

YASS Coordinators Pack

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Quick links for support

If you, a staff member at school or a parent/carer/guardian has a question, contact the YASS team; email Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk or call 0131 549 7980.

If a student has a technical/computing issue, they should contact the Computing Helpdesk on 01908 653 972 or ou-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk as soon as possible. Please be aware they are experiencing higher volumes of calls than usual, so waiting times are variable.

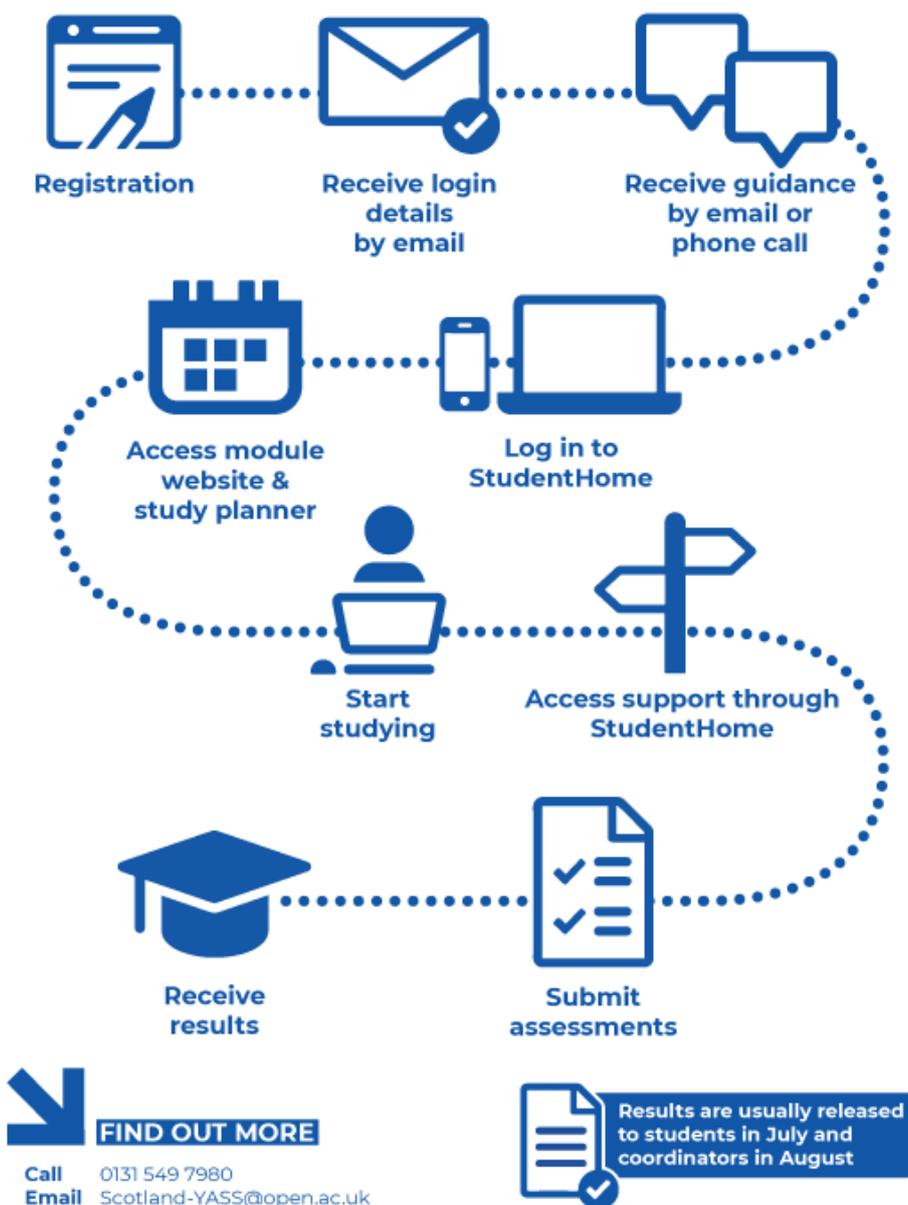
If a student has an academic or support issue, they should contact their tutor, study advisor or Student Support Team. The details for these are available through their StudentHome profile. If they cannot find these details, they should contact the YASS team; email Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk.

The YASS student journey

A quick guide to the student journey through YASS and what they should expect, setting out the following stages: Registration; receive login details by email; receive guidance by email or phone call; log in to StudentHome; access module website & study planner; start studying; access support through StudentHome; submit assessments; receive results; results are usually released to students in July and coordinators in August.

You may wish to print off this page and stick on a wall or desk.

YASS student journey



Support for coordinators

In general, we stay in touch with coordinators using email. This includes sending:

- Information on which students have logged in
- Assessment reminder emails
- Progress updates

Adding the YASS email address as a contact in your address book really helps to reduce the chance of our emails going straight to your spam or junk folder and ensures that our emails have the best chance of reaching you.

Contacting the YASS team

The YASS team are available Mon-Fri for any queries - email Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk or phone 0131 549 7980.

Promotion in school

The YASS team can deliver information sessions in school for potential YASS students. Please get in contact if you'd be interested in this service.

The 2022-23 YASS guide for students and teachers will be released in Spring 2022.

A resource pack is available for working with potential YASS students. Again, get in touch if you would like to receive a copy of the pack.

Coordinator checklist

This quick checklist is designed to help you and your students get started with YASS this year.

This list is based on feedback from schools on how to make YASS work for you and your pupils, and items can be ticked off when completed.

Check students have logged on to their OU StudentHome page and have access to their module information.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check that students have received course materials in the post (if applicable as some courses are online-only).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make a regular time to meet with students to check that they are up to date with their course work. This is particularly important in the first two months of YASS study to help students get started with their course.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help students form a study group in school particularly pupils studying the same module.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help students to use their study planners to make a note of their assignment deadlines and can meet them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let the YASS Team know if any student wants to withdraw during the module.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage students to contact their tutor or study advisor if they want academic advice or help with any aspect of the course work. Details for both are available through StudentHome.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage students to attend, if possible, any tutorials offered by their module. All tutorials are currently taking place online.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where students need to submit electronic assessments (TMAs), encourage them to submit a test one first to minimise any online submission problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>

The key first step for studying with YASS is for students to get logged into StudentHome.

If a student is having issues getting logged in, they should contact the Computing Helpdesk on 01908 653 972 or ou-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk as soon as possible. Please be aware they are experiencing higher volumes of calls than usual, so waiting times are variable.

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 09:00 – 20:00, Friday 09:00 – 17:00, Saturday 09:00 – 14:00.

Introductory OpenLearn content

There is plenty of helpful content for students available for free through OpenLearn. We've included a list of courses that YASS students may find interesting and helpful in the lead up to starting their module in October (and beyond).

Students will also have been sent links to OpenLearn courses that introduce their module so there's plenty to keep them busy!

The course titles are clickable and hyperlinked to the course description on OpenLearn, The Open University's free learning site. We would recommend that students log into OpenLearn using their StudentHome details so they can track which courses they have completed.

Please note that the hours given in brackets approximate the time it takes to work through the course.

Getting off to a good start (video) - This video has tips and advice on getting started with your OU studies.
Am I ready to be a distance learner? (3 hours) - This free course will help to boost your confidence. You'll explore useful skills so you can discover how ready you are to study and how to develop your study skills in six steps to become a successful distance learner.
Being an OU student (12 hours) – induction for new students joining The Open University, with what they need to know before they start studying.
Developing good academic practice (5 hours) - This free course is intended to help you develop good academic practices in your studies and when producing assignments and completing assessments.
Summarising text (1 hour) - Summarising is useful both when completing assignments and while studying.
Paraphrasing text (1 hour) - In this free course, Paraphrasing text, you will focus on the process of turning what you are reading into 'your own words', which is an essential skill at university.
Extending and developing your thinking skills (6 hours) - Diagrams, mind-maps, tables, graphs, time lines, flow charts, sequence diagrams, decision trees: all can be used to organise thought. This free course will introduce you to a variety of thinking skills.
Reading and note-taking – preparation for study (12 hours) - This free course will introduce you to different techniques to help you to alter the way you read according to the type of material you are studying and to learn the techniques behind successful note taking and how to apply them to your own notes.
Presenting Information (3 hours) - Tables and charts are a great way to present numerical information in a clear and concise form.
Simple Coding (2 hours) - Have you ever wanted to try out simple coding? Want to understand the basics of what it entails? This course introduces you to the skills, concepts and jargon of coding.
Assignments and exams (article) – tips from the OU Students Association
Time management and study (article and video) - Here we take you on a journey through time (management) and explore some advice that might help you balance between life, study and other potential demands on your time.
Building confidence in using online learning forums (8 hours) – This course is designed to support you to start and feel confident using online forums as part of your learning.

Guidance notes for key modules

This section includes links to the Law Making in Scotland (WXM151) checklist, which is sent to students, the introduction to the Making Your Learning Count module (YXM130 - all pathways), and the guidance that has been sent to all students studying the Contemporary Topics in Science (SXM150) module as well.

These modules operate differently so we advise that you read through the information linked in this section if you have students taking part in them.

Please note: Law Making in Scotland now has monthly tutorials added from October 2021 onwards for students to support study for the badged open courses. Please do encourage students to attend these.

[Law Making in Scotland checklist](#)

[Introduction to Making Your Learning Count](#)

[Contemporary Topics in Science guidance note](#)

This module has **two parts**, you must complete **Part 1** by the deadline to progress to **Part 2** where you will gain your credit.

Your registration email will state that this module starts in February 2022, but you must complete **Part 1** before moving onto **Part 2**. We recommend that you start work on **Part 1** in **October 2021**.

Part 1	Part 2
Complete your choice of 3 (from a choice of 4) Badged Open Courses (BOCs) on OpenLearn by the 31 st January 2022.	Complete and submit the End of Module Assessment (EMA) accessed through StudentHome by 19 th April 2022.

Part 1 and Part 2 are studied using different Open University online platforms; you will use OpenLearn (the OU's free learning platform) for Part 1 and then the OU's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) which is accessed via StudentHome to complete Part 2.

To keep track of your studies you should log into your StudentHome account first. Then everything you do on OpenLearn is tracked through to your StudentHome account. This makes it easier for you to confirm completion of Part 1 before moving on to Part 2.

Before starting Part 1, check that (tick off items as you complete them):	Done?
You have received my welcome email from the Open University with your username and temporary password. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you haven't received this email, please contact your YASS coordinator in school or Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have logged into StudentHome with these details and reset your password. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have any problems getting logged in, contact the Computing Helpdesk on 01908 653 972 or ou-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk as soon as possible. Please be aware they are experiencing higher volumes of calls than usual, so waiting times are variable. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 09:00 – 20:00, Friday 09:00 – 17:00, Saturday 09:00 – 14:00. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm you are enrolled on Law Making in Scotland on your StudentHome profile. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are no module details or incorrect details, please contact your YASS coordinator in school or Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have visited the OpenLearn website www.open.edu/openlearn/ and clicked on the 'Create Account/Sign in' button, then used your StudentHome details to log into OpenLearn. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have any problems getting logged in, contact the Computing Helpdesk on 01908 653 972 or ou-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk as soon as possible. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

You should now be ready to get started on Part 1 but if you have any questions then speak to your YASS coordinator in school or contact the YASS team – Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk.

Part 1

Start date: October 2021

What you need to do: Complete 3 BOCs out of the 4 available. You can choose any 3 out of the 4 BOCs available or you can do all 4 if you like. The title of each BOC is clickable and hyperlinked to the description of the BOC:

1. [Law and Change: Scottish Legal Heroes](#)
2. [Scottish Courts and the Law](#)
3. [Legal Skills and Debates in Scotland](#)
4. [The Scottish Parliament and Law Making](#)

How to access: Login to OpenLearn using the same login as you used before.

How it works: Each BOC should take around 24 hours of work to complete and is split up into 8 weeks, but you can work through them as quickly or as slowly as you like as long as you complete 3 BOCs by the 31st January 2022.

Tutorials: We are running tutorials to support students working through the BOCs. Each tutorial focusses on a different BOC. The first tutorial will give you lots of information on how to get started with the BOCs, how to plan out your time, background information and take you through the first BOC. Click the link for each tutorial to register to attend.

4th November 2021 4.30pm – [Getting started & Law and Change: Scottish Legal Heroes](#)

11th November 2021 4.30pm – [Scottish Courts and the Law](#)

2nd December 2021 4.30pm – [Legal Skills and Debates in Scotland](#)

13th January 2022 4.30pm – [The Scottish Parliament and Law Making](#)

How to ‘complete’ a BOC: To complete each BOC, you need to get the ‘Statement of Participation’ at the end. To get this, tick off the items in the table for each BOC as you finish it.

Completion checklist – I have...	BOC 1	BOC 2	BOC 3
Read through/completed the activities for each week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed the quizzes for each week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completed and passed the quizzes for weeks 4 and 8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viewed my Statement of Participation on my OpenLearn profile.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If the Statement of Participation for a BOC isn't on your profile, check each weekly section again to make sure you've done everything you need to. If you can't find where you've missed some work and your statement still isn't on your profile, contact the YASS team on Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk.

You will not be able to progress to Part 2 of the module unless you have Statements of Participation for 3 of the BOCs on your profile by the 31st January 2022.

Make sure you check the statements are on your profile.

You're now ready to proceed to part 2.

Before starting Part 2 , go through this checklist to make sure you've got everything you need (you can tick off each item as you complete it):	Done?
I have received an email from YASS stating that I have completed part 1 of the module and can progress to part 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have completed 3 BOCs but have not received an email to progress to part 2 by the end of February 2022, please contact your YASS coordinator in school or Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have logged into StudentHome with my login details. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have any problems getting logged in, contact the Computing Helpdesk using the details on page 1. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have confirmed I am enrolled on Law Making in Scotland on my StudentHome page and can access the module website by clicking on the title of the module. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the module details aren't on your StudentHome profile please contact your YASS coordinator in school or Scotland-YASS@open.ac.uk. 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2

Start date: February 2022

What you need to do: Work through the blocks on the module website accessed through StudentHome then complete and submit the EMA by the 19th April 2022.

How to access: Login to StudentHome using your login details then click on the module title in your profile to go to the Law Making in Scotland module website.

How it works: The module website has the study planner for Part 2 of the module with the work broken down into blocks. Part 2 should take around 24 hours of work to complete. The study planner breaks down what you need to do and when and it's a good idea to read through the entire planner before you start so you know what to expect.

Like Part 1, you can decide the pace at which you complete the blocks. The final block explains how to complete and submit the EMA using the online eTMA system.

Parliament visit: During Part 2 of the module, we plan to arrange a visit to the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh for all interested students. We will send on details for this in early 2022.

Forum and tutorial: The module forum is a great place to chat with other students and to ask questions. It is monitored by the module team who will answer any questions you might have, as well as posting interesting/useful information. We also plan to run a tutorial where you can ask questions about the EMA and how to complete it. Again, we will forward details of this in early 2022.

How to complete the module: You need to complete and submit the EMA through the eTMA system (accessed from your StudentHome profile) by the deadline on 19th April 2022. The deadline is clearly given on the module website. Full instructions on using the system are also given and you can even submit a test assessment before you do your real one.

There are no extensions allowed for the EMA so make sure you know when you need to submit the assessment and plan your work out accordingly.

You will receive a submission receipt once you have submitted your EMA successfully and you should keep a record of this. If you have any issues with submitting the EMA, you should contact the Computing Helpdesk using the details on page 1.

Good luck and we hope you enjoy the module!

Introduction - Welcome to YXM130 - Making your learning count.

In this module, you will develop the learning you have previously undertaken by considering new ways to study and learn in the future. You will be guided towards new ways of thinking and you will deepen your understanding of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary subjects. If you are unsure what these expressions mean, all will be clear by the end of the module.

[Information on using the module website is available in the Help Centre.](#)

The forums

While studying YXM130, you will have access to online forums where you can discuss the module. Forums are rather like a chat room or social networking site; where you can post messages or ask questions which can be accessed by all members of the forum. There are two types of forum in this module, both accessible from the link in the top banner of the module website:

- The tutor group forum: this will be opened by your tutor shortly before the module starts. Your tutor will post messages and you can communicate with your tutor and other students in your tutor group.
- Module forum: this is open throughout the module. This is where you can chat with all other YXM130 students and discuss the activities and module tasks.

You may find it useful to subscribe to these forums by selecting the 'Subscribe' button at the end of the page. If you subscribe, any forum posts will be sent to your chosen email account, so you can easily keep track of new discussions. If you are worried that this will overload your personal inbox, then rather than subscribing, you can visit the forums regularly. Please remember that the OU has a responsibility to maintain a friendly, supportive educational online environment where all students feel confident about participating in tutorials and forums. When working in shared online spaces, it is important that you respect and follow the guidance for appropriate conduct and content online in the Conduct and Content online section of the [OU Computing Guide](#).

How this module works

This module will give you the opportunity to make some of the not-for-credit study you have already done, or are planning to do, count towards a qualification like a degree.

This module website is organised around seven assessment tasks. These will ask you to take some of what you have learned from your non-credit-bearing study, which may include various open educational resources, and use it to complete a series of assessment tasks. These tasks include creating a poster, a video and pieces of writing. There will be support and guidance to make sure you know exactly what you need to do, including how to submit it.

Assessment Task 1 requires you to plan your study. As part of this plan you will need to include a short summary description of each course you've studied.

It will be much easier to do this if you complete the summaries as you go along. They should not take long to do individually and should only be 30 words for short courses and 50 words for those of 12 hours or longer. If you haven't already been doing that and have already done some courses, it's a good idea to start now.

Working with your tutor

The two main resources for this module are the website and your tutor. When the module begins, you will be contacted by your tutor who will talk you through how the two of you will work together.

Here's an interview that gives a bit more information about what having a tutor, sometimes called an associate lecturer or AL, is like.

INTERVIEWER: So I'm a brand new student. I've never studied with The Open University before. What would be your key advice to me in how I can use my associate lecturer (AL)?

TUTOR: Don't be scared of us is the main thing. We are here to help. You're not going to get told off. We're all adults. We all have busy complicated lives, or we all know what that looks like and feels like. I personally am always delighted to hear from my students, whether it's good news or whether it's that they've got a problem, because it signals that they know that I can help them and that I want to help them, which I do. So talk to your tutor, get that relationship going, and just don't be scared of keeping in touch with them. That's what we're there for.

INTERVIEWER: So what kind of things can the student expect from the associate lecturer or tutor?

TUTOR: Well, the students should be able to expect that the AL will help them navigate the module, so helping to explain some of the materials, the assessment strategy, and the assignments that the students are going to have to do. They should be able to help the students also with the guidelines around how the university works and how to do all the practical stuff, about how to submit the work. They'll give feedback on the work in a timely fashion and just generally be extremely supportive of what the students are wanting to do and wanting to achieve from studying the module.

INTERVIEWER: And I guess they'll also be helping the students with their choice of different OpenLearn courses and the like and helping them plan their study through the course.

TUTOR: Absolutely. So they'll be helping the students to discover useful connections between the different pieces of learning that they'll be doing, so finding things that make sense to study together, even though they might come from different disciplines or backgrounds.

INTERVIEWER: And how do you think the contact between the student and the associate lecturer is going to work on this course?

TUTOR: It will be very individualised. So usually, it will be through telephone tuition. It will be those individual phone calls with students and with support by email, if that's what the student prefers, or if there's questions in-between tutorials, when students have things that they need answering. But the tutor and the student will work out for themselves what kind of pattern of support is appropriate and how often.

INTERVIEWER: And who's going to make the first move in developing and sustaining the relationship?

TUTOR: The tutor will be the proactive one. So the tutor will contact the student at the beginning of the module and help get them going.

INTERVIEWER: And some students will want to have lots of contact with their associate lecturers, and others might not. How's that managed?

TUTOR: That's absolutely fine. We have other modules where students have that dynamic. And tutors are very accustomed to responding to what students think they need, but also kind of stepping in if the student says, well, actually, that doesn't work for me anymore. Well, I know I said I didn't really want to speak to you this week, but I do now. So they're usually very responsive, very quick to fill in those gaps but listen to what students need and what students want.

INTERVIEWER: And are there things like office hours when you can contact the associate lecturer and times you can't?

TUTOR: That will be up to the associate lecturer to discuss with the student really, because they might tutor for The Open University full time, but they might also work somewhere else. So that will be one of the first things that they discuss is how the student should be able to contact the tutor and when.

INTERVIEWER: And are there things that the student should talk to the AL about, things they shouldn't? Is there kind of a borderline between some topics and other topics?

TUTOR: Yes. I mean, that borderline is sometimes a little bit woolly, but generally anything that's to do with the module, then absolutely, the tutor should be the first port of call. They won't be able sort absolutely everything depending on the query, but they will be able to refer the student to the student support team if it's something they can't sort out.

INTERVIEWER: So what is this SST, or Student Support Team, and where is it based, and the like?

TUTOR: So we have student recruitment and support centres based in Edinburgh, Nottingham, Manchester, and Milton Keynes. And the student support teams are linked to a specific subject area. It's a collection of colleagues who have quite a lot of expert knowledge on how to support students both within but also outside of modules, so all the bits in between the modules, when students are trying to think about what they want to do, how they're going to pay for it, how they need to prepare for it. So we have lots of banks of really informed adviser colleagues who can take calls and help the student navigate their way through The Open University and through their qualifications.

Tutorials

You may have questions about this module, or want some help with study skills, or on choosing what to study. For this reason, there will be online tutorials every month given alternately by the tutors on this module. These will be run in the OU's Adobe Connect online rooms. You can access the online room and advice on the module website.

You can choose to go to any tutorial by any tutor. The tutor may start with a brief discussion about common issues that often arise, but otherwise they will be there for an hour to answer any questions you have. Don't worry about whether you think your question is worth asking as the chances are, other students will also be wanting to know! Feel free to attend any or all of them, even just to introduce yourself and meet fellow students.

[Information about tutorials is available from the Help Centre.](#)

What you need to study

To pass this module, you will need to complete at least 150 hours of study across a range of resources of your choice. This includes open educational resources (OERs) such as OpenLearn courses (the Open University's free learning resources), FutureLearn, edX, Coursera and OERu, and some others (your tutor will be able to guide you here). These are all short courses on a variety of topics hosted on a range of platforms and are different from credit-bearing Open University courses.

You have probably already studied some OERs, which may be how you found out about this module. Did you enjoy your study? Did the subject interest you and would you like to do more of it? Or would you prefer to try something different?

OERs are freely available on the internet which means that anyone can access these pieces of learning without cost. Typically, these OERs are short in duration (usually a few hours), there is little or no support to the student studying them, and the learning is not formally assessed. In this module, you can use OERs to learn about topics that interest you.

Subjects and disciplines

At this point, it is a good idea to spend a moment thinking about what subjects you want to study. At a university, we sometimes use the word 'discipline' as well as the word 'subject' but they essentially both refer to an area of interest, or a branch of knowledge.

The idea of disciplines or subjects can be complex. You might know that you are interested in Science, but within Science there is chemistry and physics and lots of other areas. You could be interested in Sports and Fitness which might combine elements of psychology with human biology. When two or more subjects are combined this is known as interdisciplinary study, and you'll learn more about this later in Assessment Task 5.

When you are choosing your courses, we will ask what subject or discipline they cover. Sometimes this will be obvious and sometimes it might be a little more complicated. Sometimes the course will be labelled as being 'in' a particular subject or discipline, or sometimes you will have to look for clues in the title or opening sentences.

As you'll learn next, OpenLearn has 8 subject categories and so you will be able to identify the subject (or discipline) for any OpenLearn courses you choose quite easily. Other sites may have their own way of categorising subjects.

Please don't spend too much time worrying about the exact classification of the subject of your courses, rather think about what excites you.

OpenLearn

Let's consider OpenLearn first, which is The Open University's home of free learning. The courses on OpenLearn are typically small excerpts from OU modules across Levels 1, 2 and 3, and cover a whole range of disciplines. The time required to study these courses is given, and there is something for everyone. OpenLearn has grouped study into 8 subject categories:

[Money and Business](#)

[Education and Development](#)

[Health, Sports and Psychology](#)

[History and the Arts](#)

[Languages](#)

[Nature and Environment](#)

[Science, Maths and Technology](#)

[Society, Politics and Law](#)

Other types of learning

You may be able to use any previous learning as part of the 150 hours of study. You should talk to your tutor about this during your first conversation with them.

What you can count in your 150 hours

This section outlines the types of study that you can include in your 150 hours of 'other study'. If you are unsure about whether something you have already done or are planning to do can count, please discuss this with your tutor.

When thinking about whether a specific course or piece of learning counts, you should consider the following things:

The level of the course	<p>At least 100 hours of your 150 hours must be at OU Level 1 or above. If your learning is from OpenLearn or FutureLearn, you can be assured this will be fine to include and it usually states the level for you.</p> <p>Up to 50 hours can include a wide range of study and can be at any level. Your decision whether or not to include a piece of learning will depend on whether or not it helps you towards your study plans. This includes a Higher you may have completed or are currently studying at school.</p>
The number of study hours	Where a specific number of hours is given (as on OpenLearn) you should use these. Where there isn't an indication of hours given, then you should estimate how long it will take you.
Subject or discipline	Assessment Task 5 requires you to have undertaken study from more than one subject or discipline. With this in mind it is a good idea to plan to study courses from at least two different subject areas.
Length	Each course or piece of 'other study' should normally be at least one hour in length and should be no more than 100 hours in length. It is a good idea to think about including a manageable number of pieces of other study. For example, 150 pieces of 1 hour study would not be sensible. Similarly, two pieces of study may not provide enough variety. However, your guiding principle should be how well your choice of 'other study' fits with your study goals.

Developing the skills you need

Higher education study isn't just acquiring knowledge about your favourite subjects, it is also about developing your skills. You will find, as you progress as a student, that skills development is an important element of learning.

The skills you develop will help you become:

- more confident online
- a more effective learner
- more employable.

These skills are often talked about separately as digital literacy skills, employability skills and study skills, but actually they are closely related and there is a lot of overlap between them.

The groups of skills are:

- a list of digital literacy skills from the OU Library resources
- a list of employability skills from the Careers and Employability resources in StudentHome
- a list of study skills from the Help Centre in StudentHome.

Digital skills:

- presenting yourself to best advantage online and managing your digital identity
- evaluating and using online tools
- communicating online

- searching effectively
- knowing who and what to trust online
- referencing sources
- making the most of online networks.

Employability skills:

- managing and organising resources
- using analytical and problem-solving skills
- developing your interpersonal skills
- meeting challenges and overcoming obstacles
- displaying commercial awareness
- managing change
- persuading and influencing
- showing a proactive approach to self development.

Study skills:

- being organised
- active reading and notetaking
- using evidence and building arguments
- assignment or essay writing
- managing your time
- problem solving
- analysing and interpreting information
- reflecting on your learning
- communicating clearly, effectively and appropriately.

Further guidance on developing your study skills will be available within the module, and you can also use the [Skills for OU Study website](#).

Defining learning outcomes

Another way to think about developing your skills and knowledge as you work through this module is to think about what you'll be able to do when you get to the end. This is expressed as learning outcomes; they are the key skills you are expected to gain as you work through the module and are usually categorised into four groups.

- Knowledge and understanding – gaining the specific knowledge related to your subject (e.g. facts and concepts in scientific areas).
- Cognitive skills – thinking skills, such as problem-solving and analysis.
- Key skills – skills gained as a result of study, such as communication skills and time management.
- Practical and professional skills – skills related to a vocational area (e.g. web design or lesson planning).

These learning outcomes will be developed as you work through the module. Some are taught and assessed directly, but others are more subtle skills you will develop by working through a number of tasks over a period of time. The assessment tasks for the module are marked by your tutor according to how well you have demonstrated these learning outcomes, so try and keep them in mind as you work.

The learning outcomes for this module

You will have achieved the following learning outcomes after successfully completing this module:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Learning outcome 1: Show that you understand and appreciate the difference between multi- and interdisciplinary study
- Learning outcome 2: Demonstrate that you have developed your knowledge of the subjects you've chosen to study

Cognitive skills:

- Learning outcome 3: Summarise key points from your learning
- Learning outcome 4: Compare and evaluate what you have learnt
- Learning outcome 5: Bring together and apply concepts and theories from different disciplines
- Learning outcome 6: Actively reflect to improve learning

Key skills:

- Learning outcome 7: Develop your skills in reading, writing and communicating in a variety of media
- Learning outcome 8: Give and respond to constructive and developmental feedback
- Learning outcome 9: Become an independent learner

Practical/professional skills:

- Learning outcome 10: Use digital tools for learning and professional development
- Learning outcome 11: Demonstrate insight into personal goals, preferences and aptitudes
- Learning outcome 12: Develop and evidence the ability to select appropriate learning resources
- Learning outcome 13: Be able to plan and organise your work.

Don't worry too much about these at the moment. Following the module carefully and completing the required learning tasks will enable you to demonstrate these learning outcomes, and this will be an excellent start on your formal learning journey.

Ready to go!

That's it! Hopefully you will now feel ready to start Topic 1, Planning your learning. If you are unsure of anything presented in this introduction you can talk it through with your tutor, or you can chat to other students on one of the forums.

Contemporary Topics in Science guidance note

Thank you for applying to study with the Open University's YASS programme, here's some important information about your chosen module.

SXM150 Contemporary topics in science:

- [Module description: SXM150 | Contemporary topics in science | Open University](#)
- [OpenLearn choices for students studying Contemporary topics in science](#)

1. This is a 10-credit module at 1st year university level. It will start on the **2nd of October and finish in March 2022.**

Depending on your previous knowledge, it will involve up to **8 hours** a week study. Think about how you will balance your OU course with other commitments such as schoolwork, sport, part time work and so on. If you are unsure whether you will have enough time for your OU module you can [access a study/hours planner](#).

2. The assessment currently includes a single End of Marked Assignment (EMA) which will need to be submitted by the due date in March. If you will not be available during this period, please reconsider your module choice.
3. You'll have an online module website which has a study planner, study resources, assessment information and study forum. It's really important that you familiarise yourself with your module website as early as possible.

[More information, highlighting where you can find everything on StudentHome and module websites, is available.](#)

You'll have access to your module website 2-3 weeks before your course starts, and you can start studying then. You should spend this time familiarising yourself with what's involved.

4. Note that SXM150 is designed to allow you to choose the science topics that you want to study. To get the most out of your study, it is important to take time in the early weeks to select the option(s) that best suit your interests and needs. I know you'll be keen to start working on the science as soon as possible, but carefully consider all of the available topics before you plunge in.
5. Previous students have also let us know that studying around the time of their prelims has been difficult. It's important to look ahead and plan for this but if you do run into any problems, you should let us know as soon as possible and we can look at how to help you.

Unlike school, we won't know if you are having problems but there is plenty of support available. Your study advisors in particular will be keen to help you so please do keep in touch with them on the forum.