



Open Study
College

**STUDENT
GUIDE**

Student information guide

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Dear Student,

Welcome to your unique home learning experience!

Congratulations on taking the first step towards your new qualification and new career.

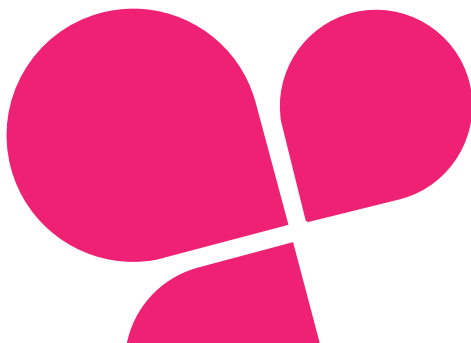
We believe that college study should be so much more than just a course, and that's why we provide an exceptional tutor support service as well as a dynamic range of qualifications. Our number one priority is to ensure that you have the support and tools you need to pass your course and to gain that all-important qualification.

We strongly suggest that you take some time to read through this Student Information Guide thoroughly before you start the course and familiarise yourself with the way that your study method and assessment will work. We have also included some handy hints and tips to get you well on your way to achieving your dream.

We hope you enjoy your course and reach your goals, and don't forget we are with you every step of the way!



Samantha Rutter
Centre Director





About us

So, we know a little about you, but what do you know about us?

Over 50,000 people have enrolled on a course with Open Study College. Our courses allow you to study at your own pace and from the comfort of your own home, with the added convenience of being able to prioritise your studies around other commitments. We believe that everybody should have the opportunity to enrol in further education, no matter what their circumstances.

Open Study College can help you on your way to improving your prospects or changing your career, or simply to learn something new! Most of our courses have no completion deadline, so they are flexible to suit your lifestyle.

We provide powerful, industry-recognised awards that will give strength to your CV. Our qualifications include A-Levels, IGCSEs, CompTIA, Microsoft, ICB, SAGE, NVQs, NCFE, Ascentis, BTEC and CeMAP.

A simple solution to gaining that qualification our courses can really help you turn your life around!

Study guide

1: Writing your assessments

Begin by introducing what the main bulk of the assessment will discuss without giving a full account of the essay. Follow on with a concise explanation of your findings, before fully concluding your argument. Your conclusion should enable readers to understand the reason for the assessment and acknowledge that the conclusion is drawn entirely from the investigation. Remember that your essay should usually have a beginning, a middle and an end. Write in clear sentences and leave plenty of space in the margins for your tutor's annotation. Don't forget to mark your name, address and enrolment number on the cover sheet provided and please do not use folders to submit your work.

2: Be original

Whilst it is a good idea to research your topic for inspiration, never be tempted to copy anybody else's work. This includes copying any text directly from the internet. It is acceptable to use key quotes from other materials, but this must be clearly referenced in your assessment. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in the termination of your course. Be original and take pride in your own work.

To reference a quote or passage of a text in a book, please use the Harvard System of Referencing for example:

Author (year of publication), title of text, place of publication: publisher.

Shakespeare, W. (2004), *Romeo and Juliet*, United States: Sterling Juvenile.

3: Read, read, then read again!

Read your first unit thoroughly, and then read it again! You should not be trying to memorise the content word-for-word; rather, you are aiming to familiarise yourself with the style and method of teaching. Be sure that you are fully comfortable with the content and that you understand the objective before you attempt to complete your first assessment. Once complete, we advise that you put the assessment to one side for a day before picking it back up and editing it. We also suggest that you re-read the assessment question before you submit it to reaffirm the purpose of the answer.

4: Organise your study

Organisation is the key to effective studying, so it's important that you find a way that suits you. Highlighters, dividers, folders and notepads are all useful tools in your bid for organisation. Use highlighters to mark key points that you may wish to revisit. Always file away your notes and assessments in an order that makes them easily accessible.

5: Prioritise your study

What takes priority over your studies? Do you need to pick the kids up from school at 3pm? Or do you have a doctor's appointment after work?

Write a daily to-do list to prioritise your time. Squeezing in study time between engagements is not a good idea as it will not allow you to focus properly and in the back of your mind, you will be conscious of your pending commitment.

Study at a time that allows you to fully concentrate on the task in hand. If this means waiting until the next day, then so be it. An hour of focus is more effective than a dozen five-minute sessions of cramming.

6: Time to study

Are you an early bird who is more alert in the morning, or a night owl who can study into the early hours? Perhaps you study effectively at 6am, before breakfast, or maybe a late night study session motivates you. Understanding when your brain is most effective can help you to prepare for study. Whatever time of day it is that you feel most alert, try to schedule your study time within this period.

Study guide

7: Study in short bursts

The most effective way to study is through intermittent, focused periods, rather than studying for hours at a time. Your brain finds it easier to store and recall information if you work with short breaks. It is difficult to store new information when you study for any longer than 40 minutes at a time. Try studying for 25 minutes, then taking a five minute break, and then studying for another 25 minutes. Not only is this useful for absorbing information but it will also reduce the risk of you getting flustered or stressed. When you return to your studies you may notice something that you hadn't spotted before, or perhaps a new idea will come into your head.

8: Make notes, notes then more notes

Rewriting text in your own words will help you to digest the information more easily. It will be much easier to study and revisit difficult sections with support from your own notes. Why not read and re-read the information, cover it with your hand, recite the writing in your own words and then check to see if you were right? Another good revision technique is to create a mind-map. This is a diagram designed to reflect the way your brain works, by focusing on a central point and then branching off into different areas using key words.

9: Creating a plan

A study plan will help you to manage your time effectively and monitor the amount of work you have put into completing your course. You can identify how to progress with your studies and decide when you should allow for this. It will also enable you to predict a completion date for your course. Create a timetable and allocate a certain amount of time to each assessment. Realistically, how long will it take you to read through the unit? How long will you need to complete it? If you are ahead of schedule then you can reward yourself with a night off. Above all, a balanced and well-planned schedule will prevent you from wandering off course.

10: Set achievable goals

Don't set yourself impossible goals! Not only will this decrease your motivation, you might also end up rushing through your assessments to keep up with your over-ambitious schedule. This may result in work that does not reflect your best standard. Map out your current commitments and responsibilities and identify realistic periods where you can study without being distracted.

Tutor support

Your dedicated tutor will help you every step of the way!

Your personal tutor provides an invaluable service that we believe exceeds that of any other college. You will receive important feedback and advice at a one-to-one level from a highly qualified professional. Your tutor will also mark your assessments, suggest areas for improvement and help you to establish an effective learning technique.

Your tutor will provide a guaranteed period of tuition for the length of your course. If your course has no deadline then you will be provided with full tutor support until you complete the course. However, if you are intending to take a break, please let us know as soon as possible.

Each tutor has varied expertise, providing valuable knowledge and experience for each course. They are dedicated and enthusiastic about passing on their know-how to budding students. You can find your personal tutor's contact details on your welcome letter. Simply contact them, no matter how big or small your question, and they will be there to give you the solution you need.

The tutors here at Open Study College have been enlisted for their outstanding professional backgrounds, as we only recruit the best and most qualified individuals. We have a wide range of tutors on our team, meaning we can offer courses that other home learning colleges are unable to provide.

At Open Study College, your success is our success!

Caroline is one of our longest residing tutors and lends her experience in bookkeeping and accountancy to our students:

"I am very proud to be a member of what I consider to be the best home learning provider in the country. I really enjoy getting to know the students who enrol with the college and take great pleasure in helping them achieve their qualifications. Distance learning requires a certain amount of discipline from students, but with the right support and the odd 'Band-Aid', there isn't a single mountain our distance learning students can't climb!"

Students are in frequent contact with me once they have received their study materials, and many questions are asked and answered (some over the odd late-night cyber cup of tea). Students vary in age, gender, experience and skills and there's never a dull moment being a tutor for Open Study College. Remember that no matter how small or silly you might think your question is, we've heard it all before and are happy to help; that's what we're here for. Don't suffer in silence – get in touch and get your answer."

Plan **your** learning

1: Draw up a schedule

Create your own timetable so that you can schedule study time around your other commitments. If you did more than planned, treat yourself to a night off the following week.

2: Create your own 'office'

Ensure that you have somewhere quiet and clutter-free to use as your 'office' for the duration of the course. Make sure that the rest of your household know you are not to be interrupted.

3: Eat brain-boosting food and keep hydrated!

Nuts, seeds, fish, pineapple, tomatoes and blackcurrants are foods which help to improve your mental ability. Drink enough water to keep your body hydrated and your brain function at its maximum. It is well-known that mental performance can fall by up to 10% when you are thirsty.

4: Drop the distractions

It has been proven that students who listen to music or have the TV on are unable to study as effectively as those who work in silence. So unplug the phone, turn off the TV, switch off your iPod and don't even think about logging onto Facebook!

5: Take short breaks

Your brain finds it easier to store and recall information if you work with short breaks. Try studying for 25 minutes, followed by a five minute break, and then study for another 25 minutes.

6: Enjoy the fresh air

Ensure that there is plenty of fresh air circulating through your study room. According to several clinical studies, extra oxygen has been shown to enhance mental performance and memory recall in healthy active adults. Going for a short walk is a great way to take a break, increasing your oxygen intake and allowing you to move your muscles.

7: Get enough zzz...

It is really important to get enough sleep so that when it comes to studying you will feel refreshed and raring to go. Aim for eight hours sleep a night, but anything over six hours is usually enough. It has even been suggested that an afternoon power nap can increase the brain's productivity and boost memory.

Setting aside **time for learning**

Fill in the table to create your own weekly schedule. Try to allocate no less than 30 minutes to each period of study. Also remember to take a break every so often when studying for long periods of time. Simply highlight or tick the timeslots in which you plan to study.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before 8am							
8am - 10am							
10am - 12pm							
12pm - 2pm							
2pm - 4pm							
4pm - 6pm							
6pm - 8pm							
8pm - 10pm							
10pm - 12am							
After midnight							

Assessment **tracking**

Don't lose track of your assessments with this handy checklist!

Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
Returned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												

Assessment and examination guide

Assessments

Unless stated, all units are compulsory and must be studied for successful completion of the course. For each unit there will be learning outcomes with a corresponding assessment, which will assess what you have learnt throughout the unit. There may or may not be a word count for your assessment, but please ensure that you clearly include all points and paragraph your assessment effectively. We expect a high level of presentation throughout your work.

Always back up your work and make a hard copy of all assessments prior to submission.

Each assessment brief will outline details of the task, the learning outcomes that are being assessed and the relevant assessment criteria. You must read the task carefully and answer all parts of it. Also look at the grading criteria, if applicable, as this is what your tutor will use to grade your assessment and will give a good indication of what is required for higher grades.

As you work through your course you will come across Guided Learning Activities. These help you to gauge and further your understanding of the subject. You should not send these to your tutor only the formal assessment at the end of each unit should be submitted for marking.

Submitting your assessment

When submitting your assessment please use **Microsoft Word** (if using Open Office, save as Microsoft Word 97/2000/XP (.doc) format). If you have any other type of word processor, please ask your tutor if they are able to read it in that file format.

When you submit your assessment you must include the assessment front cover sheet as we cannot accept any assessments without this. If the front cover sheet is missing then it will be returned without feedback or a grade. A front cover sheet can be found at <http://support.openstudycollege.com>. Simply fill in the form and attach it to your assessment.

You should receive confirmation of receipt of your assessment within 48 hours (excluding weekends), but if you have not heard from your tutor within this time, contact them to enquire as to whether they have received your assessment.

Your tutor will return your assessment within two weeks along with feedback and grades. The feedback will explain what you did well and will give advice on how you can improve on your performance in the future.

It is not recommended to submit assessment for your entire course in one go. If you do this, your tutor will have two weeks to grade **EACH** assessment.

Posting your assessment

Only post assessments if you have agreed this with your tutor, and ensure that you only post photocopies of the original versions in case of failed postal deliveries. If you choose to submit work by post, expect a longer time period for the return of your assessment with feedback. You are only required to staple the top left corner of the pages; please do not use any folders or plastic wallets. Make sure that you have paid enough postage on the envelope when posting your assessment. We are unable to return any submitted work. Your feedback will be given via the helpdesk.



Assessment and examination guide

Your tutor and your assessments

Your personal tutor is responsible for assessing your performance throughout the course. When you submit your assessments, your tutor will evaluate and mark your submission before returning it to you on a standard feedback form. You will find your tutor's contact details in your welcome letter, and your tutor will contact you within the first week of enrolment.

Each assessment brief will have details of what learning outcomes are being assessed, the task and the assessment criteria. You must read the task carefully and answer all parts of it. Also look at the assessment criteria, as this is what your tutor will use to grade your assessment and will give a good indication of what is required for higher grades.

We provide assessment criteria with each assessment brief so that all of our tutors' marking is consistent. All results are monitored to ensure fairness and moderation across the board.

You may also be provided with learning activities which do not need to be submitted to your tutor. These will enable you to monitor your own progress in between assessments.

Please note: All marks are provisional until confirmed by the OSC internal verifier and the Awarding Body. In practice, most marks do not change. The discovery of plagiarism will invalidate any previous mark awarded.

Referred assessments

If an assessment does not meet the pass criteria, it will be referred with tutor feedback explaining why it has not passed and detailing what you need to do to achieve a pass. If your assessment is referred for the second time, your tutor will provide feedback and will also refer your assessment to the college.

The college will then contact you outlining what is required for you to pass the assessment. After this second referral, you will only be able to submit the assessment for a third and final time.

If the assessment still does not meet the pass criteria after the third attempt, the student will be informed and, as no more submissions can be made for that assessment, it will be recorded as a fail. If you do not pass a unit of the course after all of these stages, you will not be entitled to the awarding body certificate, but you may continue with your course.

On completion of the course you will be sent a Record of Achievement and an Open Study College certificate of completion.

All re-submitted assessments can only achieve a pass grade.

Open Study College policies & procedures

Policies

All policies can be found on the Helpdesk under the Solutions tab - <http://support.openstudycollege.com>.

Appeals and Complaints Procedure

This procedure is designed to provide you with a fair and consistent method of appealing any alleged failures to comply with certain standards in the provision of assessment and tutor support. This includes appeals wished to be made against the decision(s) of any tutor or internal verifier on behalf of the College and also those made against the decisions made by an external awarding body.

Appeals

Should you wish to appeal against any assessment decision made on behalf of the Open Study College, the following procedures should be adhered to:

1. You should notify the College in writing as early as possible.
2. The letter should state your intention to appeal, providing full details of the circumstances of the appeal.
3. The appeal should be sent to:

Appeals & Complaints, Open Study College, 6140 Knights Court, Birmingham Business Park, Solihull Parkway B37 7WY.

Once the appeal has been received, the matter will be assessed and you will be notified within two weeks of the outcome. The decision made by Open Study College will be final.

Complaints

We take any complaints very seriously and hope that we will have done everything possible to avoid the need for a formal complaint. Please contact us before your problem escalates to this stage and we'll do everything we can to help you. If you still feel that your preferred route to a solution would be to make a formal complaint then it must be sent in writing to the above address. Please provide adequate details of the complaint so that it can be fully investigated.

Depending on the nature of the problem and the level to which it needs to be investigated, we advise that you should expect a reply within two weeks of the complaint being received. If at the end of Open Study College appeals and complaints procedure, you are not satisfied with the outcome you can contact your awarding body.



CALL US ON: 08444 15 78 79

OPEN STUDY COLLEGE
6140 KNIGHTS COURT
BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS PARK
SOLIHULL PARKWAY B37 7WY

EMAIL: INFO@OPENSTUDYCOLLEGE.COM
WEB: OPENSTUDYCOLLEGE.COM
TEL: 08444 15 78 79
FAX: 08444 15 78 77