IGCSE STUDENT HANDBOOK

REQUIRED READING FOR ALL STUDENTS on IGCSE Level programmes
Update August 2019

Dear Student,

We would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to your course. At Oxford Learning College, we seek to ensure that all students have an enjoyable and productive relationship with the College, grow both academically and personally and leave satisfied.

By enrolling and taking responsibility for your learning, you have started on a path that will interest and challenge in equal measures and allow you to develop, grow and leave with knowledge and skills that will be of great use to you in the working environment.

We wish you the best of luck on your journey!

Darren Wood and Deborah Coombe

Contents

1.Introduction 4
Your Campus 5
Extra Material – "Merchandise" 6
Post – "Letters and Certificates" 6
Tutors 6
Course Specific Information 6
Examinations 7
2.Working with Your tutor 7
What your tutor can do for you 7
What your tutor can't do for you 7
How to make the most of your tutor interaction 7
Appropriate contact with your tutor 8
3.Hints for effective writing 9
1st Vs 3rd Person 9
Formatting your work 9
Referencing 10
How to reference 10
Intertextual references 11
How do I make an Intertextual Reference? 11
How do I include reference if there are multiple authors? 11
What if I can't identify the author, or it is a corporate author? 11
What if the source is a website, without a clear author? 12
What if the source is cited by another author? 12
Reference list 12
Reference images 13
Proofreading 13
Plagiarism 14
Avoiding plagiarism 14
4.Uploading your assignment 14
If you accidentally upload an assignment in the wrong unit slot 15
5.Appeals on feedback from your tutor 15
Student Complaints Procedure 15

6.Special considerations and reasonable adjustments 16

1.Introduction

Important Notice: This handbook is required reading for all students.

This handbook has been written to help you settle into your course and get started. You should check the handbook regularly for updates; the cover page indicates the date of last revision. Updates will be uploaded

on the system for students to have access.

As you prepare your plan for studying and further for submitting an assignment, you need to read the handbook again as there is valuable advice here to help you succeed.

Your learning and completion of your course remains your responsibility, including the liaising with your tutor and the planning and submitting of work in a timely fashion.

Getting in touch with Student Services

Most students will already have spoken to student services during the enrolment process. Remember, Student Services are here to help you! If you have any problems with your account, and payment of course fees or any technical issues, Student Services is your first point of contact except for questions of an academic nature regarding your course.

If your question is academic related, you will need to communicate with your tutor directly as she/he will be the expert in terms of the academic content of your course and materials. It is the requirement of the Awarding Bodies that qualified Academic professionals are to provide all levels of academic advice.

You can contact Student Services between 9AM and 5PM (GMT) from Monday to Friday. If you leave a message outside of these times, Student Services will get back to you as soon as possible on the next working day. The quickest way to get in touch with student services is to use the following methods:

- Telephone 01865 595 263
- 'Ask A Question' Link on Campus

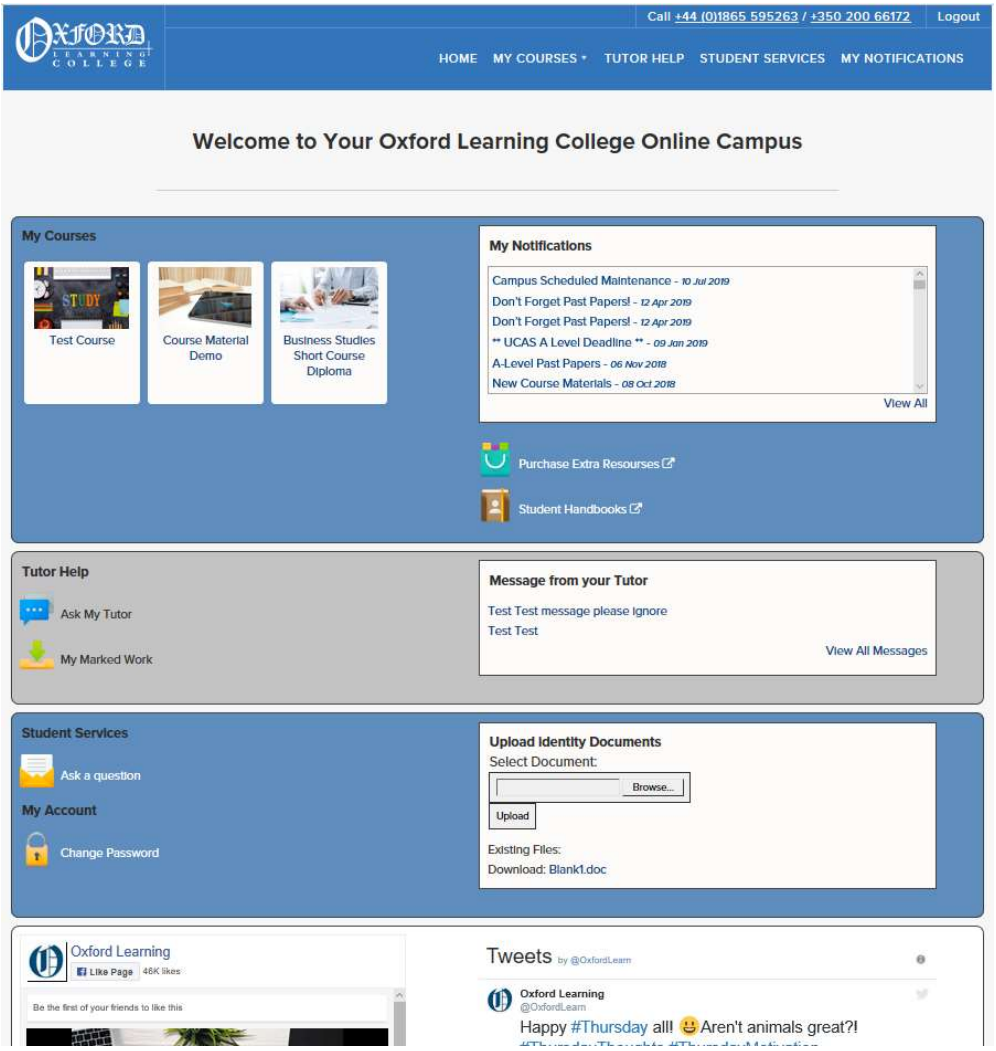
All telephone calls to and from Student Services are recorded for training purposes.

Your Campus

Campus is Oxford Learning College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Campus is where most your time studying will be spent and is where you access your course materials and contact your tutors or Student Services.

Once you have enrolled and received your log-in details, you will be able to log into Campus.

A screenshot of the Campus homepage can be seen below:



A full guide on how to use Campus and all the areas open to you on the system can be found ready for downloading on the Student Handbook page.

Extra Material – "Merchandise"

All Oxford Learning College study materials can be found online via your Campus account. You will not able to print your course materials. If you prefer a paper version of your materials, please note this is an additional cost found on the Merchandise section of our website. We also offer portable digital materials, although these are not printable, you are welcome to select this instead.

Post – "Letters and Certificates"

Oxford Learning College will not send anything via post unless the student has purchased this additionally via the Merchandise section on our website. We aim to be as paperless as possible to minimise our environmental impact.

Tutors

You will be assigned with a tutor for the duration of your course who will be able to answer any questions you may have regarding the materials. Please note that in most instances, your tutor will not contact you first, you will be required to contact the tutor should you ever need their assistance.

Course Specific Information

More information on your course can be found at the very bottom of our offline Campus home page. The answers to commonly asked questions can also be found there. Below is a quick guide to the different courses we provide: -

Examinations

Examinations are held in May and June of each year. You will be required to sit these externally in an examination centre of your choice. You may also find that local schools and colleges will allow you to sit the examinations at their establishments.

Please note that our IGCSE courses do not contain coursework no practical elements.

Your Exam code will be on the website and your materials. However, if you are in any doubt, please feel free to contact Student Services to attain your exam codes and the specific syllabus number required. The last thing you want to be doing is registering for the incorrect exam that does not match the course you have been studying.

The respective awarding body for this type of course is Edexcel (Pearson).

2.Working with Your tutor

You will have support throughout the duration of your course from your tutor, who has a great deal of experience and knowledge in the subject matter. All Oxford Learning College Tutors are trained in delivering distance learning courses and will be able to assist you.

What your tutor can do for you

Your tutor can provide advice on how to help you work through the course materials, answer your questions, and guide you through challenging concepts.

What your tutor can't do for you

Your tutor cannot plan or complete your work for you, in part or in whole. They cannot proofread your work prior to submission and cannot simply "give you the answers".

How to make the most of your tutor interaction

When contacting your tutor, you will get the best results and quickest responses if you can format your question in a clear, concise manner that allows your tutor to see exactly what you are struggling with.

If you are stuck on something, before contacting your tutor try working through the course materials that cover the concept before sending the question. If you are still stuck, then ask your tutor for help, making sure to include the following in your message:

- Unit Number
- Page numbers (If applicable)
- Your question
- An explanation of your understanding of the topic (to allow your tutor to identify any errors and check your progress)

The reason we ask for these details is to allow your tutor to answer to your question as directly and as quickly as possible, which minimizes the time before you can progress on your course. Consider the following two questions.

Question 1.

Hi, I don't really understand my course, can you help?

Thanks, Student A

Question 2.

Hi, I don't understand how Ansoff's concepts might not apply to a modern global business, as indicated on page 200, Unit 7 of the course materials. Can you help?

Thanks, Student B

The first question lets the tutor know that you need help, but requires the tutor to ask a number of questions before they understand what you need help with, to which you will have to respond before they can answer your question. This delay means they cannot help you to progress at an optimal pace.

The second question is much better, because it lets the tutor know exactly where you are, which concept you are working on and why you are having difficulties with it. This means their response can be directed at your question, so you will receive an answer much more quickly and you can move on in your studies.

Appropriate contact with your tutor

Oxford College takes interaction between students and Tutors very seriously and regularly reviews messages to ensure that standards are being maintained and to check that all contact is appropriate. All messages are logged and saved on Campus.

Oxford College requires all parties to be polite, respectful and courteous at all times and will not tolerate rude, offensive or discriminatory language.

Students are not permitted to share contact details or to contact tutors outside of the College messaging system. Tutors are instructed to ignore messages from students that are not from the Campus system.

In the rare event that the Campus messaging system is unavailable, student services will facilitate communications between tutors and students.

3.Hints for effective writing

When you write, you need to ensure that your writing follows these key points:

- Uses clear, correct language.
- Uses correct terminology.
- Uses technical language where needed.
- Does not use excessively wordily words for the sake of it.
- Use British spelling where possible.
- Harvard Referencing System (HR) to be used throughout your work.

By writing in a specific and consistent style, your assignment will be much easier to read and evaluate. Using the correct terminology, as well as technical terminology is expected, but take care not to use excessively complex language for the sake of it. Aside from adding to your limited word count if applicable, it will not benefit your grade, but misusing complex language may make it harder to understand your point.

Tutors and Assessors are Human too!

Remember that your tutor does not want you to fail. However, they do have to read through many pieces of work from students each week. By following the above guidelines, you can ensure that they find your work easier to read and understand.

1st Vs 3rd Person

Generally, you will be expected to write in the 3rd Person. This means that you should avoid phrases like we, you and us. Instead you should be using phrases like he, she, it, they, him, her and them.

Example:

1st Person - “In this assignment, I will examine how theories of business management have developed over the last 2 years.”

3rd Person - “Business management theories have changed over the last 2 decades, with a variety of a different approaches emerging.”

Formatting your work

The specific format of your work is relatively open, as the only restrictions are:

- It must be saved in an MS Word format.
- It should be written in blue or black fonts. It should be easy to read.

You will want to ensure that your work is presentable and most importantly, easy for your tutor/assessor to read. We suggest that you use a standard font,

such as Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman. Do not use fonts that would appear unprofessional, *or are hard to read.* Your work should be written in size 11 or 12 fonts and double spaced unless otherwise stated.

Make use of paragraphs to break your assignment up into easy to read chunks. This will make it easier for your Tutor/Assessor to read. In reports, headings and sub-headings should be used where necessary.

When it is relevant, you may include visual images. On the Insert tab, the galleries include items that are designed to coordinate with the overall look of your document. You can use these galleries to insert tables, headers, footers, lists, cover pages, and other document building blocks. When you create pictures, charts, or diagrams, they also coordinate with your current document look. You can easily change the formatting of selected text in the document text by choosing a look for the selected text from the Quick Styles gallery on the Home tab. You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab.

Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly. To change the overall look of your document, choose new Theme elements on the Page Layout tab. To change the looks available in the Quick Style gallery, use the Change Current Quick Style Set command. Both the Themes gallery and the Quick Styles gallery provide reset commands so that you can always restore the look of your document to the original contained in your current template. On the Insert tab, the galleries include items that are designed to coordinate with the overall look of your document.

Referencing

As mentioned in the getting started section of the Handbook, you are expected to use the Harvard Referencing System (HR) throughout your work, including intertextual references and providing a reference list at the end of your assignment.

There are several reasons why you need to use the HR system, including showing your sources, demonstrating that you have read widely on the topic and providing proof for claims. Most importantly it helps your tutor to identify which parts of the work are your original writing, which come from other sources and which portions have been inspired by other authors. By omitting relevant references to a text, you are passing off the work of others as your own i.e. plagiarism.

How to reference

Learning how to reference is straightforward, as you simply must follow a specific process for each reference. Referencing can be time consuming if you don't keep a list of your sources, you may wish to use the appropriate section in your Portfolio to list all references that you use when researching and writing your assignment.

To reference a source, you need to follow two steps:

1. Intertextual Reference - Place a reference to the source in the body of the text or assignment.
2. Reference List – Add your reference to your reference list at the end of your assignment.

Intertextual references

When should I use an Intertextual Reference?

You should use an intertextual reference in one of the following circumstances:

- You have made a factual statement.
- You have referred to someone else's work, theory, concept or idea.
- You have used an indirect or direct quotation.
- You have discussed, paraphrased, inferred, or otherwise alluded to someone else's work.

How do I make an Intertextual Reference?

An intertextual reference requires, at a minimum, the author's surname name, date of publication and page number, if known. Depending on how you have presented the information requiring the reference there are several options on the use of the reference. Two examples are seen below.

"In addition, by comparison of gender, life expectancy is higher for women than for men almost everywhere in whole world (Kalban 2002, PP.45)."

"According to Kalban (2002, PP.45), "Today, males have greater mortality than females throughout the world."

You can see that when you have used the authors name directly in the text, you simply need to use the publication date and page. If, however, the name does not arise naturally in the text, you will need to include it in the reference.

How do I include reference if there are multiple authors?

If you are referencing multiple authors *from separate sources,* they must be referenced individually, in the manner explained above. If you are referencing multiple authors from the same source, then you need to do one of two things.

If there are 2 or 3 authors, you need to reference all their surnames, as above. If there are 4 or more authors, then you need to use the phrase "**et al." which means and others in Latin. For example:**

"However, research by Wallace et al. suggests that this trend may be reversing (2009, PP.42)"

"Recent research suggests that this trend may be reversing. (Wallace et al. 2009 PP.45)"

"However, Wallace et al. state that "there is reason to believe that this trend will not continue and is in the process of a reversal" (2009 PP.45)

What if I can't identify the author, or it is a corporate author?

By corporate author, we mean that there is no individual author, which is common for works published by a large organisation or governmental bodies, such as the NHS and BBC. In this case, you may use the abbreviation for the organisation in the reference, provided that you have previously used the full

title of the organization earlier. You then enter the date as you would for an individual author.

What if the source is a website, without a clear author?

In this case, you need to establish the ownership of the website. For example, if you were to quote from the OxfordCollege.ac website, you could see that the copyright is claimed by Oxford Learning College in 2014. Note that websites have special requirements when adding them to the reference list.



Figure 1 - One method for locating the owner of a website.

What if the source is cited by another author?

You may encounter references that are cited in another author's work that you wish to include. While it is preferable that you read the original authors work, you may reference it in the following way.

"Williams suggests that although the trend may be subject to fluctuations, it has remained consistent over the last 10 years (2007 cited in Jones, 2009, p.99)

Reference list

At the end of your assignment, you need to build a reference list. It will save you time and energy to build this list as you add references, rather than trying to build it as you work. You can use the reference table in your portfolio to help you to build the list.

Your reference list should be in alphabetical order. If you have used multiple sources from the same author, or authors that share the same name, place them in chronological order. You can see a sample of a reference list entry below, which has been broken down into its components.

Bloggs, J. 2012. How to build a reference list. Oxford: Generic Press

First, you include the author's name, followed by initial(s). Next you include the date of publication, followed by the title in *Italics*. Then you insert the city or town where it was published and the publisher. Pay particular attention to the punctuation – it is very important. If the book is not the first edition, you need to include the edition after the title. The example above would read "Bloggs, J. 2012 H*ow to build a reference list* 4th Ed. Oxford: Generic press"

Websites need to have additional information added. You must follow the same conventions as a normal reference, but you need to add a link to the page in question and include the date on which it was accessed.

You should also keep a screenshot of the page if possible, in case it is removed or updated.

Reference images

Reference images

When referencing images, you need to include the photographer/artist, year in which it was created, its medium and its location. Please see the template below for an example. **Single Author**

Bloggs, J. 2012. How to build a reference list. Oxford: Generic Press

Multiple Authors

Bloggs, J. and Doe, J.J. 2013. How to build a reference list, The ultimate guide 2nd Ed. Cambridge: One Up Press

Website

Oxford College, 2014. Top tips for using the internet for research. [Online] Available at: < http://www.oxfordcollege.ac/news/top-tips-using-internet-research> [Accessed 11 July 2014]

Image (Online)

Brooke, B. 2013. Orange Eyes [Electronic print] Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/89367001@N08/9385598696/> [Accessed 11 July 2014]

Image

Evans, R. 2014. A street image [Photograph] (London, Tate Gallery)

Proofreading

You should always proofread your assignment before you upload it to your tutor, as once uploaded the work cannot be retrieved. Proofreading ensures that you don't make silly mistakes that will negatively impact your work. It also ensures that you have a chance to review your work and ensure that it is well written.

If possible, leave the assignment alone for 24-48 hours before proofreading, as you will find that more errors can be spotted this way. Ideally, have your friends or family read it for you. Be wary about giving a copy to other students. You may have the best intentions but if they use your work you may find yourself in trouble.

A note on Assignment/Essay writing services

You may be tempted to use one of many online Assignment/Essay writing services to complete your assignment/essay for you. These sites will at best, generate an assignment that is unlikely to be suited to your study and at worst will send you a plagiarised assignment.

All assignments are electronically scanned before being reviewed by your assessor. Plagiarised content will be found and you will not receive credit for it.
Do not use assignment/essay writing services!

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of passing off the work of another author as your own and if you are guilty of it, you will be liable to severe penalties, including but not limited to,

Avoiding plagiarism

Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional, but by its very nature it is extremely hard to differentiate between a mistake made in good faith and overt plagiarism. Students are therefore advised to take a great deal of care with references.

In addition, before submitting work, you are required to make a declaration that the work is your own, making a false declaration is classed as ´malpractice´ which can also result in dismissal from the course.

Students can make use of a range of Anti-Plagiarism software to check their work before submission, but the single best way to avoid a penalty is to be honest, write your own work and ensure that you carefully reference all sources of information that you have used. As a general rule, you should expect less than 10% of your work to consist of quotes or any other use of other people's words. In some disciplines, such as Law, there is often a necessity to use greater amounts of direct quotations, this is expected and only becomes a problem if referencing is inaccurate.

4.Uploading your assignment

When you have completed your assignment, you will need to upload it to your tutor/assessor. To do this, you need to log into Campus. Once logged in, you should click on the upload assignments link and click on your course. From there you will be asked to click a button, indicating that you are uploading your own work and that you are aware of the penalties of uploading plagiarised content. You will then need to click the browse button to locate your assignment.

When you are uploading, you should receive a message and asked to confirm you have read this message before you are able to upload. Make sure you read and understand the message before confirming.

If you find that you do not receive this message please report this immediately to Student Services.

If you accidentally upload an assignment in the wrong unit slot

Please contact student services as soon as possible, using the Ask a question link.

5.Appeals on feedback from your tutor

Programmes are delivered by an online system and therefore processes are in place to ensure that assessment is rigorous but flexible and fair to accommodate the needs of all involved. In addition, it is important within distance learning delivery to maintain a student-centred approach and consider the difficulties with meeting the learning preferences of students within a virtual learning platform which makes facilitation of learning more complex that via a traditional model.

With this ethos in mind the assessment process allows for considerable flexibility yet offers security of process in a timely and professional assessment and feedback process. Assessment is carried out by qualified tutors and verified to ensure accuracy and consistency and that we are maintaining the integrity of the level of course you are studying.

The system is highly effective and reliable, being endorsed by awarding bodies such as Edexcel/ATHE/CIE and the ABC National Award Organisation.

Although Oxford Online College are confident in the assessment process, it is acknowledged that differences of opinion may arise and errors are possible even in the most rigorous system. On return of an assignment, if you have any queries with regards to the feedback or grades you receive, you should contact your tutor who will be happy to offer further explanation or guidance. If your concern continues, further verification will take place. The result of this further verification will be final.

Student Complaints Procedure

The College values greatly the views of its students. It aims, therefore, to manage complaints in a way that is sensitive to the needs of each specific case, and supportive of the College's overall ethos.

There are a number of informal channels through which is it hoped that most problems can be resolved. These have been explained earlier. If, however, you need to pursue a complaint formally after attempting to resolve your issue via the informal channels, you can be sure that the College will treat it seriously and impartially, on the basis set out in this document.

Advice on how to use the complaints procedure is available from a variety of sources, but in the first instance students are encouraged to contact the Student Services Team, by sending an email to contact@oxfordcollege.ac

What complaints can be considered?

1. Grounds for complaint (after informal attempts) might include:
    - Dissatisfaction with standards of academic provision (for example, the content and structure; resources and facilities; arrangements for assessment and information provided to you about your course).
    - Dissatisfaction with the quality of supervision and tuition.
    - Failure to meet obligations promised to you by the College.
    - Persistent deficiencies in standards of services you have been promised.
    - Harassment, bullying and victimisation by College representatives.

2. Generally, complaints are most easily resolved if they are raised at the time the problem first occurs and with the person/s directly involved. Often, students will be able to resolve their issue, simply by discussing it with a Student Advisor or with their personal tutor.
3. If students cannot, or feel unable to, resolve concerns in this way, they can put their complaint in by completing a complaint form available from the student services team. The Academic Director, or a nominee, will seek to provide them with a response to their complaint within 21 working days.
4. Once your complaints form has been received, your case will be investigated and a full report presented to the Academic Director for consideration.
5. Non-completion of this form will mean a complaint is not investigated.
6. Refunds on the purchase of your course are available only if claimed within the first 14 days of enrolling.

6.Special considerations and reasonable adjustments

Oxford Learning College recognise disabilities are of a diverse nature and we do not tolerate discrimination on the basis of disability. We allow fair access to our courses for all students.

Equal opportunities and diversity categories include age, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity.

All candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or understanding to the level of attainment required to enrol and succeed.

Barriers to entry and continuous learning via on-line are removed where possible.

However, in terms of sensory disability the responsibility lies with the student to make appropriate arrangements necessary to progress with their learning. Unfortunately, the college does not provide equipment necessary for students with visual difficulties.

Students who suffer with health during their course are provided with support upon medical reports from doctors, psychiatrists and other specialists. The College, wherever the Awarding Bodies will allow, will provide extension to programmes as requested. Individual student tutors are made aware, without disclosing confidentiality, of the problems their student may be experiencing.