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Summary

This policy document is in two parts.

The first part sets out The Open University's policy about the options that you have if you want to change the Microcredential and/or qualification you are studying, take a break from study, or withdraw from your studies with The Open University.

The second part of the document explains the rules and procedures for each option and indicates potential financial or academic consequences.

For the purposes of this document, you will be referred to as a student of The Open University.

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

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

Scope

What this policy covers

This policy applies to students studying Microcredentials starting in the Academic Year 2026/27, (i.e. from 1 August 2026). It should be read in conjunction with the [Conditions of Registration \(Microcredentials\) 2026/27](#).

The University may approve Microcredential only qualifications of up to 60 credits. The references to changes to qualifications in this document will apply if such qualifications are introduced.

If you are studying Microcredentials in conjunction with modules as part of a qualification, you should refer to this document for changes to your Microcredentials, but to the main Changing Your Study Plans for changes relating to your qualification.

Enquirers may also find the policy helpful when deciding whether to study with us.

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not apply to:

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students studying module(s) and/or a qualification, who should refer to the [Changing Your Study Plans policy](#).
- Apprentices: you should contact your Apprentice Enrolment and Support Team (AEST) for further discussion. Your AEST will discuss the implications of changing your study plans with you and your employer.
- Postgraduate Research Students: you should contact the [Graduate School](#) for options for changing your study plans.
- Learners studying a non-credit bearing Short Course: you should refer to the [Conditions of Registration \(Short Courses\)](#).

Support and Information

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

How to contact us

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

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

Policy

1. Policy Purpose

1.1 We recognise that you may need to change your study plans to support your personal circumstances.

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

1.3 The objectives of this policy are to:

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

2. Policy Principles

2.1 The principles are that we:

- Recognise that personal circumstances impact your study plans. You may need to study flexibly at a pace that suits your needs at different times.
- Commit to giving you the appropriate information, advice and guidance they need to choose the best study solution for their particular circumstances.
- Recognise your legal rights as a consumer within the context of Higher Education.

- Work in partnership with you to make informed decisions that are most likely to lead to a successful outcome.
- Support you to find the best solutions to enable you to achieve your study goals.

3. Overview of your options

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

[Cancel enrolment or registration](#)

You have a statutory right to cancel your registration or enrolment to study a Microcredential, without giving any reason, within the statutory cancellation period which is within 14 days of confirmation of registration or enrolment. You can also cancel your Microcredential enrolment or registration before the Microcredential start date without incurring a fee liability. You may cancel a qualification registration or declaration at any point but this will not affect the way your fee liability is calculated.

[Withdraw from a Microcredential](#)

After the statutory cancellation period has expired, this option allows you to cease studying a Microcredential.

[Change to a different Microcredential](#)

You can change your choice of Microcredential at any time up to the final enrolment date.

[Reduce or increase the number of Microcredentials you are studying](#)

You can reduce the number of Microcredentials you are studying by withdrawing from some of your Microcredentials.

You can increase the number of Microcredentials you are studying by registering or enrolling on additional Microcredentials. You must not exceed the study limits set out in the Academic Regulations. Fee Rules.

[Change or withdraw from the qualification you are studying towards](#)

You can change or withdraw from the qualification you are studying towards.

[Include or exclude Microcredential\(s\) from a qualification](#)

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

[Stop studying temporarily \(taking a study break\)](#)

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

[Stop studying permanently](#)

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

4. Rules and procedures for each study change option

This Section indicates whether there are any academic or financial implications you need to consider before making a decision.

4a) Cancel enrolment or registration

4.1 Under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, you have a right to **cancel your registration or enrolment** to study a Microcredential, without giving any reason, within 14 calendar days of the date of the email or letter confirming our acceptance of your application to register or enrol (“the Cancellation Period”). You are not required to return or pay for any goods that may have been sent to you during the cancellation period.

- 4.2 You can cancel any Microcredential enrolment or registration before the start date of that Microcredential. If you are permitted a late registration on to a Microcredential which has already started, you may subsequently cancel this if you are still within the 14 calendar days statutory cancellation period. To cancel your Microcredential enrolment or registration, you must inform The Open University of your decision by letter, email or telephone or form before the 14 calendar days statutory cancellation period has expired. The statement must include your name, your Open University Personal Identifier (PI) Number and the Microcredential name, and the codes for the Microcredential(s) you wish to cancel. If you send a letter to request cancellation of a Microcredential, you are advised to obtain proof of posting to confirm the date that you sent it.
- 4.3 We will acknowledge receipt of your cancellation request by e-mail or letter within 10 working days. If you have not heard from us by then, you should [contact us](#).

Effect of cancellation:

- 4.4 We will cancel your registration or enrolment for the Microcredential(s) that you have told us you want to cancel. If you cancel a Microcredential within the statutory 14 calendar days cancellation period, you will receive a full refund or waiver for the fees you have agreed to pay for your study. You will not be liable to pay any further fees for that study (please note that fees paid by sponsors will be returned to the sponsor).
- 4.5 If you have previously told us that you intended to pay for your studies with a tuition fee loan or tuition fee grant, we will inform the appropriate body that you have cancelled your study.

Consequences of cancellation:

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

4b) Withdraw from a Microcredential

4.7 To **withdraw from a Microcredential** you must inform your Student Support Team by telephone, letter or email. Withdrawals cannot be made by webchat.

4.8 Withdrawal can only take place after Microcredential start and before the published final deferral date towards the end of the Microcredential.

4.9 If you request to withdraw from a Microcredential by letter sent by post, please obtain proof of postage of when you send the letter. Once we have processed your withdrawal, we will confirm this in writing (by letter or email), within 10 working days. If you have not heard from us by then, contact your [Student Support Team](#).

4.10 Prior to requesting to withdraw from a Microcredential, we strongly recommend that you speak with your Student Support Team who can outline your options, including offering advice and guidance if for example, you need help getting your study back on track. This will help ensure you have explored all of your available options prior to changing your study plans or requesting to withdraw from your Microcredential.

4c) Change to a different Microcredential

4.11 You may **change your choice of Microcredential** at any time up to the final enrolment date. If you are studying towards a qualification, you will need to take any requirements of your qualification (such as any compulsory Microcredential or study order) into account before requesting to change your Microcredential.

4.12 To change your choice of Microcredential, you must contact your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. You must clearly state which Microcredential you would like to change, what you would like to replace it with, and the presentation of the replacement Microcredential you would like to study. If you are eligible to register for a new Microcredential, your request will take effect within 10 working days of the date your Student Support Team receive your phone call, letter or email.

4d) Reduce or increase the number of Microcredentials you are studying

4.13 To **reduce the number of Microcredentials** you are studying outside of the 14 calendar days cancellation period (as set out in [Section 4a](#)), you may withdraw from a Microcredential (see [Section 4b](#)).

Withdrawing from a Microcredential which is part of a qualification may impact your ability to complete your qualification within any specified time limits (as stated within your qualification regulations). If you withdraw from a Microcredential on or after day 14 of your Microcredential, you will be liable for the full fee and will not be entitled to any refund.

4.14 If you want to **increase the number of Microcredentials** you are studying, you may do this by registering or enrolling on additional Microcredentials when they are available for registration or enrolment. You must not exceed the study limits set out in the [Academic Regulations](#).

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

4.15 You can **change the qualification that you are studying towards**, at any time. To do this, your new qualification must be available for registration or declaration; you must satisfy any specified entry requirements; and you must be able to complete the qualification within any specified time limit. If you are receiving a loan or a grant, you will need to notify the loan or grant provider, as the change of qualification may affect your eligibility for the loan or grant.

4.16 To change or withdraw from your qualification, you need to inform your [Student Support Team](#). They will advise you of your options, including whether you can use some or all of your existing Microcredential credit or current study towards a new qualification.

4f) Include or exclude a Microcredential from a qualification

- 4.17 If you have been studying standalone Microcredentials and decide that you would like to **start counting valid Microcredential credit towards a qualification**, you may do so at any time, where the qualification regulations allow this. The qualification must be available for registration or declaration, you must satisfy any specified entry requirements, and you must be able to complete the qualification within any specified time limit.
- 4.18 If you want to declare or register for a qualification for which your Microcredential credit is valid and include your Microcredentials towards that qualification, you should contact your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. Your request will take effect within 10 working days of the date on which the Student Support Team receive your request.
- 4.19 If you want to **cancel your qualification**, but you wish to continue to study your Microcredential, you can do so on a standalone basis (unless that Microcredential is unavailable for standalone study, which will be made clear on the Microcredential website). You may also opt to exclude an individual Microcredential from your qualification unless it forms a compulsory part of that qualification. We strongly recommend that you speak with your Student Support Team who can outline your options. This will help ensure you have explored all available options prior to changing your study plans or requesting to cancel your registration on a qualification.

4g) Stop studying temporarily (taking a study break)

This Section refers to students studying Microcredentials on a standalone basis or as part of a Microcredential only qualification (when available).

For students registered on other Undergraduate and Postgraduate modules or qualifications, please refer to the [Changing Your Study Plans Policy](#).

- 4.20 To achieve an Open University qualification, you do not need to study continuously. You can take a break of an academic year from your studies; this is referred to as a study break. We describe a study break as being 'approved' if you inform your Student Support Team of your intention to take time away from your studies, or 'unapproved' if you do not inform your [Student Support Team](#), but do not then register for anything in that academic year.
- 4.21 Your registration as a Student will lapse if you do not register for a Microcredential or a module within two consecutive academic years, unless you have applied for an **approved study break** for one of those years.
- 4.22 There is no limit on the number of one-year study breaks you can take. However, the time taken for a study break, whether **approved** or **unapproved**, counts towards the maximum time limit within which a qualification must be achieved (as stated within the qualification regulations).
- 4.23 If you do not enrol or register for a Microcredential or a module within two successive academic years, you will automatically cease to be a Student of The Open University, unless you have extended this period of no study by requesting approved study breaks.

Approved study break

- 4.24 An approved study break can be requested during or before the academic year in which the study break is to commence.
- 4.25 To apply for an approved study break, you need to contact your [Student Support Team](#) by phone, letter or email. They will provide you with advice about the impact your decision may have on your study aims, including on any professional recognition.

Your Student Support Team will then record your study break on your Student record. You can choose to return to study at any time before the agreed end of a study break by enrolling or registering for a Microcredential. The study break will automatically cease as soon as you do this.

- 4.26 You can extend your approved study break for one additional academic year at a time. To do this, you should apply to your Student Support Team for an extension of the current study break before the end of your currently approved study break.

Unapproved study break

- 4.27 You can take a study break of one academic year without seeking any approval. An unapproved break means that we will not be aware that you intend to stop study in that academic year.

4h) Stop studying with The Open University

- 4.28 If you wish to **stop studying with us**, you should speak with your [Student Support Team](#) first, as they will be able to offer advice and guidance before you make your final decision.
- 4.29 If you no longer want to be a Student, you should contact your Student Support Team by phone, letter or email, making it clear whether you are currently studying any Microcredentials or qualifications. Your request will take effect on the date the Student Support Team receives your request. We will acknowledge receipt of your request by e-mail or letter within 10 working days.
- 4.30 When you stop studying with us, we will retain your academic study record and details of any Microcredential credit you have been awarded. If you decide to study with us at a later date, any subsequent registration will be under the [Conditions of Registration](#) and other regulations which apply to a Learner commencing their studies at that time.
- 4.31 If you leave The Open University before you have completed the Microcredential for which you are registered at the time, you will still be liable to pay your Microcredential Fees.
- 4.32 If you do not enrol or register for a Microcredential within two successive academic years, you will automatically cease to be a Student of The Open University, unless you have had a study break approved through the procedure in Section 4g.

Expressing a concern

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

Definitions

Academic Year

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

Cancellation period

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

Count credit to a qualification

If you are studying a qualification which specifies Microcredential credit, you will be able to count the valid Microcredentials that you study towards that qualification. Credit from standalone Microcredentials will not be counted for qualification purposes unless you have told us that you want this Microcredential to be counted in your qualification.

Declared qualifications

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

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

Enrolment

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

Final enrolment date (FED)

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

Microcredential

A course studied online that consists of between 100-150 hours of study time (including the Summative Assessment) for which academic credits are awarded.

Microcredential Credit

Each Microcredential is assigned a credit value, which is related to the workload required to successfully complete it. One credit represents about 10 hours of study. You will be awarded credits when you successfully complete a Microcredential and pass the assessment.

Microcredential Start date

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

Microcredential Student

A student studying for a Microcredential.

Presentation

The period of time between Microcredential start and end dates. Presentations are referred to by their first month e.g. a Microcredential that is presented from February to October is a 'February presentation'.

Registered Qualification

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

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

Registered Student

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

Registration

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

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

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

If you are studying at postgraduate level you will register for Microcredentials and if you have declared a qualification which includes Microcredential credit, link these Microcredentials to your declared qualification.

Standalone Microcredential

A Microcredential that is not linked to a qualification.

Time limits for completion of qualifications

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

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

Withdrawal

The removal of your enrolment or registration on a Microcredential or qualification. Microcredential withdrawal can only take place after the end of the cancellation period and before the Final Deferral Date.

Related Policies and Legislation

- Your Qualification Regulations, if applicable.
- [Conditions of Registration \(Microcredentials\)](#)
- [End-of-Module Assessment \(EMA\) Policy](#)
- [End-of-Module Tutor-Marked Assignment \(emTMA\) Policy](#)
- [TMA and iCMA Policy](#)

About this Document

Summary of Significant Changes since last version

We have made the following changes:

- References to deferral of Microcredentials have been removed.
- We revised text on the inclusion of Microcredentials within qualifications.

Policies Superseded by this Document

This policy replaces the previous version of the [Changing Your Study Plans Policy \(Microcredentials hosted on the Virtual Learning Environment \(VLE\)\) 2025/26](#).

Document Information

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