

This policy is a staff and student facing policy; therefore, some of the sections in the policy will not be relevant to students and some included links may not work.

Contents

Alternative format.....	2
Summary of policy	2
Scope	2
What this policy covers.....	2
What this policy does not cover.....	3
The Open University Student Charter Values	3
Introduction	3
Policy	4
1. Purpose.....	4
2. Policy principles.....	5
2.1 Recording of online tutorials by the Open University.....	5
Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University.....	12
Safe Space Reporting	12
Glossary.....	12
Related Documentation.....	13
Further clarification	14
Feedback	14
Summary of significant changes since last version.....	15
Policies superseded by this document.....	15

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Alternative format

If you require this Policy for the recording of online tutorials document in an alternative format, please contact the Student Support Team via <http://www.open.ac.uk/contact/> (phone +44 (0)300 303 5303), or your dedicated Student Support Team via StudentHome if you are a current Open University student.

Students living in Wales can speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on 029 2047 1170, should you wish to do so.

Summary of policy

The Open University is committed to helping students achieve their study goals. The University offers online tutorials because there is evidence that they enhance the Open University study experience and give students opportunities to interact and engage with staff and their peers, promoting their learning and enhancing the sense of academic community. The University strongly encourages students to attend 'live' learning events but recognises that circumstances do not always allow this. It therefore endeavours to make recordings available to students.

This policy sets out the rules for the recording of online tutorials, provides guidance for the use and re-use of those recordings and provides clarity on the rights and responsibilities of the University, its staff and its students. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the default position is that students will have access to a recording of each learning event available to them, whilst ensuring staff who are uncomfortable with recording are not obliged to do so.

Scope

What this policy covers

This policy covers the recording of online tutorials and learning events by the Open University, and the use and re-use of those recordings.

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This policy applies to:

- All students who are directly registered with the Open University.
- Online Learning events which the Open University has responsibility for operating.
- All staff who may conduct online tutorials as part of their contracted role with the Open University.

Whilst this is an online tutorial recordings policy it recognises that students who have recordings as a reasonable adjustment may need to record face-to-face learning events to support their learning, therefore sections 2.3 cover this eventuality.

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not apply to:

- Events open to the public, or events held on social media (for definitions of social media and its acceptable use, see the Social Media Section of the [Computing Policy](#)).
- Face to face Tutorials offered as part of the Open University study experience, with the exception of students who have recordings as a reasonable adjustment.

The Open University Student Charter Values

The [Student Charter](#) was developed jointly by The Open University and the OU Students Association. 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.

Introduction

Since February 2018 all Open University modules contain online tutorials. Attendance at tutorials is optional for most modules; The Open University offers them because there is evidence that they enhance the study experience and give students opportunities to interact and engage with staff and their peers, promoting their learning and enhancing the sense of academic community.

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The University strongly encourages students to attend 'live' learning events but recognises that circumstances do not always allow this. It therefore endeavours to make recordings available to students. The availability of tutorial recordings has benefits for many students.

- It allows students to listen again, make notes at their own speed and revisit topics.
- It allows students who were unable to attend the 'live' event for personal, employment or technical reasons to access the content of a tutorial.
- It provides a resource for a student to use in revision or preparation for Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), End of Module Assessments (EMAs) or exams.
- Tutorial recordings can be essential for some students with disabilities or additional needs.

This policy sets out the rules for the recording of online tutorials, provides guidance for the use and re-use of those recordings and provides clarity on the rights and responsibilities of the University, its staff and its students.

Students: for specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact your Student Support Team via StudentHome or via the 'Contact Us' option on the [Help Centre](#) if you are a current Open University student.

Staff: for specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact your line manager.

Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish The Open University policy on recording of online learning events, participants' rights, and the use, retention and storage of these recordings.

1.2 The objectives of this Policy are:

1.2.1 To set out The Open University's approach to provision of recordings of online tutorials and set the rules for retention and use of those recordings.

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- 1.2.2 To provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities of The Open University, its staff and its students in making and using recordings.
- 1.2.3 To set out guidance for the use and the re-use of any recording by students and Open University staff.
- 1.2.4 To ensure that the default position is that students will have access to a recording of each learning event available to them with variation in exception.
- 1.2.5 To guide students on how they can choose to take part in or attend online tutorials without being recorded.
- 1.2.6 To set out guidance for the exceptional circumstances in which a student can request to make their own recording of an online tutorial.
- 1.2.7 To ensure that staff who are uncomfortable with recording are not compelled to record.
- 1.2.8 To ensure compliance with any applicable law and University policies and procedures.

2. Policy principles

2.1 Recording of online tutorials by the Open University

- 2.1.1 At least one online tutorial recording within a learning event in each presentation will be made available to students. This recording will cover the learning points laid out for that session within the tuition strategy. This applies to tutor group, cluster and module wide events. Therefore, unless a student has a requirement for reasonable adjustments, students must not make their own recordings of tutorials, see section 2.2. For example, if there is the choice of 4 tutorials available for you to attend for TMA 01, at least one will be recorded, and one not recorded for students who are uncomfortable with recordings.
- 2.1.2 The key purpose of these recordings is to enhance student learning, but recordings may be used by the University for other purposes such as staff development and/or scholarship but only as detailed in this Policy.

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2.1.3 The ambition of this Policy is to ensure that the default position is for students to have access to a recording of each learning event made available to them, whilst ensuring Staff who are uncomfortable with recording are not obliged to do so. If recording for a learning event is not available as per the points in 2.1.6, the taught content will be provided in an alternative format that is suitable to the subject matter as per point 2.4.1.

2.1.4 For each learning event the University will designate at least one online tutorial as recorded and one online tutorial as non-recorded. It will be made clear at the point of booking if a tutorial is to be recorded or not to be recorded. If there is only one online tutorial for a learning event every effort will be made to record but the recording will be stopped at key points to allow students to ask questions unrecorded if they wish.

2.1.5 The Open University will make a recording of an online tutorial available for each learning event available to students unless exceptional circumstances mean it is not appropriate for such tutorials to be recorded or made available. Such circumstances include:

- In exceptional circumstances the planned subject matter and the best approach to teaching the material is deemed inappropriate for recording, for example, the event may significantly focus on discussion of participants' personal experiences or perspectives on sensitive issues.
- The purpose of the learning event is solely for students to practise aspects of their learning experience e.g. language conversation.
- The vast majority of the learning event consists of interactive activities within breakout rooms, resulting in a tutorial that is inappropriate to record.

Should a tutor believe a recording is inappropriate for sharing they should discuss with their line manager.

If a learning event is considered unsuitable for recording this will be justified by module teams to a named faculty representative prior to the start of the presentation. An explanation for the absence of recording availability will be provided to students in advance of the learning event and an alternative learning resource such as an empty room tutorial recording must be made available.

Version number: 2.0	Approved by: Student Experience Committee
Effective from: July 2023	Date for review: August 2025

- 2.1.6 If a tutorial is designated as ‘recorded’, students should enter the tutorial on the basis that it will be recorded and used as outlined in this policy (see also 2.1.11).
- 2.1.7 Any breakout room discussions will not be recorded by The Open University.
- 2.1.8 For recorded online tutorials, at the beginning of the session, staff will notify everyone present in the tutorial by verbal and / or visual notice at that the session will be recorded.
- 2.1.9 Recorded tutorials will have a section at the end which is not recorded to allow students to ask questions unrecorded if they wish.
- 2.1.10 If a student decides they do not want to be recorded part-way through a recorded tutorial, the onus is on the student to leave the tutorial rather than recording to be stopped.
- 2.1.11 In modules where Welsh is used as a language of teaching, every effort will be made to ensure that a recording of a Welsh language tutorial is made available, in line with the points of this policy. If a recording is not available, students who are studying a module or part of their module through the medium of Welsh and who are unable to attend a tutorial in-person should speak to their tutor or make alternative arrangements.

2.2 The recording of online tutorials by students with reasonable adjustments

- 2.2.1 There may be circumstances where students with disabilities or additional needs, for the purposes of study, may make their own recordings of any online tutorials except those designated as ‘non-recorded’ as a reasonable adjustment to their studies. There are no circumstances where a tutorial designated as ‘non-recorded’ is permitted to be recorded by The Open University or student.
- 2.2.2 Where a student is permitted to make their own recording as a reasonable adjustment based upon a declared disability, such recordings must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes, and they must not be made more widely available or distributed. Copies must be deleted following receipt of final result relating to the relevant module, or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner.

Version number: 2.0	Approved by: Student Experience Committee
Effective from: July 2023	Date for review: August 2025

More information about reasonable adjustments for study can be found via the [Disability support pages within the Help Centre](#).

2.2.3 If a student who requires, a recorded version of a tutorial, as a reasonable adjustment, is unable to attend a tutorial where they are permitted to make their own recording, an alternative recording will be made available. This alternative may be an empty room recording, or additional alternatives that the student may find useful can be negotiated with the tutor.

2.2.4 The unauthorised recording of tutorials and the unauthorised sharing of recorded material, including on social media platforms is covered by the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). Recordings may only be used in the circumstances outlined in this policy and shall not, under any circumstances, be used in any way that brings into disrepute or intends to bring into disrepute any person whose comments are recorded.

2.3 The downloading of recordings of online tutorials by students (from October 2023)

2.3.1 There may be circumstances where students need to be able to download recordings of online tutorials. This may be for convenience or due to necessity, for example students with low/no internet access at home, students with disabilities or students with caring responsibilities who need more flexibility. The tutorial recordings will be made available to download and anonymised by default and guidance will be provided to associate lecturers to support the appropriate use of cameras in online tutorials.

2.3.2 Tutorial recordings can only be downloaded by students who were eligible to attend the live event. For example, tutor group online tutorials will be downloadable only by the tutor group; Cluster tutorials will be downloadable only by the cluster; and module-wide tutorials will be downloadable by any student on the module on that presentation.

2.3.3 Students are permitted to download tutorial recordings, but these must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes, and they must not be made more widely available or distributed. Copies must be deleted following receipt of final result relating to the relevant module, or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner.

Version number: 2.0	Approved by: Student Experience Committee
Effective from: July 2023	Date for review: August 2025

2.3.4 The unauthorised sharing of recorded material, including to other students or on social media platforms, is covered by the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). Recordings may only be used in the circumstances outlined in this policy and shall not, under any circumstances, be used in any way that brings into disrepute or intends to bring into disrepute any person whose comments are recorded.

2.4 The recording of face-to-face tutorials by students with reasonable adjustments

2.4.1 There may be circumstances where students with disabilities or additional needs, for the purposes of study, may make their own audio recordings of any face-to-face tutorial they attend as a reasonable adjustment

2.4.2 Like recordings of online tutorials detailed in section 2.2 of this policy, if a student is permitted to make their own recording as a reasonable adjustment based upon a declared disability, such recordings must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes. Recordings must not be made more widely available or distributed. Copies must be deleted following receipt of your module result outcome (or subsequent award of a module result outcome from a resit or resubmission) relating to the relevant module, or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner. More information about reasonable adjustments for study can be found via the [Disability support pages within the Help Centre](#).

2.5 Availability and retention of recordings

2.5.1 Recordings are only available to students who could potentially have attended the original 'live' event.

2.5.2 Recordings will be made available to students via the module website and will be visible to staff and students for the length of the presentation plus three years. This is in line with the [Open University Retention Schedule: Teaching](#), after which the module site and content is backed up to the Digital Archive and content is removed from the VLE.

2.5.3 The tutorial recordings will not be copied to any other presentations or be visible to any students who could not have attended the original event. Tutor group online tutorials will be visible only to the tutor group;

Version number: 2.0	Approved by: Student Experience Committee
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Cluster tutorials will be visible to the cluster; and module-wide tutorials will be visible to any student on the module on that presentation.

- 2.5.4 In exceptional circumstances the Open University may remove a recorded tutorial from the VLE at any time at its absolute discretion.

2.6 Alternatives to recording

- 2.6.1 If recording for a learning event is not available as per the points in 2.1.6, the taught content will be provided in an alternative format that is suitable to the subject matter. This alternative will by default be an empty room recording. Alternatives will be kept under review and faculties will consider student feedback.

2.7 Participant and Open University rights

Students

- 2.7.1 By entering a designated recorded tutorial, students consent to the Open University recording them and making use of the recording for the purposes set out within this policy.

Staff

- 2.7.2 Staff are reminded to ensure adherence to data protection, confidentiality and third-party rights. Use of external material in tutorials is normally covered as fair use for educational purposes and staff are reminded to check this.
- 2.7.3 Personal data being processed for the purposes of the tutorial recordings will be processed in compliance with the University's Students Privacy notice and data protection policies.

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2.8 Use of the recording of online tutorials for Staff development and Scholarship and quality assurance

- 2.8.1 Recordings of online tutorials can be used with staff / tutor permission for observation of staff for development purposes. An agreement will be reached between the Tuition Task Manager (Staff Tutor / Student Experience Manager), Lead Line Manager and the tutor in advance of being viewed as to which existing recording or future tutorial will be viewed for staff development.
- 2.8.2 Recordings may be viewed by appropriate University staff to observe any reported technical issues or to view how well students are responding to module material. If module teams or line managers feel the need to view recordings for any other purposes this is done in with the permission of and in partnership with tutors and in conjunction with other appropriate University wide policies.
- 2.8.3 Access to recordings will be available for scholarship purposes as read only whilst the module website is available. Recordings will be viewed to understand the overall student experience of tuition. The observation of the recordings as part of scholarship will inform future Open University practice. Permission of any staff included in the recording will be sought before using it for scholarship purposes.

2.9 Responsibility for the monitoring and compliance of the policy

- 2.9.1 Breach of this Policy or any applicable law will be dealt with in accordance with The Open University's relevant policies and procedures.
- 2.9.2 Monitoring of the implementation of this Policy will take place via the Tuition Delivery report which will be compiled annually and submitted to the Student Experience Committee.
- 2.9.3 Unless a change in operational activities requires an early review, this policy will be reviewed every three years.

Version number: 2.0	Approved by: Student Experience Committee
Effective from: July 2023	Date for review: August 2025

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University

Policies are inclusive of all Open University Students, Learners, Enquirers and Alumni, regardless of age, civil status, dependency or caring status, care experience, disability, family status, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnerships, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, sex, sexual orientation or trades union membership status.

Safe Space Reporting

The Open University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone feels safe and is treated with dignity and respect. Unlawful discrimination of any kind across The Open University will not be tolerated. Safe Space Reporting is available through [an online tool](#) through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime, or sexual harassment. It also provides information about what you can do if these incidents happen to you, or to someone you know, and where you can find support.

Glossary

The following definitions are intended to clarify terms used throughout the policy.

Learning event

A short-hand inclusive term, covering any tuition event taking place online in real time. This can either be within a tutor group, a cluster or another grouping of students; led by a member of staff.

Tutorial

A learning event delivered online. Generally, this will be Adobe Connect but other types of online tutorials do take place.

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Tutorial recording

A recording of all or part of an online tutorial made by an Open University staff member.

Empty room recording

A recording made in the correct room for the event but is a tutor summary of the learning event and has no student interaction.

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

The Open University has a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is an internet-based platform for the digital aspects of its modules. It contains the resources, activities and interactions that a student requires to complete their module.

Related Documentation

Refer to the following student documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)
- [Student Privacy Notice](#)
- [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- [Computing Policy](#)
- [Conditions of Registration](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995 \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2004](#)

Refer to the following staff documentation in conjunction with this document, these links will not work for students:

- [Behaviours and Standards at Work Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)

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Further clarification

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact your Student Support Team via StudentHome. Alternatively, you can contact your Student Support Team through the 'Contact Us' option on the [Help Centre](#) if you are a current Open University student.

New wording has been approved to be used before listing postal address and other contact details within the policy documents. Please note the new wording should only be inserted into policies where students are permitted to access HelpCentre Pages. Exceptions include Microcredential learners, Continuing Professional Development learners and enquirers who can only access some Help Centre topics and the public facing policy documents at [Student Policies and Regulations | The Open University](#).

To check the latest postal address and other contact details or if you would like to find out more about our most up-to-date response times for receiving and sending postal correspondence to the Open University, please see [OU Offices](#), <https://help.open.ac.uk/ou-offices>.

[NB, the name of the web page linked to may change, please contact [SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk](#) to double check the web link]

Students living in Wales can speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on 029 2047 1170, should you wish to do so.

Feedback

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to [SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk](#).

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Summary of significant changes since last version

There are a number of significant changes from the previous version of this policy (Version No.1.0). These are:

- a) Section 2.2 The recording of online tutorials by students with reasonable adjustments
 - i. Wording has changed to align more closely with the 2010 equality act.
 - ii. Wording changed to allow students with recordings as a reasonable adjustment to record any tutorial except those marked as non-recorded.
 - iii. Word changes to provide more clarity on when alternatives may need to be offered.
 - iv. Removal of wording around breakout rooms to allow students with recordings as a reasonable adjustment to record breakout rooms to support their learning.
 - v. Additional wording to cover the provision of recordings for tutorials where Welsh is used as a language of teaching.
- b) Section 2.3, This section is new and has been added to cover the downloading of recordings. This section has been added to ensure students who use the download functionality do so appropriately.
- c) Section 2.4 The recording of face-to-face tutorials by students with reasonable adjustments. This is a new section has been added to reflect the need to provide clarity to staff and students about the audio recording of face-to-face events by students with recordings as a reasonable adjustment.

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces the previous version of the Policy for recording of online tutorials [dated 1 October 2020].

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