Introduction

The Changing Your Study Plans Policy document is in two parts. The first part sets out The Open University's policy about the options that you have as a Student if you want to change the modules and/or qualification you are studying, take a break from study, or withdraw from your studies with The Open University. The second part of the document explains the rules and procedures for each option and indicates potential financial or academic consequences.

A list of [definitions](#) is included to explain the terms used in this document.

Throughout this document, where you see references to 'we', 'us', or 'our' this means The Open University. 'You' refers to you as the Student.

Scope

What this policy covers

This policy applies to all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students (with the exception of Apprentices), who are studying a module and/or a qualification starting from the Academic Year 2025/26, i.e. from 1 August 2025 until this version is withdrawn.

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not apply to:

- Apprentices: you should contact the [Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team \(AEST\)](#) to discuss the implications of changing your study plans with you and your employer
- Postgraduate Research Students: you should contact the [Research Degrees Team](#) for options for changing your study plans
- Learners studying a non-credit bearing Short Course: you should refer to the [Conditions of Registration \(Short Courses\) 2025/26](#)
- Learners studying an Open University microcredential via The Open University Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – you should refer to the [Changing Your Study Plans \(Microcredentials on the Virtual Learning Environment \(VLE\)\)](#)

This policy does **not** cover postponements or resits/resubmissions of final assessed tasks (exam, end-of-module assessment (EMA), or end-of-module Tutor-Marked-Assignment (emTMA)). You should refer to our [Assessment Policies](#) for information.

Support and Information

We encourage you to talk with your [Student Support Team](#) before taking action to change your study plans, to ensure you are fully aware of all your options and their potential implications.

How to contact us

If you have any queries about the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please [Contact Us](#). To check the contact details for the Open University, please see [Open University Offices](#).

Welsh-speaking Students and Learners are welcome to speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on +44 (0) 29 2047 1170. Rydym yn croesawu cyswllt yn Gymraeg.

Your Student Support Team

Your Student Support Team phone number and email contact can be found on [StudentHome](#) or Help Centre [Your contacts](#).

Student Fees (England)

Phone +44 (0)1908 653411

or e-mail Studentfees@open.ac.uk

Your Nation Office

To check the latest contact details please see [Open University offices](#).

If you are a Student in Ireland, Wales or Scotland please contact your Nation Office:

The Open University in Ireland

110 Victoria Street

Belfast

BT1 3GN

Phone +44 (0)28 9032 3718

The Open University in Scotland

10 Drumsheugh Gardens

Edinburgh

EH3 7QJ

Phone +44 (0)131 226 3851

The Open University in Wales

18 Custom House Street

Cardiff

CF10 1AP

Phone +44 (0)29 2047 1170

Rydym yn croesawy cyswllt yn Gymraeg

Further Information

Online information that aligns with this policy is available on the [Changing your study plans](#) page via your StudentHome [Help Centre](#). Please note you will need to log in to view the relevant articles in the Help Centre.

Reporting Bullying and Harassment

The Open University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone feels safe and is treated with dignity and respect. Unlawful discrimination of any kind across The Open University will not be tolerated. We encourage staff, Students, Learners and visitors to report incidents of assault, bullying harassment, hate crime or sexual harassment through [Report + Support](#). This platform also provides information about what you can do if you or someone you know experiences such incidents, and where you can find support.

Policy

1. Policy Purpose

We recognise that you may need to change your study plans to support your personal circumstances. We are committed to helping you achieve your study goals by offering options for changing how or what you study, and will offer information, advice and guidance for you to make well-informed decisions. This policy supports that commitment.

1.1 The objectives of this policy are to:

- Explain your legal right to cancel enrolment or registration.
- Set out your options for changing your study plans.
- Identify the potential financial and academic implications of these options.
- Explain the procedure for each option.

2. Policy Principles

2.1 The principles are that we:

- Recognise that personal circumstances impact Students' study plans, and Students may need to study flexibly at a pace that suits their needs at different times.
- Commit to giving Students appropriate and personalised information, advice and guidance they need to choose the best study solution for their particular circumstances.
- Recognise Students' legal rights as consumers within the context of Higher Education.
- Work in partnership with Students to make informed decisions that are right for their personal circumstances and are most likely to lead to a successful outcome.
- Support Students to find the best solutions that will enable them to achieve their study goals.

3. Overview of your options

3.1 This section contains a brief description of each of the options available for changing your study plans. Each definition has a link to the corresponding section that outlines the rules and procedure associated with that option in greater detail.

[Cancel enrolment or registration](#)

You have a statutory right to cancel your enrolment or registration to study a module without giving any reason, within the statutory cancellation period which is within 14 days of confirmation of enrolment or registration. You can also cancel your module enrolment or registration before the module start date without incurring a fee liability, as set out in the [Fee Rules](#). You may cancel a qualification registration or declaration at any point.

Withdraw from a module

After the statutory cancellation period has expired, this option allows you to stop studying a module without the intention to resume study of that module.

Suspend study of a module (defer)

You can temporarily suspend your study of a module (referred to as 'defer' study of a module) by withdrawing and re-enrolling or re-registering on a future presentation.

Change to a different module

This means you stop studying one module and change to another.

Reduce or increase the number of modules you are studying

You can reduce the number of modules you are studying by withdrawing or suspending study (deferring) from some of your modules. You can increase the number of modules you are studying by enrolling or registering on additional modules, You must not exceed the study limits set out in the [Academic Regulations](#) or the fee limits set out in the [Fee Rules](#).

Change or withdraw from the qualification you are studying towards

You can change or withdraw from the qualification you are studying towards, including changing to a qualification at a different level.

Include or exclude module(s) from a qualification

You can include valid modules or exclude non-compulsory modules from a qualification for which you have registered or declared.

Stop studying temporarily (taking a study break)

You can take a study break for a full academic year (1 August until 31 July). This means you do not enrol or register on further modules in that academic year.

[Stop studying with the Open University](#)

You can tell us that you want to stop studying with us and can withdraw from your module and / or qualification at any time. This will mean you will cease to be a Student of The Open University.

4. Rules and procedures for each study change option

This section indicates whether there are any academic or financial implications you need to consider before deciding to change your study plans.

4a) Cancel enrolment or registration

- 4.1 Under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, you have a right to **cancel your enrolment or registration** to study a module and/or qualification, without giving any reason, within 14 calendar days of the date of the email or letter confirming The Open University's acceptance of your application to enrol or register ("the Cancellation Period"). You are not required to return or pay for any goods such as module materials that may have been sent to you during the cancellation period.
- 4.2 You can cancel any module enrolment or registration before the start date of that module. If you are permitted to register late for a module which has already started, you may cancel if you are still within the 14 calendar days statutory cancellation period. To cancel your module enrolment or registration, you must inform The Open University of your decision by letter, email, online form or telephone before the 14 calendar days statutory cancellation period has expired. The statement must include your name, your Open University Personal Identifier (PI) Number and the name and codes for the module(s) you wish to cancel. If you send a letter to request cancellation of a module, you are advised to obtain proof of posting to confirm the date you sent it.
- 4.3 We will acknowledge receipt of your cancellation request by e-mail or letter within 10 working days. If you have not heard from us by then, you should contact your [Student Support Team](#).

Effect of cancellation:

- 4.4 We will cancel your enrolment or registration for the module(s) and/or qualification you have told us that you want to cancel. If you cancel a module within the statutory 14 calendar day period, you will receive a full refund or waiver for the fees you have agreed to pay for your study. You will not be liable to pay any further fees for that study.
- 4.5 If you have previously told us that you intended to pay for your studies with a tuition fee loan, tuition fee grant, or a loan through the Open University Student Budget Accounts Limited (OUSBA), we will inform the appropriate body that you have cancelled your study.

Consequences of cancellation:

- 4.6 You will not be able to study or continue to study the module(s) and/or qualification that you have cancelled.
- 4.7 If you have enrolled or registered to study more than one module and you have not cancelled all of the modules for which you are enrolled or registered, you will still be able to study the other modules, and you will remain liable to pay the fees and other charges for the modules you have not requested to cancel.

4b) Withdraw from a module

- 4.8 To **withdraw from a module** you must inform your [Student Support Team](#) by telephone, letter or email. Withdrawals cannot be made by webchat.
- 4.9 Module withdrawals can only take place after module start and before the published final deferral date towards the end of the module. Prior to requesting to withdraw from a module, you should speak with your module tutor (for academic guidance only) and/or with your [Student Support Team](#) (for policy and general guidance). Your tutor and/or [Student Support Team](#) can offer advice and guidance about your studies as well as your options if you do need to stop studying. This will help ensure that you have explored all options for changing your study plans prior to requesting to withdraw from your module.

- 4.10 When you withdraw from undergraduate modules at Open University Level 1, 2 or 3 with a value of 30 credits or more, these withdrawals count as modules which have not been successfully completed for the purposes of the University's [Academic Progress Policy](#).
- 4.11 Withdrawal will take effect either from the date on which you contact us to withdraw, or from the date on which you last actively participated in your studies, whichever is earliest. Activities used to assess participation in your studies may include:
- Logging in to your module website
 - Submitting work for assessment purposes
 - Responding to an offer of support for your studies.
 - Attending an examination or submitting an End of Module Assessment (EMA)
- 4.12 If you request to withdraw from a module by letter sent by post, please obtain proof of postage of when you sent the letter. Once we have processed your withdrawal, we will confirm this in writing (by letter or email), within 10 working days. If you have not heard from us by then, please contact your [Student Support Team](#).
- 4.13 Please refer to the [Fee Rules](#) for the academic year of the module from which you are withdrawing to check your eligibility and key deadlines for any fee refund or fee waiver. The [Fee Rules](#) include guidance on eligibility for discretionary fee credit.

4c) Suspend study of a module (deferral)

- 4.14 If you want to suspend study of a module but intend to return to study it at a later presentation, you can **defer your study**. To defer from a module, you will first need to withdraw ([see section 4b](#)) from the current presentation of your module before the final deferral date, and then re-enrol or re-register on a later presentation of that module.

You must inform your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email, that you want to defer to a later presentation.

4.15 You cannot defer from a module if:

- it is after the final deferral date
- you are completing a resit of the examination or re-submission of the End of Module Assessment (EMA); or
- the module you are studying is in its final year of presentation.

4.16 If it is not possible to enrol or register onto a future presentation of your module at the time of withdrawal from your current presentation (e.g. because the next registration period has not yet opened), you will need to contact your [Student Support Team](#) to enrol or register for the future module before the final enrolment date for the presentation you wish to study on.

4.17 To be eligible to use any Discretionary Fee Credit awarded from a deferral, you must return to study within 13 months of the start date of the original presentation of the module you withdrew from. Please refer to the [Fee Rules](#) for details.

4.18 If you are registered on a qualification and you cannot complete all the necessary study before the qualification completion date, deferral from your module would mean you will not be able to complete that qualification. In such cases, deferral may be unsuitable. You should contact your [Student Support Team](#) to discuss what options are available to you. Your qualification completion date is displayed in Your Record in StudentHome.

4.19 Some modules offer the option of assessment banking to Students who defer. This means that you keep the scores from the assessment you have already completed and carry the assignment scores forward to the future presentation of the same module, so long as this starts within 13 months of your original module presentation. You will then complete the outstanding assignments within the future presentation. You should check with your [Student Support Team](#) if the module you are studying provides this option, and should read the [Assessment Banking Rules](#) carefully.

You will need to discuss whether assessment banking is appropriate for your circumstances with your [Student Support Team](#).

- 4.20 You cannot apply to enrol or register to resume a module with assessment banking if the new presentation of the module has already started, unless late registration is approved by your [Student Support Team](#).
- 4.21 Please refer to the [Fee Rules](#) for the academic year of the module from which you are withdrawing, to check deadlines and your eligibility for any fee refund or discretionary fee credit.

4d) Change to a different module

- 4.22 The rules below set out how you **change to a different module**, depending on the timing that applies to you.

Before Final Enrolment Date

- 4.23 You may change your choice of module at any time up to the final enrolment date. If you are studying towards a qualification, you will need to take any requirements of your qualification such as compulsory modules or study order into account before requesting to change your module.
- 4.24 To change your choice of module, you must inform your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. You must clearly state which module you would like to change, what you would like to replace it with, and the presentation of the new module you want the change to apply to. If you are eligible for the new module, your request will take effect on the date your [Student Support Team](#) receives your phone call, letter or email. Once we have processed your change of module, we will confirm this in writing (by letter or email), within 10 working days. If you have not heard from us by then, please contact your [Student Support Team](#).

After Final Enrolment Date

- 4.25 You cannot normally:
- change your choice of module or apply to study additional modules after the final enrolment date has passed

- change your choice of module or to apply to study additional modules after the module start date(s).
- 4.26 Your [Student Support Team](#) may be able to approve late module changes under exceptional circumstances. You should contact your [Student Support Team](#) as soon as possible to discuss your options if you believe you have exceptional reasons that explain why you have missed the final enrolment date, or why these exceptional reasons support a change of module choice or number of modules after the module start date.
- 4.27 All exceptional changes to a different module must be completed by 28 calendar days after the module start date. If your request to change a module after the final enrolment date is accepted, the change will be treated for fee liability purposes as having been made on the day before the module start date. Changes of this type are limited to one per module presentation period.
- 4.28 Subject to availability, a request to change a module enrolment or registration will be approved if it is made following the notification of a fail result for a previous module, and notification of the fail result is received after the final enrolment date but not more than 28 calendar days after the module start date that you want to change.

4e) Reduce or increase the number of modules you are studying

- 4.29 To **reduce the number of modules** you are studying outside the 14 calendar days cancellation period (as set out in [Section 4a](#)), you may withdraw from module(s) as per [Section 4b](#). Withdrawing from a module may impact your ability to complete your qualification within any specified time limits for completion of qualifications. When you withdraw from undergraduate modules at Open University Level 1, 2 or 3 with a value of 30 credits or more, these withdrawals count as modules that have not been successfully completed under the [Academic Progress Policy](#).
- 4.30 If you want to **increase the number of modules** you are studying, you may do this by enrolling or registering on additional modules when they are available for enrolment or registration.

You must not exceed the study limits set out in the [Academic Regulations](#) or the fee limits set out in the [Fee Rules](#), if applicable.

- 4.31 If you want to study additional modules after the final enrolment date you will need to contact your [Student Support Team](#). Late enrolment or registration of any additional module(s) will be subject to the availability of places and the approval of a late registration.

4f) Change or withdraw from the qualification you are studying towards

Please note that this option is to **change the qualification you are studying towards**. To change the module(s) you are currently studying, please see [Section 4d](#).

- 4.32 You can change the qualification you are studying towards at any time. To do this, your new qualification must be available for registration or declaration, you must satisfy any specified entry requirements, and you must be able to complete the qualification within any specified time limit. If you are receiving a loan or a grant, you will also need to notify the loan or grant provider, as the change of qualification may affect your eligibility for the loan or grant.
- 4.33 To change or withdraw from your qualification, you need to inform your [Student Support Team](#). They will advise you of your options, including whether you can use some or all of your existing module credit or current study towards a new qualification.

4g) Include or exclude a module from a qualification

- 4.34 If you have been studying module(s) on a standalone basis and decide that you want to **include this study as part of a qualification**, you may do so at any time. The qualification must be available for registration or declaration, you must satisfy any specified entry requirements, the module credit you want to include must be meet the requirements of the qualification regulations and you must be able to complete the qualification within any specified time limit.

- 4.35 If you want to register for or declare a qualification first, and then include modules towards that qualification, you should contact your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. We will consider your request within five working days of the date on which the [Student Support Team](#) receive it.
- 4.36 If you are enrolled or registered for a module that you wish to continue to study, but you want to cancel your qualification registration or declaration, you may do so and opt to study the module on a standalone basis unless that module is unavailable for standalone study. You may also exclude an individual module you are studying from your qualification unless it forms a compulsory part of that qualification. You should check this will not have an impact on the way your module is funded or affect any other funding you may be receiving directly.
- 4.37 If you are paying an undergraduate UK fee or postgraduate Northern Ireland fee with a tuition fee loan, and you want to remove the module from your qualification, we will require an alternative payment method for the module fee, as you will no longer be eligible for the loan. If you are paying an England or Wales postgraduate fee for a module and are receiving a postgraduate loan, and you want to remove the module from your qualification, you will no longer be eligible to receive the loan. You must contact your [Student Support Team](#) to make this change.

4h) Stop studying with us temporarily (study break)

- 4.38 To achieve an Open University qualification, you do not normally need to study continuously. A break of an academic year or more from your studies is referred to as a 'study break'. This means you do not enrol on, register for, or begin to study on any modules starting in that academic year. We refer to a study break as being 'approved' if you inform your Student Support Team of your intention to take a break, or as 'unapproved' if you do not inform your [Student Support Team](#) of your intention to take a study break.
- 4.39 Your registration as a Student will lapse if you do not enrol on or register for a module or qualification within two consecutive academic years unless you have applied for an **approved study break**.

- 4.40 If you are studying under a Collaborative Provision Arrangement with a Partner Institution and you need to take a break in your studies, The Open University does not guarantee that the Collaborative Provision Arrangement with the Partner Institution will still be in place when you return. If the Collaborative Provision Arrangement has ended at the point you wish to return to study or is due to end before your studies will be completed, you will need to contact your [Student Support Team](#) for advice and guidance regarding your study options. It may be possible for you to continue your study towards the qualification with us on an independent basis.
- 4.41 There is no limit on the number of one-year study breaks you can take. However, the time taken for a study break, whether **approved** or **unapproved**, counts towards the time limit within which a qualification must be achieved. There are some qualifications with short time limits, for example for professional recognition, or where the qualification is being withdrawn. Your personal time limit for completing a qualification displayed on your StudentHome page is calculated from the start of the earliest module you are counting credit from, or the date of any credit awarded in recognition of prior learning. If you have credit awarded in recognition of prior learning on a registered qualification, you will have a reduced time limit for completion of the remaining credits. You should consult the [Academic Regulations](#) and your individual qualification regulations for further information, or seek advice from your [Student Support Team](#).
- 4.42 In some cases, the opportunity for a study break may be very limited or not available. It is always best to seek advice from your [Student Support Team](#) before deciding to take a study break.
- 4.43 If you wish to take a study break, but are currently studying a module, you need to formally withdraw (suspend study) from the module you are studying, please refer to [Section 4b](#) and [Section 4c](#)) and notify your [Student Support Team](#) of your intention to take a study break.

4.44 If you do not enrol or register for a module within two consecutive academic years, your registration will lapse and you will automatically cease to be a Student, unless you have extended this period of no study by requesting approved study breaks. Further information about lapsed registration is available in the [Academic Regulations](#).

Approved study break

4.45 An approved study break can be requested during or before the academic year in which the study break is to commence. The **advantages** of an approved study break are that:

- We will be able to take account of your plans in our communications with you and ensure that you continue to receive appropriate information related to your planned study.
- Approved study breaks do not count towards the period of two consecutive academic years without any module registration after which you will cease to be a Student, as described in paragraph 4.41.
- If you are on an approved study break and are registered on a qualification, you can continue to access relevant services associated with your qualification during your approved study break and continue to access some services provided to all Students of The Open University. Please note that you may not be able to access licensed resources via the Library whilst you are on a study break and not actively studying.

4.46 To apply for an approved study break, you need to notify your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. They will provide you with advice about the impact your decision may have on your study aims, including on any professional recognition. You will be asked to confirm that you have received that advice, and your [Student Support Team](#) will record your study break on your Student record. You can choose to return to study at any time before the agreed end of a study break by enrolling or registering for a module. The study break will automatically cease as soon as you do this.

4.47 You can extend your approved study break for one additional academic year at a time. To do this, you should apply to your [Student Support Team](#) for an extension of the current study break before the end of your currently approved study break, as per the process in paragraph 4.43.

Unapproved study break

4.48 You can take a study break of one academic year without seeking any approval. An unapproved break means that we will not be aware that you intend to stop study in that academic year. The **disadvantages** of an unapproved study break are:

- You may not receive information that is appropriate for or relevant to your situation and plans.
- You may not be included in important communications about changes that might affect your future study.
- An unapproved study break will count towards the two-year period after which we will withdraw your registration as a Student.
- If you take more than one unapproved study break within any one continuous period of study breaks, you will no longer be registered as a Student of The Open University.
- If you take an unapproved study break at the end of an approved study break rather than applying to extend the approved study break, you will lose the advantages of being on an approved break.

4i) Stop studying with the Open University

4.49 If you wish to **stop studying with us**, you should speak with your module tutor (for academic guidance only) and with your [Student Support Team](#) (for policy advice and guidance) before you make your final decision. For example, you may be able to change your registered or declared qualification before leaving the University, in order to claim any qualification you are already eligible for based on the module credit you have been awarded.

- 4.50 If you no longer want to be a Student, you should inform your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email, making it clear whether you are currently studying any modules or qualifications. Your request will take effect on the date the [Student Support Team](#) receives your request. We will acknowledge receipt of your request by e-mail or letter within 10 working days.
- 4.51 When you leave the University, we will retain your academic study record and details of any module credit that you have been awarded. You may, if you are eligible, study with us at a later date. Any subsequent registration will be under the regulations which apply to a Student commencing their studies at that time.
- If you withdraw before you have completed the modules for which you are enrolled or registered at the time, you will still be liable to pay your module fees. In exceptional circumstances you may be eligible for a fee refund or to apply for discretionary fee credit as set out in the current [Fee Rules](#). Key deadlines are given in the [Fee Rules](#).
- 4.52 Leaving the University does not lead to the cancellation of any discretionary fee credits that have been issued to you. If you decide to return to study with the University during the period your discretionary fee credit is still valid, you may be able to use that credit towards the fees of further study.
- 4.53 If you do not enrol or register for a module within two consecutive academic years, your registration will lapse and you will automatically cease to be a Student of The Open University, unless you have had a study break approved through the procedure in [Section 4h](#)). Further information about lapsed registration is available in the [Academic Regulations](#).

Non-compliance

If you do not tell us about changing your study plans, we will not be able to provide you with appropriate information, advice and guidance. If you do not formally withdraw from a module you, will continue to be liable for fees and will receive a fail-absent result when module results are released. Both fail results and withdrawals may have an impact on your academic progress. You should consult the [Academic Regulations](#) and the [Academic Progress Policy](#) for further information about the Academic Progress Regulations. You can also seek further advice from your [Student Support Team](#).

Expressing a concern

If you have a query about any aspect of how we apply this policy, we encourage you [to contact us](#) promptly so that we can put things right. If you feel that The Open University has not responded appropriately to your policy query or concern, you can raise a formal complaint or appeal using the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#).

Definitions

Academic Year

The academic year starts on 1 August each calendar year and ends on 31 July.

Assessment Banking

When you defer with Assessment Banking, you keep the scores from assessments you have already completed, carry these forwards to a future presentation of the same module that starts within 13 months of the original start date of the module that was deferred, and then complete the outstanding assessment requirements within that future presentation. You should refer to your module website to check if the module you are studying provides this option, and to the [Assessment Banking Rules](#).

Cancellation period

Under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, you have a right to cancel your registration to study a module and/or qualification, without giving any reason, within 14 calendar days of the date of the email or letter confirming The Open University's acceptance of your application to register ("the Cancellation Period").

Non-credit bearing Short Courses are not within the scope of this document. You should refer to the [Conditions of Registration \(Short Courses\) 2025/26](#) for the cancellation policy for these courses.

Collaborative Provision Arrangement

An agreement between The Open University and a Partner Institution, which enables Students to study for an Open University qualification through The Open University's online distance learning model with an element of face-to-face support provided by the Partner Institution. Studying under a Collaborative Provision Arrangement means Students will follow a programme of study made up of Open University modules carefully selected by The Open University and Partner Institution.

Count credit to a qualification

If you have registered on an undergraduate qualification or declared a postgraduate qualification, you can count the modules that you study and are awarded credit for towards this qualification. Credit from standalone modules will not be counted for qualification purposes unless you have told us that you want this module to be counted in your qualification.

Deferral

You can temporarily suspend your study of a module by deferring a module. This means you withdraw from the module and re-enrol or re-register on a later presentation.

Declared qualifications

All Open University postgraduate certificates, diplomas and Master's degrees are declared taught qualifications.

A declared qualification is a taught postgraduate qualification that you have told us that you are studying towards and to which you are linking the modules that you register for, study and are awarded credit for.

Discretionary Fee Credit

An amount of money that is awarded by The Open University in exceptional circumstances that can be offset against the fee of a future presentation of the same module or, in some circumstances, a different module. Discretionary Fee Credit can be applied for, as detailed in the [Fee Rules](#).

Enrolment

Enrolment is the process by which a Student who is registered for an undergraduate qualification signs up to study each module which will be studied as part of that qualification.

Final deferral date (FDD)

The final deferral date is the last working day before you sit the examination or submit the final end-of-module assessment (EMA) or for modules which do not have an end of module assessment, the last working day before the submission deadline for the final piece of assessed work.

Final enrolment date (FED)

The Final Enrolment Date is the last date that a reservation can be made for a module in a specific presentation period. It will be published in the online prospectus in the module description and on StudentHome.

Late registration

Module registrations are not normally considered after the final enrolment date (FED). Your [Student Support Team](#) may consider individual cases for late registration.

Module

A module is a self-contained unit of teaching, learning and assessment which may be studied as a standalone course or in combination to form qualifications. Each module, other than a Short Course, is assigned a credit value and a level of study.

Module Credit

Each module is assigned a credit value, which is related to the workload required to successfully complete it. One credit represents about 10 hours of study. You will be awarded credits when you successfully complete a module, so if you pass a 60-credit module you will be awarded 60 credits. Some modules have a zero-credit value.

Module Start date

This is the date on which teaching of a module officially begins. There may be communication or access to learning facilities before this date. You will be informed of the Module Start Date when you enrol on a module.

Postponement

If you cannot attend your module examination or submit your end of module assessment, due to circumstances beyond your control, such as illness or bereavement, and you can provide third party documentary evidence of those circumstances, you may be exceptionally permitted to postpone your module examination or end of module assessment to the next opportunity for your module. This process is called 'Discretionary Postponement'.

If you are offered a resit or resubmission which is scheduled within 12 to 16 weeks of your original exam period, you can elect to postpone this to the next available opportunity. This process is called 'Elective Postponement'.

Policy and procedures for both types of postponement are provided within our Assessment Policies.

Presentation

A presentation is the period of time between module start and end dates.

Presentations are referred to by their first month e.g. a module that is presented from February to October is a 'February presentation'.

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (Credit Transfer)

If you have previously studied elsewhere and your studies were completed at the same academic level as Open University modules, we may be able to award you credit towards an Open University qualification. This will allow you to use your previous study instead of completing some of the modules required through The Open University. Credit awarded in recognition of prior certificated learning may be awarded with restrictions and if that is the case, these will be set out in the award confirmation. Credit awarded in this way will not count towards the classification requirements of any classified award.

Registered qualification

A registered qualification is an undergraduate qualification that you have formally registered to study. You then enrol on eligible modules and count the credit from those modules towards the qualification.

All Open University undergraduate qualifications are registered qualifications. Open University postgraduate qualifications are *declared*, not *registered* qualifications.

Registered Student

You will be a Student of The Open University for the purposes of this policy if you are currently registered for an undergraduate qualification or, if you are not registered for a qualification, you are either currently registered for a module or you have studied a module in either of the previous two academic years.

Registration

The process by which you become a Student of The Open University.

If you are studying for an undergraduate qualification, you will also register for this qualification (and subsequently enrol on modules within it).

If you study an undergraduate module as a standalone course rather than as part of a registered undergraduate qualification, you will register for this module.

If you are studying at postgraduate level you will register for modules and if you have declared a qualification, link these modules to your declared qualification.

Standalone Module

A module that is not linked to a qualification.

Time limits for completion of qualifications

If you are studying a registered qualification, the time limit specified for your qualification is included in the qualification regulations available on your StudentHome or available on the qualification website.

If you are studying a postgraduate qualification, any time limit which is applicable to your qualification is included in the qualification regulations, available on your StudentHome.

Withdrawal

The removal of your enrolment or registration on a module or qualification.

Withdrawal from a module can only take place after the end of the cancellation period and before the final deferral date.

Related Policies

- [Academic Regulations](#) and your Qualification Regulations, if applicable.
- [Assessment Banking Rules](#)
- [Conditions of Registration](#)
- [End-of-Module Assessment \(EMA\) Policy](#)
- [End-of-Module Tutor-Marked Assignment \(emTMA\) Policy](#)
- [Exam Policy](#)
- [Fee Rules](#) for the academic year in which you are studying
- [Postponement Policy](#)
- [Resit and Resubmissions Policy](#)
- [TMA and iCMA Policy](#)

Charity Statement

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England and Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

Give Us Your Feedback

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please share this with us, by emailing SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Our commitment to Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is embedded in all that we do and reflects our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We celebrate diversity and the strengths that it brings, whilst challenging under-representation and differences in outcomes within our institution. We promote and manage equality and diversity to meet both our strategic goals and our statutory equality duties. We achieve this in many ways, including the development of inclusive policy.

Our Student Charter Values

[The Student Charter](#) was developed jointly by The Open University and the Open University Students Union. It is a declaration of our shared values and the commitments we make to each other. This document has been developed with the Student Charter values as its foundation.

Welsh language standards

[Safonau'r Gymraeg \(Welsh Language Standards\)](#)

The Open University is one of several universities named in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. This means that any Students in Wales can expect to receive certain services from the Open University in Welsh. These are outlined in what's called the [Open University's Welsh language standards](#).

This means that you can speak to our student recruitment and support team in Welsh or contact the university in Welsh. You can find out more about your rights as a Welsh language user on the [Open University in Wales website](#).

About this Document

Summary of Significant Changes since last version

The following changes have been made:

- The policy has been put into a new template to improve accessibility and revisions have been made to the text to improve clarity.
- A short summary of the policy has been published for the first time.
- For Students starting modules in October 2025 onwards, fee credits will no longer be automatically awarded). If you have withdrawn, failed or deferred a module in difficult circumstances, you are encouraged to apply for a Discretionary Fee Credit, as detailed in the [Fee Rules](#).

Policies Superseded by this Document

Changing your study plans policy 2024/25 is superseded by this document.

Document Information

Version number 1.0

Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services

Effective from 1 August 2025

Date for review March 2026