



The Open University

Credit transfer for BA and BSc Open degrees

Essential information for students

What is credit transfer?

Our credit transfer schemes give recognition for academic study you have already successfully completed at the higher education level elsewhere. This may reduce the amount of credit you need from Open University courses to achieve your degree.

This leaflet explains the credit transfer arrangements for our Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) Open degrees. These degrees are awarded for any combination of course credit that meets the credit point and level requirements. They can be awarded either as a BA or as a BSc depending on the balance of the materials you have included. As a general rule for the Open degree with honours, at least 180 of your 360 credit points must come from materials that have been judged to be particularly suitable for the degree you want. For the Open degree without honours, the minimum amount is 150 credit points.

You will find more information about degrees in the Open programme in the current undergraduate prospectus or from the Study at the OU website, www.open.ac.uk/courses.

We also award bachelors honours degrees in subjects. If you want to submit a claim for transferred credit against a bachelors degree in a subject you should read the Essential Information leaflet for the relevant degree. These are available to download from our website www.open.ac.uk/credit-transfer in the 'How to Apply' section. If you decide to submit a claim for credit transfer towards one of our bachelors degrees in a subject, your claim will also be assessed against the rules for an Open degree at the same time and you will receive notification of both outcomes.

What kind of study is eligible for credit transfer?

The University makes awards of transferred credit only for study undertaken since 1971.

If you already have an award of transferred credit for study you completed prior to 1971 it will not be taken away. However, if you now seek reassessment of your award of credit transfer either because you have undertaken additional study or if you want to take advantage of subsequent policy changes, while your current award will not be reduced you may not be able to gain any additional credit.

You can claim credit for successful study towards any of the qualifications which appear on our approved list and have been taken with an approved awarding body.

These all meet the following conditions:

- they are at the UK higher education level;
- they are formally assessed, with external validation or moderation;

- they are essentially academic (although they may include an assessed practical element).

These are some of the forms of study that have been approved for credit:

- Undergraduate degrees from UK or Republic of Ireland degree awarding bodies
- Foundation degrees
- Edexcel, BTEC or SQA/SCOTVEC HNCs and HNDs
- NCEA/HETAC National Certificates and Diplomas
- Initial Teacher Training Certificates and Diplomas from the UK or Republic of Ireland
- Pre-registration Nursing courses
- NVQ or SVQ levels 4 and 5 (registration from January 1998)
- Membership examinations of certain UK professional bodies
- Certain courses from countries outside the UK

If you want to check whether your previous study is on the list, you can do this in one of two ways:

- If you have access to the Internet, you can find the full list on the OU website at www.open.ac.uk/credit-transfer.
- You can contact the Credit Transfer Centre by letter, telephone, fax or e-mail. Contact details are given on the last page of this leaflet.

How much credit will I receive?

Any award of credit transfer will be based on the credit rating of the course(s) that you have studied. Where the study does not carry a credit rating we may be able to make an award on the basis of 120 credit points for each full-time academic year (or part-time equivalent) of successful higher education study.

The list on the OU website shows the amount of credit awarded for successful completion of the full programme. We can award credit for successfully completing part of a course, provided the study was formally assessed.

We award transferred credit in units of 5 credit points, up to the maximum of 240 credit points that can be counted towards the Open degree with honours. The maximum that can be counted towards the Open degree without honours is 200 credit points. You can find details of the maximum amount of credit transfer that is permitted towards a bachelor degree in a subject in the appropriate Essential Information leaflet for each award. For the Open degree without honours, 60 credit points are required at level 3 and for the Open degree with honours, 120 credit points are required at that level. In all cases, this credit must come from the study of Open University level 3 courses so, regardless of the actual academic level of the study on which your claim for credit transfer is based, we will make your transferred credit award at level 1 and/or level 2 only.

We can award transferred credit for postgraduate study, and you can count up to a maximum of 90 credit points of postgraduate-level study towards a bachelor's degree. This can come from an award of transferred credit, OU course credit or a combination of the two.

If you have completed more than one eligible period of study, we can usually add together awards of transferred credit, provided there is no overlap in the content of the courses and the total award does not exceed the 240 credit point maximum that can be counted towards the Open degree with honours, (or 200 credit points which is the maximum that can be counted towards the Open degree without honours).

We examine in detail the syllabus or outcomes of the course which you followed. If there is significant overlap with any OU course, you will not be allowed to count that OU course towards your degree along with your transferred credit, or any courses which form an excluded combination with that course.

When making awards of transferred credit we do not take into account the grade you achieved in your previous study. The final classification of your OU honours degree will be based entirely on the grades you achieve in your OU courses or approved collaborative scheme courses.

How does transferred credit count towards an Open degree?

- For an Open degree with honours you will need a total of at least 360 credit points. That is the equivalent of three years of full-time study. You will need to include at least 240 credit points at Level 2 or above, of which 120 needs to be at Level 3. You may be able to count up to 240 credit points of transferred credit. However, all 120 credit points at Level 3 must be studied with the Open University.
- For an Open degree without honours, you will need a total of 300 credit points, including at least 180 at Level 2 or above of which 60 need to be at Level 3. You may be able to count up to 200 credit points of transferred credit. However, all the remaining 100 credit points required from OU courses must be above Level 1 and of those at least 60 must be at Level 3.

For details of the maximum amount of credit that can be used towards the different named degrees, please see the relevant Essential Information for the award.

We will always award the maximum amount of transferred credit for which your study is eligible. Whether you can use all of it will depend on your choice of degree and your choice of courses.

Collaborative scheme credit

We offer a small number of schemes of academic collaboration that have been concluded with other universities in the UK. These allow you the opportunity to study subjects we do not offer, and to count credit from such courses towards your OU degree. Credit is counted at the appropriate level and associated grade.

The maximum amount of credit from any non-OU study that you can claim within any bachelors degree with honours is 240 points, whether this be from transferred credit, collaborative credit or a combination of the two. For an Open degree without honours the maximum is 200 points.

Further details about these schemes are available from your Regional or National Centre, from the Credit Transfer Centre or from the website www.open.ac.uk/collaborative-schemes.

Making a claim

If you wish to apply for credit transfer, please complete the claim form. This includes detailed guidance on how to complete it and what original documents you will need to send in with it. We cannot make an award of transferred credit unless we have all the information we need on your previous study. It is your responsibility to obtain the information needed.

Reassessing an award

Following receipt of an award of transferred credit, you may ask for your claim to be reassessed if one or more of the following apply:

- you have completed additional study not included in your original claim;
- you can provide further information which was not available at the time the original claim was assessed.

We will assess your whole profile of previous study. If the prevailing regulations are less favourable, while your existing award will not be reduced, you may not get an additional award of transferred credit.

Abandoning your award

You may abandon all or part of your award of transferred credit at any time before you are awarded your Open University qualification, provided that you advise the Credit Transfer Centre in writing not later than two weeks after the despatch of the course results or the award of transferred credit that would qualify you for the qualification. Once the qualification has been awarded, transferred credit cannot be abandoned. Awards of transferred credit that have been abandoned can be reinstated, partially or in full. Please contact the Credit Transfer Centre for advice.

Recognition of your studies for other purposes

If your Open University degree contains certain specified courses, it may be possible to use them as the basis for membership of a professional institution. However, it is always up to the professional institution concerned whether they will accept study for which you have an award of credit transfer in place of OU courses and you must check this with the professional institution. You can find more information in our Recognition Information Leaflets which are available from your Regional or National Centre or on our website www.open.ac.uk/recognition.

Linking credit for previous Open University study

If you wish to count previously studied Open University courses towards your qualification, you do not need to complete a credit transfer claim form. Most OU prospectuses will tell you whether your courses can count towards your chosen qualification but remember that there are rules on the amount of unique study (courses not already counted towards another OU qualification) that you must include for each OU qualification you can get. Details for each qualification are given within the qualification regulations available at www.open.ac.uk/our-student-policies. If you would like further information or would like to link a course to your qualification, please contact the Awards and Ceremonies Centre on 01908 653003 or acc-gen@open.ac.uk.

If you have previously made a credit transfer claim

If you made a credit transfer claim before the end of 1999, it will have been assessed under different rules, and will not have levels or BA/BSc designations associated with it. The information in this leaflet does not apply to those “old format” awards. You should contact the Credit Transfer Centre if you want information on how your transferred credit counts towards the Open degree or the possibility of having your award reassessed under the new rules.

If you have any questions

We hope that, after reading this guide, you will know whether you are likely to be eligible for a credit transfer award towards your BA or BSc degree. If you have decided to claim, please do so as soon as you can. That way, once your claim has been assessed and your award of transferred credit notified to you, you will be in the best position to know the remaining credit you need to obtain from OU courses to qualify for your Open degree. If, however, you are still not sure whether you might be eligible for an award, please consult the list of approved courses on the website, or contact the Credit Transfer Centre.

Credit transfer awards are made in line with the policy set out in these notes and based on a formal assessment of the documentation accompanying your claim. Any advice you receive from the staff of the Credit Transfer

Centre, or any other area of the University, about credit for particular qualifications is intended only to help you decide whether to make a claim. This advice does not commit us to making an award.

Please remember that our policy towards individual courses may change from time to time. Your claim will be assessed under the policy in force at the time you send in your form.

Our commitment to you

We aim to provide a high quality of service to everyone we deal with. If you are having problems with your claim for credit transfer, please contact the Head of the Credit Transfer Centre. If you are not satisfied, we will refer your query to the Head of Assessment, Credit and Awards within Student Services.

If you require a version of these notes in an alternative format, such as large print, please contact us

The Credit Transfer Centre
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MK7 6AS

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