OXFORD LEARNING COLLEGE SHORT COURSE DIPLOMA STUDENT HANDBOOK

REQUIRED READING FOR ALL STUDENTS on Oxford Learning College

Short Course Diploma courses

March 2021, v1

Welcome to Oxford Learning College

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 you 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

Academic Directors of Oxford Learning College

Contents

1. Introduction 4
Your personal information 4
Contact with your tutor 5
Asking for help 5
Your responsibility 5
Your course materials 5
Appropriate communication with others 5
2. Your Short Course Diploma Course 7
Overview 7
Duration of your course 7
3. Using Campus – Your on-line environment 8
Contacting your Tutor and Student Services 8
Uploading your work for marking 9
4. Working with your Tutor 10
What your tutor can do for you 10
What your tutor can't do for you 10
How to make the most of your tutor interaction 10
5. Planning your studies 12
Introduction 12
What to consider when planning 12
Using the Study Planner software ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
6. Studying 13
Study environment 13
7. Your Coursework 14
Portfolio of your work 14
Deadlines 14
8. Approaching your Assignments 15
Assignment questions 15
The introduction 15

The main body 16
The conclusion 16
Writing style 16
Proofreading 16
Uploading your assignment 17
If you accidentally upload an assignment in the wrong unit slot 17
9. Feedback from your tutor 18
Manual marking 19
Appeals on feedback from your tutor 19
Errors in materials 20
Student Complaints Procedure 20
10.Special considerations and reasonable adjustments 22

1. Introduction

Important Notice

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 to.

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.

You can contact Student Services between 9AM and 5PM (GMT) from Monday to Friday by telephone. 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
- Via email: contact@oxfordcollege.ac

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

Your personal information

To support you on your course, we need to obtain and process personal information.

By enrolling in a Course and using the Campus site, you are acknowledging that you have read and accepted the Conditions of Use and the Privacy Policy that are on our website.

The College use personal data in a transparent way and only with your full cooperation and knowledge.

If you have any query regarding the use of your personal data, send your query in writing to gdpr@oxfordcollege.ac

Contact with your tutor

All contact with your tutor is to be conducted via your Campus account. Do not give out personal contact details, such as email addresses or phone numbers and do not accept contact details from tutors. Notify Student Services if this occurs.

Asking for help

We are here to help! If you have any problems at any point during your course, you can contact us for assistance. Student Services and your Tutors are on hand to help you, but have distinct and separate roles. To help you get help quicker, see the following breakdown of who to contact:

Tutors should be contacted for the following reasons:

- Academic Questions about course materials and content
- Questions about assignments
- Academic guidance on the course

Student Services should be contacted for the following reasons:

- Technical problems
- Fee payments
- Password/login issues
- Course material glitches, eg typos.
- Change of circumstances/address/contact details
- Referencing Assistance

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

Your responsibility

Due to the nature of distance learning, you are expected to be self-motivated and driven when it comes to studying. Your tutor will not chase you for work, nor will they check in with you if you haven't submitted any work, this is entirely up to you to manage.

Your course materials

All Oxford Learning College study materials can be found online via your Campus account. If you wish to have hard or pdf copies of your materials, refer to website: https://www.oxfordcollege.ac/courses/merchandise/

Appropriate communication with others

Oxford College takes interaction between students, Student Services 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 towards or by tutors, Student Services or others.

Students are not permitted to share personal 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.

2. Your Short Course.

Overview

Short Courses currently consist of 10 units which are covered over 10 weeks.

Certification is awarded by Oxford Learning College.

Within the materials you will see compulsory assignment tasks, at least one per section of your course. It is essential that you complete all these tasks. You will find a section on assignments later on in this handbook.

This Short Course can be used to gain entry to a Level 4 Diploma or higher.

Please note, however, that this programme does not contain any academic credits nor UCAS points. If the achievement of academic credits or UCAS points is important to you and you think you may have enrolled on the incorrect course, contact Student Services.

Duration of your course

Your course life begins as soon as your log-in details have been sent to you. Once your course has expired, e.g.10 weeks, your account will be disabled.

If you find that during your 10 weeks, you may need more study time, please contact Student Services.

3. Using Campus – Your online environment

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 find yourself on the home page of your account, your "On Campus" terminal. A screenshot of this can be seen below:

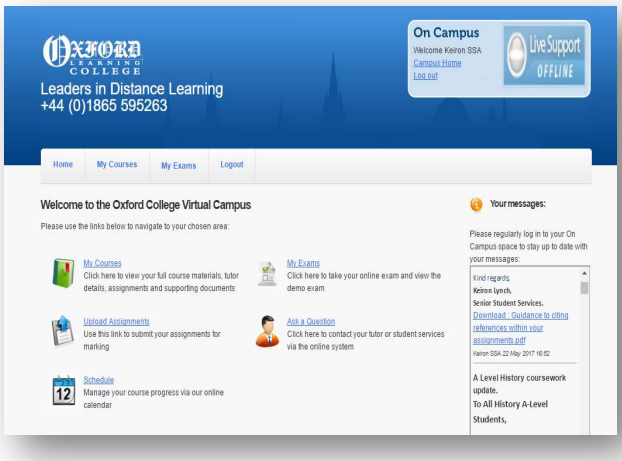


Figure 1 - Screenshot of Campus

- My Courses – This is where you will find your course and assessment materials
- Upload Assignments – This is where you will upload your assignments for marking and download your assignments with tutor feedback.
- Ask A Question – This is where you can message Student Services and your Tutor. You will receive an email notification when your message is responded to and can come back to the message thread to continue your discussion.
- Schedule – This is your course planner. Come here to plan your studies, set dates for assignments, and check to see if you are running on schedule.
- Noticeboard – Here you'll see important messages from Student Services and your Tutors, so be sure to check it regularly.

Contacting your Tutor and Student Services

- Student Services can be contacted via email as well as via your Campus account. Use the Ask a Question link to send a message to your tutor; you will not have their email address. We recommend you contact your tutor in the first instance, just to introduce yourself. Do this by using the Ask a Question link.

When you send a message via your Campus account, use the Ask a Question link. It opens a message thread that you can come back to review your responses. You will also get an email notification when your tutor or Student Services respond back to you. Make sure you log into Campus to respond, as tutors cannot contact you via email.

- The messages threads will remain open for the duration of your course, so you can refer to them at any point.
- Tutors are expected to respond to respond to any enquiries within a five-working day period.
- Tutors are only available to answer course queries via the Campus system alone.

Uploading your work for marking

When you upload an assignment, the Campus system automatically allocates it to the appropriate slot on your account. For example, your first assignment will go to slot one and so on.

Note: If an assignment after a unit of study comprises more than 1 task, all tasks for that one assignment must be completed before uploading for your tutor.

Therefore, if you upload the wrong document, contact Student Services immediately.

When submitting your work, make sure it is in Microsoft Word format.

4. 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 progress 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 assignments for you, in part or in whole. They cannot proofread your assignments 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 suggest you include 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 Business Management, can you help?

Thanks, Student A

Question 2.

Hi, I don't understand how Ansoff's concepts of management might not apply to a modern global business, as indicated on page 200, Unit 1 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.

5. Planning your studies

Introduction

To make the most of your time on the course and to help you achieve the best possible results, we strongly advise students to take time at the start of the course to carefully develop a study plan.

Plans can range from simple target dates for completion of units, to very specific breakdowns and timetables of daily study. There is no one-size-fits-all plan, you will need to work out which plan works best for you.

As a rule of thumb, if you are highly self-motivated or have extensive experience in the area of study, you can use a simpler plan. If you find that you struggle to motivate yourself, or find it difficult to concentrate, then you may benefit from a more detailed timetable.

What to consider when planning

The key points to consider when planning are:

- Length of your course
- Study time suggested to you
- Self-Assessment Assignments
- Tutor marking and feedback time – can be up to 7 days.

When setting out your plan, you should ensure that you are realistic when setting goals. You may want to throw yourself into the course headfirst – and we in no way want to discourage your enthusiasm! – but you should consider if you can sustain the initial rate of work.

6. Studying

This section is an overview of how you will be studying your course materials. All students learn differently, so not all parts will be suitable for your personal requirements. However, this section outlines 'best practices', which will be beneficial in part or whole for most students.

Remember that your notes will form part of your course portfolio, which may be requested by the College or your Tutor. Your portfolio can also be used as part of your Continuous Development Plan (CPD).

Study environment

Whenever possible, you should try to set aside a designated study environment in which you are able to focus entirely on your studies. Some of the key features you should aim to achieve are:

- Quiet and relatively isolated place where you're not distracted.
- Minimal interruptions – not just a noise household, but also other forms of distraction, such as social media notifications, phone calls, TV etc.
- Purposeful environment – space set aside for study only.
- Comfort – assemble everything to help you study – cup of tea, snack, blanket if you think you may get cold!
- Sufficient lighting – natural light is the best; if this is not available make sure you have sufficient lighting so you're not squinting etc.
- Use study tools – whether pen and paper or digital ways to make notes, note pads etc. Some people use index cards to note key points to help revision. We recommend you back up notes to a spare memory stick or use a cloud service such as Dropbox or Evernote

At Oxford Learning College, all study materials are presented in written format, either online or in Paper/PDF form. You will be required to read through the materials and carry out additional research or self-assessment exercises where directed to do so in the text.

7. Your Coursework

Portfolio of your work

Students are required to keep a digital portfolio throughout their time on the course.

Its purpose is to give your studies a central reference point and it may be requested by the College or your Tutor at any point during your course. A portfolio can be expanded to your needs, but should contain the following as a minimum:

- Course notes copies.
- Copies of your self-assessment assignments.
- Copies of your annotated assignments, (assignments returned by your tutor).

Deadlines

There are no specific deadlines for presenting your assignments for marking by your Tutor. However, you are expected to complete all assignments within 10 weeks of enrolling.

8. Approaching your Assignments.

Your assignments are designed to familiarise you with your materials and prepare you for your online examination. They assess your "active learning" and submission to your tutor is mandatory.

If you prepare for the assignment beforehand, you will produce a better assignment. This is important because it will help you to test your knowledge and can also be a useful revision tool.

When you work on your assignment, try to remember that structure and presentation is very important. You need to convey a logical approach where key words and themes can be easily identified; this demonstrates confidence and knowledge of the subject topics.

Don't rush an assignment – they are a chance to test your knowledge and check your progress. Make the most of this opportunity.

Remember, an assignment may contain more than 1 task. Complete all tasks for the assignment you are working on before uploading it for your tutor to mark.

Assignment questions

- Carefully read the assignment question.
- Read the question carefully – try to think about what is it really asking.
- Identify key words, especially verbs, these will refer to the 'doing' part of the question and will quickly help you to assimilate the main points and generate a structured plan.
- Prepare a plan – helps you gather your thoughts and ideas into an organised, logical sequence as well as help you formulate a sensible answer. It will also help you reduce repetition and avoid irrelevant information as well as keep you on track for the main points. Include:
  - ✓ Key themes of your answer.
  - ✓ Key points and the order in which you plan to present them.
  - ✓ Outline of the main ideas that you intend to convey in your answer.
  - ✓ Checklist formulated against the assignment question to help avoid missing any points.
  - ✓ Have an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion.

The introduction

This is a brief outline that comments on the main topics, but doesn't suggest a conclusion. It should clearly communicate the intent and focus of the essay. You may wish to define the terms of the question and include any assumptions that you are making.

The main body

The most important section; here you will be addressing the main focus of the question, so it is vital that you follow your plan carefully and don't leave anything out.

Focus your attention on answering the question – this sounds obvious, but it can be easy to start writing at a tangent and lose focus on the question.

Try not to interject personal opinions or viewpoints unless the question specifically asks for them, or they are otherwise relevant. Generally, essays will be asking for facts, not personal viewpoints.

The conclusion

The conclusion is where you 'wrap up' or finish your essay, so don't introduce new content here. If you have content you want to introduce, then go back and redraft the main body.

Try not to add your personal views, unless specifically asked. You should treat the conclusion as a summary and review of the information that you have presented in the main body.

Writing style

Try to be as clear as possible and don't add extra embellishments. Keep sentences short and to the point. Remember that your tutor is human – they want to read a clear and concise essay.

Try to think about how you would read the essay if you had not seen it previously. It can also help to have someone read over your work – an impartial outsider can often spot mistakes that you cannot.

Review your work regularly and check back to your checklist and plan – have you missed anything out? If so, go back and make sure that you have included it before continuing.

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 however. 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.

Do not use assignment/essay writing services!

Uploading your assignment

When you have completed your assignment, you will need to upload it to your tutor. To do this, you need to log into Campus.

Once logged in, 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. Then click the browse button to locate your assignment.

If you find that you do not receive the plagiarising message, report this immediately to Student Services.

If you accidentally upload an assignment in the wrong unit slot

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

9. Feedback from your tutor

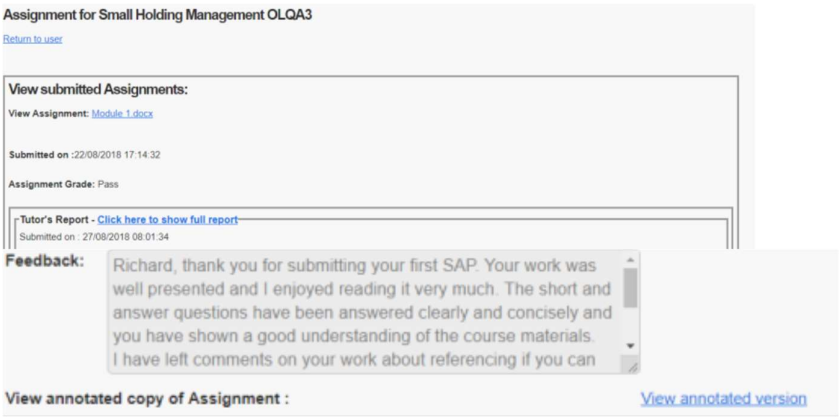
Your assignment should not be returned without thorough, respectful and helpful feedback, identifying where you have done well and what you need to work on for your continuous progression.

Feedback from your tutor is vital for progression through the course. If there is anything they say that you are not sure of, contact him/her via your Ask a Question link.

Pass or Referred result – when your tutor has marked your work, they will provide a "pass" or "referred" result. A pass means your work is good or better; a referred result indicates your work is not to the standard expected of the qualification and you will need to resubmit. In both cases, take note of comments your tutor gives you in the textbox (explained below).

Textbox - You should see a textbook that gives you a brief 3-4 line overview of how you have done.

This is an extracted example to give you an idea of what your screen will look like (*personal data redacted*)



Comments on your work (click "View annotated version") – Your tutor should have inserted comments on your work using a Red or Plum coloured text.

Manual marking

On rare occasions, if you're having problems uploading materials because of technical issues, contact Student Services and they should be able to help you.

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.

Errors in materials.

Oxford College are continually reviewing the materials provided to students to stay in line with either trends of the particular topic or with Awarding Bodies.

If, however, on the very rare occasion, you find what appears could be a mistake, we would really appreciate it if you could let us know.

If you find something that appears to be a mistake, such as a spelling, general grammar, punctuation or a formatting mistake, send an email to the Student Services team, along with a screen shot that indicates where there appears to be an error.

If what appears to be an error is academic, eg an out of date fact, a miscalculation in your mathematics course material, or a wrong formula in a science course material or simply something doesn't appear to be explained clearly, contact your tutor directly via the messaging system.

Feedback from students is always welcome for continuous improvement.

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 submit their complaint by completing a Service Request form, available from the student services team.
4. Once your complaints form has been received, your case will be investigated and a full report presented to the Academic Director for consideration and you will be notified of the outcome within 21 working days.
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.

10.Special considerations and reasonable adjustments

Oxford Learning College recognise disabilities are of a diverse nature and we do not tolerate discrimination based on 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.