

## Contents

Alternative Format .....	2
Summary of Policy.....	2
Scope .....	3
Introduction.....	4
Policy and Related Information .....	6
1. Purpose .....	6
2. Preparing your assignment .....	6
3. Submitting your assignments (TMAs and iCMAs) .....	8
4. Marking.....	15
5. Assignment scores.....	19
6. Substitution .....	22
7. Timetable and exceptions to the Policy .....	22
8. Methods of appeal .....	26
9. Contact details for further information .....	27
Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University .....	28
Safe Space Reporting .....	28
Glossary .....	28
Related Documentation .....	32
Further clarification .....	32
Appendix .....	34

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## Alternative Format

This TMA and iCMA Policy document is available 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.

If you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme, then please contact the [Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team \(AEST\)](#).

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 set of assignments that you complete during the module are called continuous assessments, most commonly known as Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs). This policy covers those continuous assessment component of the module.
- This policy outlines:
  - a) the meaning and purpose of TMAs and iCMAs,
  - b) how you can prepare your assignments,
  - c) the methods you can use to submit these assignments,
  - d) why it is important to keep a copy of your submitted assignments,
  - e) how the assignments are assessed, and how the scores are calculated, and
  - f) other guidance you may find useful.
- While this document covers the policy for completing and submitting your continuous assessment tasks and explains how the assessment scores are calculated, separate module-specific information such as the assessment strategy on [StudentHome](#), your Module Guide, Study Planner and Assignment Booklet will give you more information about the TMA and iCMA assessment tasks in your module.

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Therefore, this document should be read in conjunction with the module specific information.

- [Table 4 in Section 7](#) below summarises all the policy points contained within this document with deadlines and exceptions to the policy (if any). There is also an appendix on Substitution.
- If you have any queries or need guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please [contact us](#).

## 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
- 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](#)

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- 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
- OpenLearn Learners: please contact the [OpenLearn team](#).
- Professional Development Course learners
- 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 \(Short Courses\)](#).

## 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

Continuous assessment is the name given to the set of assignments that you complete during a module. Information about these can be found in the module guide, assignment booklets or module materials. The most common continuous assessment tasks are Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMAs).

- **Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs):** As part of the teaching methodology on most modules, you have to submit written assignments to your tutor.

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TMA's are usually essays or short-answer questions, although they may also include other types of tasks.

- **Interactive Computer-Marked Assignments (iCMA's)** are an interactive form of assignment made up of a series of questions and submitted online. This submission method was originally developed to facilitate interactive Computer-Marked Assignments but it is now also used to facilitate submissions for some other types of assessment that are not interactive or computer-marked. Please refer to your module website to find out more about the type of assignments that your iCMA will include.

There are two types of TMA's and iCMA's:

- **Formative assignments** – Formative assignments are set for teaching purposes only. The scores you get for them do not count towards your final module result, but it may be compulsory for you to submit particular formative assignments or achieve a minimum score on them or have an individual threshold in order to pass the module overall.
- **Summative assignments** - Scores for these assignments count towards your final module result.

Within each module, TMA's and/or iCMA's will count differently towards your overall module outcome. The details of which TMA's/iCMA's count towards your overall module outcome, and how the scores are weighted is set out in the Assessment Strategy for your module. You can access the assessment strategy from [StudentHome](#). Please refer to the glossary for further information on how to access it.

Any terminology that may be unfamiliar is explained in a [glossary](#) at the end of this document.

For specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact your [Student Support Team \(SST\)](#) who can advise on the implementation of policy. If you are an Apprentice studying as part of an apprenticeship programme, you should contact the appropriate Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) or equivalent contact, for more information; alternatively, you should request that your employer contacts their named Apprenticeship Programme Delivery Manager (APDM) for further information, see [Contacts section](#) below for more information.

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# Policy and Related Information

## 1. Purpose

The Open University uses different assessment types. Each assessment type is governed by its own policy to maintain consistency across modules. This policy clearly communicates the rules around continuous assessment so that you know what is expected of you during your studies. The policy also sets out The Open University's responsibilities towards you and your assessed work.

## 2. Preparing your assignment

Your assignments serve two main purposes; to help you learn, and to enable The Open University to assess the standard you have achieved. The preparatory work you carry out for an assignment and the process of writing it should help you to concentrate on particular aspects of the module and to consolidate what you have learned so far.

The nature of the assignments varies from module to module. Most module teams offer advice and suggestions in the assignment notes about the scope of the question and what will be expected of you. You can also find plenty of information on [preparing assignments](#) in the Help Centre.

### 2.1 Discussing assignments with other students and tutors

Discussing the material and ideas you are learning with your tutor and other students is 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 it with other students. Unless it has been specifically agreed, it is also not appropriate to send your tutor a draft of your assignment for checking.

See the [Academic Conduct Policy](#) for more information about what The Open University considers to be academic misconduct.

### 2.2 Good academic practice and plagiarism

As an Open University student, you are required to read and follow The Open University's [Academic Conduct Policy](#) carefully.

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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 with all sources fully attributed according to academic requirements.

Academic misconduct covers a range of behaviour including using material that is not your own unique and original work to gain some form of benefit or enabling others to do so. It can be caused by anything from poor study skills and a lack of understanding of what is expected at your level of study to straightforward fraud in the form of intentional cheating. 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 Confidentiality of assignments and other assessment tasks**

All information you provide within assignments and other assessment tasks is regarded as confidential to you and this will not be divulged outside of The Open University. Some modules have additional confidentiality guidelines and data protection rules which you will be informed of 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.

Assessment tasks may include work undertaken using collaborative tools such as forums, wikis or blogs. These tools are accessible to anyone with the relevant permissions to the website on which they are hosted, therefore, the work undertaken via these tools cannot be considered confidential.

In your assignments, and elsewhere in your module, you may be encouraged to apply module content to your own employment or experience. Please refer to your module website and consult your tutor for information regarding how the information you provide about your current or historical employment or organisation will be used.

### **2.4 Processing personal data as part of your studies**

You will not usually be expected to process personal data as part of your studies. If you do need to do so (perhaps for the purposes of a project) you must obtain the agreement of your tutor that the processing is necessary and immediately inform the [Data Protection Team](#).

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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.

## 2.5 Research ethics review

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 to ensure that all 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.

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## 3. Submitting your assignments (TMAs and iCMAs)

You should submit your assignment on or before the cut-off date provided on the module website. If you need to request for an extension to the deadline then please refer to [section 3.1.5](#) below. Please note that extensions are not permitted for iCMAs.

### 3.1 Submitting TMAs

TMAs must be submitted online via a link on your StudentHome page. In some exceptional cases TMAs can or may need to be submitted as a hard copy due to their nature. Your module materials will tell you which method you should use, or whether you can choose your submission method.

Please note that you are not permitted to use the OU 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 OU.

The cut-off date given on the module website is the last date by which each TMA should be submitted.

If you are submitting your TMA online, you should ensure that you submit before noon (UK local time) on the cut-off date in case you experience technical problems. There is a 12-hour grace period so 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 will receive a receipt confirming your submission.

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TMA's submitted after 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date may not be marked and you will not normally get a score unless you have already had an extension agreed.

If you have difficulties submitting your TMA online using the link on your StudentHome page, you can submit by email directly to [The Open University](#) (not to your tutor). Please refer to the Help Centre page '[Submitting your TMA 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.

If you are submitting on paper, you should allow at least three days for delivery. 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 TMA's cannot be considered. If you are unable to obtain proof of postage through the post office or equivalent, we recommend paying for postage via [Royal Mail online](#) (or your home country equivalent if available).

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

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### 3.1.1 Submitting TMAs online

You are only permitted to submit one file for each TMA, therefore, unless you are told otherwise, you must submit all parts of a TMA together. Do not submit individual parts of a TMA separately or in instalments, as submitting a second file will overwrite the first one unless your tutor has already downloaded it, or the cut-off date has passed. If your TMA consists of more than one file, you should zip the files together (information is provided later in this section on how to do this). You must ensure:

- a) that your submission contains all parts of your TMA,
- b) that you are submitting the correct version, and
- c) that it is in the right file format (see [submitting a Tutor Marked Assignment \(TMA\) online](#) for details).

Unless your module materials tell you otherwise, your submission file must be no bigger than 10MB. If it exceeds this size, you will not be able to submit it. Methods to reduce file size include zipping the file or converting image files to a different format.

A TMA containing multiple individual parts which have been submitted as a second instalment via the online TMA/EMA service may not be marked if your tutor has marked the first instalment or submission. This is the case also for paper submissions, whereby any second instalment may be returned by your tutor with a note to say that it cannot be accepted.

The Help Centre gives further information about [submitting a Tutor-Marked Assignment \(TMA\) online](#) including guidance for zipping files. You can also refer to the [Computing Guide](#) webpages for detailed information on how to make a submission.

If you have difficulty completing all parts of the TMA by the deadline, you can request an extension to your TMA deadline. Please refer to [section 3.1.5 “Requesting an extension for TMA”](#) on how to request an extension.

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### 3.1.2 Submission through the medium of Welsh

You may submit written work for an assessment 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.

### 3.1.3 Submission of an incorrect file

Check your TMA carefully before submitting, whether on paper or electronically. You can check what you have submitted online by downloading it back to your computer.

If you have submitted the wrong file electronically (for example, you accidentally submit an earlier draft instead of your final version) or you have missed something out, you may be able to resubmit depending on whether the cut-off date has passed, and whether or not your tutor has already marked your submission. Your TMA may or may not have been collected for marking (and please note that your tutor can start marking your work before the cut-off date), please contact your tutor to see if they are prepared to accept a new version. If the tutor agrees to accept the new version, then resubmit your TMA to the system and contact the tutor to let them know. If your tutor has already marked and returned your TMA, then you will not be allowed to submit another version.

### 3.1.4 Submitting TMAs on paper

If your module allows or requests a paper submission, you should post your TMA to the [Assessment Processing Centre](#). Each TMA submitted by post must be accompanied by a PT3 form and you should record this on StudentHome. The Help Centre gives detailed information about [submitting TMAs on paper](#) and explains what PT3 form is and where to find it.

### 3.1.5 Requesting an extension for a TMA

If you find that you are unable to submit your TMA before the cut-off date, you can request an extension. You should contact your tutor in the first instance when requesting an extension of any length.

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Try to 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 or equivalent contact](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme. 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 are able to for further advice (for e.g. your tutor may be able to accept a late submission – [see section 3.1.6](#)).

Your tutor will decide if the extension can be authorised and will set a new deadline for that assignment. Tutors can agree an extension of up to 21 days. In exceptional circumstances more than 21 days can be granted depending on additional authorisations by the faculty.

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 refer to the [Special Circumstances policy](#) to find out more about exceptional circumstances). In any circumstance no extensions to a final TMA can be given beyond the first day of the month in which the module ends (i.e., 1 June for a module that formally ends in June).

If you are considering requesting an extension, please read [Getting 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 advisor.

If circumstances beyond your control have affected your performance in your TMAs or prevented you from submitting one or more of the assignments for your module, you should consider submitting [Special Circumstances form](#).

### 3.1.6 Late TMAs

If you have submitted your TMA after the 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.

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### 3.1.7 Non-submitted TMAs

If you decide not to submit your assignment, tell your tutor before the cut-off date. You should consider the impact that not submitting may have upon your overall assessment, your module result, and potentially your qualification classification. Some assignments are compulsory or have a required pass threshold in order to pass the module. 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 affected, please read the [Failed or missed an assignment](#) information on the Help Centre.

There may be other options available if you find you are falling behind with your studies and are not able to submit your 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 (i.e., Assessment Bank) the assignment scores you have already achieved. More details can be found in the [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#) and by speaking to your [SST](#). If you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme you should contact your [AEST or equivalent contact](#) for further discussion. Your AEST will discuss the implications of changing your study plans with you and your employer.

### 3.2 Submitting iCMAs

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.

To avoid the possibility of plagiarism please ensure that your iCMA is your own work (in the same way as a TMA must be).

There will be a noon deadline (UK local time) on the cut-off date given on the module website. We strongly recommend that you do not leave submission of your iCMA to the last minute as network traffic may be heavy and may delay receipt of your work.

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You are encouraged to submit your iCMA before the noon deadline in case you experience technical problems. We also recommend that you keep all submission receipts. There is, however, a 12-hour grace period after the noon deadline, which means that any iCMAs received by 23:59 hrs (UK local time) on the cut-off date will still be accepted.

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

### **3.2.1 Two-stage submission process for iCMAs**

To successfully submit an iCMA, you must enter answers to the questions, and you must also press the 'Submit all and Finish' button.

### **3.2.2 Extensions for iCMAs**

It is not possible to request an extension for an iCMA.

### **3.2.3 Late submission or late receipt of iCMAs**

iCMAs cannot be submitted 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.

Some iCMAs are non-repeatable and you are allowed only one attempt, while others allow as many attempts as you like prior to the iCMA cut-off date. For non-repeatable iCMAs there is a 7-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 7 calendar days following the cut-off date to submit the answers: however, you will only be able to submit the answers that you completed before the cut-off date and will not be able to amend or answer any unanswered questions during this time. We will email you to let you know if you have not submitted your answers before the iCMA cut-off. Follow the link within the email and submit the iCMA within 7 days after the cut-off date otherwise your work will not be marked, and you will receive a zero score for this assignment. If you were not able to access and submit an iCMA on time because of extenuating circumstances, you should consider submitting [Special Circumstances](#) information to the Module Result Panel.

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### 3.3 Keeping your assignments

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. TMAs 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. You should also consider backing up your files in case of PC failure or file corruption, see [Safe and secure computing](#) in the Help Centre for more information. As the online TMA/EMA service is regularly cleared due to the volume of submissions, The Open University policy does not permit the retrieval of TMAs on your behalf.

If you submit electronically, you must wait for the on-screen receipt to confirm the submission has been accepted and make a note of the receipt number. If you submit an assignment on paper, you should retain a photocopy along with proof of posting ([see Section 3.1.1 “Methods of submitting TMAs”](#)). This evidence will be required if a document sent in the post is not delivered or is delivered late. The Open University will not accept any responsibility for assignments that 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.

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

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## 4. Marking

### 4.1 Marking of TMAs and querying a TMA score

#### 4.1.1 TMAs submitted online

If you submit your TMA online, we will email you when it has been marked and is available for collection. 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 may also add comments to your TMA.

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You are likely to get comments back on TMAs which have been submitted online more quickly than TMAs submitted on paper.

#### **4.1.2 TMAs submitted on paper**

If you are submitting your TMA by post, you should record this on StudentHome. Click on the "online TMA/EMA service" link under your module on StudentHome and choose "submit via paper". This tells The Open University and your tutor that you have posted a hard copy. Your tutor 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 Processing Centre who will 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. This can take up to three weeks from the cut-off date of your TMA.

#### **4.1.3 Your marked TMA**

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

#### **4.1.4 Monitoring**

A random selection of TMAs which have been marked by module tutors are monitored to ensure a reasonable 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. However, if you submit your TMA on paper and your TMA is selected randomly for monitoring, it will need to be photocopied for checking by the module team, which may delay its return to you by up to two days. These photocopies are treated as confidential and are destroyed at the end of each calendar year.

[The Assessment Processing Centre](#) will be able to tell you if this has happened. 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.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
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#### 4.1.5 Late return of marked TMAs

Tutors are expected to mark and return your TMA within ten working days of the cut-off date. Working days do not include weekends, bank holidays in UK nations or University closure days in December over the Christmas and New Year period. There may be a slight delay in returning your work if an extension was agreed and you submitted within the agreed extension period.

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

If you submit your TMA by post, you should receive the marked TMA back within three weeks of the cut-off date.

If you have not received your marked TMA by the above timescales, contact your tutor. If you receive no response from your tutor, contact your [SST or AEST or equivalent contact](#) if you are studying as part of an apprenticeship programme.

#### 4.1.6 Querying a TMA score

If you want to query the score awarded for any TMA (except for an emTMA score), 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 Student Support Team or AEST, the Assessment Processing Centre, module team chair or anyone else.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal. 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.

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.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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On modules without an exam or end-of-module assessment (EMA), you cannot query the score of your emTMA. If you think 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.

#### **4.1.7 Modules without tutors**

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.

## **4.2 Marking of iCMAs**

### **4.2.1 Automatic marking of iCMAs by systems**

iCMAs are marked automatically.

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

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

### **4.2.2 Non-receipt of iCMA scores**

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 Processing Centre](#). If you want to clarify an academic aspect of your iCMA, ask your tutor.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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## 5. Assignment scores

### 5.1 Calculating your continuous assessment

- 5.1.1 Most modules use some form of continuous assessment. Individual assignments are weighted to reflect their relative importance. The score your assignment is awarded 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 6: "Substitution" below).
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 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.
- 5.1.4 On most modules your performance in all forms of assessment is recorded and reported back to you in line with one of the following numerical Scales.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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

<b>Band</b>	<b>University scale score</b>	<b>Performance standard</b>
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

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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

<b>Band</b>	<b>University scale score</b>	<b>Performance standard</b>
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)**

<b>Band</b>	<b>University scale score</b>	<b>Performance standard</b>
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

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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- 5.1.5 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.
- 

## 6. Substitution

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). 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.

If your module allows substitution, please [refer to the Appendix section](#) and also the [Help Centre](#) webpage for more detailed information.

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## 7. Timetable and exceptions to the Policy

- 7.1 Table 4 Timetable of TMA and iCMA submissions, extensions, marking and exceptions to the policy.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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Policy	Deadline	Exception
TMA submission deadline	<p><b>You should submit your TMA by noon (UK local time) on the cut-off date for each TMA</b> (provided on your module website and your module record page on StudentHome).</p> <p>You can submit your TMA <b>any time before noon (UK local time) on the cut-off date</b>. Make sure your submission is final version as your tutor can collect it for marking before the cut-off date.</p>	<p>If you are unable to submit your TMA by the submission deadline, there will be a <b>12-hour grace period</b> on the noon deadline, so any assignments received by 23:59 hrs UK time on the cut-off date will be accepted. <a href="#">See section 3.1. 'Submitting TMAs'</a> for further details.</p>
Late submission of TMA after grace period	<p>A TMA received after 23:59 hrs on the TMA submission deadline may not be accepted for marking.</p>	<p>An exception is allowed if you have requested and agreed an extension with your tutor. <a href="#">See section 3.1.5 'Requesting an extension for TMA'</a></p>
iCMA submission deadline	<p>You should submit your iCMA <b>by noon (UK local time) on the cut-off date</b>. You will find the cut-off dates and times for your iCMAs in the Assessment table within the Assessment section of your</p>	<p>There is a <b>12-hour grace period</b> on this deadline, so any assignments received by 23:59 hrs UK local time on the cut-off date will be accepted.</p>

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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Policy	Deadline	Exception
	module website.	
Late submission of iCMA after grace period	iCMAs received after 23:59 hrs will <b>not</b> be accepted.	No exceptions, iCMAs submitted after the cut-off date will not be marked.  However, for non-repeatable iCMAs there is a 7-day grace period in which you can submit any answers completed before the cut-off date ( <a href="#">see section 3.2.3 'Late submission or late receipt of iCMAs'</a> for details).
TMA extension (not applicable for the Final TMA – see below)	You should submit your request for an extension <b>before the original cut-off date</b> . Contact your tutor to request an extension or if you can't get in touch with them, <a href="#">contact us</a> .	If you make a request for an extension on the cut-off date, please be aware your tutor may not be available on the cut-off date to consider it and approve the extension (if applicable).
Final TMA (i.e., the TMA before the exam, EMA or emTMA) extension	Extensions on the final TMA are only permitted under exceptional circumstances. Contact your tutor to discuss your circumstances.	Any extensions (if permitted) on the final TMA <b>cannot</b> fall after the first day of the month in which the module formally ends.
iCMA extension	No extensions are permitted on iCMAs.	No exception.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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Policy	Deadline	Exception
TMA Marking	You will receive TMA marks and feedback within 10 working days from the submission cut-off date.	If your TMA was submitted on paper, you should receive your marks and feedback within three weeks of the submission cut-off date. If you have not received your marked TMA within this timeline, please <a href="#">contact us</a> .
iCMA Marking	Your iCMA score for formative assignments will be available after pressing the 'submit all and finish' button, on the module website using the iCMA link.  Scores for summative assignments will be available on StudentHome and the module website assessment page within 7 calendar days of the submission cut-off date.	If you do not receive your iCMA score within 7 days, <a href="#">contact Assessment Processing Centre</a> .

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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Policy	Deadline	Exception
Querying your TMA score	<p>Any queries regarding your TMA score must be raised with your tutor in the first instance. You should do so by emailing your tutor within 14 calendar days of the date your score was returned, stating the grounds on which you are querying the score.</p> <p>If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you must appeal within 28 days of the date of notification of your module tutor's decision regarding your query on TMA score. <a href="#">See Section 8: 'Methods of Appeal'</a> for details.</p>	No exception. If you do not raise a formal query with your tutor within 14 days of the date your score was returned by your tutor, then your assignment will not be sent on appeal for re-marking.

## 8. Methods of appeal

If you want to query the score awarded for any TMA you should send your query by email to your tutor first, but if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal. For more details, please refer to [section 4.1.6 'Querying a TMA score'](#).

If you have a query or experience a problem with any aspect of The Open University's application of this policy, please [contact us](#) promptly. 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 [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 Help Centre.

The Open University also has 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."

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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## 9. Contact details for further information

### Student Support Teams (SSTs)

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

For queries related to apprentices/apprenticeships the following learner support contact details are applicable:

### Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) (for apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales)

Email: [apprentice-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:apprentice-support@open.ac.uk)

Telephone: 0300 3034121

### Apprenticeship Programme Delivery Manager (APDM) (for apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales)

Employers: please contact your named APDM, alternatively please email [apprenticeships@open.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@open.ac.uk), and your allocated APDM will contact you.

### For Apprentices studying Nursing Programmes, Social Work or Advanced Clinical Practice

Email: [hsc-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:hsc-support@open.ac.uk)

Telephone: 01908 541070

### Assessment Processing Centre

The Open University

PO Box 722

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6ZT

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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## Other

To check the latest postal address and other contact details, please see [Open University Offices](#).

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## 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.

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## 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

### Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST)

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

### Apprenticeship Programme Delivery Manager (APDM)

APDMs support Employers participating in an Apprenticeship Programme. They offer support and advice on recruitment, registration and eligibility; act as the conduit between the Employer and the OU; and provide support to line managers/workplace mentors and Apprentices.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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APDMs also review, track and respond to Apprentice progression by working with the Employer, the Apprentice and the Faculty to achieve successful completion. They collect and act upon feedback from the Employer and the Apprentice to continually enhance this process.

## **Assessment**

This is 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**

This is 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**

This is the date and time before which a particular assignment must be finished and submitted.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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## **End-of-Module Assessment (EMA)**

This is one of the final assessed tasks within a module. On many of the 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 study. 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 Assignment (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.

## **Online TMA/EMA service**

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

## **Exam (Examination)**

The University holds a number of different types of exams in exam periods at the end of module presentations. Exams will be online and taken remotely. The duration and format of exams varies by module.

## **Formative**

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.

## **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 Assignments (iCMA)**

This is an interactive form of assessment made up from a series of questions and submitted online.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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This submission method was originally developed to facilitate interactive Computer-Marked Assignments, but it is now also used to facilitate submissions for some other types of assessment that are not interactive or computer-marked.

## **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 OCAS.

## **Plagiarism**

This is using, without acknowledgement, someone else's ideas or work. 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.

## **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**

A summative assignment counts towards the overall module result, in contrast to a formative assignment.

## **Substitution**

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.

## **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.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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## Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)

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

### Related Documentation

- [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](#)
- [Changing Your Study Plans: Deferrals, Withdrawals and Cancellations](#)
- [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)
- [Computing Policy](#)
- [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#)
- [Student Privacy Notice](#)

### 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 who are specially trained to advise on the implementation of policy. 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.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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Apprentices studying as part of an apprenticeship programme should contact the appropriate Apprenticeship Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) or equivalent contact, for more information; alternatively, they should request that their employer contacts their named Apprenticeship Programme Delivery Manager (APDM) for further information, see [Contacts section](#) above for more information.

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

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](mailto:SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk).

## 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](mailto:SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk).

## Summary of significant changes since last version

There are a few significant changes from the previous version of this policy (Version No. 1). These are:

- a) New policy template has been used so the layout has slightly changed and wordings updated.
- b) The wording in some sections has been reviewed and updated to make the information clearer.
- c) Added text to the iCMA definition to include information that iCMAs are also used to submit quizzes and remote exams that are not interactive or computer marked.
- d) Reworded the Academic Conduct section 2.2 using wording from the revised policy.
- e) Some text in 3.1 was guidance than policy so has been removed. Also, some wordings regarding the use of OU brand has been added to the section.
- f) eTMA system is now called the online TMA/EMA service so this has been updated.
- g) The text in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 has been reviewed and amended to make the information clearer.
- h) Section 3.1.6 has been amended to change the layout to make the information clearer.
- i) Section 3.1.6 has been divided into two sections to separate late submission and non-submission of TMAs into two different paragraphs.

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
Effective from: December 2023	Date for review: August 2024

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- j) Added text in section 3.1.6 to reiterate that students should contact their tutor as soon as possible if their TMA has been submitted late for further advice and support.
- k) Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 added to clearly reiterate the two-stage submission process for iCMAs and extension of an iCMA.
- l) Added text in section 4.1.5 to make the information clearer about potential delay in receiving the marked TMA in case of agreed extension.
- m) A link has been updated in section 4.1.6.
- n) Glossary terms have been reviewed to ensure they are up to date and to make the terms simpler and easy to understand.

## Policies superseded by this document

This policy previously formed part of the combined [Assessment Handbook](#).

# Appendix

## 10. Substitution

10.1 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.

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.

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

Version number: 2.1	Approved by Delegate, Director Academic Services
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the module.

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.

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 [‘What is Substitution?’](#) for more details.

## 10.2 How it works

Substitution involves up to three stages:

10.2.1 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.

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.

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

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### 10.3 Example

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.

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

**Table 5: 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

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.

In the example in table 6, 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.

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**Table 6 scores and substitution**

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

OCAS = 65.47

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> denotes the substituted scores

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