MA in Online and Distance Education

Distance learning degree qualification

GLOBAL STUDY
GLOBAL RECOGNITION
Qualification details

This masters degree is part of a programme that includes a postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma. These qualifications are presented by The Open University’s Institute of Educational Technology and are open to students from countries all over the world.

They offer you the unique opportunity to study the theory and practice of online and distance education through modules designed by experts from the Institute who are now using information technology to reinvent open distance learning. Working with them, in collaboration with colleagues from around the world, you will be at the forefront of the latest developments as they happen.

Career relevance and employability

Workplaces and work roles increasingly involve media-rich and technology-enhanced forms of learning, professional practice and personal development, often summarised in the term ‘elearning’. Accordingly the experience of achieving this masters degree has proved vocationally relevant across a wide range of occupations and locations, from managers in business organisations, teachers of languages, consultants, trainers and teachers at any level of the education sector.

You will explore in-depth the research and practice literature in technology enhanced learning, and experience the implications of learning technology choices made across a wide range of contexts and organisations, both formal and informal. The vocational relevance of the MA in Online and Distance Education goes well beyond the obvious category of teacher and trainer, and previous alumni have included librarians, media professionals, project managers, consultants, entrepreneurs, practice educators in nursing, and web developers.

Credit for previous study elsewhere

If you have already completed some successful study at postgraduate level at another institution you may be able to transfer credit for this study and count it towards this Open University qualification. If you wish to apply to transfer credit you must do so as soon as possible as it may affect your choice of OU modules. If you are awarded credit for study completed elsewhere, you may find that you need to study fewer OU modules to complete your qualification with us.

Modules

For this 180-credit masters degree you require:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postgraduate compulsory module</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology-enhanced learning: practices and debates (H800)</td>
<td>60</td>
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And 60 credits from the following optional modules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible online learning: supporting disabled students (H810)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness and innovation in elearning (H817) NEW</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice-based research in educational technology (H809)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The networked practitioner (H818)</td>
<td>30</td>
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And a further 60 credits from the optional modules listed above, or 60 credits from the following optional modules:

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<tr>
<td>Critical issues in equity, diversity and educational practice (E805)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, learning and society: investigating practice (E846)</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulties in literacy development (E801)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for development (ET821)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational enquiry (E891)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational leadership: context, strategy and collaboration (E856)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating language in action (E854)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, literacy and learning in the contemporary world (E852)</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading professional practice in education (E855)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate certificate in academic practice (H812)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding children’s development and learning (ED841)</td>
<td>60</td>
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</table>

For more information and to register go to www.openuniversity.edu, or call +44 845 241 6555
Modules

For a full list of modules available, please refer to our website, www.openuniversity.edu.

Assessment key
EMA = End-of-module assessment
ICMA = Interactive computer marked assessment
TMA = Tutor-marked assignment

Technology-enhanced learning; practices and debates (H800)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

This course is designed for current or future professionals in elearning or ‘technology-enhanced’ learning. It is highly relevant if you already work in elearning in a university or college, in training, in heritage, health or non-formal learning – or if you’re considering moving into one of these areas. The course provides hands-on experience of a range of learning technologies, and enables you to explore the processes of designing, implementing and critiquing technology-enhanced learning. By the end of your studies, you’ll have developed your ability to act as a creative and effective professional within the broad field of technology-enhanced learning, teaching and training.

Accessible online learning: supporting disabled students (H810)

Credits: 30 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 2 TMAs, 1 EMA

This online course is concerned with improving access to learning for disabled students. There are increasing expectations in many countries that disabled students should be able to participate fully in post-16 education. This means that people responsible for provision in academic and support roles need to be aware of the impact of this on how courses are designed and delivered online. The course looks at the experiences of disabled students, the technical aspects of accessibility, and current debates and discussions about disability and accessibility in educational contexts.

Openness and innovation in elearning (H817)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

Innovations in elearning are moving at a fast pace especially with the use of new social software tools that encourage peer supported learning and assessment. With an emphasis on exploring innovation, you will discover the latest educational communication developments, and also explore developments in open education. You will develop specific elearning and evaluating skills (including online group moderation and elearning activity design), conduct small-scale investigations, and use case studies, with the overall aim of incorporating or rethinking elearning activity into your own professional context. This course will introduce you to current debates around the concept of openness.

Practice-based research in educational technology (H809)

Credits: 30 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 3 TMAs, 1 EMA

This course provides a learning experience of the processes of designing, implementing and evaluating technology enhanced learning environments. You will engage in the critical study of original empirical research to learn about cutting edge methods of data collection and analysis. Philosophical assumptions underlying educational enquiry are examined; and an evaluation of ethical and political concerns are explored in detail. There is an opportunity to apply what’s been learned using a topic of your choice, by critically evaluating current research or by developing a research proposal.

Critical issues in equity, diversity and educational practice (E805)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

E805 explores theories, policy developments and practices relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. It is relevant for practitioners working with learners of all ages in a range of settings and situations. The course supports the development of a critical understanding of the factors contributing to social and educational exclusion. It explores the development of approaches and pedagogies for inclusive learning environments, which take account of diversity. The course will encourage you to think critically about the impact on the personal, social and educational opportunities, expectations and aspirations of learners in the twenty-first century and on your practice in supporting learning.

Curriculum, learning and society: investigating practice (E846)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 5 TMAs, 1 EMA

E846 supports a wide range of professionals, including teachers, working in informal and formal learning environments including educational institutions and workplace settings, to evaluate and develop their practice to support learning. It introduces some of the major issues dominating the areas of learning and its assessment in educational research. In the course, curriculum includes the knowledge base of what is learned or demonstrated in particular activities, subjects or professions. Through your study you will develop a theoretical framework that relates views of learning, knowledge and pedagogy, which can be applied to analyse and evaluate your own and others’ practice.

Difficulties in literacy development (E801)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

The course will serve teachers and other professionals in mainstream and special schools, colleges and other educational settings. It aims to raise the standard of all students’ literacy levels and increase awareness of the barriers to learning some students face. You’ll explore and reflect on appropriate curriculum responses to the needs of children, and wider issues relevant to adults who experience difficulty in literacy development.

Education for development (E821)

Credits: 30 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 3 TMAs, 1 EMA

What role can education play in international development? Education is a key focus of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals; in addition to the specific education targets, education is crucial to achieving other goals. This online course explores the relationship between education and development, and helps you analyse and act on education practices and processes in developing and transition countries. The study materials centre around case files focused on different topic areas including teachers, use of new technologies and gender equality in education, in educational settings (both formal and non-formal) at local, national and international level across the globe.

Educational enquiry (E891)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

This course focuses on educational enquiry, exploring the ways it can play for professional practice and policymaking. The course explores key features of educational research, and some of the practical strategies and skills involved in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. There will be an opportunity to explore aspects of data processing and analysis. You’ll also consider ethical issues, and investigate what’s involved in reading and assessing research reports and reviewing research literatures. The course provides an introduction to masters-level study in education, and will help you to adopt the degree of criticality that is needed for work at this level.

E856 takes an experiential learning and reflective practitioner approach and helps you to examine current issues and concerns in your own practice settings and to be involved in peer collaborative learning. The course uses a blend of learning methods and includes a printed Reader containing material by major authors in the field and a DVD providing UK and international examples of leadership practice.

Investigating language in action (E854)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

This online masters-level course in applied linguistics is about how language works in theory and in the real-world, using examples from the English language. Whether you are interested in language education, the social sciences or arts, the course enables you to pursue your own particular interests and expertise through the end-of-module small-scale research project. You will develop your skills in analysing how English is used from a range of different perspectives – functional, critical and ethnographic. You will become familiar with online forums which are an integral part of the course, providing opportunities to share ideas with colleagues and your tutor.

Language, literacy and learning in the contemporary world (E852)

Credits: 60 at Postgraduate
Assessment: 4 TMAs, 1 EMA

This online masters-level course is for people interested in exploring language, literacy and learning in today’s world with its increasing linguistic and cultural diversity and rapid technological development. Focusing on the English language, it uses key current ideas and debates, together with audiovisual examples of practice from different language learning contexts, to explore new and more effective ways of helping students to learn language, to learn through language and to learn about language. It is designed for those who are interested in the role of language in education including professionals teaching English either as a first, additional (EAL) or foreign language (EFL),
Understanding children’s development and learning (ED841)

**Credits:** 60 at Postgraduate

**Assessment:** 5 TMAs, 1 EMA

ED841 is for people working with children and young people and looks at children’s development and learning in cultural, educational and social contexts. It explains how theoretical and methodological frameworks contribute to understanding developmental change and how psychological research can inform educational and clinical practice. You will learn about how children actively contribute and shape their own development through meaningful interaction with others and how the study of atypical development and individual difference contributes to theory and practice. You will also carry out a small-scale, observational study and will design an extended research proposal relevant to your own professional interests.

Leading professional practice in education (E855)

**Credits:** 60 at Postgraduate

**Assessment:** 3 TMAs, 1 EMA

This course explores the internal-facing aspects of professional practice of leadership and management in education, specifically the curriculum and the learner’s role, leadership of internal-facing change and leading professional development. E855 takes an experiential learning and reflective practitioner approach, closely linked to examining current issues and concerns in your own practice settings and through peer collaborative learning with other students.

Postgraduate certificate in academic practice (H812)

**Credits:** 60 at Postgraduate

**Assessment:** 5 TMAs, 1 EMA

This course is intended for both new and experienced teaching staff and others who directly support learning in higher education. It will give you the opportunity to develop your own professional practice in the light of current research in the field of teaching and learning in HE. It examines a wide range of approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and asks you to explore these in relation to your own practice. You will also investigate how you can use a range of technologies to support student learning in different teaching contexts.

FAQs

**Can I study in any country?**

This course is approved for study in most countries. Please use the Course Finder menu at www.openuniversity.edu to see if it is available in your country.

**Is an OU qualification recognised in my country?**

An OU degree is equal in academic standard to a degree from any other British university. The University is subject to the same quality assurance procedures, through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), as all other British universities, and uses external assessors and examiners to ensure comparability of standard and level in its courses. A leaflet is available on how you can apply for formal recognition in your country. To download the leaflet, please go to www.openuniversity.edu/brochures/recognition.pdf.

**What tutor support will I receive?**

The OU excels in its unrivalled support for students. You’ll have email and online support from a tutor and you will be able to discuss your study in online tutor group discussions, using our customised learning environment. Our community websites Platform and OpenLearn offer a different perspective on your subject, and a huge range of OU resources on YouTube and iTunes U can expand your understanding. In addition, you can tap into a range of enthusiastic and welcoming OU social network groups on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

**Are there any entry requirements?**

To gain entry to our postgraduate programmes you’ll normally need an undergraduate degree or equivalent. However, your previous work experience and study, or qualifications from other higher-education institutions, may all count towards programme entry. Although experience of distance education may be an advantage, it is not essential.

As part of the registration process you will be asked to confirm your proficiency in English. (If you are unsure, you can take a short online test, which you will find when completing the online registration form.)

**Can I count previous study towards an OU qualification?**

Any higher-education level studies you’ve successfully completed elsewhere may count towards your OU degree or other qualification. We enable you to do this by awarding you a certain amount of ‘transferred credit’. By transferring credit gained from previous study, you can reduce the amount you need from OU study to achieve your qualification. For more information please go to www.openuniversity.edu.

**How do you work towards a qualification?**

We measure the size of our qualifications in credits - you need 60 credits for the certificate, 120 credits for the diploma and 180 credits for the masters degree.

**How long does it take?**

Our qualifications are designed to be flexible. So if you want to vary the amount of time you spend studying, you can. The table below is a guide on the time required, but call us today to discuss how you can vary the study intensity and therefore the time taken to complete your course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Credits required</th>
<th>Time required to complete¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1 year part-time study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2 years part-time study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>3-4 years part-time study</td>
</tr>
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¹For illustrative purposes only – in most cases you can vary the number of credits taken per year and therefore the time taken to complete the course.

For more information and to register go to www.openuniversity.edu, or call +44 845 241 6555
How much will it cost?
You pay for your postgraduate studies module by module, rather than for an entire programme up front. Therefore, the total cost of a qualification may vary according to which modules you choose and how long you take to complete your degree.
The EU fee for this qualification in 2012/13 is:
£7,725 - £9,170
Please note: prices are approximate and subject to change. Please check our website or call us for latest details.
For information please go to www.openuniversity.edu and view the details on the Courses pages.

When can I start?
To give you more opportunities to start, most qualifications have two intakes a year – September and February for this qualification.

Can I meet and network with other students?
Definitely – when you start with the OU you automatically become a member of the Open University Student Association (OUSA). OUSA also runs a popular student forum site. For more information, go to www.ousa.org.uk.
Once you have gained your qualification, you can join the OU Alumni Association, our vibrant and active alumni community with 280,000 members worldwide. You will enjoy many membership benefits, including regular newsletters, good networking opportunities and access to the alumni website.

How is my privacy protected?
We record your personal information when you contact us and use this to manage registration, study, examination and other services. When you register, we'll tell you more about how we process and use your personal information.

When should I apply?
Apply as early as you can – particularly if you wish to claim for credit for previous study. Registration open dates are shown in the Courses section on each qualification page at www.openuniversity.edu.

What do I need to do next?
It takes just 2 simple steps.
Begin the process to secure your place. Here’s how easy it is.

1. Register now
Go to www.openuniversity.edu, select the Courses section and the degree you require. You will then be asked to select your first module to register.
Alternatively call us on +44 845 241 6555.
Don’t worry, you don’t need to pay anything at this stage.
As soon as you have registered you’ll get an email confirmation which contains your login details.

2. Choose your first module, make payment to enrol
Before you start studying you will need to choose and register on your first modules and arrange payment; instructions for this will be emailed to you.
Once complete you will officially be an Open University student – welcome!
All details shown in this leaflet are correct as at February 2013, but are subject to change. Please call +44 845 241 6555 for the latest details.