

Policy for recording of online tutorials

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

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Alternative format

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

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scope

What this policy covers

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

This policy applies to:

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

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

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not apply to:

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

Support and Information

How to contact us

If you have any queries about this policy, please [Contact Us](#). To check the contact details for the Open University, please see [OU Offices](#). 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.

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

1.2 The objectives of this Policy are:

- 1.2.1 To set out The Open University's approach to provision of recordings of online tutorials and set the rules for retention and use of those recordings.
- 1.2.2 To provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities of The Open University, its staff and its students in making and using recordings.
- 1.2.3 To set out guidance for the use and the re-use of any recording by students and Open University staff.

- 1.2.4 To ensure that the default position is that students will have access to a recording of each learning event available to them apart from exceptions detailed in section: 2.1.5.
- 1.2.5 To guide students on how they can choose to take part in or attend online tutorials without being recorded.
- 1.2.6 To set out guidance for the exceptional circumstances in which a student can request to make their own recording of an online tutorial.
- 1.2.7 To ensure that staff who are uncomfortable with recording are not compelled to record.
- 1.2.8 To ensure compliance with any applicable law and University policies and procedures.
- 1.2.9 To make clear to students any agreed exceptions to this policy.

2. Policy Principles

2.1 Recording of online tutorials by the Open University

- 2.1.1 At least one online tutorial recording within a learning event in each presentation will be made available to students, apart from agreed exceptions (2.1.5). This recording will cover the learning points laid out for that session within the tuition strategy. This applies to tutor group, cluster and module wide events. Therefore, unless a student has a requirement for reasonable adjustments, students must not make their own recordings of tutorials, see section 2.2. For example, if there is a choice of 4 tutorials available for you to attend for TMA 01, at least one will be recorded, and at least one will not be recorded by the University for students who are uncomfortable with recordings.
- 2.1.2 The key purpose of these recordings is to enhance student learning, but recordings may be used by the University for other purposes such as staff development, regulatory assessment and/or scholarship but only as detailed in this Policy.

- 2.1.3 The ambition of this Policy is, by default, for students to have access to a recording of each learning event made available to them, whilst making provision for Staff who are uncomfortable with recording are not obliged to do so. If recording for a learning event is not available as per the points in 2.1.5 the taught content will be provided in an alternative learning resource that is suitable to the subject matter.
- 2.1.4 For each learning event the University will designate at least one online tutorial as recorded and one online tutorial as non-recorded (every tutorial or learning event will have a label via the title). It will be made clear at the point of booking via the tutorial title if a tutorial is to be recorded or not to be recorded. If there is only one online tutorial for a learning event, if appropriate, every effort will be made to record but the recording will be stopped at key points to allow students to ask questions unrecorded if they wish or as stated in 2.1.3 an alternative format will be provided.
- 2.1.5 The Open University will make a recording of an online tutorial available for each learning event available to students unless it is not appropriate for such tutorials to be recorded or made available. Such circumstances include:
- In exceptional circumstances the planned subject matter and the best approach to teaching the material is deemed inappropriate for recording, for example, the event may significantly focus on discussion of participants' personal experiences or perspectives on sensitive issues.
 - The purpose of the learning event is solely for students to practise aspects of their learning experience e.g. language conversation.
 - The vast majority of the learning event consists of interactive activities within breakout rooms, resulting in a tutorial that is inappropriate to record.
 - The purpose of the tutorial is:
 - Student / tutor interaction such as one-to-one support, an informal getting to know you session or community building between students.

- Question and Answer drop-in sessions where students are not expected to stay for the whole session.

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

If a learning event is considered unsuitable for recording this will be confirmed by module teams to a named faculty representative prior to the start of the presentation. An explanation for the absence of recording availability will be provided to students in advance of the learning event and an alternative learning resource such as a pre-recorded tutorial must be made available, unless the format of the event means it not relevant or appropriate.

- 2.1.6 The Open University aims to make recordings available as soon as possible. Generally, the aim is to upload the recordings within 2-3 days. However, there may sometimes be a longer delay.
- 2.1.7 If a tutorial is designated as 'recorded', students should enter the tutorial on the basis that it will be recorded and used as outlined in this policy (see also 2.1.11).
- 2.1.8 Any breakout room discussions will not be recorded by The Open University by default.
- 2.1.9 For recorded online tutorials, at the beginning of the session, staff will notify everyone present in the tutorial by verbal and / or visual notice at that the session will be recorded.
- 2.1.10 Recorded tutorials will have a section at the end which is not recorded to allow students to ask questions unrecorded by the University if they wish.
- 2.1.11 If a student decides they do not want to be recorded part-way through a recorded tutorial, the onus is on the student to leave the tutorial rather than recording to be stopped.

2.1.12 In modules where Welsh is used as a language of teaching, every effort will be made to ensure that a recording of a Welsh language tutorial is made available, in line with the points of this policy. If a recording is not available, students who are studying a module or part of their module through the medium of Welsh and who are unable to attend a tutorial in-person should speak to their tutor or make alternative arrangements.

2.2 The recording of online tutorials by students

- 2.2.1 There may be circumstances where students with disabilities or additional needs, for the purposes of study, may make their own recordings of any online tutorials or learning event as a reasonable adjustment to their studies.
- 2.2.2 Such recordings must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes, and they must not be made more widely available or distributed. Recordings must be deleted following receipt of final result relating to the relevant module (or subsequent award of a module result outcome from a resit or resubmission), or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner. More information about reasonable adjustments for study can be found via the [Disability support pages within the Help Centre](#).
- 2.2.3 The unauthorised recording of tutorials and the unauthorised sharing of recorded material, including on social media platforms is covered by the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). Recordings may only be used in the circumstances outlined in this policy. Recordings must not, under any circumstances, be used in any way that brings into disrepute or intends to bring into disrepute any person whose comments are recorded.

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

- 2.3.1 There may be circumstances where students need to be able to download recordings of online tutorials. This may be for convenience or due to necessity, for example students with low/no internet access at home, students with disabilities or students with caring responsibilities who need more flexibility. The tutorial recordings will be made available to download and anonymised¹ by default.
- 2.3.2 Tutorial recordings can only be downloaded by students who were eligible to attend the live event. For example, tutor group online tutorials will be downloadable only by the tutor group; Cluster tutorials will be downloadable only by those students who are part of the cluster; and module-wide tutorials will be downloadable by any student on the module on that presentation.
- 2.3.3 Students are permitted to download tutorial recordings, but these must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes, and they must not be made more widely available or distributed. Copies must be deleted following receipt of final result relating to the relevant module (or subsequent award of a module result outcome from a resit or resubmission), or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner.
- 2.3.4 The unauthorised sharing of recorded material, including to other students or on social media platforms, is covered by the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#). Recordings may only be used in the circumstances outlined in this policy and shall not, under any circumstances, be used in any way that brings into disrepute or intends to bring into disrepute any person whose comments are recorded.

¹ For the purposes of this policy by anonymised we mean that Adobe Connect recordings will automatically remove student name labels, but tutors and students may still be referred to by their names verbally or textually in the recording. This is not a breach of GDPR

2.4 The recording of face-to-face tutorials by students

- 2.4.1 There may be circumstances where students with disabilities or additional needs, for the purposes of study, may make their own audio recordings of any face-to-face tutorial they attend.
- 2.4.2 Like recordings of online tutorials detailed in section 2.2 of this policy, if a student makes their own recording, such recordings must only be used as a personal aid for study purposes. Recordings must not be made more widely available or distributed. Copies must be deleted following receipt of your module result outcome (or subsequent award of a module result outcome from a resit or resubmission) relating to the relevant module, or upon the student leaving The Open University, whichever is the sooner. More information about reasonable adjustments for study can be found via the [Disability support pages within the Help Centre](#).

2.5 Availability and retention of recordings

- 2.5.1 Recordings are only available to students who could potentially have attended the original 'live' event.
- 2.5.2 Recordings will be made available to students via the module website and will be visible to staff and students for the length of the presentation plus three years. This is in line with the [Open University Retention Schedule: Teaching](#), after which the module site and content is backed up to the Digital Archive and content is removed from the VLE.
- 2.5.3 The tutorial recordings will not be copied to any other presentations or be visible to any students who could not have attended the original event. Tutor group online tutorials will be visible only to the tutor group; Cluster tutorials will be visible to the cluster; and module-wide tutorials will be visible to any student on the module on that presentation.
- 2.5.4 In exceptional circumstances the Open University may remove a recorded tutorial from the VLE at any time at its absolute discretion.

2.6 Alternatives to recording

- 2.6.1 If recording for a learning event is not available as per the points in 2.1.5, the taught content will be provided in an alternative format that is suitable to the subject matter. Alternatives will be kept under review and faculties will consider student feedback.

2.7 Participant and Open University rights

Students

- 2.7.1 By entering a designated recorded tutorial, students consent to the Open University recording them and using the recording for the purposes set out within this policy. Personal recordings of tutorials made by students with additional needs do not require permission, as personal recordings are a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation that ensures equal access to education for students with disabilities. Note that recordings made for personal use are outside the scope of data protection legislation (the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR) and are not personal data held by the University. If you make a request to access your personal data, the University will not be able to provide information held in personal recordings made by students.
- 2.7.2 Personal data being processed for the purposes of the tutorial recordings will be processed in compliance with the University's Students Privacy notice and data protection policies.

Staff

- 2.7.3 Staff are reminded to ensure adherence to data protection, confidentiality and third-party rights. Use of external material in tutorials is normally covered as fair use for educational purposes and staff are reminded to check this.

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

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

2.9 Responsibility for the monitoring and compliance of the policy

- 2.9.1 Breach of this Policy or any applicable law will be dealt with in accordance with The Open University's relevant policies and procedures.
- 2.9.2 Implementation of the policy is monitored within faculties with the support of the Tuition Programme.
- 2.9.3 Unless a change in operational activities requires an early review, this policy will be reviewed every three years.

Definitions

Learning event

A short-hand inclusive term, covering any tuition event taking place in real time. Includes all types of online and face-to-face person-led learning opportunities such as tutorials, day schools, drop-ins, catch-ups. Traditionally, the University has referred to all person-led learning opportunities as tutorials.

Tutorial

An online learning event which is typically 1-2 hours long with opportunities for interaction, activities and discussion. Helps students to consolidate knowledge through discussion and interaction and allows students to ask (and respond to) questions and seek support.

Tutorial recording

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

Pre-recorded tutorial

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

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

The Open University has a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is an online platform for the digital aspects of its modules. The online platform holds the core learning content, including a study planner, activities, interaction, and various tools to support teaching and learning.

Related Documentation

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

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

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

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

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

- a) Section 2.1 Recording of online tutorials by the Open University. -Wording has changed to provide clarity as to the use of recordings and that all events will be identifiable as recorded or non-recorded via the event label.
- b) Section 2.2 The recording of online tutorials by students with disabilities or additional needs - Wording changed to allow students with disabilities or additional needs to record any online tutorial or learning event.
- c) Section 2.3 The downloading of recordings of online tutorials by students - A footnote added to 2.3.1 to provide clarity on what is meant by anonymisation.

- d) Section 2.7 - Statement added to 2.7.1 to make it clear that personal recordings made by disabled students are a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010 and therefore do not require permission. Additional clarification that recordings made for personal use are outside of the scope of data protection legislation.
- e) Section 2.8 Use of recordings of online tutorials for staff development and scholarship and quality assurance. - 2.8.4 added to state that recordings will be made available to view in situ if officially requested as part of an assessment by any regulatory body.
- f) List of Definitions - Changes made to terminology to provide further clarity for students.

Policies Superseded by this Document

This document replaces the previous version (V3.0) of the Policy for recording of online tutorials.

Document Information

Version number: 4.0

Approved by: Student Experience Committee (3 June 2025)

Effective from: September 2025

Date for review: August 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.