The Open University
SCOTLAND

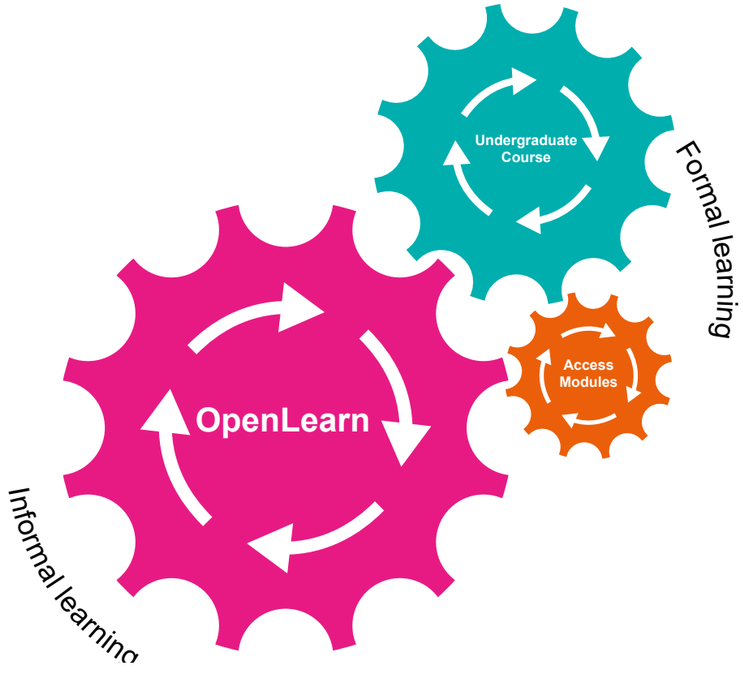
OPEN PATHWAYS

Guide for learners

Welcome to Open Pathways

Welcome to Open Pathways – the start of your learning adventure. Whether you're returning to learning for the first time since school or you're already learning but not online, there is bound to be something in this guide to grab your interest. We hope you enjoy finding your way around OpenLearn – the Open University's home of free learning. There are thousands of resources, from one minute videos to 50 hour courses, on every subject you can think of. This guide will get you started on your learning journey. Where it will take you is up to you.

MAPPING PATHWAYS FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL LEARNING WITH THE OPEN UNIVERSITY



UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

- Courses and qualifications
- Personal interest
- Career development

ACCESS MODULES

- Arts and Languages
- Science, Technology and Maths
- People, Work and Society

OPENLEARN

- Explore OU material
- Try out OU courses
- Badged open courses
- Prepare for formal study

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WHAT IS ‘OPEN PATHWAYS’?

Open Pathways is a resource for people who are thinking about getting back into learning.

With Open Pathways, you decide where and how far you take your learning journey. You decide how much time you want to commit to studying, the level you want to study at, and the pace you progress at.

Open Pathways will help you:

- **Explore free online learning**
- **Identify the resources that interest you**
- **Reflect on where you are now, where you want to be and how to get there**
- **Develop study skills**
- **Understand routes into formal study**

You may be keen to learn a new skill, to fulfil your potential, or improve your career opportunities. You may just want to learn more about a subject that interests you. You can work through this guide yourself, with a friend or in a group.

What do I need to get started?

All you need is a computer, tablet or smartphone and internet access. If you don’t have wifi at home, you can access your local library or community learning centre.

OpenLearn

OpenLearn is the home of free learning at The Open University. You can explore a huge range of OU resources and try out free courses at:

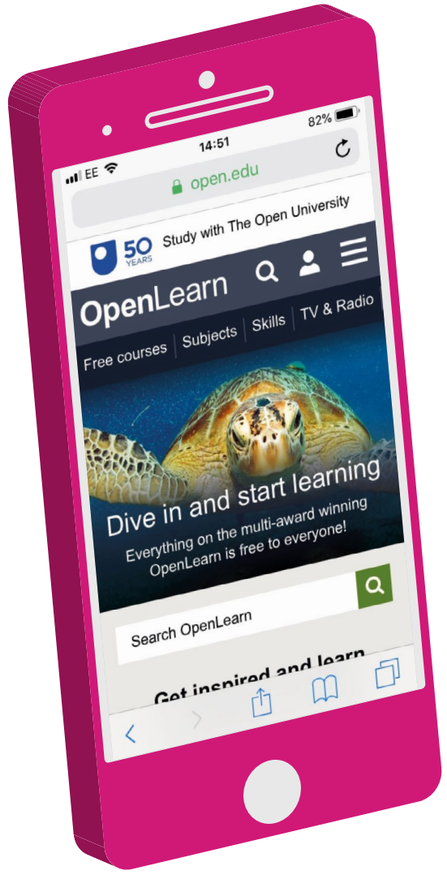
www.open.edu/openlearn

How do I use this guide?

This guide is designed to help you identify your learning needs and options, to navigate your journey through OpenLearn and, if you decide to take it further, towards more formal study.

The Open Pathways pack contains:

- **A guide for learners**
- **Pathways on different learning themes**



OpenLearn homepage, 2019

This guide is available online and as an interactive pdf at **www.open.edu/openlearn/education/open-pathways**

We recommend you work through this guide along with an online version, so you can follow the links to the OpenLearn materials.

GETTING STARTED

Opening an OpenLearn account

You don't need an account to access the free resources on OpenLearn but it can be a useful first step on your learning journey. Signing up is free and takes two minutes. All you need is an email address. Having an account means you can:

- **Save your favourite activities so you can easily find them later**
- **Keep track of your progress**
- **Enrol on courses**
- **Display your achievements as you earn badges and certificates**

Finding your way around OpenLearn

There are a number of ways to find what interests you on OpenLearn. You can use the subject icons on the home page to explore all types of content under the following headings:

- **Health, Sports & Psychology**
- **Education & Development**
- **History & The Arts**
- **Languages**
- **Money & Business**
- **Nature & Environment**
- **Science, Maths & Technology**
- **Society, Politics & Law**

The Free courses tab across the top of the screen will open a full catalogue of courses available in each subject, in alphabetical order. Each listing will tell you the level the course and how many hours it will take. The Skills tab will take you to Skills for Work and Skills for Study resources.

You can also use the search bar to find what you're looking for, such as Scottish history, writing crime fiction, or how to draw a pie chart. There are so many resources on OpenLearn, there's sure to be something on your chosen subject.

Guide to levels

All the resources in this guide are Introductory (**level 1**) which should be accessible to most learners. Intermediate (**level 2**) resources will usually be aimed at university level, while Advanced (**level 3**) are postgraduate level. Watch out for the level of any resource that looks interesting and choose the level that's right for you.

Accessibility on OpenLearn

OpenLearn content is reviewed to make it as accessible as possible. Many of the courses can be downloaded in different formats and used offline or on your preferred device, including Word, PDF, Kindle, and ePub. You can adjust the size and colour of the text, and the colour of the background. Modern browsers allow you to override the entire colour scheme. Older browsers will display most content, but some features won't work.

Learners with screen readers should be able to access all the text-based content.

Learners with screen magnifiers or who use specific operating system or browser settings should not have any difficulties with the site.

Video and audio material can be downloaded and over 90% have textual descriptions and/or transcripts.

This guide is available as an interactive pdf which you can find at:
www.open.ac.uk/Scotland/openpathways

If you would prefer to access it in an alternative format, such as a Word or large print document, please contact:
Scotland-engagement@open.ac.uk

EXPLORE

On OpenLearn you'll find a vast range of free learning material. Even if you only have 5 minutes to spare, you will find something to interest you.

There is so much to choose from on OpenLearn, it can be hard to know where to start. In this section, here are some short tasters to help you get started. They are all introductory level and take less than an hour.

Explore (less than an hour)

- Ocean Explorer
- The History of English in Ten Minutes
- Slip Slide Collide
- Design in a Nutshell
- A Support Net
- How Women Changed the World
- 12 famous Confucius quotes on education and learning
- Finding the Truth
- 20th Century Asian Britain in photographs
- Five Reasons You Should Care About Mindfulness
- Detecting deception
- Life or Death Decisions

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

If you've enjoyed exploring the materials in the last section, why not challenge yourself with a short course?

The courses suggested in this section take up to 6 hours and are all at introductory level.

If you haven't already registered on OpenLearn, now is the time to do it (see **page 4**). You need to have an account to enrol on courses. Most of them offer a statement of completion to recognise your learning.

If your exploring has given you the confidence to navigate OpenLearn, you can dive right in and search for what interests you. See **page 4** for tips.

Short courses (1 - 6 hours)

- Starting with psychology
- Beginner's French: food and drink
- Making sense of art history
- A brief history of communication
- An introduction to business cultures
- The impact of technology on children's physical activity
- The value of coffee
- Eating to win: activity, diet and weight control
- Particle physics
- Understanding children: babies being heard
- Speeches and speechmaking
- Living with death and dying

GET THE BADGE

Open badges are used to recognise informal online learning.

Badged Open Courses

Open badges are a digital record of your learning. To earn one, you must complete the course and pass the online quizzes. Badges don't carry any credit (for qualifications) but they're a great way to demonstrate your achievement, and provide evidence of continuous professional development. You can display your badge on your OpenLearn profile or on social media platforms.

To earn a badge, you must enrol on the course which means you'll need to register for an OpenLearn account (**see page 4**). Badged courses on OpenLearn are 24 hours long and are divided into eight units. You can study for three hours per week over eight weeks to get into the habit of structured learning, or you can progress at your own pace.

Below you will see some examples of the badged courses available on OpenLearn, and new ones are added every month so keep an eye on the website.

Badged courses (24 hours)

- Introducing the voluntary sector
- Succeed with Maths part 1
- Understanding autism
- The Scottish parliament and law making
- Digital literacy: succeeding in a digital world
- The science of nutrition and healthy eating
- Managing my money for young adults
- Forensic psychology
- Succeed in the workplace
- Exploring sport coaching and psychology

MORE OPEN LEARNING

OpenLearn Create

Like OpenLearn, you can do free courses and gain badges on OpenLearn Create. It is a platform that allows the Open University to create open learning resources with partner organisations in Scotland and all over the world. Some of these include:

- **Caring Counts – a reflection and planning course for carers**
- **Dyslexia: Identification and Support**
- **Understanding Parkinson's for health and social care staff**

OpenLearn Create also makes the tools available for you to create your own resources or adapt existing ones to suit your learning needs.

www.open.edu/openlearncreate

FutureLearn

FutureLearn is a platform owned by The Open University that hosts a diverse range of courses from universities around the world. These are called massive open online courses (MOOCs) because they are open to all and there may be thousands of people signed up for each course, all studying at the same time. Like OpenLearn, anyone can register for a course and it is free to take part.

The difference is that courses on FutureLearn are time limited, so you have to keep up with the pace. The course is made available week by week and you study at the same time as other learners from around the world. Another difference is that, once you've finished the free course, there is a cost if you would like a certificate of completion. MOOCs can be a good 'next step' between informal and formal learning. They provide an opportunity to see if you can study in real time over a number of weeks without committing to formal study yet.

www.FutureLearn.com

Community learning

You may be keen to brush up on your literacy, numeracy or digital skills or maybe you are looking for a more practical subject to study next. Look at what your local college offers, or try adult learning classes in the community.

Informal learning is available through your local community learning team, library, or other organisations such as the Workers Education Association. Contact them about adult education classes in your area.

Workplace learning

If you are interested in learning that's related to your job, talk to your employer or Union Learning Representative (if you have one) about learning opportunities available at work. If you have colleagues who would like to explore OpenLearn too, you could set up a study group.

Here are some ideas for learning in the workplace:

- **Identify courses related to your job. For example, subjects such as dementia may be relevant to health and care workers.**
- **Develop digital skills by getting into online learning.**
- **Run informal sessions where learners get together to discuss their learning and how they put it into practice.**
- **Maybe someone at work would be happy to facilitate a session or even a course. OpenLearn courses can be studied offline too!**

> "It boosted my confidence an awful lot. I believed in myself. I felt like the sky is the limit, I can do anything."
>
> **LEARNER**
> **CARING COUNTS COURSE**

NEXT STEPS

Now that you've had a chance to explore OpenLearn, spend some time thinking about your next steps.

When you have had time to think about it, you can decide to continue with informal learning online or try a different challenge, including formal study.

Reflecting on my learning

Review your progress and reflect on how your learning is going. You can use the learning log on **page 23**, a notebook or a Word document for this. Write down the different subjects you have covered and some comments on how you found the resources in terms of interest and level of difficulty. This will help you identify which areas appeal to you and the level that's right for you. Have you found yourself making links between what you've learned and things you come across in everyday life, for instance watching the news or talking to friends? Have you surprised yourself with what you've learned, maybe feeling strongly about an issue you didn't know about before?

Reflecting can help you look at your choices and motivations, and to appreciate the skills and qualities you already have. OpenLearn Create has a range of courses that can help you reflect on where you are and where you would like to be.

The Reflection Toolkit is for anyone who is considering making a change in their life.

Caring Counts is for carers who are thinking about a life outside of their caring role.

Reflecting on Transitions is for New Scots, such as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Career planning

If you are thinking of studying with a career goal in mind and want to plan your next steps, the Open University careers website offers information and tips on choosing and planning your career. The website is open to anyone, at any stage of their learning journey.

If you go on to register for formal study with the OU, you can also access our Careers & Employability Services where you can access a range of services including one to one consultations, webinars, forums and take the next steps to becoming OU Career Confident.

www.open.ac.uk/careers

There are also OpenLearn resources to get you thinking about your career.
You can find these and more on OpenLearn:

- **Skills for work**
- **Developing career resilience**
- **Succeed in the workplace**

STUDY SKILLS

Making time

It can be hard to find the time for studying in your day. When time is tight, some learners fit in studying early in the morning when the house is quiet, on the train when commuting, or in the evening instead of watching TV. It can take a bit of self-discipline and it helps to have support from friends and family. Here are some tips:

- **Just do it! Often a task doesn't take as long as you expect**
- **Tell family and friends it's your study time and put the phone on hold**
- **Avoid a big meal before you study**
- **Organise your study space so that it's comfortable and you can find everything easily**
- **Have a quick break every half hour**
- **Set small goals for your study session with rewards at the end – 'I'll read this section before I make that coffee'**
- **Do a deal with yourself – 'I can go to the pub tomorrow if I study tonight'**
- **Mark or highlight any parts that are holding you up and move on – then return to them when you have read more (often it will make more sense)**
- **Stop at a good bit – it makes it easier to start again.**

Study skills resources

OpenLearn has courses that can help you develop your study skills and prepare for formal study. See OpenLearn: Skills for Study

- **Being an OU student**
- **Am I ready to be a distance learner?**
- **Essay and report writing skills**
- **Get started with online learning**
- **Succeed with learning**
- **Taking your first steps into higher education**
- **Reading and note-taking: preparation for study**

If English is not your first language, there are OpenLearn resources to help you develop your language skills for studying:

- **Everyday English 1**
- **English: skills for learning**
- **Am I ready to study in English?**

This guide is available online and as an interactive pdf at **www.open.edu/openlearn/education/open-pathways**

We recommend you work through this guide along with an online version, so you can follow the links to the OpenLearn materials.

PATHWAYS INTO FORMAL STUDY

Formal study is assessed learning that may lead to a qualification. It takes place in schools, colleges, universities and other education and training providers. It can also include distance learning, workplace training and professional qualifications.

Access modules

An Open University Access module is a good place to start if you have been out of formal education for some time or left school without qualifications. Access modules are around SCQF level 6 and take 30 weeks to complete, with nine hours study per week. You will have a personal tutor to support you by telephone.

There is a choice of three broad subject areas:

- **Arts and Languages**
- **People, Work and Society**
- **Science, Maths and Technology**

www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/access

Making your learning count

Making your learning count is a new Open University module that lets you gain credit for informal study you've already done on OpenLearn or other online platforms. The module is worth 30 credits and counts towards the OU's Open qualifications. If you have 150 hours of informal learning under your belt, this could be an option for you.

www.open.ac.uk/courses/modules/yxm130

Law making in Scotland

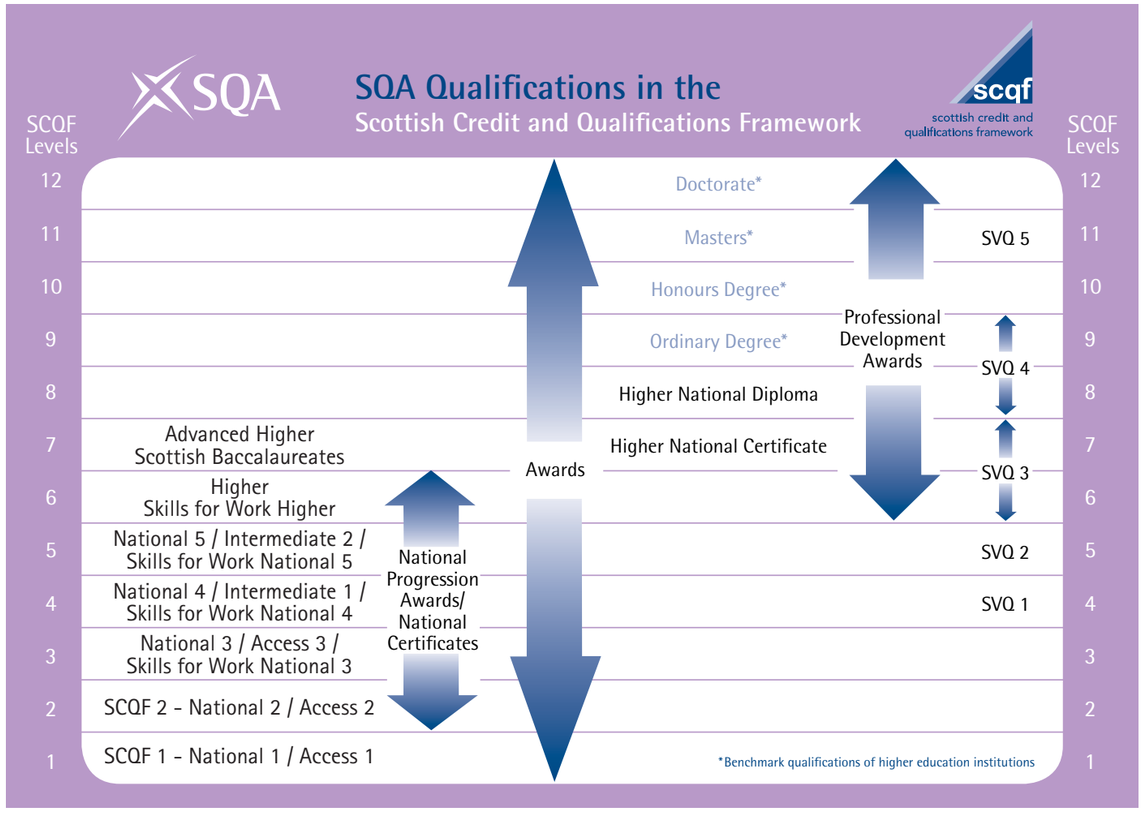
There are four badged courses on OpenLearn covering different aspects of the law in Scotland. If you complete all four, you can register for the *Law making in Scotland* module, which is worth 10 credits towards an OU qualification.

- **Scottish courts and the law**
- **Legal skills and debates in Scotland**
- **Law and change: Scottish law heroes**
- **The Scottish Parliament and law making**

www.open.ac.uk/courses/modules/wxm151

Mapping Scottish qualifications

Formal learning is also called accredited learning, as it counts towards a credit-rated qualification. Have a look at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) table to see where any qualifications you already have sit within the framework so you can decide the level you choose to study at next.



SCQF framework

There is no limit to the amount of time you can spend on OpenLearn or the number of courses you can take.

www.open.edu/openlearn/get-started/badges-come-openlearn

Get credit for previous study

If you have studied at SCQF Level 7 or above in the last 16 years, you may be able to count it towards an Open University qualification. SCQF level 7 includes a HNC or HND at college, previous study at University or qualifications gained through your job. Transferring credit will reduce some of the time you have to study with the OU to get a degree or other qualification.

How much credit you can be awarded will depend on the qualification that you wish to study for. Our Open degree allows you to transfer credit and tailor your degree content to meet your current needs, regardless of the subject you previously studied. For example, you may be able to transfer up to 240 credits from a HND or 120 credits from a HNC to an Open qualification. Degrees in a named subject may allow different credits, depending on the relevance and level of your previous study.

www.open.ac.uk/study/credit-transfer/

Graduate apprenticeships

If you would like to work towards a degree that's related to your job, a graduate apprenticeship may be an option for you. The Open University offers Graduate Apprenticeships in:

- **Cyber Security (undergraduate and postgraduate level)**
- **IT: Management for Business**
- **Software Development**

Our Graduate Apprenticeships are available to employees aged 16 years and over, who live and work in Scotland and are in a relevant role. Through tutor-supported online learning, you can flex learning around your work schedule, reducing time away from the workplace. As you learn, you can embed your new skills in the workplace.

www.open.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/degree-and-higher/cyber-security-and-software-development-graduate-apprenticeships

"I was able to pursue my work and my family commitments and after two years I would come out with an Honours degree. The Open University gave me the opportunity to just follow straight on from my HND."

OU STUDENT

IS PART-TIME STUDY RIGHT FOR ME?

The Open University provides part-time and distant learning so you can study at the times and in the place that best suit you. 74% of our students study while working part-time or full-time. The flexibility of the OU also appeals to students with caring responsibilities, parents, and others who may prefer not to travel to university.

There are no formal entry requirements for most courses. OU modules generally start in October and February and last nine months, though there are shorter modules and start dates at other times of the year.

As an OU student you will be allocated a course tutor to support you through each module.

Choosing your first module

If you feel you're ready to study at university level, have a look at the range of courses available.

www.open.ac.uk/courses

The Pathways documents in this pack look at different themes and suggest OpenLearn resources and OU modules which may be of interest to you. These include:

- **Digital skills**
- **Leadership and management**
- **Health and care**

With the Open University in Scotland, you can study one module at a time, so you don't have to commit yourself to doing a degree or other qualification at the start.

Talk to us

If you would like to discuss the best place to start studying with the OU, contact our advisers on **0300 303 5303**.

What will it cost?

There is a fee for OU modules and Access courses but nearly two thirds of OU students in Scotland study for free. The Part-Time Fee Grant will cover your module fees in full if your personal (not household) income is below a certain amount – currently £25,000 per year.

www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding

Support for disabled students

Our flexible system of learning supports the largest disabled student community of any UK university. Find out more about the support we offer:

help.open.ac.uk/topic/disability

Learning log

Exploring OpenLearn

Activity	Subject area	Comments
Example: Design behind the bike	Engineering and technology	Films were enjoyable + interesting. Level OK but some new language.

Challenge yourself

Course	Subject area	Comments
Example: Speeches and speech-making	Money and management	Liked this! Could be useful in my job

Get a badge

Badged course	Subject area	Comments
Example: Succeed with maths - part 1	Maths	Not too difficult (except for fractions). Feeling more confident with numbers.

www.open.ac.uk/scotland/openpathways

Reflecting on my learning

Which subjects have you most enjoyed? Why do think this might be?

What have you learned about how you learn?

What challenges did you face when studying and how did you tackle them?

Next steps

Think about what you'd like to do next.

What are your personal learning goals?

What steps will you take to reach your goals? You might find the pathways documents useful for this.

The Open University

SCOTLAND

Scotland-engagement@open.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk/scotland/openpathways

@OUScotland

OU in Scotland on LinkedIn

www.facebook.com/OpenUniversityinScotland

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All information in this guide is indicative and correct at the time of going to press. June 2019

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