Audit of Level 1 Courses – June 2008 – Katharine Jewitt

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1.0 A103: An Introduction to the Humanities

1.1 Photographs of the A103: An Introduction to the Humanities Course Material
1.2  A103: An Introduction to the Humanities Course Website (Study at the OU)

1. Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

Yes it is very clear that the course is for beginners. Here is some text clearly stating this:

“As the course is a broad introduction to the eight disciplines studied in the Arts Faculty and to the University as a whole, no assumptions are made about the knowledge or education you bring to it. Level 1 courses provide core subject knowledge and study skills needed for both higher education and distance learning, to help you progress to courses at Level 2. Successful completion of this course will equip you to go on to any of the more specialised Level 2 arts courses, and by the end of it you will be expected to be working successfully at the level required of first-year undergraduate students. If you have any doubt about the level of study, please seek advice from our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.”

“This course provides an ideal basis from which to go on to further study at university level. This is also a lively and varied introduction to the eight disciplines studied in the Faculty of Arts: art history, literature, music, philosophy, classical studies, history, religious studies, and history of science and technology.”

2. Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

See Answer 1. It states no prior knowledge is assumed. It specifies this course results in an award of a Certificate in Humanities and is a compulsory course in the BA Hons English Language and Literature and is a specified course in eight other degrees:

BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies

BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) European Studies

BA (Hons) History

BA (Hons) Humanities

BA (Hons) Language Studies

BA (Hons) Literature

BA (Hons) Modern Language Studies

BA (Hons) Philosophy and Psychological Studies
3. Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

No. It does state no prior knowledge is expected.

4. Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

The website states: “The course will help you to express yourself more clearly and develop the reading, analysis and interpretation skills you need before moving on to more specialised courses at Level 2. It is not necessary to have studied in this area before.”

5. Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?

The website advises that before the course begins students will receive a set of preparatory materials that introduce the skills and study methods needed to work successfully on the course. The materials include a non-assessed diagnostic assignment that the tutor will comment on.

6. Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?

At four strategic points in the course there are ‘reading weeks’, to give students time to absorb the material they have been studying and to prepare for the next block.

Students will have a tutor who will help with the course material and mark and comment on written work, and whom students can ask for advice and guidance. If students are new to The Open University, they will find that their tutor is particularly concerned to help with their study methods. The OU may also be able to offer group tutorials or day-schools that students are encouraged, but not obliged, to attend. Where tutorials are held depends on the distribution of students taking each course.

7. Does it say anything about study hours? What?

No, I could not find any information on the hours of study required to complete this course.

8. Does it say anything about assessment? What?

There are nine tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), some of which you can submit online using our eTMA system. One is a timed piece of work for which arrangements may be made at study centres in your region. There is also one unassessed assignment. Assessment is an essential part of the teaching, so you are expected to complete it all. However, if you unavoidably miss or do badly in an assignment some courses allow you a ‘substitution
score’, calculated as a weighted average of all your scores for the course. In A103 this rule does not apply to the last three. You will be given more detailed information when you begin the course. There is no examination but, to prepare students for the examinations they will have if they go on to courses at a higher level, the last assignment is a timed exercise marked by a tutor who is not their own.

9. Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?

There is a link to the “Personal Computing for OU Study”. It states students need access to a computer as described in the section that is provided by a link. The link leads to a specific page headed “A103 – An Introduction to the humanities”

A103 - An introduction to the humanities


You will need a computer on this course for the following:

- all or nearly all the resources and teaching is delivered online
- to receive and send email and to use our online services. These include a course website (where available), online forums, online library, an OU email account and the facility to complete administrative tasks, like booking and paying for a course and changing your personal details.

In addition, you may use a computer for the following:

- 2 of the course assignments can be submitted via the online eTMA system.

The minimum computing specification

Processor : Pentium 1GHz

Software rarely fails to work just because the processor speed is too slow. If you have a processor that is at least three-quarters of the suggested minimum, then you'll probably still be OK - though some of the course software may be noticeably slow. However, if you have the minimum memory and little free hard disk drive space, as well, then performance could become unacceptable. As with most computer features a more powerful processor is better.

Other brands of processor that are Intel compatible are acceptable.

Memory (RAM) : 128MB

You will get better performance if you have more memory than this minimum - aim to double it. It is best to get as much as you can afford when buying a new machine.

Operating system : Windows XP Home
Windows 2000 is also supported.

If you have Windows Vista then you should read the section in the Technical help page. Although much of our course software will operate with the Business/Professional versions of Windows XP or Vista, and even Windows 2000, there may be security etc. restrictions applied to such computers that may be constraining, especially if used in a business environment.

CD/DVD-ROM drive: 32x CD-ROM

An ordinary CD-ROM or CD-RW (writeable CD) drive won’t read DVDs. If you only have one of these and if your course software is delivered on DVD, then you’ll need to update your drive. (See Technical help) If you are buying a new computer you should get one with a DVD-ROM or combi drive.

Common items: All computers have certain common items, which should be compatible with the general standard of the computer.

They include:

- Colour monitor, 15” capable of displaying 800x600 resolution and “High Color” with appropriate video card to support this.
- Hard disc drive, at least 20GB
- Pointing device (mouse, trackball, pen/pad, voice-activated)
- Keyboard
- Floppy disk drive, 1.44MB (optional, but most computers have one)
- Colour printer
- 56kbps (V90 or V92) or broadband modem
- Sound card or onboard sound, microphone (some courses only) & speakers/headphones
- Office software. (The free Sun StarOffice software is provided by the University for students to use if they do not already have a suitable office package.)

Most computers come with all of these, and obviously some, like the keyboard, are essential for most people. Microphones are slightly less common and only required by a few language, technology and business courses, so don’t worry if you don’t have one. If you do need one, a simple microphone or headset only costs a few pounds.

Even the oldest computer’s video card will deliver the 800x600 resolution that is required by most courses. The monitor size and resolution is rarely a limiting factor, though some older 15” monitors may not be able to provide 800x600. Heavy CRT monitors are being steadily replaced by slim and light LCD flat panel screens. A 15” LCD panel is effectively as good as a 17” CRT monitor and will usually work best at 1024x768 resolution. If you have a larger, modern monitor you will be able to set it to a higher resolution.

If you’re still unsure whether your computer meets these requirements see our Technical help section for further advice.

See the full course description in the Courses & Qualifications website.
10. Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?

What’s included

Course books, other printed materials, DVD, audio-CDs.

You will need

A CD player and DVD player (or a computer with DVD-ROM). To use our online services, you will need access to a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

Set books to buy (January 2008 prices)


Euripides Medea and Other Plays trans. P. Vellacott, Penguin, £8.99

G. B. Shaw Pygmalion, Penguin, £8.99


1.3 A103: An Introduction to the Humanities Course Materials

1. What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

There is no online work required. I estimate between the audio and print material is 20% audio and 80% printed material.

The course material consists of:

The seven blocks

Resources books: Resource books 1-4 contain extra readings for the study weeks and for television and CD work

Illustration Book: all the extra illustrations which are discussed in the blocks are located here

Thirteen CDs

Audio-visual notes: these relate to the television programmes and audio-cassettes

Study Calendar

Assignment Book: this explains in detail the assessment policy for A103 and includes TMAs 02-08 and an example of TMA09, the timed TMA
2. **Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?**

A 108-page booklet and a CD are issued to students which covers four weeks preparatory work. It is strongly recommended to complete and if students are short of time, they are advised to go straight to the final section and activities and refer to the rest of the book during the course.

3. **How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?**

It is advised to start studying the course at least 4-weeks in advance of the course start date. Students are guided to start with the Preparatory material and then the Course Chair letter, the course guide and block 1.

4. **Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?**

There is a course guide which explains the aims and objectives; the course structure; course materials and tuition and assessment. Without the course guide, there is a study calendar and the course booklets are all numbered, so it is easy to know what to study in order.

5. **How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?**

A hard copy of the study calendar is provided. It does clearly help students to plan their study of the course week-by-week, detailing which chapter of the block book to read, which CD to study and DVD. It also states when TMAs are due and the TMA weighting.

6. **Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?**

Yes, there are 4-weeks of preparatory material and then the course guides students through each stage of the course in a guided and supportive process with a variety of media.

7. **Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.**

The level of conceptual engagement progresses through the course but the subjects are different. The course focuses on eight disciplines studied in the Faculty of Arts: art history, literature, music, philosophy, classical studies, history, religious studies, and history of science and technology. The level of reading and the analysis and interpretation skills is at a deeper level as the course progresses.
8. Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

The course helps students to express themselves more clearly and develop the reading, analysis and interpretation skills needed before moving on to more specialised courses at Level 2. This is achieved through tailored course books and reading weeks. Resource books 1-4 contain extra readings for the study weeks and for television and CD work.

9. Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

Yes it is very clear that the course is for beginners. Here is some text clearly stating this:

“As the course is a broad introduction to the eight disciplines studied in the Arts Faculty and to the University as a whole, no assumptions are made about the knowledge or education you bring to it. Level 1 courses provide core subject knowledge and study skills needed for both higher education and distance learning, to help you progress to courses at Level 2. Successful completion of this course will equip you to go on to any of the more specialised Level 2 arts courses, and by the end of it you will be expected to be working successfully at the level required of first-year undergraduate students. “

“This course provides an ideal basis from which to go on to further study at university level. This is also a lively and varied introduction to the eight disciplines studied in the Faculty of Arts: art history, literature, music, philosophy, classical studies, history, religious studies, and history of science and technology.”

At four strategic points in the course there are ‘reading weeks’, to give students time to absorb the material they have been studying and to prepare for the next block.

Students will have a tutor who will help with the course material and mark and comment on written work, and whom students can ask for advice and guidance. If students are new to The Open University, they will find that their tutor is particularly concerned to help with their study methods. The OU may also be able to offer group tutorials or day-schools that students are encouraged, but not obliged, to attend. Where tutorials are held depends on the distribution of students taking each course.

10. Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

No ICT skills are assumed. There is a booklet provided on how to submit TMAs electronically. No other ICT skills are taught. There does not appear to be any guidance on how to use the forum – perhaps this is assumed that the tutor will provide instruction.
11. What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

16 hours is assumed. The hours are explicit within the study material and the study material is listed in the course calendar. There does appear to be a reasonable mix of reading and activities and media used.

12. Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, every TMA addresses learning outcomes and requires a set amount of course reading, analysis and interpretation skills.

13. Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, it clearly states in the study material and the assignment book what learning outcomes are being taught, throughout the course.


Assessment Strategy is based solely on Continuous Assessment: There is no examination for this course. There are 9 TMAs. TMA01 is formative and will not be used for assessment purposes. TMAs 02–09 are weighted as follows: TMA02 10%, TMA03 10%, TMA04 10%, TMA05 10%, TMA06 10%, TMA07 15%, TMA08 20%, TMA09 15% (timed exercise). There is a threshold of 30% on each of TMAs 08 and 09. Substitution will apply for up to one TMA from TMAs 02–06 only. The full assessment strategy is described in the Assignment Book.

15. How are students expected to submit their assessment?

Students submit TMAs via the ETMA system.

16. How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

It is an excellent match. All the blocks are detailed on the website and match the course material.
2.0 A191: Ethics in Real Life

2.1 Photographs of the A191: Ethics in Real Life

This is an online taught course.

2.2 A191: Ethics in Real Life Course Website (Study at the OU)

1. Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

It does not explicitly say ‘beginners’; but it does say: “This is a Level 1 course with no prerequisites. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.” It states that the basics of ethical theory and its application in practical areas of life are covered. It also states that the course has been designed to be of interest to everyone, and goes well beyond these particular issues into the role of ethical thinking in work and daily life.

2. Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

Yes, it states “This course can count towards most of our degrees at bachelors level, and is equally appropriate to a BA or BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change. You should think carefully about fitting 15 points into a degree that consists mostly of 30-point and 60-point courses.”

No knowledge of level is assumed (see answer to question 1).

3. Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

This is a Level 1 course with no prerequisites.

All teaching is in English and your proficiency in the English language should be adequate for the level of study you wish to take.
4. **Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?**

It mainly focuses on the skill of decision-making. It states: “This course is for those interested in ethical problems. It deals specifically with the end of life, with issues of plagiarism and copyright, and issues concerning the responsibilities of companies and shareholders. These discussions are set within a theoretical framework, which is designed to make us better decision-makers. The interest of the course goes well beyond these particular issues into the role of ethical thinking in work and daily life. It is likely to be of interest to anyone who needs to make decisions: all of us.”

This course will help you to understand ethical problems that arise in work and professional life. It deals specifically with decision making with respect to the end of life, with ethical issues of plagiarism and copyright, and issues concerning the responsibilities of companies and shareholders. These discussions are set within a theoretical framework, designed to make us better decision makers. The course has been designed to be of interest to everyone, and goes well beyond these particular issues into the role of ethical thinking in work and daily life. It is taught online, and has one audio CD.

The focus of the course is on exploring some aspects of life that bring forward difficult ethical problems, and how to think through those problems to a solution. It’s divided into five blocks of work.

**Block 1: Professional Ethics**

Many jobs (especially those known as ‘the professions’) have a ‘code of ethics’. These codes perform many functions, one of which is to guide people’s ethical decision making. Does this mean we can do without thinking for ourselves? This block explores the nature and limits of this approach.

**Block 2: Ethical Theory**

If we do need to think for ourselves, how do we go about it? This block draws on the best philosophical writing to explore some of the frameworks of ethical decision making. It considers why appealing to such frameworks might be necessary (or why they might simply be more trouble than they are worth).

**Block 3: Health and Social Care: Euthanasia and End-of-life Issues?**

There are some very difficult ethical decisions involved in the provision of health care. This block looks at how we identify an ethical issue in health care, and then at one particular structure for deciding on practical action. You’ll then apply what you have learned to the difficult areas of treatment decisions, care at the end of life, and issues around patient dignity.

**Block 4: Using Other People’s Words: The Ethics of Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

Should ideas be free for other people to use? Or, if someone has an idea, do they own it, as they might own their car? Can they bequeath their ownership to others, and, if so, for how long? Is there such a
thing as the theft of ideas? The ethics of plagiarism and copyright infringement has become a much-discussed topic recently, particularly with the growth of the internet. This block will explore these and related issues.

Block 5: Business Responsibility

Anyone who runs a company that is owned by its shareholders is running an operation using other people’s money. Does this mean that they are under an obligation to do their best by those people? Or do they have a broader responsibility to society? This block explores the ‘shareholder’ and the ‘stakeholder’ models of business responsibility.

It states that students will learn the basics of ethical theory and its application in practical areas of life.

5. Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?

There are no preparatory materials.

6. Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?

You will be allocated to a tutor with a group of around 25 people. You can contact your tutor either through email or the online forum. Your tutor will help you with the course material and mark and comment on your written work.

If you are new to the OU, you will find your tutor is particularly concerned to help you with your study methods. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with The Open University before you register.

7. Does it say anything about study hours? What?

No, I could not find any information on how many study hours are required for this course.

8. Does it say anything about assessment? What?

It states: We expect there to be one computer-marked assignment and two tutor-marked assignments, which you can submit online using our eTMA system. We strongly recommend you use the eTMA system but there will be the facility to submit TMAs on paper. There is no examination.

9. Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?

Yes it states that the course is taught online.
10. Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?

Students may need to plan for stationery, perhaps a dictionary, and travel to attend tutorials or residential schools if relevant to your course.

Students must have a CD player and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

2.3 A191: Ethics in Real Life Course Materials

1. What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

100% online. There are no printed course materials.

2. Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

There are no preparatory materials.

3. How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

The text states: “There are a number of things to do in this first week of the course. The first is to read the information on the web page ‘How to use this website’. This web page will introduce you to the different tools and functionality we use on this site. Once you have looked at this information, use the ‘back’ button to return to this page. Then read through the remainder of this document in order to familiarise yourself with the different materials you will use on this course. At this end of this document, you will find a link to the Course Guide. This guide contains information about the structure of the course and the way it is taught and assessed. It also contains a couple of activities for you to work through this week.

4. Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide, which is easily accessible from the course website in PDF form.

5. How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

The course calendar is online and helps students to plan their work week by week – clearly identifying what needs to be worked on week by week.

6. Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes, all the activities are geared towards the beginner and everything is explained step by step in the course guide and introduction. There is also a useful ‘where to get help’ section with helpful links.
7. Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, each block requires more of the student in terms of the level of reading and questions asked and the level of analysis and discussion in the forum. In block 1, the learning outcomes are as follows:

- be able to define a code of ethics, and have a grasp of its function
- be aware of the difference between a descriptive and a normative claim
- understand John Ladd’s argument that a code of ethics is not truly ‘ethics’
- understand that a code of ethics should not replace our common morality.

By the final block, the learning outcomes have progressed to the following:-

- have explored the meaning of plagiarism in the literary context
- have a clear sense of what copyright infringement means and how it differs from plagiarism
- have compared and contrasted theft of objects with plagiarism
- have thought about the morality of plagiarism from a range of perspectives
- have a basic overview of what copyright is and some knowledge of the key features of copyright law
- have considered the four principal justifications for the existence of copyright law
- be aware of new challenges to the existence of copyright as a direct result of the internet and the digital revolution
- appreciate the moral arguments on either side of the copyright debate both for and against the continuation of copyright.

8. Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

The following skills are taught:

- understand the difference between a normative and a descriptive claim
- understand that there is a framework provided by ethical theory, and
- recognise two major theoretical approaches
- understand some basic issues in the ethics of at least two areas of: health and social care, intellectual property, business
- assess, reasonably, complex ethical claims
- analyse and construct arguments
- construct a persuasive, well-reasoned case in support of an ethical point of view
- find, select and use information or data in defined contexts.

Skills are developed through activities, online forum discussion and reading.

A181 is a 15-week course and is divided into five blocks. You will study each block over two weeks. The remaining five weeks have been put aside for you to spend time preparing your assignments, taking part in discussions via the forums, and for further reading. The blocks are structured as follows:

Block 1: Practical ethics and professional ethics
Many jobs (especially what are known as ‘the professions’) have ‘codes of ethics’. These documents perform many functions, one of which is to guide people’s ethical decision-making. Does this mean we can do without thinking for ourselves? This block explores the nature and limits of this approach.

You will study Block 1 in weeks 2 and 3 of the course.

Block 2: Thinking about ethical issues
If we do need to think for ourselves, how do we go about doing it? This block draws on the best philosophical thoughts to explore some of the frameworks of ethical decision-making. It considers why appealing to such frameworks might be necessary (or why they might simply be more trouble than they are worth).

You will study Block 2 in weeks 4 and 5 of the course.

Block 3: Introducing ethics in health and social care
There are some difficult ethical decisions involved in the provision of health and social care. This block looks at how we can best take these decisions, and decide on practical actions. It then applies what has been learned to the difficult areas of treatment decisions, such as care at the end of life. You will study Block 3 in weeks 7 and 8 of the course.

Block 4: Using other people’s words: the ethics of plagiarism and copyright infringement
Should ideas be free for other people to use? Or, if someone has an idea, do they own it as they might own their car? Can they bequeath their ownership to others, and if so, for how long? Is there such a thing as the theft of ideas? The ethics of plagiarism and copyright infringement has become a much-discussed topic recently, particularly with the advent of the internet. This block will explore these and related issues.

You will study Block 4 in weeks 10 and 11 of the course.

Block 5: Business responsibility
Anyone who runs a company that is owned by its shareholders is running an operation using other people’s money. Does this mean that they are under an obligation to do their best by those people? Or do they have a broader responsibility to society? This block explores the ‘profit maximisation’ and ‘corporate social responsibility’ models of running a business.

You will study Block 5 in weeks 13 and 14 of the course.

9. Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

It is clear that this is an introductory level 1 course. This is explained in the introductory guide and the course guide. In the course components it states:

“Course and tutor group forums. Tuition for this course will be conducted via an online forum. Further information about using the course forums is in the Course Guide.”

It also mentions the tutor in the introductory guide eg. “Web links to some of these case studies are listed in the Library resources section of the course website, and I’m sure your tutor will make use of a number of these in your tutor group forum.”

In the course guide, there is a section on tuition: “This course is taught online. Before the start of the course you will be assigned to a tutor, along with about twenty-five other students, with whom you will be able to discuss the course via the online computer forums. Your tutor will contribute to your tutor group forum, mark and give feedback on your eTMAs, and is available for you to contact via email should you have a query of a personal or private nature. The forums section of this guide gives you more information on online forums.”
10. Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

This is an online taught course. The introductory guide and the course guide are explicit in the use of ICT and point the student into the direction of a number of ICT training, such as the library SAFARI; using the forum, library resources, using the ETMA system. There is also a section on computing and health and safety: It is worth paying some attention to the health and safety aspects of using a computer. Please follow the advice given in the ‘Safe computing’ section of the Computing Guide carefully.

There is a section in the course guide on where to get help within the OU for computing and also a helpful guide on using the internet. There are some introductory activities in the course guide to get students started in using the internet.

10. What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

Yes, everything is very clear and laid out in the course calendar and the study hours are in line for a 15-point course.

11. Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the assignment builds on the learning skills for the course, such as reading, analysis, building on discussion from the forum activities and course activities and addresses the learning outcomes of each block.

12. Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

The assessments address the learning outcomes and build on the course material. It states what learning outcomes are addressed as part of each block and assessment.


This course has three assignments. The first is a multiple-choice computer marked assignment (known as an iCMA), which does not count towards the final mark: it is for students to complete in order to assess their understanding of the course. The second and third assignments are tutor marked assignments (or eTMAs). These will be marked by the tutor, and students need to submit both in order to pass the course. The first counts for 40 per cent and the second for 60 per cent of the final mark. The final mark needs to be at least 40 per cent to pass the course.

14. How are students expected to submit their assessment?

The ETMA system is expected to be used. The course guide states:
You are strongly encouraged to submit your assignments via the University’s electronic tutor-marked assignment (eTMA) system. Instructions on how to do this (and other information such as how to appeal against your eTMA score) is in the Guide to eTMAs. You will have been sent a printed copy of this document; an electronic version is also available from the Assessment resources section of the course website. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with its contents well before you submit your first assignment.

16. How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

I think it is a good match – but I do think the fact that the course is taught all online could be stressed more. It is one sentence in the middle of the description. I think it should be made explicitly clear that students do not receive course material in hard copy form and that the course is all online. The use of a computer for all study could be stressed more.

3.0  DB123: You and your money: personal finance in context

3.1  Photographs of the DB123: You and your money: personal finance in context Course Material
3.2 DB123: You and your money: personal finance in context Course Website (Study at the OU)

1. Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

The course website states: “You are strongly advised to start your OU studies with a Level 1 course that provides the study skills needed for higher education and distance learning. DB123 provides core subject knowledge and academic skills that will help prepare for studying at a higher level, particularly in social sciences or business courses. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.”
2. Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

DB123 is a specified course in

- BA (Hons) Leadership and Management
- BA (Hons) Business Studies
- BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) Social Sciences
- BA(Hons) or BSc(Hons) Economics and Mathematical Sciences
- BA (Hons) Politics, Philosophy and Economics
- Diploma of Higher Education in Business
- Diploma of Higher Education in Leadership and Management
- Foundation Degree in Business
- Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management
- Certificate in Business Studies

The Social Sciences degree is available with a number of subject strands and DB123 would be particularly helpful for the Economics strand. It can also count towards most of our other degrees at bachelors level, where it can help to weight your degree towards a BA or BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.

DB123 has particular relevance for anyone working in, or thinking about working in, the financial services industry such as banking and insurance. It will provide important background and contextual knowledge for anyone working in financial services. It is also relevant for people who may be offering more general financial guidance to people in their everyday lives.

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the largest and fastest growing global professional accountancy body, supports and endorses You and your money: personal finance in context as making a major contribution to the development of financial literacy and its education across the UK. The ACCA supports the development of a financially intelligent society, and believes that this Open University course can play a major role in helping to educate people about the crucial issues of personal financial management.

3. Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

No prior skills required.

4. Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

You and your money will improve your financial capability and enable you to make informed financial decisions. It develops your practical financial skills and your understanding of the changing social and economic environment within which financial decisions are made. You'll explore questions such as: Why do people
borrow so much? How can I plan for my retirement? Why do I have to make more financial decisions, and what is the best approach to making them?

Are you interested in making more informed decisions about your personal finances, as well as developing the knowledge and skills required to study at a higher level? If so, then You and your money is an excellent course. It provides a detailed understanding of many of the important personal finance issues that affect people’s lives, and delivers the skills and knowledge you need to improve your personal financial capability.

This course covers four broad themes. The first theme is the importance of the changing economic and social environment to your personal finances. This is taught by placing financial topics – such as borrowing and debt; savings and investments; the housing market; and pensions – within the context of social and economic change. So, for example, you’ll examine not just the different types of mortgages available, but also explore the underlying social and economic changes currently affecting home ownership, interest rates, and borrowing.

The second course theme is the relationship between individuals and households in financial matters, a relationship that is crucial to situating financial decisions in their real context. This relationship can include various issues, from thinking about how a couple manages their money, to the financial implications of having children, or of caring for an elderly parent.

The third course theme considers the importance of change over the course of a lifetime. This means thinking not only about how your own income and spending plans might change, but also how such change interacts with broader social and economic change. For example, as the government and employers reduce pension provision, it’s increasingly likely that individuals will have to think ahead in order to plan and provide for their old age: this course discusses some of the options.

The final theme is financial planning. This is a crucial element of personal finance and you will explore the financial planning process, working through the four key stages: assessing your financial position; deciding upon a financial plan; acting upon this plan; and reviewing the plan. You will also learn about (and practise using) all the main tools used in personal financial planning, from personal balance sheets, to budgeting and cash-flow statements. These tools can be kept and used for your own personal use after the course.

Taken together, the knowledge and understanding you gain from studying You and your money will deliver two types of skills: skills that are highly practical and relevant in your everyday life, and academically-relevant skills that are useful for further study, particularly in social sciences, economics and business courses.

5. Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?

No, but there are sample course materials available for download.

6. Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
The website states:

You will have a tutor who will help you with course material and mark and comment on your written work, and whom you can ask for advice and guidance with your studies. If you are new to the OU, you will find your tutor is particularly concerned to help you with your study methods. There will also be group tutorials which you are encouraged but not obliged to attend. Where your tutorials are held will depend on the number of students doing the course locally to you. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with the Open University before you register.

7. **Does it say anything about study hours? What?**
   No information provided.

8. **Does it say anything about assessment? What?**

   There will be three tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), which you can submit online using our eTMA system, and one end-of-course assessment (ECA). The ECA must be submitted on paper. We strongly recommend you use the eTMA system, but there will be the facility to submit TMAs on paper.

   This means you will be asked to do three assignments that your tutor will mark and provide feedback on. The ECA, which will be similar to the first three assignments, will be marked by another tutor on DB123. You will be given guidance and support in preparing for these assignments.

   DB123 does not have an examination.

9. **Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?**

   The website states that you’ll use a course text, interactive computer learning, practical tools and a study guide, and acquire useful skills for further study.

10. **Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?**

   Students will need internet access and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.
3.3  You and your money: personal finance in context Course Materials

1. What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

Course textbook, DVD-ROM, study guide and website. 90% is the core text book.

2. Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

There are sample course materials available on the website prior to registration but nothing required as part of the course materials for preparation.

3. How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

The course starts in week 1 with detailed advice on getting started and planning study. There is a course calendar outlining each week’s study work.

4. Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

The course guide is very helpful and details everything the student needs to know step by step. Without the course guide, students miss out on the added value, but can easily navigate the course without it, as there is just one core text book and there is the study calendar.

5. How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

The study calendar is in hard copy form and available on the course website. It is very helpful for students to plan their study.

6. Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes, the study guide is extremely focused on the beginner learner with lots of support. There is also a useful guide called ‘writing in your own words’. There is a big focus on study skills and how to study and become an independent learner, how to read and make notes, how to work with numbers, how to write essays and present and interpret data.

7. Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, the first block is designed to help get the student started with work on DB123 and introduces a few simple theories. There is a first assignment to follow block 1 and brings all the learning together. The theories and concepts are built up throughout the course, along with study skills, activities, tutorials and the TMAs are linked with the course material and learning outcomes.
Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Taken together, the knowledge and understanding students gain from studying You and your money will deliver two types of skills: skills that are highly practical and relevant in everyday life, and academically-relevant skills that are useful for further study, particularly in social sciences, economics and business courses. There is a big focus on study skills and how to study and become an independent learner, how to read and make notes, how to work with numbers, how to write essays and present and interpret data.

Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

Yes, the study support is very clear, particularly in the study guide, which has a section on support:

As a student at The Open University, most of the time will be spent alone with your book and computer. No matter how much support you are getting at home or from interested friends, there comes a point when they don’t want to talk to you, or can’t talk to you, about that issue in Chapter 6 that’s really bugging you. Give them a break and think about the other people around who really do want to talk to you about that issue in Chapter 6. You are not alone – there are people in the OU to help you. These include:

Your tutor
Your tutor is there to help you – on both academic and administrative issues. She or he is your main link with The Open University as well as the person who runs your tutorials and marks your assignments. If you have any questions about how the system works, for example about payments, registration and so on, your tutor will either be able to answer your queries directly or will know which part of the OU to approach. Tutors expect to have students contacting them and are well aware of the sorts of challenges they will face from time to time.

Tutorials
The Open University and its tutors put substantial resources into providing tutorials in study centres spread across the UK. Please try to attend these tutorials as they provide an important part of your study. They do this by allowing you to meet with your tutor and other students and engage in debate and discussion around course-related issues. By exploring certain topics in more depth and working through questions with other students you will get a lot more from the course. Tutorials are not compulsory but we would strongly urge you to attend. If you really are unable to attend a tutorial, let your tutor know this and make sure you still keep in touch. If you are unable to attend tutorials because you have special needs, your tutor may be able to arrange a special session for you, and will certainly be willing to give a summary of what was covered in any particular session.

Other students
You will meet other students at your tutorials. Meeting other students can make a huge difference to your experience of studying at The Open University. It is possible for you to form a ‘self-help’ group with other students. This is a really useful way of discussing the course and other issues related to being an Open University student. We have already mentioned the wide range of backgrounds that your fellow students will have; just think what a great asset that will be in the weeks and months to come. Your tutor will explain to you how to start up a self-help group as you will need to release your contact details to other students.
Audit of Level 1 Courses – June 2008 – Katharine Jewitt

Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

Limited use of the computer – to submit TMAs and access the course website. Guidance is provided in the ETMA booklet and computing guide.

What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

One – two hours is recommended and there is detailed guidance in the study guide on how to plan study time, alongside the course calendar. The course is predominantly the printed text book.

Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the TMAs build on the learning outcomes and draws upon the theories and concepts taught in each of the blocks.

Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, it is very clear what each TMA’s focus is for learning outcomes. These are outlined at the start of each TMA question to show which learning outcomes are being tested.

How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

There are three tutor-marked assignments and one end-of-course assessment

The information on the allocation of marks for the course components can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The continuous assessment component is worth 70 per cent of the total course marks, comprising:</th>
<th>The end-of-course component is worth 30 per cent of the total course marks, comprising:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TMA 01</td>
<td>TMA 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How are students expected to submit their assessment?

Via the ETMA system. Guidance is provided.

How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Excellent. The only improved is a description of the study hours required.
4.0  E131: Introduction to working with young people

4.1  Photographs of the E131: Introduction to working with young people

Course Material
4.2  **E131: Introduction to working with young people Course Website (Study at the OU)**

1. **Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?**

Yes it states this is a level one course and provides the following information outlining the introductory nature of the course:-

The course provides an introduction to the key principles and ideas which underpin work with young people, focusing on the age range 13 to 19. It defines ‘work with young people’ as professional practice where the young people’s participation is voluntary and the aims are connected with informal education. It examines the nature and scope of these practices; the values and purposes which underpin them; the roles and responsibilities of practitioners working in the field; and the practical and ethical issues that they face. The course will actively engage you in taking a reflective stance towards your own practices and those of others.

2. **Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?**

E131 is a compulsory course in our

- **Foundation Degree in Working with Young People**
- **Diploma of Higher Education in Working with Young People**
- **Certificate in Working with Young People**

E131 is a specified course in our

- **(Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies**

You can ‘top up’ your foundation degree to a full degree awarded with honours by studying a further 120 points at Level 3. You should note that Childhood (U212) is a compulsory course if you wish to progress to the BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies. If you do not take it as one of the optional Level 2 courses in this foundation degree, then you will need to take it as part of your study for the BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies, in addition to the 120 points at Level 3.

E131 can also count towards most of our other degrees at bachelor’s level, where it is equally appropriate to a BA or BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time, the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.
The Certificate in Working with Young People has been approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), for inclusion as a Level 4 qualification in the National Qualifications Framework, as a Youth Support Worker qualification.

The Foundation Degree in Working with Young People has been recognised by the DfES as a sector endorsed qualification. The National Youth Agency (NYA), on behalf of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), recognise this foundation degree as a professional qualification for those wishing to be employed in youth work in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. People living in Scotland can take E131, but it does not currently form part of a professional qualification for work in Scotland.

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

Students will need to be either directly engaged in work with young people, or have had recent experience or involvement in this type of work.

The website states:

Please note that if you've never had any practical involvement in work with young people, it will be difficult to complete some of the assignments.

4. Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

The course introduces the key principles and ideas which underpin work with young people, focusing on the age range 13–19. The course defines 'work with young people' as professional practice where the young people's participation is voluntary and the aims are to do with informal education. The course examines the origins and scope of this work; the changing contexts in which it occurs; the practices through which it is implemented; and the issues which it raises for practitioners and policy makers.

The website states:

Through the printed Study Topics and supporting resources such as the DVD and the course reader, you will be exploring and analysing a range of perspectives on work with young people. As you do so you will be encouraged to review and analyse your own experiences as a learner and a practitioner.

By the end of the course you will have developed your:

- understanding of the range of practices included in 'work with young people'
- understanding of the issues, theories and research relevant to this field of practice
• understanding of ways of supporting young people with diverse needs and abilities in a range of contexts
• understanding of how young people learn
• understanding of the impact of policy on work with young people
• skills in, and knowledge and understanding of, processes of critical reflection and programme evaluation.

5. Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?

There are no formal qualification requirements for students joining the course. However, if you have no prior experience of higher education, or if you have not studied for some time, we would strongly advise you to make use of the OU’s wide range of introductory courses and packs.

6. Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
The following is stated on the website:

You will have a tutor who will help you with the course material and mark and comment on your written work, and whom you can ask for advice and guidance. If you are new to the OU, you will find that your tutor will be particularly concerned to help you with your study methods. We also offer group tutorials. You are not obliged to attend these, but you are strongly encouraged to do so, and make the fullest use of the support that your tutor (and fellow students) can give. Where your tutorials are held will depend on the distribution of students taking the course. You can also take part in an online forum with other students, and again we strongly recommend you to do so. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with the Open University before you register.

7. Does it say anything about study hours? What?
Nothing is provided on the amount of study hours required for this course.
8. **Does it say anything about assessment? What?**

The website states:

There are four tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), which you can submit online using our eTMA system, and a final project that takes the place of an examination. We recommend you use the eTMA system, but there will be the facility to submit TMAs on paper. Equal weighting is given to the TMAs taken together and to the ECA, and you must pass both of these to pass the course. Assessment is an essential part of the teaching and so you are required to complete it all. You will be given more detailed information when you begin the course.

9. **Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?**

To receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

Access to a computer at your workplace, for example, would be sufficient.

10. **Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?**

The ability to play DVDs. To receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

Access to a computer at your workplace, for example, would be sufficient.

### 4.3 E131: Introduction to working with young people Course Materials

1. **What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.**

Course books, a DVD, a course reader and an award website. It is primarily 100% printed material via the course books.

2. **Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?**

There are no preparatory materials required.
3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Students start with the course guide and study calendar and then move onto the study topic guides. There are 10 study topics in total.

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide. Without the course guide, it is possible for students to navigate through the course through the study calendar and the numbered study topics – but is far better with the study guide. With the study guide, students are informed of the course materials, how to make progress, study support available electronically and via the tutor and studying effectively.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

The study calendar is available online and in hard copy and helps students know what to study week by week.

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

The course guide is geared towards the beginner learner, particularly with focus on studying effectively – covering reading; preparing to read; working on the text; reviewing and writing. Study topic 1 is an excellent introduction covering basic principles and definitions and introduction to the course, learning outcomes and the aims of the course. It also explains how the course helps the student to learn and looks at learning styles.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, in topic 1, students are able to describe the scope and rationale of this course; describe the nature of the learning processes used in the course and identify aspects of their own experience relevant to this course. On completion of study topic 5 you should be able to: outline the importance of building appropriate and supportive professional relationships with young people understand some skills in and approaches to building relationships with young people describe how context affects the development of relationships

Study topic 10 provides a reflective account of the learning which has taken place over this course outline some of the changes to your thinking and your practices which have occurred as a result of your study and reflection provide evidence of your existing strengths and indicate areas for future professional development.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Through the course guide and the study materials and activities a range of study skills are developed – reading; writing; knowing how to learn according to learning styles etc. The course teaches values and purposes; understanding young people; roles and responsibilities; forming relationships; working in groups; acting professionally; understanding learning; planning for learning; working and learning.
9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

Yes, in the course guide, there is a detailed section on support discussing tutor support; tutorials and electronic support.

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

To receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

Access to a computer at your workplace, for example, would be sufficient.

The standard guides for computing use by the OU are provided.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

I could not find detail on study hours – but within the course material it did state how many hours a particular activity would take. There is a study calendar, but the hours are not stated on this.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the TMAs are built upon the content of the course material and in the assignment booklet it states what learning skills, aims and outcomes the TMAs are testing.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, there is a detailed appendix in the assignment booklet stating the learning outcomes and aims that each assessment is testing.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

There are four TMAs and an ECA
TMA 01 – 10% of the continuous assessment
TMA 02 – 20% of the continuous assessment
TMA 03 – 30% of the continuous assessment
TMA 04 – 40% of the continuous assessment

Substitution does not apply to this course. 40% must be achieved overall.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

Via the ETMA system. Guidance is provided.
16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Yes Excellent. It is just the number of hours that needs to be added.

5.0 K100 / KYN100: Understanding health and social care

5.1 Photographs of the K100 / KYN100: Understanding health and social care
Course Material
5.2 **K100 / KYN100: Understanding health and social care Course Website (Study at the OU)**

The information provided for both K100 and KYN100 codes is identical.

1 **Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?**

Yes, it states: This course offers a broad practical introduction to health and social care, whether you are engaged in supporting, nursing or caring for others, receive services yourself, or simply have a general interest. Using real examples, it explores the nature of modern caring, the effects of technological, social and political change, and the shift to more flexible, inter-professional ways of working. It develops the intellectual and study skills important to all learners and has been designed in the light of N/SVQ Levels 3 and 4 in Care. A Certificate in Health and Social Care is awarded for successful completion.

This course is an ideal place to start your degree studies if you want to draw on your experience of caring, no matter how informal. Level 1 courses provide core subject knowledge and study skills needed for both higher education and distance learning, to help you to progress to courses at Level 2. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service. They can also tell you about materials and courses that can help you to gain confidence and study skills before you start. The course itself will give you a lot of practice and support for your study skills.

2 **Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?**

The course website states:

K100 provides underpinning knowledge and understanding for Level 3 and Level 4 N/SVQs in Health and Social Care.

**We can award a Certificate in Health and Social Care on completion.**

K100 is a compulsory course in our

- **BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care**
- **BA (Hons) or BSc (Hons) Health Studies**
- **BA (Hons) Social Work (England)**
- **BA (Hons) Social Work (Scotland)**
- **BA (Hons) Social Work (Wales)**
- **Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care**

K100 is a specified course in our

- **BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth Studies**
It can also count towards most of our other degrees at bachelors level, where it is equally appropriate to a BA or BSc and, as KYN100, it forms part of our Pre-registration Nursing Programme leading to our Diploma of Higher Education (Nursing). We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change. If you would like to know more about the BA (Hons) Social Work or the Diploma of Higher Education (Nursing), please ask our Student Registration & Enquiry Service. Please note that entry to BA (Hons) Social Work (England, Scotland and Wales) is through employer sponsorships.

This is one of a set of courses that together constitute an approved programme that leads to a DipSW qualification, or the new Social Work degrees. If you would like to know more about the BA (Hons) Social Work degrees, please ask our Student Registration & Enquiry Service for the Handbook for Employers and Students. In addition, as KYN100, it forms part of the programme leading to the professional qualification of Registered Nurse (Part 1: NMC). It may also help you to gain recognition from a professional body. Ask our Student Registration & Enquiry Service for Recognition leaflet 1.3 Social Work. This course has been mapped against the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework.

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

No prior skills are required.

4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

This course offers a broad foundation in health and social care. We are all at some time in the position of being cared for, and most of us also have experience of caring for others. This course builds on such personal experiences to open up debates and discussions about how health and social care is, or should be, provided. It gives a grounding in the knowledge, skills and understanding required in caring work of all kinds – paid or unpaid, voluntary or professional – and also explores the perspective of users of care services. At the same time it prepares you for further study towards a diploma or degree.

Recognising the growing emphasis on professional skills and knowledge, the course provides underpinning knowledge and understanding of relevant vocational qualifications and offers support in preparing for them. But it is equally a course for non-professional carers and for people who themselves rely on support or care. It emphasises, for example, the importance of choice for users of services and the need to design support systems that empower rather than undermine. It also questions attitudes towards disability, ageing, race, gender and sexuality, exploring the promotion of anti-discriminatory practice and respecting difference and diversity.

The course is structured around seven study blocks.
Who cares? explores informal, unpaid caring work by family members, as well as the role of paid carers in homes and hospitals. We ask what care is and who needs it, and consider the mixed feelings the word arouses. We examine the various kinds of relationship in which care services can place carers and care receivers.

People and places is about the places where care is given and received. What do we understand about ‘ordinary living’ in housing that meets ‘special needs’? What are the advantages and limitations of institutional care, and what influences public and private choices for or against it? You will also explore what happens to personal space, privacy and security in various care settings.

Care and communities explores the meaning of 'community', how a community can respond to the needs of different groups of people, and the strategies and skills required for effective work in this context. You will look at both national programmes and local networks, to assess the extent to which these can, for better or worse, have an impact on people's quality of life. The work of services, agencies and carers is examined against a background of rapid and continuing social change across the UK.

Working with life experience shows how being aware of service users’ experiences can contribute to appropriate practice which gives choice and control to them. You will examine different sources of information and evidence about the past, comparing written records and documents with accounts drawn from the memories and experiences of service users. We look at issues of discrimination, confidentiality and the ownership of accounts and evidence.

When care goes wrong looks at caring relationships in some very challenging situations. It considers issues such as the abuse, exploitation and neglect of children and vulnerable adults. It explores the boundaries of personal care, and the difficulties which can arise when trying to balance a ‘hands-off’ approach against the risk of leaving people vulnerable. The block considers some of the ethical dilemmas which can emerge when care may legitimately imply control, and at legal and moral issues, including guidelines for good practice.

Who needs to know what? Knowledge, as they say, is power. In any situation, unless you know what is going on, you cannot act intelligently. This block is about sharing knowledge with the right people at the right time, so that carers, service providers and service users alike can access relevant information, to ensure that care needs can be met as fully as possible. This includes establishing information systems which enable service providers to be held accountable through clearly defined procedures and lines of reporting and properly kept records. But at the same time it requires safeguards to protect people's right to confidentiality.

Care policies in context examines care policies at the national level. It considers how policy for training care staff was developed and takes a look at how the NHS and social services have changed and how different governments, both Conservative and Labour, have tried to develop services to respond to people's needs. You will also have the opportunity to look back over the course and consolidate your learning.
5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?

You will receive a copy of the Faculty of Health and Social Care’s Get Started Online leaflet in your first course mailing. This will provide you with the information you need to get started on using your computer for OU study and working with the OU Computing Guide, which, for example, explains how to access and use your course website and conferences. If you have time before the course starts, this is a good document to start reading, although you will also be given time early on in the course to engage with it.

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?

The website states: You will have a tutor who will help you with the course material and mark and comment on your written work, and whom you can ask for advice and guidance. If you are new to the OU, you will find that your tutor is particularly concerned to help you with your study methods. We may also be able to offer group tutorials or day schools that you are encouraged, but not obliged, to attend. Where your tutorials are held will depend on the distribution of students taking the course. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with the Open University before you register.

7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?

No information on study hours is provided.

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?

There are seven tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), submitted on paper, and an examination.

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?

No, it just states, you will need access to a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?

It states students will need:

Television, DVD and audio CD players. To use our online services, you will need access to a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.
Set books to buy (January 2008 prices)


M. Allott, M. Robb (eds) Understanding Health and Social Care: an Introductory Reader, Sage, £19.99

5.3  **K100 / KYN100: Understanding health and social care Course Materials**

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

Course books, other printed materials, DVD, audio CDs, course website (optional). 100% printed material.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

You will receive a copy of the Faculty of Health and Social Care’s Get Started Online leaflet in your first course mailing. This will provide you with the information you need to get started on using your computer for OU study and working with the OU Computing Guide, which, for example, explains how to access and use your course website and conferences. If you have time before the course starts, this is a good document to start reading, although you will also be given time early on in the course to engage with it.

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Students start with the “Introduction and Study Guide”. It has a black label on the front saying “READ ME FIRST”.

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide. Without the course guide, it is possible for students to navigate through the course through the study calendar and the numbered study topics – but is far better with the study guide. With the study guide, students are informed of the course materials, getting started, pacing studies, setting up a filing system, a study diary, writing assignments and other topics.
5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

A hard copy wall chart and an electronic study calendar is available on the website.

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

The course guide is geared towards the beginner learner, particularly with focus on studying effectively – covering reading; preparing to read; working on the text; reviewing and writing. Study topic 1 is an excellent introduction covering basic principles and definitions and introduction to the course, learning outcomes and the aims of the course. It also explains how the course helps the student to learn and looks at learning styles.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

The course focuses on understand the broad development of UK health and social care services in the twentieth century. Throughout the course blocks, a range of theoretical models to explain policy and practice in health and social care are taught. Students are taught how to interpret simple statistics and evaluate various approaches to social and health care services. A range of study skills are used for degree level study.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Through each course block, TMAs and activities, study skills are developed such as evaluating the reliability of different sources of evidence, read research study accounts to develop understanding of the subject, interpret data statistics, explain theoretical models. Develop a range of study skills such as reading, writing, discussing, analysis.

The skills unit at the end of each block has a different texture – less reading, more doing activities and reflecting on them. And there is the assignment to fit in to the week as well.

9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

In the study guide, it discusses tutorials, tutor support, day schools, self help and assignment marking. The study guide is tailored to the new student. It states:

As a Level 1 course, K100 assumes that you are new to degree level study and offers plenty of support in developing the skills for moving on to Levels 2 and 3. You will regularly meet study skills exercises and discussions of the principles of effective study, as well as being directed to The Good Study Guide, one of the two set books for the course. You are also encouraged to keep a ‘study diary’.
10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

Yes, there is a getting started online guide.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable i.e. balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs online? Is there a student workload plan?

There is a helpful, detailed wall chart, but no timings. There is guidance in the study blocks for activity timings, but overall it is difficult to know how long study takes, apart from knowing overall what you have to complete each week. It is not known how many hours are required per week.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the TMAs are built upon the content of the course material and in the assignment booklet it states what learning skills, aims and outcomes the TMAs are testing.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, there is a detailed appendix in the assignment booklet stating the learning outcomes and aims that each assessment is testing.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

The continuous assessment consists of seven tutor-marked assignments (TMAs). The first is a short ‘trial run’, which counts for only a quarter of the marks of the other assignments. (Think of it as worth 4 per cent of your continuous assessment. Normal assignments are worth 16 per cent. Six assignments at 16 per cent add up to 96 per cent. With the 4 per cent for the first assignment, this makes 100 per cent.) The other six assignments come at the ends of Blocks 1 to 6. To give you plenty of time for exam revision, there is no TMA for Block 7. Instead it is assessed in Part III of the examination.

The ‘trial run’ assignment comes at the end of Unit 1. It has two purposes:
- to give you a bit of practice right at the start—a chance to get into the swing of things
- to put you in touch with your tutor, so that you can get some advice before attempting the first full-scale assignment at the end of Block 1.

The assignment has two parts. Part A (the main part) is a short essay. It carries 85 per cent of the marks. Part B gives you a chance to check that you are picking up the important points as you study the course materials. It carries 15 per cent of the marks.

Although it is the first assignment, this ‘trial run’ is called, a little oddly, TMA 07. We wanted the rest of the assignments to have the same numbers as the blocks they go with, so we had to call the trial run something other than 01, to avoid putting all the other numbers out.
Each of the six end-of-block assignments has three parts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part A</td>
<td>An essay based on the block you have just been studying</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B</td>
<td>A short exercise based on one of the practice skills activities in the Skills Unit at the end of the block</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part C</td>
<td>An exercise based on one of the tables you have studied in the block</td>
<td>5%</td>
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**TMA substitution**

You will maximise your learning from K100 if you tackle all seven TMAs. You will also get full value from the ‘correspondence tuition’ element of your course fee. However, regardless of good intentions, you may hit a crisis in your life which throws your studies off track. If this happens the best strategy is to look for ways to catch up, so that you can keep submitting work to the TMA deadlines. (It’s a good idea to talk to your tutor about this.) Failing that, you can ask your tutor for an extension to a deadline. But if even this is not enough, you can miss out one TMA, after TMA 02, and the substitution rule will automatically be applied. Your TMA scores and examination score will be averaged out and that score will be substituted for the missing assignment. This does not apply to TMAs 07, 01 and 02. You will receive zero marks for any of these assignments you do not submit and this will significantly affect your overall continuous assessment score. The reasons for this are that these early assignments are important in getting you into a pattern of producing TMAs for deadlines and in developing your writing skills. For any assignment (whether substitutable or not) it always works in your interests to submit something – even an incomplete piece of work – rather than nothing. If you have not made use of the substitution rule your lowest assignment score will automatically be substituted by your continuous assessment and examination ‘average’ if that mark is higher.

It is worth pointing out that even if you missed two or more TMAs you might still be able to pass the course. One of your missing TMAs (after TMA 02) would be substituted and you would score zero for the other(s) – this could include TMAs 07, 01 or 02. Although this would bring your average down, so long as your scores for the other TMAs were high enough, your average might still be high enough to pass. Clearly this is not an ideal scenario, and not one we recommend, but when you have invested a lot of time, effort and money in the course it is important to know that you may still be able to salvage something from your investment if you run into difficulties.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

Via the etma system.

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Yes Excellent. It is just the number of hours that needs to be added.
7.0 LB160 Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies

7.1 Photographs of the LB160 Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies Course Material
7.2  **LB160 Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies Course Website (Study at the OU)**

**1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?**

Yes it states it is a level one course.

**2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?**

Yes it states the business degrees this course is linked to.

**3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?**

No. It does state no prior knowledge is expected.

**4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?**

This course focuses on communication. The website states: “The course will help you to express yourself more clearly and develop the reading, analysis and interpretation skills you need before moving on to more specialised courses at Level 2. It is not necessary to have studied in this area before.”

**5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?**

No preparatory materials are required.

**6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?**

Students will have a tutor who will help with the course material and mark and comment on written work, and whom students can ask for advice and guidance. If students are new to The Open University, they will find that their tutor is particularly concerned to help with their study methods. The OU may also be able to offer group tutorials or day-schools that students are encouraged, but not obliged, to attend. Where tutorials are held depends on the distribution of students taking each course.

**7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?**

No, I could not find any information on the hours of study required to complete this course.

**8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?**

There are four tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), which you can submit online using our eTMA system.
9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?

There is a link to the “Personal Computing for OU Study”. It states students need access to a computer as described in the section that is provided by a link.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?

No additional materials are required.

7.3 LB160 Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies Course Materials

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

The course materials consist of a book – Analysing business cases; resource book 1; course guide and a study guide.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

There are no preparatory materials required.

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Week 0 with the course guide.

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide. Without the course guide, it is possible for students to navigate through the course through the study calendar and the numbered study topics – but is far better with the study guide. With the study guide, students are informed of the course materials, how to make progress, study support available electronically and via the tutor and studying effectively.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

In hard copy and on the course website.
6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes, the course guide talks the student through the course step-by-step and explains how their learning will be developed. The course guide is geared towards the beginner learner, particularly with focus on studying effectively – covering reading; preparing to read; working on the text; reviewing and writing. Study topic 1 is an excellent introduction covering basic principles and definitions and introduction to the course, learning outcomes and the aims of the course.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, the course starts with analysing business cases; identifying problems, influences, impacts, solutions and evaluating analysis. The course then helps students write successful essays and writing a critical discussion; the final block in the course book looks at writing an academic report; influential documents, self-evaluation documents, email and other communication. The course provides a series of theories and builds student learning through activities and the assessment.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Communication skills are developed by using authentic texts
Most of the texts that you will study in LB160 are business studies texts and the activities that you do with them are business studies activities. This means that you will acquire business studies communication skills and business studies knowledge at the same time. In the final three sessions of Book 3, Producing Influential Documents, you will also compare business studies texts with workplace texts.
A simplified version of some of the texts studied in Book 1, Analysing Business Cases, is provided in Resource Book 1. To do the activities, you still have to read the original texts but you may find the simplified versions given in the Appendix to Resource Book 1 helpful in understanding the original.

Communication skills are learned through activity
A course that develops skills is different from a course which develops knowledge of a subject. To develop skills, we need to practise and use the skills we are learning. For this reason, there are many activities in LB160.

Communication skills are study skills
The kind of communication skills training which has been described above is also study skills training. Learning to read and write business studies texts more effectively means studying more effectively.

Communication skills and knowledge are transferable
There are differences between the skills you need to be a successful business studies student and those you need to be a successful communicator in the workplace. However, if you recognise the similarities and differences between the two situations, business studies communication skills provide a very good foundation for workplace communication.
These ideas about language and learning mean that the way you read and write in LB160 will be different from the way you read and write in other courses. You will be asked to think about why you are reading and writing, who for and how. You will look at how the texts you read are designed and use what you learn from this in writing your own texts. You will look at the way you use grammar and vocabulary when you are reading or writing. In other words, you will pay attention to what you are doing and the language you use to do it.
LB160 is based on the principle that academic study is, among other things, an opportunity to develop new communication skills. The goal of the course is to enable you to make the most of that opportunity.

9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

Yes, in the course guide, there is a detailed section on support discussing tutor support; tutorials and electronic support.

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section is required. Also students are recommended to use mystuff to develop an eportfolio system.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

No hours are communicated, only what needs to be completed each week.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the TMAs are built upon the content of the course material and in the assignment booklet it states what learning skills, aims and outcomes the TMAs are testing.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, the TMAs are built upon the content of the course material and in the assignment booklet it states what learning skills, aims and outcomes the TMAs are testing.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

Assessment Strategy: to be sure of a pass result you need to achieve 40% in the weighted average of the eTMAs and a minimum of 40% in the eECA. Please refer to the Assessment Booklet on the course website for details. Continuous assessment component: this represents 50% of the overall score. There are four electronically submitted tutor-marked assignments. You must achieve an average of at least 40% in eTMAs 01–04 and at least 40% in eTMA 04. Please refer to the Assessment Booklet on the course website for details of the different weightings of the eTMAs. Substitution: does not apply on this course. Examinable component: this represents 50% of the overall score. Notes: * the work in study weeks 13, 14 & 15 covers preparing and writing eTMA 03.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?
Via the ETMA system

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Excellent. It is advised to add in hours of study

8.0 S104: Exploring Science

8.1 Photographs of the S104: Exploring Science Course Material
8.2 S104: Exploring Science Course Website (Study at the OU)

1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

It does not explicitly say ‘beginners’; but it does say: “This is a Level 1 course with no prerequisites. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.”

2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

Yes, it states “This course can count towards most of our degrees at bachelors level, and is equally appropriate to a BA or BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change. You should think carefully about fitting 15 points into a degree that consists mostly of 30-point and 60-point courses.”
3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?
No knowledge of level is assumed

4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?
The focus of the course is on exploring science and the study skills associated with learning about science.

5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?
None required.

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
You will be allocated to a tutor with a group of around 25 people. You can contact your tutor either through email or the online forum. Your tutor will help you with the course material and mark and comment on your written work.
If you are new to the OU, you will find your tutor is particularly concerned to help you with your study methods. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with The Open University before you register.

7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?
I could not find any information

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?
There are 7 TMAs and online CMAs

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?
As per the OU computing guide.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?
No
8.3 S104: Exploring Science Course Materials

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, offline, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

2 DVDs, six course books and study kit.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

Week 0 course guide – can be completed in week 1

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Week 0 course guide – can be completed in week 1

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide, which is easily accessible from the course website in PDF form. Students can navigate without it, but not as effectively.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

The course calendar is online and helps students to plan their work week by week – clearly identifying what needs to be worked on week by week.

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes, all the activities are geared towards the beginner and everything is explained step by step in the course guide and introduction. There is also a useful ‘where to get help’ section with helpful links.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, each block requires more of the student in terms of the level of reading and questions asked and the level of analysis and discussion in the forum. The course covers global warming, earth and space, energy and light, the right chemistry, life and explores the earth’s history.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Skills are developed through activities, online forum discussion and reading – theoretical study, reading, analysis, experimentation etc.
9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

It is clear that this is an introductory level 1 course. This is explained in the introductory guide

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

Students are provided with the OU guide to using a computer for assessment. A computer is required for TMA submission and completion of the computer marked assignments.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

Yes, everything is very clear and laid out in the course calendar. Specific hours are not known, just what needs to be completed each week.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

The assessments address the skills to be developed in the course and builds on the course material. It states what learning outcomes are addressed as part of each block and assessment.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

The assessments address the learning outcomes and build on the course material. It states what learning outcomes are addressed as part of each block and assessment.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

TMA01-07 and online ICMAs 41-46 and ECA. To be sure of a pass result you need to achieve a score of at least 40% in part 1 and 40 % in part 2.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

Completing the computer assessments and ETMA system

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Excellent. Hours of study would be helpful.
9.0 SA188 Archaeology: the Science of Investigation

9.1 Photographs of the SA188 Archaeology: the Science of Investigation Course Material
9.2  SA188 Archaeology: the Science of Investigation Course Website (Study at the OU)

1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

Yes it is clear this course is for beginners. The website states the following:-

This course has been produced in partnership with the British Museum and York Archaeological Trust.

This course is one of a series of short courses that the Science Faculty has prepared on informative topics in science. These short courses can offer you greater flexibility in your study with the OU. You can:

- Try out an area of study before you commit yourself to a longer course, or top up your knowledge and skills between longer courses
- Study at different times of the year – four presentations are usually offered annually for short courses: February, May, September and November

Choose how long to take over the course: either 8-10 weeks or up to 5 months

2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

SA188 is a specified course in our

- BSc (Hons) Geosciences
- BSc (Hons) Molecular Science
- BA (Hons) Humanities
- Certificate in Contemporary Science

It can also count as 10 points towards an Open University bachelors degree. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

This is one of the science short courses that has the most advice on study skills, so it’s particularly suitable for students new to distance learning.
It’s designed for people who are new to the subject areas, and although a little basic knowledge of general science would be useful, all you need is an interest in archaeology and the motivation to discover much more about the scientific techniques used in archaeological investigations. You’ll have to be prepared to understand some basic science, e.g. physics and chemistry, in order to do this. If you’re an amateur archaeologist, or have read popular books on the subject, you will find the course develops your understanding and introduces topics that you have not met before. Mathematically you need only to be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide simple numbers. The structured teaching will take you to a level at which you are happy to use maths as a tool in a range of scientific contexts. To cope with the printed material, you should be able to understand in outline the sort of articles printed in ‘quality’ newspapers, and you should be able to write your thoughts down comprehensibly.

To check if you have the necessary skills you should try the interactive quiz ‘Are you ready for Level 1 science?’, which is available at www.open.ac.uk/science/courses-qualifications/are-you-ready-for-science/interactive-materials/

If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.

4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

Archaeology is about reconstructing the physical past to obtain an understanding of how different civilisations and cultures have developed over time. In this course, you’ll develop an appreciation of the processes involved in the discovery, investigation and interpretation of a wide variety of artefacts and archaeological sites, and apply a range of scientific techniques commonly used in the field and laboratory. You’ll then learn how this scientific information can provide archaeologists with new insights into how various aspects of societies and cultures may have evolved.

You’ll achieve this by investigating a series of case studies within four main topics:

- reading the archaeological landscape
- from bog bodies, skeletons and mummies to forensic archaeology
- making sense of materials – insights into ceramics, stones, metals, food and textiles
- our archaeological heritage – protecting finds for the future.

Within each of these topics, you’ll be introduced to new scientific ideas and concepts as you need them and consider different ways of communicating the results effectively. By the end of the course, you’ll have developed a greater awareness of the role of scientific investigation in archaeology and how it provides new
insights into the evolution of past cultures and societies. You’ll also develop a range of study skills associated with finding, interpreting and communicating different forms of information.

The course is based around two books: a specially written OU study book and parts of Archaeology: An Introduction by Kevin Greene. There is also an interactive DVD containing the case studies, and a course website, which will link to an active archaeological dig. The study book will guide you through specific sections of the course book and DVD, and provide questions and activities to help test your understanding and appreciation of different scientific, social and cultural aspects of archaeology.

This course has been produced in partnership with the British Museum and York Archaeological Trust.

5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?
No preparation is required.

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
You can telephone or email a study adviser, who will be able to help you with academic questions to do with the course and the assessment. There will also be an online discussion forum that you can use to get in touch with study advisers and other students.

7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?
No

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?
There is one piece of written work for assessment, which you must submit online using our eTMA system. There is no examination.

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?
you will need internet access and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?
A basic scientific calculator; a digital camera or scanner; you will need internet access and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.
9.3  **SA188 Archaeology: the Science of Investigation Course Materials**

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

95% print and minimal online work.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

no

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

There is a ‘where to start’ leaflet.

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

No

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

There is a choice of two study calendars in hard copy form or from the website which depends on whether the student completes in a shorter or longer timescale.

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes, there is a good basic guide to getting started on the web and developing web skills and the study book with activity booklet to support reading. Chapter 1 of the course book helps the student start the course and get to know the course materials.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

A number of case studies are utilised to help the student achieve the course outcomes. Students examine the various analytical and investigative techniques used to identify different materials to establish where they came from, how they were used and how they were made. You also examine various carbon-based (organic) and mineral-based (inorganic) objects, and use chemical data and imaging techniques to determine their conservation and preservation needs associated with displaying and storing these objects for future reference.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

**Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate general knowledge and understanding of some of the basic facts, concepts, principles and language relating to archaeology and scientific investigation. In particular, you should be able to demonstrate a knowledge and
understanding of:
KU1 the different scientific techniques commonly used in archaeology
KU2 how evidence from other case studies can be used when investigating unknown artefacts and/or sites
KU3 the importance of combining scientific, social, cultural and historical information, as part of the investigative process of an archaeological site or artefact
KU4 issues of preservation, conservation and ownership of archaeological sites and artefacts.

Cognitive (thinking) skills
CS1 Apply your knowledge and understanding of archaeological processes to familiar and unfamiliar situations.
CS2 Describe, analyse and interpret scientific information and data in the light of existing scientific, social and cultural understanding.
CS3 Use information from different sources to determine the authenticity of an archaeological site or artefact.
CS4 Express course concepts in your own words in an objective and factually correct way.

Key skills
KS1 Apply basic arithmetic and graphical methods to solve scientific problems.
KS2 Make sense of information presented in different ways including textual, numerical, graphical and digital material.
KS3 Communicate information clearly, concisely and correctly, recognising the audience for whom it is intended.
KS4 Begin to understand how to develop effective learning strategies.

Practical and/or professional skills
PS1 Develop an awareness of the relevant ethical issues faced by archaeologists.

9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

The availability of a learning adviser is made clear to support the student.

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

Yes and a helpful guide on using the web is provided. Basic use of a computer is assumed. Basic web skills are covered and how to submit ETMAs.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

Not described.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, the learning outcomes are tested through the assessment and these are listed in the assignment booklet.
13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes see earlier.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

There is one ECA. It is not clear how many learning outcomes need to be achieved to pass or fail.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

ETMA system

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Yes, but number of hours are not clear, nor is what exactly the pass rate is. Do all learning outcomes have to be achieved?

10.0 SXR103: Practising Science
10.1 Photographs of the SXR103: Practising Science Course Material
10.2 SXR103: Practising Science Course Website (Study at the OU)

1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

No. The website states the following for course entry:

Practising Science complements the 60-point introductory science course Exploring science (S104) (and the discontinued course S103), and is particularly suitable if you’re taking that course or have already taken it.

You should have basic mathematical skills (including drawing and interpreting graphs, and measurement and use of angles, using degrees). You should also have an understanding of basic scientific concepts, especially in chemistry and biology. Both skill sets are covered in S104 Exploring Science (and the discontinued course S103).

It is essential that you establish whether or not your background and experience give you a sound basis on which to tackle the course, since students who are appropriately prepared have the best chance of completing their studies successfully. The Science Faculty has produced a booklet Are You Ready For SXR103? to help you to decide whether you already have the recommended background knowledge or experience to start the course or whether you need a little extra preparation. This can be viewed or printed from the Science Faculty website at www.open.ac.uk/science/courses-qualifications/are-you-ready-for-science/index.php. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.
2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

SX103 is a compulsory course in our

- BSc (Hons) Geosciences
- BSc (Hons) Life Sciences
- BSc (Hons) Molecular Science
- BSc (Hons) Natural Sciences

SX103 is a specified course in our

- BSc (Hons) Physical Science

It can also count towards most of our other degrees at bachelors level, where it can help to weight your degree towards a BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.

This course can be studied as part of the ‘2 plus 2’ scheme. The ‘2 plus 2’ scheme allows you to gain your degree by studying two years part-time with the OU followed by two years full-time with one of our partner universities. For more details, please visit www.open.ac.uk/2plus2.

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

The core of this course is a one-week residential school. It will:

- introduce the nature of practical work in the laboratory and in the field, and the skills of recording, reporting and interpreting data
- help you to develop confidence in working with a variety of laboratory and field equipment and techniques
- introduce literature and web-based research
- develop your team-working, problem solving and oral communication skills.

Throughout the school you will be working in science laboratories and at a field site, with students who have similar interests to your own. You will learn practical techniques across a range of science disciplines – biology, chemistry, Earth sciences and physics – and how to retrieve information from printed literature and websites. There will also be a programme of evening tutorials and workshops.
Before the school there is some preparatory study to do, so that you have the theoretical background you need to participate satisfactorily in the investigations. After the school you will be required to complete an end-of-course assessment (ECA) based on some of the work you have carried out during the residential week. This ECA is submitted at the start of September.

The school will be held in July at Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh) and July/early August at the University of Sussex (Brighton). You will be asked to choose your preferred week and site when you register for the course. Places are allocated on a ‘first come, first served’ basis, so you should register as soon as you can.

4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?
As for 3.

5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?
Before the school there is some preparatory study to do, so that you have the theoretical background you need to participate satisfactorily in the investigations. It does not say what or how much. There is actually significant preparation work to be completed prior to the residential school and this should be made more clear, in my view.

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
You will have a tutor who will give you advice and support throughout the school. Support will also be provided after the school (via a telephone helpline and FirstClass computer forum) to help you prepare the ECA. You will have tuition from specialist tutors during each of the laboratory and field activities. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with The Open University before you register.

7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?
No – not for the preparatory work, not for the length of the residential school. It is very unclear on what is expected.

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?
There is an ECA to be completed after the school and submitted at the start of September. To pass the course you must pass this assessment, and participate satisfactorily in all the activities at the residential school.

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?
To receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

There is a course website and a forum for students in advance of the residential school and some specific websites on studying chemistry and science. This is not mentioned on the website and would be helpful for students to know why a computer is required.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?

Scientific calculator. Note that laboratory coats and other protective equipment will be provided.

In the course materials the set book study skills for sciences is required but this is not listed on the website.

There is a long list of items required in the course materials, once issued, for what to bring to the residential school – the website does not state any of the kit required. This is very misleading.

10.3 SXR103: Practising Science Course Materials

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.

All print and the residential school.

A course book and five activity booklets, a glossary and supplementary articles booklet.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

Yes all the course materials have to be worked through prior to the residential school. This is very unclear from the website description prior to signing up to the course.

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

As soon as the course materials are received, six weeks prior to the residential school.

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

There is a course book and five booklets. It is easy to navigate through the materials.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?
There is no calendar, but a timetable for the residential school and a flowchart of the order that material should be studied in. The length of the residential school is not communicated prior to signup for this course. It is not known whether the residential is 7 days or the times etc prior to sign up.

**6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?**

No, this is not for the beginner and prior study is required.

**7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.**

Yes, the preparatory materials achieve this through the course book and five activity booklets – however, this is developed further in the residential school.

**8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?**

The aims of the Residential School are listed below.
To introduce you to the nature of practical work in the laboratory and field.
To help you to develop confidence in working safely with a variety of laboratory and field equipment and methods.
To introduce you to the skills of recording, analysing and reporting observations and other data.
To introduce you to literature- and web-based research.
To provide an opportunity for you to work with other students in a team.
To provide an opportunity for you to develop your communication skills in science.
To develop your skills of reflection.

**9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?**

Support available at the residential school and access to support prior to the schools is communicated.

**10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?**

Only submission of the assessment.

**11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?**

You will spend about 100 hours of your time studying this course. Around half that time will be spent on the academic aspects of the Residential School. You should expect to spend up to 30 hours working through the PSSB before you attend your Residential School week. This should be communicated on the website prior to registration.
12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, there is a detailed appendix in the assignment booklet stating the learning outcomes and aims and skills that the assessment is testing.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, there is a detailed appendix in the assignment booklet stating the learning outcomes and aims that each assessment is testing.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

100% ECA

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

ETMA System

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Poorly. See detail above over all 26 questions
11.0 T191 Personal and Career Development in Engineering

11.1 Photographs of the T191 Personal and Career Development in Engineering Course Material
11.2  **T191 Personal and Career Development in Engineering Course Website (Study at the OU)**

1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

The website states the following for entry:

This course has been designed for undergraduate engineers who are interested in exploring their own approach to learning, assessing plans for their professional development and extending their capabilities as lifelong learners. It is suitable both for students who have recently embarked on their Open University degrees and for those who have degrees that don’t meet professional requirements. Although it’s intended to be taken early in your studies, we advise you not to take it as your first Open University course. You are also strongly advised not take this course alongside more than 30 points of other OU study. If you have any doubt about the suitability of the course, please contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service.

You must complete T191 before going on to **Key skills for professional engineers (T397)**, the other compulsory course for the BEng. You cannot take both in the same academic year.

2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

T191 is a compulsory course in our

- **BEng (Hons)**

It can also count towards most of our degrees at bachelor’s level, where it can help to weight your degree towards a BSc. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

Taking an innovative approach, T191 both teaches and evaluates your general and key skills associated with lifelong learning and career management. You will examine your career position, the qualifications you already have, and your learning needs, before compiling a development plan for yourself. Depending on your aspirations, you’ll identify a profile of courses to satisfy the OU regulations for the award of a BEng (Hons)
degree, taking into account the educational requirements of the professional engineering institution you’ve selected in preparation for IEng or CEng registration.

You must first satisfactorily complete T191 if you intend to take T397.

4 **Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?**

This is the first of two compulsory courses in The Open University’s Bachelor of Engineering degree programme. Taking an innovative approach, the course teaches and evaluates general skills associated with lifelong learning and career management. You will examine your career position, the qualifications you already have and your learning needs. Two of the course’s main purposes are to help you in compiling a development plan and in working out a programme of courses that suits your needs. Taking into account your aspirations, your experience and your qualifications, you’ll select a set of courses that will satisfy the University’s regulations for the award of a BEng or other degree. If you also want professional membership of an engineering institution, leading to Incorporated Engineer or Chartered Engineer status, your programme will be designed to satisfy the educational requirements of the institution you’ve selected.

The course will enable you to integrate career management skills with the subject-based skills and knowledge you will gain from later study. It will help you to produce:

- a profile of the knowledge, qualifications and skills you already have
- an assessment of your opportunities for professional development
- a description of your goals for development, with plans for achieving them
- two reports of tasks based on parts of your development plan
- a reflective account of the learning, both technical and personal, that you have experienced
- a portfolio containing a structured record of your self-evaluation, planning and project work.

The contents of the course are:

**Block 1 Prologue:** Taking stock – drawing on experience – the process of learning – learning for development – assessing key skills and abilities – forces, influences and support.

**Block 2 Planning for development:** Goals, planning and problem solving – exploring goals – converging on your goals – diverging to strategies – bringing it all together.

**Taking action:** The two tasks – planning the tasks – implementing your tasks – your ECA file.
Reviewing progress: Reviewing learning – reviewing your key skills and abilities – reviewing helping and hindering forces – epilogue.

5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?
No

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
You will be supported by a tutor who is familiar both with the Open University and its courses and with the engineering institutions and their requirements for membership. Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with The Open University before you register.

7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?
No

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?
There are two written assignments, submitted on paper, each a narrative account supported by evidence, and an end-of-course assessment based on your written work and on accompanying documentary evidence.

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?
You will need internet access and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?
CD player. You will need internet access and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

11.3 T191 Personal and Career Development in Engineering Course Materials

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.
All in print. Course calendar; study guide; two blocks; assignment booklet; activity sheets and resource book
2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?

No

3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Week 0 with the study guide

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes, it is easy to navigate without it, but of benefit to work through this.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

Hard copy and available on the website. It helps students to plan.

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Yes through the study guide explains everything step by step

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, the course focuses on firstly taking stock; then planning for personal development; taking action and finally reviewing progress.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

They are:
1. an overview of significant life events
2. an analysis of what this says about important themes in your life
3. an analysis of your own approach to learning tasks
4. an assessment of your current abilities in some key skills areas
5. an assessment of the factors which are likely to help or hinder your own learning and development.

9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

The title encapsulates what this course is about – it’s to help you become a professional engineer, that is, to gain professional engineering qualifications.
That’s why it’s a compulsory part of the OU’s BEng and undergraduate MEng degrees (although it can also be counted for credit in other OU degrees).

As you’re aiming towards a professional engineering career, there’s a good chance that you already have a background in science, technology or engineering (it’s rare, but not unknown, for aspiring engineers to have previously studied humanities or social sciences). Whatever your subject background, your previous studies could have taken you to any one of a number of levels. For instance, you might not have studied anything since leaving school, or you could be part-way through your studies at the OU, or you could already have a Higher National Certificate or a degree from another institution. Irrespective of this, T191 is intended to give you the opportunity to draw on your previous experience, and to learn and develop a range of personal and professional skills.

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?
Experience of asynchronous computer-mediated conferencing via first class.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable ie balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?
Not known. There is a study calendar for what to complete each week but no recommended hours of study.

12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?
Yes. The assignment booklet details clearly how each learning outcome can be achieved and how to demonstrate learning.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?
Yes, detailed in the assignment booklet how each learning outcome is achieved.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?
Two TMAs and an ECA. 30% must be achieved in TMA01 and TMA02

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?
ETMA system

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?
Very well, but hours of study need to be communicated on both.
12.0 Y163: Starting with Psychology

12.1 Photographs of the Y163 Starting with Psychology Course Material
12.2 Y163: Starting with Psychology Course Website (Study at the OU)

1 Does the course suggest it is suitable for beginners? How?

Yes - Starting with psychology introduces some of the key ideas and ways of thinking involved in studying the broad subject of psychology. You'll be exploring several different areas of psychology including how we are shaped by our biology; thinking; important relationships; and social identity. You’ll also consider some of the ways that psychologists gather their evidence and the type of work that psychologists can do.

Starting with psychology is suitable if you are a beginner or returning to study. The course will also help you to develop your study skills and become a confident learner.

2 Does it say where the course should fit in a study plan or pathway leading to an award? Where? Does it assume knowledge of levels?

There are no entry requirements. The course is designed for students who have not studied before or who may have studied a long time ago.

This Openings course would be useful if you are interested in going on to our longer Level 1 courses An introduction to the social sciences: understanding social change (DD100) or An introduction to the social sciences: understanding social change part 1 (DD121).

3 Does it say anything about the learning skills required? What?

None

4 Does it say that learning skills will be taught? Which?

Are you interested in why people behave the way they do? Are you curious about what is going on in other people’s minds? Would you like to know more about the main influences on our thoughts, feelings, abilities and behaviour? Starting with psychology is a wide-ranging course that considers how aspects of our biology, ways of thinking, important relationships, and social identity combine to make us who we are.

A central feature of the course is its exploration of psychology from different viewpoints.

How can investigating damaged brains increase our knowledge of healthy brain functioning? You’ll look at several case studies of people who have experienced some form of brain damage and consider any subsequent changes in their behaviour.
How do we think and how do we organise our thoughts? The way that we take in and manipulate information from the world about us can affect the way that we understand our world and can influence our feelings and behaviour.

How are we influenced by our relationships with people who are important in our lives? You’ll consider the impact of early relationships between babies and their main carers and then the important features of later friendships and romantic partnerships.

How do the roles we play and the groups we belong to shape who we are? We play many roles throughout our lives and can belong to a number of different groups ranging in size from just a few people to large cultural groups.

Throughout the course, you’ll focus on the psychology of happiness and examine this topic from each viewpoint.

Starting with psychology introduces key psychological concepts and develops your knowledge of the way psychologists work. No previous knowledge of the subject is needed. Whether you are thinking of further study in psychology or are simply interested in finding out about this fascinating and challenging subject this course has much to offer.

The course materials have been prepared with the needs of new learners in mind. They assume no special knowledge and no experience of studying. Taking examples from everyday life, they enable you to start from your general knowledge and interests and gradually build up to degree-level study. Learning skills are key to the course, and skills such as time management, note taking, reading for study purposes and reflection on your own learning are explored.

5 Does it say anything about preparatory materials? What?
None

6 Does it say anything about tutorial support? What?
You will have a tutor who will keep in touch by telephone. There are no face-to-face tutorials: all tutorials are conducted by telephone. Your tutor will help you to plan your work and to think about the ideas explored in the course. Your tutor will also comment on and help you with your written work. At the end of the course you will discuss your progress with your tutor, and you will work together to produce a review of your study plans.

Contact our Student Registration & Enquiry Service if you want to know more about study with The Open University before you register.
7 Does it say anything about study hours? What?
None

8 Does it say anything about assessment? What?
You will be asked to submit two tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), which you can submit as a paper copy or, if you wish, online using our eTMA system. You will also be asked to submit an end-of-course assessment (ECA) as well as a learning plan and review. If you submit at least one TMA and achieve the appropriate standard in the ECA you will gain 10 credit points at Level 1 that can count towards a degree.

9 Does it say anything about the level of computer access required? What?
Though computers are not essential to study Openings, to receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

10 Does it say anything about materials that students are expected to provide themselves? What?
Access to a telephone (preferably a landline) for contact with your tutor; and the equipment to play and watch a video DVD e.g. a television and DVD player or a personal computer with DVD-ROM.

Though computers are not essential to study Openings, to receive and send email and use our online services you will need access to both the internet and a computer as described in our Personal Computing for OU Study section.

12.3 Y163: Starting with Psychology Course Materials

1 What materials does the course consist of? If possible, provide a rough percentage of print, online, off-line, AV, software etc. If possible provide a digital photo of the course material out of the box.
Course books and a DVD.

2 Are there preparatory materials? What do they consist of? How strongly are they recommended in the course? When are they sent to students? Are they available before course start?
None
3 How and when does the course suggest the student starts their study of the course?

Course guide in week 0

4 Is there a course guide? How easily can students navigate through the course material with the course guide? Without the course guide?

Yes there is a course guide. It is better with the course guide than without – though it is possible to navigate without it.

5 How is the study calendar presented to students? Does it help students plan their study of the course?

Hard copy and available on the website. Yes it does help students to plan their study

6 Does the presentation of the course materials engage the beginning learner? How?

Each block covers study skills such as writing and essay planning; each block introduces a series of course concepts and theories and develops key learning outcomes.

7 Does the level of conceptual engagement progress through the course? Give examples.

Yes, the TMAs require more and ask to reflect back on the previous TMA. More theories are introduced. The questions are more demanding.

8 Are there any learning skills taught? Which skills? How and where are they taught? Are there any learning skills developed? Which skills? How and where are they developed?

Each block has a study skills section – reflective practice; essay writing; reading and note taking; essay planning etc. These skills are developed through course activities and reading and TMA questions.

9 Is the level and type of student support made clear? How is it expressed? Is the existence of a tutor made clear? Is the existence of tutorial support made explicit? How?

Yes it is all clear in the study guide that this is an introductory beginners course and that the tutor is in regular contact.

10 Is there any mention of the need for computer access? Are there any ICT skills assumed? Taught?

Optional if students wish to access the course website and student forum.

11 What are the study hours on the course? Are the study hours made explicit to students? Do the study hours seem reasonable i.e. balance and amount of reading vs activities? Print vs on-line? Is there a student workload plan?

Not known. 100% printed material and an introductory DVD at the start of the course.
12 Does the assessment support the development of learning skills? How?

Yes, each TMA is based on study blocks from the course book, builds on what has been covered in the material and activities.

13 Does the assessment support the learning outcomes? Is the link between learning outcomes and assessment made explicit to students? How?

Yes, this is clearly stated in the assignment booklet.

14 How much assessment is there? What format does it take? Does it allow substitution? Formative assessment? Weighted assignments?

Two TMAs and one ECA. Students must complete at least one TMA. Only submission is required of one TMA, the mark is not included. It is not clear if students have to achieve all eight learning outcomes to pass the course in the ECA.

15 How are students expected to submit their assessment?

ETMA system.

16 How does the course compare with its description on the courses Website?

Excellent. Study hours need to be communicated on both.