

Frequently asked questions

A guide for new PGR students

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# Useful Links

**Forms and Guidance** - <https://www.open.ac.uk/students/research/forms-and-guidance>

Contains all the links for the Handbook, PGR Manager guides, the Regulations and information about fees and funding

**PGR Manager** - <https://doctoral-research-system.open.ac.uk/>

The administration system that you will use to keep track of your maximum submission deadline, submit your upgrade and progress reports, and submit your final thesis. You can also request annual leave and study breaks.

**UKCISA** - <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>

Information and advice for international students.

# When do i get my id badge?

**FASS**

These will be handed out by the FASSteam at induction unless they have arranged to post it to you. Contact [FASS-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:FASS-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk)

**FBL**

Please go to the security lodge to collect your pass. Contact [FBL-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:FBL-PHD@open.ac.uk) if you have any difficulties.

**STEM**

Please go to the security lodge. contact your school administrator with any issues. [kmi-phd-enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:kmi-phd-enquiries@open.ac.uk); [STEM-CC-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-CC-PHD@open.ac.uk), [STEM-EEES-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-EEES-PHD@open.ac.uk), [STEM-EI-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-EI-PHD@open.ac.uk), [STEM-LHCS-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-LHCS-PHD@open.ac.uk), [STEM-MS-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-MS-PHD@open.ac.uk), [STEM-SPS-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-SPS-PHD@open.ac.uk)

**WELS**

These will be handed out by the WELS team at induction. Contact [WELS-PhDs@open.ac.uk](mailto:WELS-PhDs@open.ac.uk)

# Can i get student discount?

Once you have your @open.ac.uk email address you’ll be able to sign up for student discount on any website that offers it.

You can also sign up for free Student Discount apps that prove your student status.

UNiDAYS - <https://www.myunidays.com/>

StudentBeans - <https://www.studentbeans.com/uk>

# How do i set up my bank account?

Your stipend can only be paid into a UK bank account once you have been fully registered. We are happy to provide you with proof of income/studentship letter to give to your chosen bank to help you open an account (most banks will request this). Please email [Research-Degrees-Office@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-Degrees-Office@open.ac.uk) to request this. Once you have visited a bank and opened a new account, you will need to complete an OU payment form and send it back to us so we can arrange your payments.

Local banks listed in order of closest to campus:

**Metro Bank** (located in Waitrose)

Address: Unit E, 3 Babbage Gate, Milton Keynes MK10 9SU

Telephone: 020 3402 7760

<https://www.metrobankonline.co.uk/>

**Lloyds Bank**

Address: Lloyds Court, 28 Secklow Gate W, Milton Keynes MK9 3EH

Telephone: 0345 602 1997

<https://www.lloydsbank.com/>

**TSB Bank** (located in The Centre:mk)

Address: 549 Midsummer Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 3BD

Telephone: 01908 230089

<https://www.tsb.co.uk/personal/>

**NatWest** (located in The Centre:mk)

Address: 164-166 Midsummer Blvd, Centre, Milton Keynes MK9 3BA

Telephone: 0345 788 8444

<https://www.natwest.com/>

**Halifax** (located in The Centre:mk)

Address: 12 Midsummer Arcade, Milton Keynes MK9 3BB

Telephone: 0345 720 3040

<https://www.halifax.co.uk/>

**Barclays Bank** (located in The Centre:mk)

Address: 9 Midsummer Place, Milton Keynes MK9 3GB

Telephone: 0345 734 5345

<https://www.barclays.co.uk/>

Many banks can offer students extra perks with their student accounts (who doesn’t love a freebie?!) but it’s worth researching your bank account carefully and all the options they offer.

Things to consider when choosing a new bank:

What kind of account do I want? Current? Savings?

Does the bank charge to open an account?

Are there any additional annual fees?

Does the bank have good interest rates or hefty penalty fees?

Is the branch close by in case I need to go in?

Is their smartphone app good? Does it have the features that I need?

What kind of overdraft do I need?

Are there any extra student benefits or discounts with this bank? And are they worth it?

# When do i receive my stipend?

Your first stipend payment will include two month’s payments and will be paid on 1st November. This will be paid directly into your bank account.

If you already have a UK bank account, you should have completed a payment form at registration. If you didn’t do this, please call 01908 653806.

If you have just arrived in the UK, you’ll need to set up a bank account before completing the payment form. See section 3 for more details.

If you withdraw or your stipend is overpaid, you must repay the stipend. If you submit before your grant expiry date, your stipend will cease. Once your funding expires you will be liable for any remaining fees, so make sure you read the Student Handbook and check your offer letter for the length of your funding.

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# when do i get my doctoral loan?

If you have applied for a Doctoral Loan from Student Finance England, your registration will be confirmed once you have completed registration with the Open University. You will receive your first payment about two weeks after this, as long as the loan has already been approved by Student Finance.

If you are unsure about any of this, please call 01908 653806 or email [research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk).

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# What are transport options in milton keynes?

Bus timetables in Milton Keynes can be found through the council website <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways/bus-rail-and-taxis/bus-timetables-maps-and-travel-updates>

Taxi services are available through apps such as Skyline and Bolt.

# Can i get a rail card?

Students can get a student 18-25 Railcard. If you are over 25, please fill out the mature student form <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/help/faqs/mature-student/> and email it to [research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk](mailto:research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk)

# Can i get a council tax exemption letter?

Full-time students may be entitled to full council tax exemption if they live with other full-time students.

If you don’t share your home with other full-time students, then the property won’t be exempt from council tax, and you’ll get a bill. However, whoever is liable to pay the council tax may qualify for a discount.

[www.gov.uk/council-tax](https://www.gov.uk/council-tax)

You will need proof of your studies to claim full exemption or a discount on your council tax. Please email [Research-Degrees-Office@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-Degrees-Office@open.ac.uk) to arrange your personalised council tax letter. Please don’t forget to let us know your full name, full address, and your council tax offices address.

# Where do i collect equipment?

**FASS**

FASS facilities have been sending out equipment to student’s home addresses if the student has indicated this should happen. Any that are ordered this week can be picked up by the student when they come in for registration and 4th induction from IT-DCA, Wilson H. Contact [FASS-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:FASS-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk).

**FBL**

Students should pick up their IT equipment at the IT-DCA collection point at 9am on 5th October. Contact [FBL-PHD@open.ac.uk](mailto:FBL-PHD@open.ac.uk).

**STEM**

Students should pick up their IT equipment at the IT-DCA collection point at 9am on 5th October. Contact [STEM-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:STEM-Research-student-support@open.ac.uk).

**WELS**

Equipment will be available to collect it from the WELS team. Contact [WELS-PhDs@open.ac.uk](mailto:WELS-PhDs@open.ac.uk)

# How do i connect to the wifi?

* Use EduRoam to contact on your mobile device and personal IT equipment. You should use your [OUCU@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUCU@open.ac.uk) and your password.
* Use OU Staff to connect on OU provided laptops using your OUCU and password.
* If you haven’t yet received your login details, you can connect to The Cloud using your personal email address.

You can call IT if you are struggling to connect on 01908 654 321. <https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-it/Pages/wifi.aspx>

# How do i access Ou systems with my log-in details?

**New usernames and passwords to access OU systems**

At registration you will be given two accounts.

One will be a ‘Staff’ account that you will use to access all Open University systems (apart from PGR Manager). This account will have an OUCU and a password that will expire every 90 days. When you use these details, you should log-in using the ‘Staff sign in’ option on the ‘Sign in to the OU website’ screen <https://bit.ly/3BSU5Vj>.

The second account will be a ‘Student’ account that you would use to access just PGR Manager <https://doctoral-research-system.open.ac.uk/>. This account will have a different OUCU and password – this password does not expire. When you use these details, you should log-in using the ‘Sign in’ (student sign in) option on the ‘Sign in to the OU website’ screen <https://bit.ly/3BSU5Vj>. Click the reset password button when signing in for the first time. This will send a reset link to your @open.ac.uk email.

**Passwords**

The password for your student account (to access PGR Manager) will never expire. Once you have set that password it will never change unless you prompt to change it yourself through the password reset link on the login page.

The password for your staff account expires every 90 days. It is best to change your password before it expires as it is more complicated to change after expiry so we recommend you set a calendar reminder for around 80 days after you last reset your password.

Information on managing your password can be found here: <https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-it/Pages/passwords.aspx>

Information and instructions on resetting your staff password can be found here (this also covers if you have let your password expire or it has been forgotten): <https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-it/Pages/passwords.aspx#Change%20password%20before%20it%20expires>