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Alternative Format

If you require this TMA and iCMA 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 dedicated Student Support Team via StudentHome if you are a current Open University student. If you are studying an apprenticeship please contact the Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) by email on apprentice-support@open.ac.uk, or telephone (+44 (0) 300 303 4121). Welsh-speaking Students and Learners may speak with a student support adviser in Welsh on +44 (0) 29 2047 1170. Research Degree Students can contact the Research Degrees Office via email research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk.

Introduction

This policy outlines the information on completing and submitting continuous assessments. It also explains how assessment scores are calculated and outlines the process for querying a TMA score. Continuous assessment refers to the assignments you complete during a module. You can find information about these assignments in the module guide, assignment booklets or module materials. The assessment tab on your module website will also tell you what types of assignments are expected for your module. The most common continuous assessment tasks are Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs).

- **Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs):** For most modules, you are required to submit written assignments to your tutor. TMAs are usually essays or short-answer questions. They can also include other types of tasks like reports, speaking assignments, or PowerPoint slides. For more details on the types of assignments, visit the Help Centre page on '[Types of assignment](#)'.
- **Interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs)** are online assignments made up of a series of questions. This submission method is used to facilitate interactive Computer-Marked Assignments. At times you may be required to submit other forms of assessment through the iCMA system. Your module website will provide details of submission and tell you what you need to do to complete your iCMA.

There are two types of TMAs and iCMAs:

- **Formative assignments** – Any scores you get from formative assignments do not count towards your final module result. But you might need to submit certain formative assignments, achieve a minimum score or meet an individual threshold to pass the module overall. Please refer to your module assessment strategy to understand the conditions that must be met to pass the module overall.
- **Summative assignments** – Scores for these assignments count towards your final module result.

Within each module, TMAs and/or iCMAs will count differently towards your overall module outcome. The Assessment Strategy for your module tells you how each of your assignments contribute to your overall module result. You can find this on [StudentHome](#). In the centre panel, under the title of the module you are enrolled on, select 'Assessment' (or 'Assignment scores'), then select 'Assessment strategy'. SiSE students don't have access to their student homepage but can access their assessment strategy from within their module assignment guide.

Any terminology that may be unfamiliar is explained throughout the policy and in the [definitions section](#) at the end of this document. Throughout this document, where you see references to 'we', 'us', or 'our' this means The Open University. 'You' refers to you as our student.

For specific guidance on how this policy relates to your personal circumstances, please contact your [Student Support Team \(SST\)](#) for advice on the implementation of policy. If you are an Apprentice studying as part of an apprenticeship programme, you should contact the Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team (AEST), see [contacts](#) section below for more information.

Scope

What this policy covers

This policy applies to all continuous assessments that you complete during your module i.e., the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs). This policy applies to you if you fall into any of the categories below:

- Enquirers (for information only)
- All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students studying a module and/or a qualification, including students studying Access modules
- Students in Secure Environments (SiSE)
- Apprentices studying a module
- Short Course module TG089 only

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not cover the following types of assessment:

- Exams (including exams submitted using the iCMA/iCME system) – please see the [Exam policy](#)
- End-of-Module Assessments (EMAs) - please see the [EMA policy](#)
- end-of-module Tutor-Marked Assignments (emTMAs) - please see the [emTMA policy](#)

Information about the types of assessment on your module can be found in the module's Assessment Strategy on StudentHome.

This policy does not apply to:

- Postgraduate research students: please contact the [Research Degrees Team](#)
- Learners studying a Microcredential: please contact your [Student Support Team](#)
- OpenLearn Learners: please contact the [OpenLearn team](#)

- Students studying under partnership agreements: please contact the [OUVP Curriculum Partnerships team](#)
- Vocational qualification learners: please contact the [Vocational Qualification team](#)
- Students studying a non-credit bearing Short Course (except module TG089): please refer to the [Conditions of Registration \(Short Courses\)](#)

Support and Information

How to contact us

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please [Contact Us](#). If you want to contact your Student Support Team (SST), please refer to the '[Contact the OU](#)' Help Centre webpage. To check the contact details for the Open University, please see [OU Offices](#).

SiSE student can contact the National Support team for any queries. Their contact details are available on the [Contact us](#) page.

If you are studying an apprenticeship, please contact the Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) by email on apprentice-support@open.ac.uk, or telephone (+44 (0) 300 303 4121). Welsh-speaking students and learners are welcome to speak with a Student Support Adviser in Welsh on +44 (0) 29 2047 1170. Research Degree Students can contact the Research Degrees Office via email research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk.

Assessment Operations Centre (the address can be used to post paper submission and email id can be used for inquiries)

The Open University

PO Box 722

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6ZT

assignments@open.ac.uk

Help Centre Articles

[Help Centre – Assignments](#)

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

- 1.1 This policy explains the rules for continuous assessment, so you know what to expect during your studies. The policy also describes our responsibility to you and your assessed work while you study with us.

1.2 The policy objectives are:

- 1.2.1 To support students and learners to successfully submit work for assessment.
- 1.2.2 To clarify the submission deadlines that apply to TMAs and iCMAs, whether extensions to deadlines are available and how to apply for an extension.
- 1.2.3 To explain the timeline for marking and returning your assignment.
- 1.2.4 To explain how we weight your assessment scores and where to find this information.
- 1.2.5 To describe how to query a TMA score if you have grounds to believe there is a mistake in the marks awarded.

2. Before submitting your assignment

2.1 Preparing your assignment

- 2.1.1 Your assignments serve two purposes: to help you learn, and to enable us to ensure you have met the module learning outcomes. Module teams offer advice and suggestions in assignment information and guidance. They explain the scope of the question and what they expect from you. You can also find information on [preparing assignments](#) in the Help Centre.

2.2 Discussing assignments with other students and tutors

- 2.2.1 Discussing the module material and your ideas with your tutor and other students can be beneficial and is encouraged. However, when you start to write your assignment you must make sure this is entirely your own work, and you should not share your work with other students.
- 2.2.2 Unless it has been specifically agreed, please do not send your tutor a draft of your assignment for checking.

2.3 Good academic practice

- 2.3.1 As an Open University student, it is essential that you thoroughly read and adhere to our [Academic Conduct Policy](#).
- 2.3.2 Good academic practice is the process of preparing and submitting your academic work independently and honestly, using your own words, using the appropriate academic style and properly acknowledging all sources in line with academic standards.
- 2.3.3 Academic misconduct covers a range of behaviours. It involves using material that is not your own work to gain some form of benefit or enabling others to do so. Plagiarism, collusion and contract cheating are some examples of academic misconduct. See the [Academic Conduct Policy](#) for more information about what the Open University considers to be academic misconduct.
- 2.3.4 If you submit an assignment that contains work that is not your own without indicating this to the marker you are committing academic misconduct, which is an offence under Section 2.3.1 of the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#).

- 2.3.5 The [Academic Conduct Policy](#) also includes guidelines on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI). For more details, please refer to Section 3.6 of the [Policy](#). Detailed guidance can be found on the [Generative AI for students](#) webpage.
- 2.3.6 We use Turnitin software, like most other universities, to compare your assignments with other sources like books, websites, and module content. We use it to make sure that the work you submit is your own and has not been copied from other sources. If your Module Team permits Turnitin for student use, you will find a link to upload your draft work to Turnitin on the Assessment page of your module website. You can use this tool to make sure your sources are correctly identified and referenced. For guidance, please refer to the [Using similarity detection software: Turnitin](#) webpage in the Help Centre.

2.4 Confidentiality of assignments and other assessment tasks

- 2.4.1 All information you provide within assignments and other assessment tasks is regarded as confidential to you and will not be shared outside of the Open University. Some modules have additional confidentiality guidelines and data protection rules, which you will find within the module-specific information in your module material. The [Student Privacy Notice](#) provides you with details of how the Open University uses your personal data.
- 2.4.2 Assessment tasks may include use of 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, therefore, the work undertaken via these tools cannot be considered confidential.
- 2.4.3 In your assignments, and elsewhere in your module, you may be encouraged to apply module content to your own employment, experience or other relevant situations. For details on how the information you provide about your current or past employment or other experiences will be used, please refer to your module website and consult your tutor.

2.5 Processing personal data as part of your studies

- 2.5.1 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 our [Data Protection Team](#).
- 2.5.2 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. They will also be responsible for dealing with subject-access requests related to personal data you hold. For more help and guidance please refer to your module website.

2.6 Research ethics review

- 2.6.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate taught students undertaking a research project that involves human participants, human data or human biological samples require review before the project can commence. This ensures that all potential ethical risks associated with the project have been identified and mitigated. Please refer to your module materials and consult your tutor for guidance about your module's ethics review process.

2.7 The Open University's brand policy

- 2.7.1 You are not permitted to use the Open University brand as part of your studies, including assignments or dissertations, or for any other personal purposes where you are not communicating on behalf of the Open University.

3. Submitting your assignments

3.1 Submitting TMAs online

- 3.1.1 TMAs must be submitted online via a link on your [StudentHome](#) page. In some exceptional cases TMAs can or may need to be submitted by post (please refer to Section 3.2 below). Your module materials will explain which method to use. Please visit the Help Centre for more detailed information about [Submitting a Tutor Marked Assignment \(TMA\)](#).

- 3.1.2 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 at etma@open.ac.uk (not to your tutor). Please refer to the Help Centre page '[Technical troubleshooting TMA submissions](#)' for more information. Submission via StudentHome is always preferable because it guides you through the process, and receipt by the system is quicker.
- 3.1.3 The submission cut-off date given on the module website is the last date by which each TMA should be submitted. Submit your TMA online before 12:00 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date. There is a 12-hour grace period provided to help you in case you experience technical problems which may delay your submission. Any TMAs received by 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the submission cut-off date will still be accepted for marking. Once you submit, you must wait for the on-screen receipt to confirm the submission has been accepted and make a note of the receipt number. Please do not leave submission of your TMA to the last minute, as there is a possibility of heavy network traffic which may delay receipt of your work.
- 3.1.4 TMAs submitted after 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date may not be marked and you may not get a score unless you have already had an extension agreed. Where an extension has been requested and granted, please follow the cut-off date you have been given and submit by the new deadline. For more information on requesting extensions, refer to section 4.2 '[Requesting an extension for a TMA](#)' below.
- 3.1.5 You are only permitted to submit one file for each TMA, unless you are told otherwise in your module material. If you are required to submit more than one file for your TMA, you must submit all parts together in a zip file. Do not submit individual parts of a TMA separately. If you submit a second file, it will replace the first one unless your tutor has already downloaded it, or the cut-off date has passed. For help, please visit Help Centre page [Zipping your files](#).
- 3.1.6 Your submission file must be no bigger than 10MB, unless specified within your module guide. If it exceeds this size, you will not be able to submit it. Methods to reduce file size including zipping the file or converting image files to a different format can be found on the Help centre page [Zipping your files](#).

3.1.7 Your tutor can collect your TMA at any time before the cut-off date if you have already made a submission, so always ensure you submit the final version. If you submit a second time, your tutor may not collect this for marking if they have already collected your first submission. If having already submitted you find you need to submit a different file, please contact your tutor and ask if they agree to accept the second submission. If your request is approved, you should resubmit your TMA to the system and inform your tutor. Once your tutor has marked and returned your TMA, you will no longer be allowed to make further submissions.

3.2 Submitting TMAs on paper via post

3.2.1 You should only submit your TMA on paper via post if it has been agreed as part of additional arrangements due to a disability or arrangement made in advance with the SiSE team. The assessment tab on your module website will tell you which submission method you should use. If you are allowed a paper submission, you should post your TMA to the [Assessment Operations Centre](#). Each TMA submitted by post must be accompanied by a completed PT3 form containing your name, personal identifier, module and TMA number. The Help Centre provides detailed information about [submitting TMAs on paper](#). It also explains what a PT3 form is and where you can find it.

3.2.2 The cut-off date given on your module website is the last date by which we must receive the TMA. You should post your assignment at least three days before your submission deadline so that the post arrives on time. You must ensure you pay sufficient postage to cover the weight and size of the envelope but should not use any form of delivery which requires a signature on receipt. You must obtain a certificate of posting: without this evidence, lost, late or missing TMAs cannot be considered. The Open University will not accept any responsibility for assignments that do not reach us by the cut-off 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.

- 3.2.3 If your tutor has already marked the first submission of your paper TMA, any additional parts or resubmissions may not be marked. Tutors can collect and mark your TMA before the cut-off date, so always submit the final version. Any second submission or resubmission may be returned with a note saying it cannot be accepted.

3.3 Submission through the medium of Welsh

- 3.3.1 If you are a Welsh-resident student, you can submit your assignments and/or sit exams through the medium of Welsh. If your tutor is a Welsh-speaker, they may choose to mark this directly. If not, the OU may send your work to be translated into English, and this translation would be assessed. Your tutor may also give written feedback in English on this translation. For information, please see [Assessment through the medium of Welsh \(Fersiwn iaith Gymraeg\)](#). If you submit your work in Welsh, it will be treated no less favourably than an English-language submission. Your mark will not be affected, and you should expect to receive your result at the same time as an English language submission.

3.4 Submitting iCMAs

- 3.4.1 If your module has an iCMA, it will be available through a link on your module website. iCMAs can be presented in a number of formats; for more information see the [iCMA section](#) in our Computing Guide. Some will provide immediate feedback after you answer each question or provide feedback for all questions after the cut-off date, while others do not provide any feedback at all. In some iCMAs you may be able to have more than one attempt at a question, but you will be given a lower score for second and subsequent attempts. Scores, and any feedback if it is provided, will be provided within seven days of the cut-off date for most iCMAs.
- 3.4.2 The majority of iCMAs are non-repeatable and you are allowed only one attempt. However, some do allow as many attempts as you like prior to the iCMA submission cut-off date. If your module allows more than one attempt at an iCMA you will see the Grading method set to 'Highest grade', this will also be specified on the iCMA 'Information' page available once you start the iCMA.

- 3.4.2 To avoid the possibility of plagiarism please ensure that your iCMA answers are your own work. For more information about plagiarism please refer to the [Academic Conduct Policy](#).
- 3.4.3 You should submit your iCMA before 12:00 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date given on the module website. We strongly suggest submitting your iCMA early to avoid possible delays from heavy network traffic near the deadline. We also recommend that you keep all submission receipts. There is a 12-hour grace period after the 12:00 hrs deadline, which means that any iCMAs submitted by 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date will still be accepted. For more guidance on submitting iCMAs, please refer to the [Collecting and submitting iCMAs](#) page on the Help Centre.
- 3.4.4 There is a 'Two-stage submission process' for iCMAs. To successfully submit an iCMA, you must:
- a. enter your answers to the questions, and
 - b. press the 'Submit all and Finish' button.

3.5 Additional arrangements for assignments

- 3.5.1 If you have a disability, long-term mental or physical health condition, are neurodivergent or have a specific learning difference, please let us know so we can offer appropriate support. Please refer to Help Centre page [Additional arrangements for assignments](#) to find out how to inform us and what support is available.

3.6 Keeping your assignments

- 3.6.1 You should always check carefully that you are submitting the correct assignment and should keep a copy of each assignment you submit. It is advisable to download a copy of your work after submission to check it is the correct version.
- 3.6.2 If you have not kept a copy of your TMAs, they are available to download **until 90 days** after your module has finished. Beyond this point you will be unable to download TMAs, and they cannot be retrieved on your behalf.

- 3.6.3 You should also consider backing up your files in case of PC failure or file corruption, see [General safety tips](#) in the Help Centre for more information. As the online TMA/EMA system is regularly cleared due to the volume of submissions, the Open University policy does not permit the retrieval of TMAs on your behalf.
- 3.6.4 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.
- 3.6.5 If you are studying as part of the apprenticeship programme it is particularly important for you to keep your marked assignments until the end of your qualification as you will need to refer to them to complete your End Point Assessment (EPA). If you are unable to download and save, please get in touch with your [AEST](#) as soon as possible.

4. Problems with submission of your assignments

4.1 Submitting an incorrect file

- 4.1.1 Check your TMA carefully before submitting. You can check what you have submitted online by downloading it back to your computer.
- 4.1.2 If you have submitted the wrong file, like an early draft instead of your final version, or missed something, you may be able to resubmit. This depends on whether the cut-off date has passed, and if your tutor has already marked your submission.
- a. If the cut-off date has passed, you cannot submit another version. Please contact your tutor for more advice.
 - b. If the cut-off date has not passed, then contact your tutor to ask if they will accept a new version. If the tutor agrees to accept the new version, resubmit your TMA to the system and contact the tutor to let them know.
 - c. Please note that your tutor can start marking your work before the cut-off date. If your tutor has already marked and returned your TMA, you cannot submit another version.

4.2 Requesting an extension for a TMA

- 4.2.1 If you find that you are unable to submit your TMA before the cut-off date due to unforeseen circumstances, you can request an extension. When requesting an extension please ensure you do the following:
- Request an extension as soon as you realise you are unable to submit and do not wait until the deadline.
 - Contact your tutor in the first instance when requesting an extension of any length.
 - Avoid asking for an extension close to the deadline as your tutor may not be available to see your request and authorise it at short notice. If you need to request an extension on the cut-off date and you cannot contact your tutor, please contact your [SST, or AEST](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme, who will contact the tutor/faculty on your behalf and pass on your request.
- 4.2.2 If you are unable to request an extension before the submission cut-off date due to circumstances outside of your control (e.g. hospitalisation) then please contact your tutor or SST as soon as you can for further advice (for example, your tutor may be able to accept a late submission – [see Section 4.4](#)).
- 4.2.3 If you are considering requesting an extension, please read [Asking for an extension to your assignment deadline](#) in the Help Centre, which will lead you through the process. Alternatively, you can [contact us](#) to speak to an adviser.
- 4.2.4 Your tutor will discuss your circumstances with you and decide if the extension can be approved. If the extension is granted, they will set a new deadline for that assignment. You will need to submit your TMA before 12:00 hrs (UK local time) on the new deadline date. There is a 12-hour grace period, so TMA received by 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the new deadline date will be accepted for marking.
- 4.2.5 Tutors can agree an extension of up to 21 days. In exceptional circumstances more than 21 days can be granted depending on your circumstances and on additional authorisation by the faculty.

4.2.6 No extension will be agreed for a module's final TMA (the TMA prior to the exam, EMA or emTMA) unless there are exceptional or serious circumstances. Please contact your tutor to explain why you need more time. If your tutor agrees that there are exceptional circumstances they may give you an extension. However, in any circumstance no extensions to a TMA can be given beyond the first day of the month in which the module ends (i.e. 1 June for a module that formally ends in June) unless you have a disability, in which case please refer to section 4.3 below.

4.3 Extension request of final TMA for students with disability

4.3.1 If you cannot complete your final TMA before the deadline due to a disability, you can ask for an extension of up to three weeks.

- If the new deadline date would fall before the absolute cut-off date for your module, you should ask your tutor for an extension. The absolute cut-off date is the first day of the month in which the module ends (i.e., 1 June for a module that formally ends in June). Your tutor will discuss this with their Staff Tutor or Student Experience Manager.
- If the new deadline date would fall after the absolute cut-off date for your module, you can ask for an extension by emailing disc-post@open.ac.uk. We will need to understand how having a disability impacts on your studies. You'll also need to tell us how your extension will affect your ability to submit your EMA or emTMA or take your exam.

4.3.2 If you need help applying for an extension, please contact your [SST, or AEST](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme.

4.4 Late submission of TMAs

4.4.1 If you have submitted your TMA after the submission cut-off date and you have not been granted an extension, or if you submit it after any agreed extension date, then it is classed as 'late' and may not be accepted for marking. If you have submitted late, contact your tutor as soon as possible for further advice. Your tutor may still think it is useful for your assignment to be marked so that you have the benefit of teaching comments (feedback), but your tutor may not record a score resulting in a zero mark.

4.5 Non-submission of TMAs

- 4.5.1 If you decide not to submit your assignment, tell your tutor before the cut-off date. You should consider how not submitting your work could impact your overall assessment, your module result, and potentially your qualification classification. Some assignments are compulsory or have a required pass threshold to pass the module. Please check your assessment strategy text on the Assessment section of [StudentHome](#) to see if the assignment is compulsory and use the [assessment calculator](#), if it is available, to find out how your results may be affected. If you fail to submit a compulsory TMA or reach a specified threshold, you are likely to fail the module unless you can demonstrate with evidence that there were circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from satisfying the requirement. To find out how your results will be impacted, please read the [Failed or missed an assignment](#) information on the Help Centre.
- 4.5.2 There may be other options available if you find you are falling behind with your studies and are not able to submit a TMA by the cut-off date. For example, you may be able to defer your studies and re-join at a later start date of your module. In some cases, you can carry forward the assignment scores you have already achieved (that is, use assessment banking). For more details about Assessment Banking please refer to the [Assessment Banking Rules Policy](#) or talk to your [SST](#). If you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme you should contact your [AEST](#) for further discussion. Your AEST will discuss the implications of changing your study plans with you and your employer.

4.5 Extension of iCMAs

- 4.5.1 It is not possible to request an extension for an iCMA. If you are unable to submit your iCMA on time, please contact your tutor or SST. They can help you understand how non-submission might affect your overall score.

4.6 Late submission or late receipt of iCMAs

- 4.6.1 iCMAs cannot be attempted after the cut-off date, both for technical reasons and because model answers or other information about the iCMA may have already been sent to other students.

4.6.2 For non-repeatable iCMAs there is a seven-day grace period in which you can submit any answers that you completed before the cut-off date. You will be able to review the submission and if you have not pressed the 'Submit all and finish' button you will have seven calendar days following the cut-off date to submit the answers. However, you can only submit the answers you completed before the cut-off date. You will not be able to change or answer any questions you left blank during this time. We will email you to let you know if you have not submitted your answers after the iCMA cut-off. Click the link in the email and submit the iCMA within seven days after the cut-off date. If you don't, your work will not be marked, and you will receive a zero score for this assignment.

4.7 Special Circumstances

4.7.1 If circumstances beyond your control have affected your performance in your TMAs, prevented you from submitting one or more of the assignments, or if you were not able to access and submit an iCMA on time, you should consider submitting a [Special Circumstances form](#).

4.7.2 Please refer to the [Special Circumstances Policy](#) to find out when you need to submit the form and how the Module Result Panel uses the special circumstances information.

5. After submitting your assignments

5.1 Marking of TMAs submitted online

5.1.1 If you submit your TMA online, we will email you when it has been marked and is available for collection. Tutors usually aim to mark and return your TMA within ten working days of the cut-off date, subject to the circumstances outside of our control listed within your [Conditions of Registration](#). When you download your TMA from the online TMA/EMA service, there will be a separate Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3) file which will contain your tutor's comments. Your tutor will typically also add comments to your TMA.

5.2 Marking of TMAs submitted on paper

- 5.2.1 The Assessment Operations Centre will process your TMA within five working days and send it to your tutor for marking. Your tutor will aim to mark and return your TMA to the Assessment Operations Centre within ten working days from the date they receive your assignment. They will write comments on your script and on the accompanying Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3). Once your tutor has completed the marking and feedback, they will send both the script and form to the Assessment Operations Centre. The Assessment Operations Centre will then record your score and return the marked TMA and one copy of the Assessment Summary/TMA form (PT3) to you within 24 hours of receipt.

5.3 Timelines for Marking and Return of your TMA

- 5.3.1 Tutors usually aim to mark and return your TMA within ten working days from the submission cut-off date. For TMAs submitted on paper, you should receive the marked TMA back within three to four weeks of the cut-off date. Working days do not include weekends, National Public Holidays or University closure days over the Easter, Christmas and New Year periods. Early submission of a TMA does not mean an early return of score and feedback. If an extension was agreed and you submitted within the agreed extension period, please expect a delay of more than ten working days from the original submission cut-off date for the return of your work.
- 5.3.2 If you have not received your marked TMA within the above timescales, please contact your tutor. If you receive no response from your tutor within two to three working days, contact your [SST, or AEST](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme.
- 5.3.3 Please refer to Help Centre webpage '[Collecting TMA marks and feedback](#)' for guidance on how to collect a TMA and what to do if you are unable to collect the TMA or see the comments.

5.4 Monitoring

- 5.4.1 A random selection of TMAs which have been marked by module tutors are monitored to ensure consistency of marking standards and appropriate teaching comments. If you are submitting your TMA online this should not cause any delay in the return of your marked TMA.
- 5.4.2 The Assessment Operations Centre will be able to tell you if your TMA was used in monitoring. If you have not received your comments within three weeks from the cut-off date of your TMA and you need your tutor's comments to enable you to begin your next TMA, please ask your tutor to send a copy of them direct to you.

5.5 Automatic marking of iCMAs by systems

- 5.5.1 iCMAs are marked automatically.
- 5.5.2 For formative assignments, feedback may be provided after answering each question or immediately after submission of the whole iCMA. Your iCMA score will be available on the module website using the iCMA link.
- 5.5.3 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 calendar days of the iCMA's submission cut-off date. Feedback, if provided, will be available on the module website using the iCMA link. Your score will be available on StudentHome and the module website's assessment page within seven calendar days of the submission cut-off date.

5.6 Non-receipt of iCMA scores

- 5.6.1 If you do not receive your iCMA score within seven days of the cut-off date, or if you have a query about your score, you should contact the [Assessment Operations Centre](#). If you want to clarify an academic aspect of your iCMA, you should contact your tutor.

6. Assignment scores

- 6.1 Most modules use some form of continuous assessment. Individual assignments are weighted to reflect their relative importance. The score you receive for an assignment is multiplied by the weighting (of that particular assignment) to produce the score that will count towards your continuous assessment. You will be given a zero score for any assignment you do not submit, unless your module allows 'substitution' (explained in [Section 7: "Substitution"](#) below).
- 6.2 Your module may have a 'threshold' for one or more of the continuous assessment tasks. This may be a minimum score on a particular task or group of tasks that you must reach, or a compulsory task(s) that you must submit to pass the module.
- 6.3 The assessment strategy for each module is explained in the module materials. A summary of the assessment strategy for every module can also be accessed from the study record page on [StudentHome](#). This information includes the pass mark that is applicable to your module.
- 6.4 On most modules, we record and report your performance in all assessments using one of the following numerical 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

- 6.5 Some modules use other scales for marking individual assignments. These will be explained in your assignment material, but the final score for an assignment will be recorded and reported using one of the scales outlined in Tables 1-3.

7. Substitution

- 7.1 Substitution is where a low or zero tutor-marked assignment (TMA) score is automatically replaced with a higher score, calculated based on scores from your continuous assessment. Where a module permits substitution, it is applied at the end of the module if it helps to improve your Overall Continuous Assessment Score (OCAS).

- 7.2 Please note that a small number of modules permit substitution. The summary of the module's assessment strategy, available via [StudentHome](#), will tell you whether your module allows substitution, and to which assignments it can apply. Not all assignments may be eligible for substitution, for example those considered especially important to the module study. There is no need to ask to have scores substituted. Substitution only takes place if it is to your advantage, and it will be applied automatically if your module allows it.
- 7.3 If your module allows substitution, please refer to the [Appendix section](#) below and also the [Help Centre](#) webpage for more detailed information.

8. Methods of appeal

8.1 Querying a TMA score

- 8.1.1 You can query the score awarded for any TMA (except for an emTMA score), if you have grounds to believe:
- that your tutor has made a mistake in the marking process
 - that the mark given is not a reasonable reflection of the standard of work you have submitted.
- 8.1.2 You should send your query by email to your tutor within 14 calendar days of the date your score was returned by your tutor, stating the grounds on which you are querying the score. If you do not do this, the assignment cannot be sent on appeal for re-marking. The query should always be sent to the tutor who marked the assignment, not to your SST or AEST, the Assessment Operations Centre, Module Team Chair or anyone else. In cases where your tutor is unavailable or absent or if your module does not have a tutor, please contact your [SST, or AEST](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme.
- 8.1.3 Your tutor will consider your query based on the grounds you have given and should inform you of their decision in writing within 10 working days of the date you submitted your query.

- 8.1.4 If you are not satisfied with your tutor's decision on your query, you have the right to appeal. To do this please forward the assignment to the [Student Casework Office](#), with the related correspondence from your tutor, the grounds for your appeal and any other relevant information. It must arrive within 28 calendar days of the date of notification of your tutor's decision. The Student Casework Office will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three working days of their arrival, telling you which delegated authority of the University has been asked to reply direct to you. Please refer to the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#) section B3 for detailed information.
- 8.1.5 A query or subsequent appeal will not necessarily result in an increase to your original score. Scores often remain unchanged and, in some cases, can even be reduced. You may not submit a revised assignment to try to improve the score.
- 8.1.6 A small number of modules provide support through study advisers or online conferencing rather than through allocated tutors. If you are studying this type of module and you want to query a TMA score, forward the assignment to the [Student Casework Office](#), together with a note saying that your module does not provide a tutor; the grounds for your appeal; and any other relevant information; to arrive within 28 calendar days of the date of notification of your TMA score. The Student Casework Office will acknowledge receipt of your documents within three working days of their arrival, telling you which delegated authority of the University has been asked to reply direct to you.
- 8.1.7 On modules without an exam or end-of-module assessment (EMA), you cannot query the score of your emTMA. If you have evidence that your module result may be wrong, you will need to complete a [module result check form](#). Please refer to the [Module Results Determination Policy](#) for more information.

8.2 Queries or problems with our application of this policy

- 8.2.1 If you have a query or experience a problem with any aspect of our application of this policy, please [contact us](#) promptly.
- 8.2.2 If you feel that we have not responded appropriately to your policy query or concern, you can raise a formal complaint or appeal using the [Students Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#). You can find out more information about how to do this in the Open University's [Complaints and Appeals](#) procedure webpages on the Help Centre.
- 8.2.3 We have a specific complaints procedure for complaints relating to Welsh Language Standards. Please refer to [Welsh Language Standards, Dealing with Complaints and Comments](#) for more details.

Definitions

Academic misconduct

Any action or behaviour which may give you or others an unfair academic advantage in an assessment or exam. This includes plagiarism, self-plagiarism, enabling plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, unauthorised use of generative Artificial Intelligence and automated tools, falsification and misconduct in an exam.

Appeal

A request for a review of a decision made by an academic body responsible for making academic decisions such as admission, assessment, student progression and awards.

Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team (AEST)

The first point of contact for Apprentices in line with the Apprenticeship Programmes. Please see the [contacts section](#) above for their contact details.

Assessment

The term we use to cover the different ways that the Open University assesses how you are progressing during your module. It covers things like TMAs, iCMAs, exams, emTMAs and EMAs.

Assessment Banking

Assessment banking is when you keep the scores from assessments you have already completed, carry these forwards to a future presentation of the same module and complete the outstanding assessment requirements within that future presentation.

Assessment strategy

This is a detailed breakdown of the way a module is assessed (such as the learning outcomes to be met, type and number of assessments and their weighting). 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'. There may also be information in the module guide, assignment booklets or module materials.

Assignment

Assignment is the term we use for the parts of the module assessment that are not the final assessed task – for example, TMAs, iCMAs and reports.

Continuous assessment

The name given to the set of assignments (TMAs and iCMAs) that you complete during a module. Information about these can be found in the module guide, assignment booklets or module materials.

Cut-off date or submission deadline

The date and time by which a particular assignment must be finished and submitted.

End-of-Module Assessment (EMA)

This is one of the final assessed tasks within a module. On many Open University modules, you have to work independently to produce an extended piece of work rather than sitting a traditional exam at the end of your studies. For ease of reference, these essays, projects, portfolios, dissertations, assessments, etc. are referred to collectively as End-of-Module Assessments (EMAs).

End-of-module Tutor-Marked Assignments (emTMA)

Where a module does not have an exam or EMA, the last TMA on that module will be classed as an emTMA. If this is the case, your assessment strategy will clearly state which assignment is the emTMA. Please note that the 'final TMA' that comes before the exam, EMA or emTMA is not the same as an emTMA.

Exam (Examination)

An exam is a time restricted final assessed task. Exams have a set start time and must be submitted within a specific time frame. The submission deadline is typically between 2-4 hours, but can be up to 24 hours, as specified by the module team. Some exams will be invigilated by an online invigilation provider; you will be told if this applies to your module.

Formative assessment

A formative assignment does not normally count towards the overall module result. It is used on some modules for teaching purposes only, but it is important to note it could still be compulsory, and you might not pass a module if you do not submit it. Check your assessment strategy (via the Assessment section on [StudentHome](#)) to find out more.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI)

A type of artificial intelligence which generates content in response to prompts from the user, including text, images and code. This includes large language models or other artificial intelligence programs.

Grace period

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.

Interactive Computer-Marked Assignment (iCMA)

An interactive form of assessment made up of a series of questions and submitted online. The iCMA submission system is also sometimes used for other types of assessment.

Online TMA/EMA service

This is the University's system that allows you to submit work electronically for assessment.

Overall Continuous Assessment Score (OCAS)

This is a score out of 100 which has been achieved for continuous assessment on the module. Continuous assessment is usually made up of assignments such as TMAs and iCMAs. Your module's assessment strategy (via the Assessment section on [StudentHome](#)) will explain how much each individual assignment contributes towards your OCAS.

Plagiarism

Using, without acknowledgement, someone else's ideas or work, including text produced by Generative AI. If you submit an assignment that contains work that is not your own, without clearly indicating this to the marker (fully acknowledging your sources using the rules of the specified academic referencing style), you are committing 'plagiarism', and this is academic misconduct.

Students in Secure Environments – (SiSE)

SiSE are made up of three groups of students: prison based, secure unit based and students who are Out on Licence / Probation / Disclosure. There are specialist teams within the Nations to support these students based on their geographical location.

Special Circumstances

If your performance in any assessment on your module has been affected by something beyond your control, you can submit a [special circumstances form](#). This information will be made available to the Module Result Panel when they agree your module result.

Summative

An assignment where the score counts towards the overall module result, in contrast to a formative assignment.

Substitution

Where a low or zero TMA score is automatically replaced with a higher score, calculated based on scores from your continuous assessment. Where a module permits substitution, a substitution is applied at the end of the module but only if it will improve your OCAS score.

Threshold

On some modules there is a minimum requirement or score (such as 40%), known as a threshold, that you must achieve for an individual piece of work or activity, or for a number of pieces of work combined, in order to achieve a pass result.

Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)

As part of the teaching methodology on most modules, you have to submit written assignments to your tutor known as TMAs.

Related Policies and Legislation

- [Academic Regulations](#) and your Qualification Regulations, if applicable (available via [StudentHome](#) once you are registered for a qualification, or on the [online prospectus](#)).
- Assessment Policies:
 - a. [End-of-Module Assessment \(EMA\) Policy](#)
 - b. [End-of-module tutor-marked assignment \(emTMA\) Policy](#)
 - c. [Exam Policy](#)
 - d. [Special Circumstances Policy](#)
 - e. [Module Results Determination Policy](#)
- [Academic Conduct Policy](#)
- [Assessment Banking Rules](#)
- [Assessment through the Medium of Welsh](#)
- [Changing Your Study Plans: Deferrals, Withdrawals and Cancellations](#)
- [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)
- [Computing Policy](#)
- [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#)
- [Student Privacy Notice](#)

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 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.

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.

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 OU in Welsh. These are outlined in what's called the [OU'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 [OU in Wales website](#).

About this Document

Summary of Significant Changes since last version

The following changes have been made

- New policy template has been used so the layout has slightly changed, and wording updated.

- Headings and some sub-headings have been amended (mainly in Sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8) so it is more user-friendly.
- The wording in some sections has been reviewed and updated to make the language simpler and information clearer.
- Added Section 2.3.5 to include information on Generative AI.
- Added Section 2.3.6 to include information on Turnitin access.
- Added Section 4.3 to include information on extension request of final TMA for students with disability.
- Removed the table in section 7 of the previous version of the policy to improve screen reader accessibility and avoid repetition.
- Glossary terms updated.

Policies Superseded by this Document

This policy will replace the older version 2.1 of the TMA and iCMA Policy dated December 2023.

Document Information

Version number: 2.2

Approved by: Student Experience Committee

Effective from: 1 July 2025

Date for review: July 2026

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.

Appendix 1

1. Substitution

- 1.1 Substitution is where a low or zero TMA score is automatically replaced with a higher score, calculated based on scores from your continuous assessment. Where a module permits substitution, a substitution is applied at the end of the module but only if it will improve your OCAS score.
- 1.2 If you are studying a module with two components of assessment (please refer to the [Module Results Determination policy](#) to know more about two components of assessment), all of your summative assignments count towards your Overall Continuous Assessment Score (OCAS). Your OCAS is 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.
- 1.3 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 your summative assignments to be replaced (or 'substituted') by a higher score derived from your assessment scores throughout the module.
- 1.4 The calculation of the substitution score(s) is intended to encourage you to submit all assignments and is not simply an average of the scores achieved for your other assignments. This means that submitting part of an assignment and achieving a low score is still better than not submitting the assignment at all. If you do not submit an assignment 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.
- 1.5 If you have had an assignment score reduced because of a disciplinary penalty due to an academic conduct investigation, this assignment will not be eligible for substitution.

Please refer to the Help Centre page ['Failing or missing an assignment'](#) for more details.

1.6 How it works: Substitution involves up to three stages:

1.6.1 The system checks to see if you are likely to benefit from substitution by:

- calculating your preliminary OCAS from the weighted average of your assignment scores
- checking if any of the substitutable assignments have a lower score than your preliminary OCAS.

If none of your substitutable assignments have a lower score, no substitution is required.

1.6.2 The system will then calculate which assignments should be substituted, based on their scores and weightings. The assignment chosen will always be the one which adds the most to your final OCAS and will not necessarily be the assignment with the lowest score. TMAs 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.

1.6.3 For each assignment chosen to be substituted, the original score is replaced by the average of the original score and your preliminary OCAS.

1.7 Example

1.7.1 This example shows the effect of substitution for a student on a module whose continuous assessment consists of eight TMAs, all equally weighted, and where substitution is allowed for any two assignments except TMA 03.

1.7.2 The weighted average of the student's assignment scores (i.e., the preliminary OCAS) is 61.25%.

Table 4: 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

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

1.7.4 In the example in Table 5, TMA03 is not eligible for substitution. TMAs 02, 06 and 07 all have scores lower than the preliminary OCAS. Substitution has been applied to TMAs 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 increases the final OCAS from 61.25% to 65.47%. The final OCAS is then rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 5: scores and substitution

TMA number	Maximum Mark	Revised scores
01	100	80
02	100	58.13 ¹
03	100	50
04	100	75
05	100	90
06	100	30.63 ¹
07	100	60
08	100	80

OCAS = 65.47

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

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

¹ denotes the substituted scores