

Enquirer Pack

Eight steps to study

Student Recruitment and Support Team

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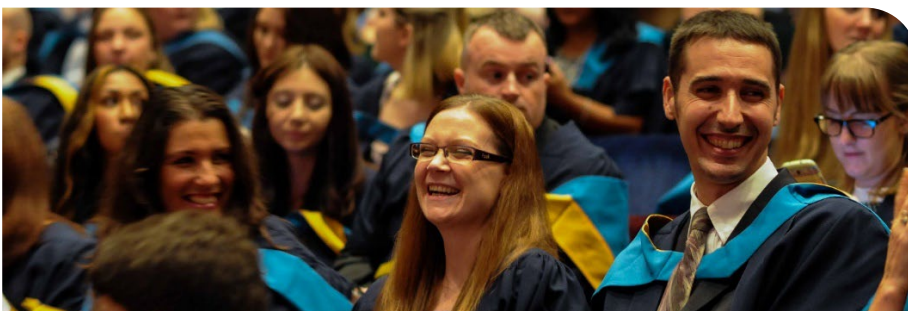
Welcome to The Open University

We are the Student Recruitment and Support Team in Wales, and we're here to support you through your student journey; from deciding what module or qualification to study, to being there for you during your studies. In Wales, we support over 16,000 individual students from all walks of life, we are a source of information, advice, and guidance for all our students.

By taking you through eight points to consider, this pack will help you decide whether OU study is right for you.

We hope you find this information helpful, but if you have any questions you would like to discuss, please feel free to contact us. We can be contacted by telephone on 029 2002 0354 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 5pm) or by email at

Wales-Support@open.ac.uk. If you would like to communicate with us in Welsh, then let us know and one of our team will be happy to help.





Why do you want to study and what do you hope to achieve?

Take a moment to consider why you want to study with us and what you hope to achieve before you begin your studies. Some of our students have a clear career goal in mind while others study for personal interest or development. All our students are different and your reasons for studying with us will be unique to you and your personal circumstances. However, having clear goals, whether your focus is personal development or furthering your career, will help you make an informed decision and improves your chances of success.

Here are some things that you can do to help with this:

- A. Use these questions to help you reflect. There is no right or wrong answer, and it's absolutely fine if you haven't got the answer to some of them! Just thinking about them can help:
- What do you want to study and why?
 - Is it out of personal interest or do you have a career goal in mind?
 - Have you studied this subject before? If not, how do you know you will enjoy studying it?



- How will your studies fit in with your long-term plans and life circumstances?

B. Browse the following websites if you need to explore careers ideas:

- The Open University: **open.ac.uk/courses/careers**
- Prospects: **prospects.ac.uk/planner**
- Careers Wales: **careerswales.com/en**



C. Get an idea of what it feels like to study online with our free OpenLearn courses. These online courses are extracts from former and existing OU modules, so will give you a good idea of what it feels like to study your chosen subject with us.

Find out more about OpenLearn

Visit **open.edu/openlearn**





How much time do you have for study?

Studying doesn't have to mean giving up what's important to you. The Open University's unique, flexible approach to learning means you can fit study around your job, family, friends, and leisure time. However, studying at The Open University is a big time-commitment. You will need 16 to 20 hours every week to study for a 60 credit-module. If you register on 120 credits (full time), you will need to study between 32 and 40 hours a week.



Studying for a qualification with The Open University while working full-time is a challenge. However, it can be done. Most students at The Open University have other work-life commitments aside from studying. Although you will need to manage your time carefully to keep up with your studies, it's important to remember that you do not need to complete all your study at the same time each week or in large blocks of

time. Be creative and make the most of every opportunity: can you fit in 20 minutes study during your lunch break or on your commute to work? Even if you're only able to study for short periods of time, it all adds up.



It's essential that you consider how much time you'll have for studying before you enrol with The Open University. You may find our 'Time Planner' tool helpful.

Remember to leave some 'you' time when planning your study hours – life can't only be about work and study!



Find out more about our 'time planner'

Visit open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/finding-time





Do you have computer and broadband access?

The Open University is a distance learning organisation and because of that, a lot of your module material will be accessed online. For this reason, you will need a laptop or desktop, as well as broadband. Unfortunately, it's impossible to study using a phone, no matter how smart it is!

You don't need to be an IT genius to study with us – and you'll develop your computer skills as you study. However, you will need basic IT skills to get started.





How does OU study work?

The Open University specialises in part-time, online distance learning. This means that you will study independently, reading through course materials that have been designed for that purpose. Each module has a module website, which is the hub of your studies and contains all the information and resources you need for your studies. The weekly study planner tells you what you should be doing when and helps you manage your workload efficiently. While the study planner will guide you in your work, how you organise your studies, manage your time and decide when to study is entirely up to you.



However, you will not be alone when studying with The Open University. For every module that you study, you will be allocated a tutor who can be contacted for academic support throughout the module. They are your first port of call for any worries or concerns you have about your studies, so don't be afraid of getting in touch with

them. You will also be able to engage with other students via forums on the module website or via the OU Students Association. There is also a wide range of online resources in the Help Centre on your StudentHome page to aid you in your studies.



If you need additional support or help you can contact your Student Support Team in Wales via telephone, e-mail, or webchat.

You will also have regular tutorials for each of your modules with many offering a choice of face-to-face and online tutorials at various times and dates, usually in the evenings or on Saturdays. Tutorials are meetings where you meet with a tutor and other students to revise and discuss some aspects or themes that you have learnt on the module. They are often a great way to help you prepare for your assignments and to connect with other students on your course. Attending tutorials can be of great benefit to your studies, but if you can't make a tutorial, there's no need to worry as they are often recorded.



Find out more about the OU Students Association

Visit **oustudents.com**





Are you ready for OU study?

We're different to other universities because we're open to everyone. Most of our courses have no formal entry requirements and our students come from a diverse range of educational backgrounds. For example, 41% of our students have less than two A-Levels while 46% come from disadvantaged areas in Wales. This is why we offer a choice of starting points depending on how confident you are in your study skills. You can either dive straight into your university studies or you might prefer a gentler start with an Access module.



Access modules provide an excellent starting point for Open University studies if you've not studied for a while or feel your academic writing and reading skills are a little rusty. They cover a range of subjects and study skills and provide a great introduction to Higher Education. Designed to build your confidence, these modules are a great way to understand the OU's style of learning. You may even be able to study an Access module for free if you meet our eligibility requirements.



When you study an Access module, you'll have one-to-one telephone tutorials with a dedicated tutor who can tailor their approach to your individual needs at a time that suits you. You will also have access to the Student Support Team in Wales who are on hand to help you with any issues or queries that you may have regarding your studies.

The four Access modules that we offer are:

- Arts and Languages (fast-track option also available)
- Business and Law
- Psychology, Social Science and Wellbeing (fast-track option also available)
- Science, Technology and Maths (fast-track option also available)



Find out more about our Access courses
Visit **open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/access**





Do you only offer degrees?

We don't just offer degrees! Many of our qualifications work as stepping-stones, from one stage to the next. You could start with a certificate and stop there, or you could continue your studies to gain a diploma and then a degree. It's entirely your choice!

You can do a Certificate of Higher Education worth 120 credits. This will demonstrate your ability to study at university level, raise your confidence, and support a career change or progression. Typically, this will take one year at full time study intensity or two years part time.

We also offer a Diploma of Higher Education worth 240 credits. This would allow you to gain the expertise that many employers value in less time than a degree and develop specialised subject knowledge and invaluable skills. Typically, this would take two years at full time intensity or four years at part time.

Or you can choose to study an Honours Degree which is 360 credits. This opens the door to graduate jobs and schemes, postgraduate qualifications, and higher-level jobs. Typically, this would take three years at full time intensity or six years part time.

Open University study is flexible. Your study intensity can vary year-to-year and you can take study breaks if needed.

Find out more about our qualifications

Visit **open.ac.uk/courses/types**





How much will my studies cost?

How can I pay for them?

Studying with The Open University is not free, but it is more affordable than you might think. You don't have to pay for your entire qualification up-front. Instead, you pay on a module-by-module basis. Every module has an individual fee. How many modules you choose to study will affect how much it costs each year.



There are several ways of funding your undergraduate studies with The Open University. The most popular payment method is a part-time tuition fee loan (sometimes called a student loan) from Student Finance Wales (SFW). It means you pay nothing up front. Part-time tuition fee loans are not means-tested, so you'll be eligible to apply regardless of your income and there's no upper age limit. Repayments are linked

to your income, not how much you borrow. Even if you're earning over the income threshold, you won't have to start repaying your loan for up to four years.

Find out more about our current fees

Visit open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding





Please note, however, that you will not be eligible for a part-time tuition fee loan if you're studying a standalone module. Student Finance Wales will only fund modules that are linked to a qualification.

If you feel a part-time tuition fee loan is not the right option for you or you do not meet the eligibility requirements, there are other options available.

These include:

- The Open University Student Budget Account Ltd. (OUSBA) loan
- Employer Sponsorship
- Up-front debit or credit card payment
- Enhanced Learning Credits (ELCs) if you are a member of the Armed Forces

Further details on all the funding methods available to Open University students in Wales can be found at **open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding**

If you already have a degree, you will only be eligible for a part-time tuition fee loan if you study certain eligible courses.

Details of eligible courses if you already hold a degree

Visit **open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/equivalent-qualifications**





Finally, you could also be eligible for a non-repayable maintenance grant from Student Finance Wales. The amount you'll be awarded is determined by your household income and study intensity. You may also be eligible for a non-means-tested maintenance loan, should you need it, to 'top up' the financial support you've received from grants.

If you have children or adult dependants and study at 50% intensity or more, you may be eligible to apply for additional income-assessed grants from Student Finance Wales. The help available includes a Childcare Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance and Adult Dependents' Grant.

If you do decide to apply for maintenance funding from Student Finance Wales, the earliest you'll receive the first instalment of your funding will be one month after the start date of your first module. This is to allow time for checks to be made that you are actively engaging with your studies with The Open University. If you do not engage with your studies, you will not get your funding.

Find out more about maintenance funding

Visit **open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/learning-and-support-grants**





Can I get support for my disability?

Accessibility is at the forefront of the OU's mission to be 'open to all', which is why more disabled students choose the OU than any other UK University. 27% of students in Wales declare a disability – that's nearly 4,500 students!

If you have a long-term health condition, a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia), or a mental health difficulty, support may be available to help you with your studies.

It is important that you tell us about your disability or health condition, so that we can discuss with you how we can support you with your studies and make adjustments to our teaching to meet your needs. It enables us to support you more effectively if we know your specific requirements.

Find out more about extra support

Visit **open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/disability**





You don't need to provide evidence of your condition to access most disability support services. However, some specialist arrangements (for example extra time in exam or specific reasonable adjustments) will require documentation.

Additional support includes specialist alternative formats of module materials and alternative exam arrangements. If you would like to discuss what extra support may be available to you, then please get in touch.



We would also encourage all students with a disability or long-term health condition to apply for the Disabled Student's Allowance from Student Finance Wales. This is a grant that helps to pay for extra equipment and support that you may need as a direct result of your disability.

Find out more about the Disabled Student's Allowance

Visit studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-finance/part-time/welsh-student/what-s-available/disabled-students-allowance/





Next steps

Thank you for taking the time to go through these steps. We hope that this guide has helped you

- Understand how OU study works
- Understand how much time you need to set aside for your studies
- Explore what you want to get out of your OU studies
- Decide which subject area and qualification you want to study
- Decide whether OU study is the right choice for you and where you might start your studies

If you have any other questions or want to talk this through with someone, in Welsh or English, before making your decision please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We can be contacted via:

Telephone on **029 2002 0354** Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 5pm

Email at **Wales-Support@open.ac.uk**.

Alternatively, if you have now got a good idea about what you'd like to study you can register online via our website.

Our Information, Advice and Guidance is free and impartial.

To register on a course
Visit **open.ac.uk/wales**

We have made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate at the time of publication. However, we shall be entitled, if we consider it reasonably necessary (including in order to manage resources and improve student experience), to make changes, including to the availability of modules and qualifications, to qualification structure and to our regulations, policies.

March 2025



