



# The Open University Student Charter



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The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

# Introduction



The Open University is more than just a place of learning - it is a community.



As members of the community we have responsibilities to each other, responsibilities which, if we all meet them, will allow our student members to achieve their full potential and the University to flourish.

This Charter, developed jointly by the University and the OU Students Association, sets out what our responsibilities are and what we can all expect of each other. Although it gives links to the OU and Students Association regulations and policies, it is a declaration of values rather than a rule book. It describes the way in which the members of the OU - staff and students - should work together in partnership so that everyone can benefit. The University and Students Association take the Charter very seriously and are fully committed to upholding its principles.

As the University changes and evolves, so too do our responsibilities as members. We will review this Charter every year to ensure it reflects our current needs and challenges, while continuing to support the key aim of helping all our students to succeed.



Peter Horrocks, Vice-Chancellor

Nicola Simpson, OU Students Association President

## Principle

# 1

# We treat each other with dignity and respect

As members of a welcoming and inclusive community we:

- value diversity and recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture and that this difference brings great strength;
- treat each other with courtesy and respect, challenge inequalities, and anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances;
- respect the rights of individuals to hold different beliefs and views and to express them through appropriate contribution to discussion and academic debate;
- respect confidentiality and only use information we have been given for the legitimate purposes for which it is provided;
- communicate with each other in ways that are clear, relevant, respectful, accurate and timely, and exemplified by transparency and constructive dialogue.



## Principle

# 2

# We aim to inspire and enable learning

As staff members of an academic community, we:

- provide a higher education curriculum which provides choice, makes learning and research accessible and strives to meet the needs of our students and the societies in which they live and work;
- provide high quality distance learning materials and doctoral training, and aim to support each student in a way that is appropriate for them to develop as an engaged and independent learner or researcher;
- develop and take advantage of new technologies which enable people to learn in a way that meets their individual needs, providing a flexible method of learning that fits with students' lives and commitments and that helps to overcome barriers to study;
- maintain high academic standards through fair and challenging assessment;
- advance our knowledge and understanding through research and scholarly activity which contributes to the global research community, is conducted to a high ethical standard, and enhances the reputation of the University as a centre of academic excellence;
- provide timely and accurate information, including any changes we make which affect the student experience, such as information about the cost of study and the curriculum.



## Principle

# 3

# We share the responsibility for learning

As student members of the community, we:

- use the information, advice, guidance and services that are provided to support our learning and achieve our career goals;
- make the commitment to study, use the learning materials and resources that are available to us to ensure that we are prepared for study at the appropriate level and to complete the scheduled learning, research and assessment activities on time;
- contribute to, and support others to contribute to, the academic exchange of ideas in our interactions with each other and with OU staff;
- make responsible use of the teaching and learning support and supervision provided; engage with and respond to feedback whilst retaining personal responsibility for our own learning and research, and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.



## Principle

# 4

## We work together to secure the University's mission and to promote the University's values

to be open to people, to places, to methods and to ideas;  
to be inclusive, innovative and responsive.

### As members of a collaborative community, we:

- make this Charter and its principles the fundamental reference point in the development of University strategies, policies, procedures, programmes and projects that relate to the student experience;
- actively promote and support the right of students to participate in the governance of the University through the Open University Students Association;
- actively support the Open University Students Association to engage with all its members to foster a vibrant student community and to promote their educational and social interests;
- consult with each other, encourage – and remove barriers to – participation and welcome constructive feedback to enhance the student experience. We communicate to each other when and where feedback has been acted on, or where change is not possible, the reason why this has not happened;
- maintain and enhance the standards and reputation of our University, recognising the contributions that all members make to its success;
- commit to an economically and environmentally sustainable future for our University;
- provide and make use of fair and open means to deal with our concerns and grievances and to learn from them to improve what we do;
- encourage graduates and former students to continue to be part of the OU community through the Alumni Association.



# Further information

## The Student Charter

For more information on the Open University Student Charter please visit the website:

[www.open.ac.uk/students/charter](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter)

The Student Charter website is where the Charter commitments come together with the University's policies, rules and resources to demonstrate how we are delivering them.



## Welsh Language Scheme

For more information on:

- the OU's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act
- opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh
- the OU's engagement with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

visit the Open University in Wales at: [www.open.ac.uk/wales/about-us/welsh-language-scheme](http://www.open.ac.uk/wales/about-us/welsh-language-scheme)

## Feedback

We'd love to hear what you think about your OU experiences and how well we are meeting the commitments we make in the Student Charter. You can give us your feedback using the form, which you will find at: [www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/feedback](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/feedback)

## Contact

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Other formats are available on request.

[www.open.ac.uk/students/charter](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter)