

A green speech bubble containing the text 'UK OPEN LEARNING HOME STUDY COURSES'.

UK
OPEN
LEARNING
HOME STUDY
COURSES

A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a dark purple blouse with a large bow at the neck, is sitting at a desk and looking at a laptop. Her hand is resting on her chin.

STUDY GUIDE

GUIDELINES FOR CENTRES OFFERING COURSES
THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

UK Open Learning Ltd.
17 Aikbank Road
Whitehaven
Cumbria, CA28 6LJ

www.uk-open-learning.com

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Welcome to your distance learning course.

This course is designed to give you the comprehensive skills and knowledge needed to help you in your chosen career..

Introduction and Course Outline

Here you will find the breakdown by Unit and an introduction to the course.

Tutor Marked Assignments

You will find the required tutor marked assignments in your course. Depending on which course you have chosen, they will be in the front throughout the course or in the back. Please check your index in the front of the course. You need to complete the assignments and send them to your tutor for marking to ensure you obtain your qualification. In some courses there are self assessment questions which you do not need to send to your tutor for marking.

Obtaining your Qualification

To be awarded your accredited qualification, you will need to complete a number of Tutor Marked Assignments and/or projects, depending on the course, which should be completed and then sent to your tutor to be marked.

How Assignments are graded

Each assignment is awarded the following form of grade.

No percentage marks are awarded apart from BTEC courses.

PASS: You have achieved above the required pass mark of 60% and have met the requirements of the accreditation.

RE-SUBMIT: You have not achieved a sufficient mark to PASS and need to re-submit any work the tutor requires from you to obtain a pass grade.

FAIL: You have not met the minimum requirements of the accreditation and must completely re-do the assignment after further study and research.

There is no opportunity at this level to be awarded a Merit or Distinction

Word Count

There is no fixed word count with any of the questions.

We are looking for enough information to show you have understood the question and related the information in your assignment answer to show your ability to understand and where necessary put that information into practice.

Study Suggestions

We suggest you read through your course as though you were reading a book, to get the feel for your chosen subject.

Once you have completed the read through start back at the beginning and work through the course at a pace to suit your requirements.

Try and plan a time during your day that you set aside for your studies, choose a quiet and comfortable place and make sure you tell the people you live with or work with that this is your "quality study time." Never try to do more than 45 minutes at any one time, take a break and have a cup of tea between your study periods.

Being a distance learning student, you should be planning to spend between 5 and 7 hours a week on your course, if you are in full time employment and have a family or social life.

Take your time; rushing a course just to get a qualification is not the way to proceed. We are here to help you improve your skills and knowledge in your chosen field.

When you submit your assignments, please take care and read all the questions. Do not rush your answers, and you should present your work in a clean, tidy and precise manner.

Remember, if you had to submit a report in a business, you would not have scratching outs or missing answers to questions.

If English is not your first language, or you have any form of disability which might hamper your studies, please let us know and we can take this into consideration when your assignments come in for marking.

When completing an Assignment

Please will you ensure you carry out the following when submitting it for marking:

1. All assignments must be word-processed; no hand written assignments will be accepted unless you are including diagrams and sketches or where students have obtained special permission from the tutor.
2. All assignments must be completed in Microsoft Word or Works format ONLY. (DO NOT use any other packages if emailing your assignment).
3. Back-up and keep a copy of all your work in case it gets lost in cyberspace or in the post.

Assignments are retained by the college for moderation at the accreditation stage and cannot be returned to the student.

4. All assignments should be in Ariel Arial font.
5. All assignments should be in 12-font size.
6. All assignments should be in 1.5 line spacing.
7. All assignment pages should be "justified." (Even margins on both sides).
8. All pages in your assignment must have the following information in the top right hand corner:
 - Your full name
 - Your student number
 - Your assignment number

- Your page number
9. The first page of your assignment must have the following information on:
 - Your full name
 - Your student number
 - Your course title
 - Your assignment number
 - Your full postal address

Any assignments received without this information will be returned unmarked.

10. Please ensure you number each question exactly as the question paper (ie. 1.2 or 3.1 etc)
11. If using MS Works please ensure your page is set at A4 and not the standard Letter format.

When you send in your assignment by post it is only required that you staple your assignment in the top left hand corner and include the following:

1. Assignment cover sheet
2. Assignment question paper
3. Your numbered assignment answers.

Sending in your assignments in plastic wallets, fancy files and bound books will in no way affect your grade; we are interested in the content not the packaging of the assignment except where specifically pointed out that certain presentation is vital.

How to send in your Assignments

Assignments can be posted, or you can email them to your tutor depending on what the tasks require.

If sending by email, only send in Word or Works format and only ONE attachment per assignment.

Multiple attachments or incorrect package used will be returned unmarked for re-formatting into one document in the correct format. You will receive a confirmation email stating that your assignment has been received. If you do not receive this confirmation within 48 hours of sending (allow extra for weekends) then you can assume it has not been received.

In today's day and age the Internet is like the post office - one slight error in address or overloading of the Internet system can cause delay

and loss of emails. So do not assume that sending is proof of receipt.

If you post your assignment, please ensure sufficient postage is paid on the envelope. Long delays can be expected where underpaid assignments are received at the college or where insufficient information is included on the cover page.

It is recommended that you request "Proof of Delivery" or pay for "Next Day" delivery

of your assignments. Do not assume that just by posting your assignment it will arrive. 18 million letters and parcels are lost each year by Royal Mail and one of them could be yours.

Unless you receive an email confirming receipt or are able to track and trace your posted assignments, your Tutor will not be liable for delaying your assignment due to non delivery.

Understanding the Levels

What are the different course levels and what are they equivalent to?

The level of the learning you undertake is similar to the level of study needed for other courses and UK wide recognised qualifications.

The level, given on the certificate for each course you have achieved, shows the stage you have reached in your learning.

ENTRY LEVEL

- Qualifications at Entry Level provides a basis for progression to other qualifications

Level One

- This is comparable to NVQ Level 1, GCSEs D-G and Foundation Diploma

Level Two

- This is comparable to NVQ Level 2, GCSEs A* to C and Higher Diploma

Level Three

- This is comparable to NVQ Level 3, A and AS Levels, Advanced Diploma

The assignment questions have been designed to ensure that the answers you give meet the level that the course is pitched at. Depending on which course you are doing, the following will apply:

Level 1

At this level you might be asked to 'Identify', 'Name', 'Give...', 'Outline' and other basic requests. Here the tutor would expect only the very basic information and responses to the assignment. Not many of our courses are at this level, but it is useful to know that a Level 1 response would not be acceptable in a Level 2 course.

Level 2

Here we are looking at more sophistication where the learner will be expected to develop their ideas and responses. Typical assignment words here are: 'Describe', 'Define', 'Comment on', 'Compare', 'Select'. You would be expected to write in sentences and fully explore the issues. It would not be enough to simply write a few brief remarks or to list a series of items. To this end, it is best to avoid bullet points except where you are asked to list ingredients, for instance, or parts of the anatomy. Bullet points, however useful, lead the student into giving only the briefest of responses.

Level 3

The typical assignment

question would include words such as 'Analyse', 'Evaluate', 'Critically compare', 'Explain', or 'Justify'. Here it should be apparent that the tutor will expect a much more developed response than for Level 2 where you would only have to discuss. You would be expected to produce a carefully worked out response which would include evidence for your answers and factual details where necessary. Your own opinions backed up by justifications are needed here. Remember, this is on a par in terms of difficulty with GCE A Level, so a basic response would not be acceptable.

Level 4

This level is much more complex and difficult to describe as it requires a degree of research and deeper analysis to deal with the assignment questions. The level is determined more by the depth of knowledge that is asked for than the specific words in the assignment questions. Bear in mind that this level is on a par with first year degree or HND/HNC. It is possible here to come up with a high level of exploration in your answers and to range more widely than at other levels whilst still staying within the range of the question.

Remember that your assignments should be written in sentences for the most part, although there are obviously occasions in some courses where diagrams or illustrations are necessary. The key thing, though, is to give as full an answer as possible and to

show your tutor that you have fully engaged with the course material and the subject in general.

If you have any problems understanding the requirements for an assignment, don't hesitate to contact your tutor before embarking on your response; it saves the time of both of you.

Emailing General

When sending by email, please ensure you complete the subject line of your email with your student number, name and course title.

Emails received with subject headings like "Hi / Hello or RE:" or even blank will be rejected by the server and will not be received.

Contact with your Tutor

Please read your welcome letter carefully which will explain who your tutor is and how to contact them.

Please do not telephone UK Open Learning about lost or missing assignments as our tutors are professionals in their own areas of expertise and work from home throughout the country so we do not have access to the files or assignments.

You will not be contacted by the tutor on registration of your course. It is up to you to make contact with your tutor as and when required.

Your Tutor will help you in marking your assignments and handling queries directly related to the assignment questions but will not provide any of the following services:

1. Preview or check assignments before marking
2. Handle any queries relating to any matters except the tutoring element of the course.
3. Provide references
4. Handle any administrative function relating to your course.

We use a panel of tutors to both handle queries and mark assignments depending on the topic being marked.

There is no guarantee you will have the same Tutor throughout your course. You will be advised by the college how to contact your Tutor Coordinator who will oversee your tutorial period with us.

Period of Tuition

You have a guaranteed tuition period of 12 months from the date you sign up for the course or courses. You are therefore expected to complete all the required assignments for the course or courses within this time period.

Some courses are 24 months in length and so you must check your course folder for details.

We do not provide a timetable of study or assignment

submissions as students are expected to judge their own pace of study and ensure assignments are submitted in time before your course tuition period expires. Having said that some useful hints would be:

- If your course has 6 assignments then you should submit a minimum of one assignment every 6 weeks.
- If your course has 4 assignments you should submit a minimum of one assignment every 2 months.

The decision is yours as is the time scale for completing your assignments. You can choose the pace you want to work at. Should you need to extend the period of your tuition, you will be expected to pay an extension fee directly to your tutor.

Tuition and Completion Extensions

After the 12 month guaranteed tuition Period, you can obtain an extension for a further 12 months for an additional fee of £50.00 payable to your tutor. You will also have to pay a re-registration fee to the awarding body if your course is a recognised qualification. This is £99.00 on most courses but more on BTEC courses.



Accreditation Forms

In the majority of courses you will receive with your pack an accreditation application form which you must complete and submit to the college as soon as you have received your course pack. If you do not complete this form within 4 weeks and return it to your UK Open Learning you will have to pay a late registration fee of £30.00 and in some cases you will not gain the qualification.

Please ensure that you send your application form back by "signed for Royal Mail first class", or if you send by email that you receive confirmation.

UK Open Learning will not be held responsible if you do

not put sufficient postage on your envelope and an administration charge of £5.00 is payable if we have to collect the form from the Post Office.

Turnaround time on assignment and queries

We try to handle all queries within 48 hours. However, it can take up to 72 hours to reply if the query is not straightforward or if insufficient information has been provided.

Assignments are marked and returned to the student within 10 working days from receipt. Do not chase up results by email unless a period of 14 working days has elapsed

from date of you posting or emailing it to use.

Please note during July-August- September of each year college staff are usually on leave, and this could add a further delay of 7 working days to the returning of your assignments or projects.

When querying a missing assignment result please ensure you state clearly in your email the following information:

- The date you sent it
- How you sent it
- The course you are doing
- The assignment number you are querying
- Your full name
- Your postal address
- Your student number

If this information is not provided your email will not be answered as it takes a long time to find you in our system and track your assignment.

Assignment Feedback

You will receive written feedback on each assignment submitted by 2nd Class post if you are in the UK and by Airmail post if you are outside the UK.

On some courses tutors will email your feedback so please check with them if they are emailing or posting your results. We do not resend feedback sheets unless the feedback has gone missing and a 14 day period has lapsed between dispatches of original feedback.

As advised previously you will not receive your assignment back from the college; this has to be held for moderation by the accreditation board.

Extra Reading and Research

There are no required textbooks for most of our courses. However, any extra reading you can do will be an advantage.

When researching or referring to a specific book or Internet link to answer a question in the assignments it is essential that you quote the reference source in your reply either at the end of the question asked or in a reference section at the end of an assignment.

We would also suggest you watch as many programmes as you can relating to your course (if available) as the content might be beneficial to your assignments and future plans.

Accreditation on Completion

Once you have finished all your course assignments, they will be sent by your tutor to the college for moderation by the accreditation board. Please note this can take up to 16 weeks to process and arrange for your qualification to be prepared.

UK Open Learning cannot speed up the process of issuing certificates as this is out of our control and down to the awarding body.

Please do not telephone and ask about your certificate or diploma unless the 16 weeks has elapsed as we will be unable to help you.

We can, however, issue you with a UK Open Learning Diploma once you have completed your course, and a covering letter for any potential employers.

Once you have received confirmation from your tutor that you have completed the course you must then refer all queries you have on the receipt of your qualification to the college and not to your tutor as he or she will not be able to help you further.

COLLEGE AND AUTHOR NOTE:

Throughout the course we have tried to apply the latest information needed to gain a suitable understanding of the knowledge and skills required for a thorough understanding of the course laid out to meet the requirements of the individual accreditation boards.

However, the College and Author cannot be held responsible for any information that is deemed changeable in terms of the latest requirements under UK and EU Law.

Good luck and we hope you enjoy your course with us.