

***BA (Hons) Top Up
Early Childhood
Education and Care

(Graduate Practitioner
Competencies)***

Programme Student Handbook

Academic Year: 2022 - 2023

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*The Information provided in the handbook is correct at the time of publication.
August 2022*

1. Welcome and introduction

Welcome to the BA (Hons) Top-Up Early Childhood Education and Care programme. On behalf of the staff team at the School of Health, Social & Professional Studies at University Centre Somerset we would like to offer you a very warm welcome. We very much hope that you will enjoy your time with us and will be encouraged to take full advantage of the opportunities available to you as a student at the University centre.

We hope you will have a stimulating, challenging, and fulfilling experience as a student. This course brings varying elements of childhood together to facilitate deeper understanding and critical reflection that will enable you to grow as a practitioner along your career pathway. These include child development, the sociology of the family, new and emerging research and practice-based implications.

You and your peers will form strong relationships within a supportive environment that will facilitate your journey. Classes and modules are supported and guided by a module lead who is passionate and knowledgeable about their specialisms. You are allocated a tutor and sessions of academic support that will further support and guide your progress. Our environment aid learner's own progression and learning enquiries, this means that while there is structured and planned sessions, you can cater your degree to your own unique career pathway and interest.

Our local and high-quality service is delivered within an integrated FE and University centre premises. This means that HE students have access to their own specific study space and Common room but can also use the wider facilities that are shared, such as Gym, Library and Restaurants/Cafeteria. Some students choose to use our residential accommodation or you can study and work at the same time, without having move away from your local area.

We would like to wish you an engaging, stimulating and successful period of study with us and look forward to the opportunity to see and discuss your work as your studies progress.

Louise Hannan
Course Leader
Early Childhood Education and Care programme

1.1 Background, history, philosophy

Welcome to University Centre Somerset, part of Bridgwater and Taunton College, an Approved Institution of The Open University. At University Centre Somerset (UCS) we are very proud of what we have to offer and the high standards our students achieve. Our focus is very much on you, the student, and our aim is to help you achieve your goals. UCS has strong industry links across its courses to prepare our students to be successful in their chosen careers.

Building on over 130 years of experience in delivering quality education courses, University Centre Somerset (UCS) provides a strong, innovative, industry-focused and supportive environment in which you can thrive and start your professional journey. This programme has been designed to equip you with the skills and knowledge required to work in your chosen specialism. It is a platform from which you can enter employment or further study, or further develop your career if you are undertaking a degree as part of a degree apprenticeship.

UCS is proud to deliver courses validated by a number of university partners. These universities quality assure the courses and award the qualifications. In addition to this oversight of quality, UCS works within the quality expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education published by the Quality Assurance Agency. Your course is subject to stringent quality assurance processes including external examiner scrutiny. This means that your qualification is equivalent in level and standard to similar awards offered throughout UK Higher Education, in universities and colleges across the country. UCS enhances the opportunities for people in Somerset and the region, by providing greater and more flexible access to Higher Education (university level study) locally.

UCS prides itself in its flexible delivery and ability to offer part-time courses and on-site childcare at both our Taunton and Bridgwater campuses, giving you the support to study within your work or family commitments.

This Student Handbook contains important information including:

- Who will be teaching and providing support to you
- Details of your programme of study
- Opportunities available for:
 - Work-Based Learning (WBL) / Work-Related Learning (WRL)
 - The development of academic and employability skills
 - Progression onto further study

Please note that additional information relating to your course can be found on the course specific section of your Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Academic calendar

Autumn Term 2022	
Induction and Enrolment : TBC	Fresher's Week: TBC
Start of term: Monday 19th September	End of term: Thursday 15th December
Reading week: Monday 24th October – Friday 28th October	
RAG Day: TBC	

Spring Term 2023	
Start of term: Tuesday 3rd January	End of term: Friday 31st March
Reading week: Monday 13 February – Friday 19 February	
Easter Holidays: Friday 7th April – Monday 10th April	

Summer Term 2023	
Start of term: Monday 17th April	End of term: Friday 16th June
Reading week: Monday 29th May – Friday 2nd June	

UCS and the College are open throughout the year, with the exception of the Christmas period shown above and Bank Holidays.

The dates shown above signify principal teaching and learning dates, key administrative times and UCS/College closures.

2. Assessment Schedule (example)

Year 1 – Level 6

Week commencing	Week	Key dates and assignment submission	Notes
13 September	0	HE enrolment	
20 September	1		Semester 1
27 September	2		
4 October	3		
11 October	4		
18 October	5		
25 October		Reading Week	
1 November	6	Creative reflexive practitioner placement details form	
8 November	7	Conceptualising Childhood Formative Global Perspectives on education Formative	
15 November	8	Placement 1 (14 hours) Research proposal and ethics application	
22 November	9	Placement 1 (14 hours)	
29 November	10	Placement 1 (14 hours)	
6 December	11	Placement 1 (14 hours)	
13 December	12	Catch up week – In university.	
20 December		Christmas Break	
27 December		Christmas Break	
3 January	13		Bank Holiday 3 rd Jan
10 January	14		
17 January	15	Conceptualising Childhood Summative	
24 January	16	Global Perspectives on education Summative	
31 January	17	Creative Reflexive Practitioner Formative	Semester 2
7 February	18		
14 February	19		
21 February		Reading Week	
28 February	20		

7 March	21	Contemporary Discourses in the Early years Formative	
14 March	22		
21 March	23	Placement 2 (14 hours)	
28 March	24	Placement 2 (14 hours)	
4 April	25	Placement 2 (14 hours)	
11 April		Easter Break	
18 April		Easter Break	
25 April	26	Placement 2 (14 hours)	
2 May	27		Bank Holiday 2 nd May
9 May	28	Creative reflexive practitioner	
16 May	29	Dissertation	
23 May	30	Contemporary Discourses in the Early years	
30 May		Reading Week	
6 June	31	Contemporary Discourses presentations Dissertation presentations	
13 June	32	Feedback Session/ Course evaluation	

Please note your Assessment Schedule will be issued to you shortly after you commence your course of study.

Please refer to the Virtual Learning Environment for details of assessment and resources relevant to your course.

3. Course Leader and academic staff

The Course Leader is responsible for timetabling, resources and staffing, the effective delivery and promotion of the programme and providing, as required, specialist advice.

Key staff helping you through the challenges of study at this level include:

Name	Role	Tel	Email
Louise Hannan	Course Leader		HANNANL@btc.ac.uk
Melanie Sutton	Module Leader		SUTTONM@btc.ac.uk
Toni Smith	Module Leader		SMITHTON@btc.ac.uk
Jessica Mobey	Module Leader		MOBEYJ@btc.ac.uk

Kay Davey	Module Leader		DAVEYKA@btc.ac.uk
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UCS contacts

Role	Name	Contact information
Principal	Andy Berry	HE@btc.ac.uk
Vice Principal	Louise Rowley	
Director of Student Services	Mark Nettle	
Head of Higher Education	Pauline Osborne	
HE Quality Co-Ordinator	Wasif Choudhury	
HE Data & Compliance Co-Ordinator	Katharine Briffa	
To solve IT issues	Technology Helpdesk	ITSHelpdesk@btc.ac.uk
Library resources queries and support sessions; HEADstart	The LRC Team	lrcenquiries@btc.ac.uk (for B/W and Cannington) tauntonlrc@btc.ac.uk (for Taunton)
Printing and copying	Reprographics	reprographics@btc.ac.uk
Support with specific difficulties you may be facing	Counselling and Mental Health Team	CounsellingService@btc.ac.uk CounsellingService@bridgwater.ac.uk
For advice about support tailored to your needs	Student Support	StudentSupport@btc.ac.uk
To help with accommodation queries	Student Liaison Team	Residentialenquiries@btc.ac.uk residentialservices@btc.ac.uk canningtonresidential@btc.ac.uk
Loan and payment queries	Finance Team	Finance@btc.ac.uk
To provide extra support with learning in lessons and exams	Learning Support Team	learning.support@btc.ac.uk
For future course and career options and information	Information and Guidance Team	Info@btc.ac.uk

Keeping in Touch

If we need to get some information to you, we'll most likely do one or more of the following

- Send you an email – to your UCS/College email address
- Speak to you in a tutorial or lecture session
- Put the information on The Virtual Learning Environment

In order to make sure you don't miss anything, it's worth keeping a regular eye on all of these places. That way, you can be confident you're up to date with the latest news.

Contacting staff

From time to time, you may want or need to see a member of academic staff – to discuss your progress, say, or ask a question. The best way to set this up is by sending an email, messaging them on Microsoft teams or by giving them a call. All of our staff are very approachable, and care deeply about your success. So don't be afraid to get in touch.

If you have any confidential/private matters you wish to discuss such as 'extenuating circumstances' that are causing you difficulties in completing your assignments, you can email myself directly as the Course Leader, or contact your Personal Tutor.

The curriculum team understand and recognise that there are occasions where you may have difficulties attending classes because of personal, financial or academic problems. If so, please talk to me, as the Course Leader or your Personal Tutor at the earliest stage so we can support you in the best way possible. We want to ensure that you have every chance at success in your chosen degree, and that we support you the best we can.

4. Student support, guidance and advice

4.1 Induction arrangements

At the start of your course, you will have an induction week. A full programme is provided, which will include:

a) Enrolment and UCS Student ID

You will be notified when you are required to enrol. This is normally at a specified time during the first week when you will be asked to complete relevant forms. At enrolment you will receive your UCS Identity card (ID) and you will be given access to the UCS/College systems and Common Areas. We ask for your help by wearing your UCS ID at all times when on UCS/College premises. Wearing your ID helps to ensure we maintain our open campus and protect and safeguard those who may be vulnerable. Wearing your ID will enable us to notice and challenge anyone who does not have an ID and a good reason for being on site.

b) Central and Academic Induction

- Welcome to UCS with central induction key facts for all UCS students
- Welcome and introduction to the team tutors
- What it means to study at degree level
- Developing independent learning skills
- Programme-specific information, which may include timetables, programme content, module descriptors, project briefs, module delivery, module feedback and arrangements for the preparation of your dissertation
- The role of the Additional Learning Support Team and how they can help

- Tutorial arrangements
- c) Induction to the UCS/College Environment
- A tour of the library/learning resource centre and an introduction on how to use the facilities, including Blackboard and the student portal
 - Fire evacuation procedure
 - Health and Safety

4.2 Attendance requirements

Studying for a degree is a great opportunity, and it's one that we want you to grasp. We expect you to attend all timetabled sessions and we ask that all students avoid taking holidays during term-time; this includes the weeks leading up to the end of the academic year.

If you don't turn up to lectures, tutorials and seminars, you might not perform to the best of your ability. Failure to attend can also impact on those studying around you, for example in the case of group projects and presentations.

A poor attendance record could result in the following:

- Maintenance loans/grants payments being withheld
- The College informing the Student Loan Company and the UK Visas and Immigration as applicable. Failure to attend could therefore impact on the funding available and/or your ability to remain in the country
- you may be withdrawn from the programme

Please take your responsibility to attend UCS sessions extremely seriously. In our experience, students who don't turn up perform badly in their degrees.

What happens if I can't attend lectures?

If you're too ill to attend lectures, you should send your apologies via email or contact your Personal Tutor via telephone and be sure to catch up on the work you've missed as soon as possible.

If you are absent for two consecutive weeks, without prior notification, your Tutor may invite you to attend a tutorial meeting.

Where there is unexplained absence of more than four weeks, we may start the process to withdraw or suspend you from the programme of study.

4.3 Personal tutoring

As part of our commitment to your wellbeing, you will be allocated a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor will act as a mentor for your academic studies but also as counsel should you

need it. Your Personal Tutor will also be able to signpost you to other support or information as required.

Personal Tutors have a particular role for first-year students, because they help you to manage the transition into university life, as you progress through your studies, your Tutor will also help you to prepare for life beyond your degree and your future career or study options.

4.4 Study skills

Making the transition to university-level study

When you study for a degree, you are expected to take a great deal of responsibility for your own work. This is a significant difference between university and school or college, and sometimes takes a bit of getting used to.

To help you make the transition, our teaching staff provide a range of learning opportunities that will increase your knowledge and equip you with the skills to pursue independent study. These include lectures, group work, discussions, student-led activities, simulations, working with technology, practical scenarios and directed study.

Whatever activity you're engaged with, the one way to ensure it enhances your performance is to engage with it fully. We want you to work in partnership with your teachers and lecturers so that you do as well as you possibly can.

With that in mind, we encourage you to take responsibility for developing the required knowledge and skills to succeed in your degree. If you do this, we commit to giving you the best possible support in realising your ambitions.

You'll soon find that degree-level study challenges your time-management and prioritisation skills in new ways. You'll have to make time to study at home and ensure you are organised enough to meet deadlines for assignments.

To give you a sense of the likely time commitment you'll need to make during your degree, an average 20-credit module requires a total student effort of 200 hours. Discount the time when you're in lectures, seminars or workshops, and you'll see that there's a considerable onus on you to use your time constructively.

For most students, this is the great advantage of university study. It frees your time, so that you can study at your own pace and in your own way. Even better, it gives you the opportunity to make new discoveries and connections for yourself, thereby firing your imagination and putting you in control of your learning.

Experiencing difficulties?

That said, some students find it harder than others to move to degree-level study. If this is you, don't panic. It doesn't mean you're not as clever as your peers, or that you won't end up being every bit as successful.

It just means you need some support to develop the skills needed to succeed at this level. We're here to provide just that support, so please contact your Personal Tutor, who will help you identify what's needed. This may include study skills mentoring, or accessing help from staff in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC).

Study skills support – LRC and HESC

New undergraduate students have the opportunity to complete our HEADstart programme (Higher Education Academic Development), which will develop the skills required to confidently succeed at university level studies. The core sessions in the programme are:

- Bridgwater and Taunton College Library resources
- Partner University portal and library resources (where applicable)
- Harvard referencing
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Evaluation of information
- Academic writing

In addition, the Learning Resources Service (LRS) offers sessions that help you with study skills and research. Group sessions are organised by your lecturers, but you can arrange individual appointments to help with the following areas:

- The Harvard referencing systems
- Academic writing skills
- Essay structure
- Searching the library catalogue
- Searching e-books
- Searching other academic electronic sources – databases, e-journals, e-newspapers, company/market research reports
- Searching the Internet
- Searching strategy (Boolean operators, search strings)
- General research sessions (using various information sources from printed to electronic and audio-visual)
- Advanced study skills/research (conducting a literature search and literature review)
- Using Turnitin plagiarism detection service
- Being an effective learner (critical thinking skills, information dissemination, writing skills), etc.

A dedicated study skills area is available on the BTC Libraries link on the VLE. The libraries at all our campuses stock a good range of study skills books, details are available via the Heritage library catalogue <http://heritage.bridgwater.ac.uk/>

- **Dissertations and Projects**

Historic copies of dissertations (good standard) are available to view per subject in the LRC. This means that students can use them for reference purposes but they cannot be loaned. For class activities such as student approximating grades, the dissertations can be loaned out to a module lead. Dissertations are supported by your module leader and supervisor. They will guide you through the process, in a set of individual meetings offered and taught lessons. In the event of completing primary methods of research, students are supported to

submit information to the ethics board for approval. The student then continues to have timetabled lessons and 1-1 support available.

4.5 Careers advice

Preparing for your future

As a graduate, the world is your oyster when it comes to careers. You could work in the public, private or third (charity) sectors, in the UK or overseas. As part of your learning and growth at University Centre Somerset, we encourage you to consider your career options at an early stage in your studies. We'll help you to find a pathway that makes the very best use of your skills and aptitudes, and provide you with the educational opportunities to pursue it.

On successful completion of a foundation degree we encourage you to consider applying for the Honours Degree Top Up. On completion of your Honours Degree, we encourage you to consider both a continuation of your studies at Masters level or to enter employment in the sector for which you have prepared. A further opportunity if you are considering teaching is to apply for the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE).

The Information and Guidance Team offers information, advice and guidance that will help you make the right choice for your future. This includes:

- A wide range of up-to-date information on courses, careers, working/study abroad, voluntary work, grants and finance
- Help with CV writing, interview preparation, interview techniques and careers-related topics
- Comprehensive computer packages designed to help with course and career choices
- Individual and confidential careers interviews with the Information and Guidance Team or Careers Advisors
- A dedicated Information and Guidance and Student Support area where you can access information and explore alternative sources of funding, as well as researching qualifications available and finding out more about the facilities at UCS.

Further guidance is available from the Info, Guidance & Careers Advice Team, details of which can be found at this link <http://www.bridgwater.ac.uk/college-information.php?category=107>

4.6 Professional body recognition

Membership of a professional body may be something that you wish to pursue if your chosen profession is related to the subject area of that organisation. Indeed you may wish, and the teaching staff would encourage you, to include such membership on your CV. If you wish to progress becoming a member of a professional body any membership fees will be your responsibility.

4.7 Opportunities available to students on completion of the programme

We have designed a programme of studies for you that we hope will help you to secure a job once you complete your studies with us. The programme is designed, however, for you to help yourself too! It is your responsibility to keep records of what you have learnt in order to be able to demonstrate to an employer what you have achieved whilst at UCS. You will need to start thinking about your career and planning early on in your programme.

4.8 Counselling and student welfare: it's good to talk

Support on non-academic-related issues

We want you to thrive during your time at UCS. That means providing all the support you need, not just with your studies but with every aspect of your life.

For example, we provide support to help reduce your stress, help you manage your money and, if relevant, get used to living away from home. We also help you manage the fine balance between study and family or work commitments.

If you need more specific help, or there's a particular issue that's worrying you, contact your Personal Tutor or The Wellbeing Team (at the Taunton Campus), who will put you in touch with someone who can support you.

4.9 Support for students with special needs and long term health conditions

UCS is aware that disability covers a wide range of impairments and strives to ensure that its provisions and structures takes into account, as far as possible, the full range of needs that disabled students have.

If you have a disability, UCS is committed to helping you make the most of your time studying with us. We are conscious that no two people are the same, and strive to make provision for your precise needs.

Here are some of the ways that we support people with disabilities during their time at UCS:

- Ensuring access to the physical environment (both facilities and equipment)
- Providing adequate and accurate information for students both prior to joining and while at UCS
- Disability awareness workshops are held as part of the UCS/College staff development programme

Our Additional Learning Support Team provides individualised support that is tailored to your needs. So whatever your disability, learning difficulty or additional needs, please tell us as soon as possible. You can do this by completing a Student Disclosure Form in your first meeting with your Personal Tutor, or at Student Services. Once you submit this document, an Additional Learning Support Tutor will be in touch to discuss your needs privately.

In these ways, we do everything in our power to help you flourish in your time at University Centre Somerset.

Other support

Here are some of the other ways that we help you to fulfil your potential while you are with us:

- We provide detailed feedback on assessed work, helping to develop your knowledge and understanding
- Tutorials – many subjects have timetabled tutorials where work can be discussed with subject tutors. You can also arrange to meet tutors at other times to discuss your progress
- The UCS/College VLE system and via email. Some staff use these to initiate discussions and set up learning support groups for their modules, ensuring you can keep thinking together, even when you're not in lectures
- Electronic learning. We provide access to eBooks, electronic journals and research papers as well as resources such as eBook readers and laptop computers
- Learning packs. Some modules on some courses use learning packs for you to work through in your own time. These include exercises to consolidate your learning, helping you to manage your home study and develop your knowledge
- Learning Resources Centres (LRCs) are available at each campus – Taunton, Bridgwater and Cannington. There is a dedicated HE room at Bridgwater and Cannington LRCs. Students at Taunton have access to the UCS Common Room on the ground floor.
- Resources can be borrowed from any of the campuses – a reliable van service transports resources between all LRCs. Resources can be reserved using a reservations service via the Heritage library catalogue. A professional librarian and learning resource assistants are available to help you in these places. Full details of how to access these resources are available via your course tutors, your Personal Tutor and on Blackboard

4.10 Financial advice and support.

If you need help with your finances, go to Student Services which are available on both the Taunton and Bridgwater Campuses. Our staff will be able to advise and support you.

You can find information about what bursaries and funds are available to support you at <https://www.somerset.ac.uk/student-services/money-matters/he-loans-grants-and-bursaries/>

If you wish to talk to someone about applying for an HE Bursary please email: studentsupport@btc.ac.uk

If you wish to talk to someone about applying for the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Technology Support Fund or HE Diagnostic Support Fund please email: learning.support@btc.ac.uk

5 Opportunities for Professional Development Planning (PDP)

Professional Development Planning (PDP) is defined as:

“a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their educational and career development” (QAA, 2002, Policy Statement on a Progress File for Higher Education)

The level of engagement and what you get out of your period of higher education is your choice. You have responsibility for your own learning.

Taking stock of your position and setting goals in all areas of your life is a crucial step, but in order to maximise your potential you must be clear about how you can transfer the skills and knowledge you have acquired into other situations. You must learn to be able to communicate your unique skills and abilities.

The programme specification and module specifications included in your Programme Quality Handbook detail the range of skills and abilities that you will have acquired should you succeed in passing the course.

Our online guide to Professional Development Planning is available on the HE Info Hub, accessed via the VLE. It guides you through the process just described, helping you to consider where you are and where you want to be with reference to the following areas:

Key Transferable Skills – These are the skills that employers need and that will help you to thrive in any walk of life. An online audit helps you identify your skills, work out which ones you need to develop, and make a plan for acquiring them in the future.

Background – This area is a chance to take stock of where you’ve come from. It considers your current skills, qualifications to date, work experience, positions of responsibility held and involvement in extra-curricular activities. You’ll be encouraged to think about how you’ve developed as a result of these experiences, and to pinpoint your strengths and areas for improvement. As well as your own review, it is helpful to receive feedback from other people, giving you a realistic picture of your achievements and abilities.

Learning Style – Everyone learns in their own way, but your general tastes can be categorised into a particular learning style. A short online test helps identify yours, which will make it far easier for you to continue acquiring knowledge and skills in order to release your full potential.

Goals – You need to set goals if you’re to achieve your dreams. This part of the PDP process helps you do just that, enabling you to focus your career aspirations, your academic ambitions and your personal objectives.

Planning – Now you need a plan to achieve the goals you’ve identified. As well as identifying practical steps, we offer a financial planning tool to help you budget for the future.

Opportunities – The world is full of opportunities, and you’ll be faced with plenty of them at UCS and in the local area. Consider what’s on offer, from voluntary work to round-the-world expeditions.

Progress – This is the crucial part. Having set goals and identified a way to achieve them, you need to check in with yourself on a regular basis and review progress. This may only take a couple of hours each term, but it's key to making the most of your time at UCS.

Job Applications - This section contains useful tips on producing a professional CV that will improve your chances of securing job interviews. By working through your PDP, you will already have identified your experience, skills and abilities. It's worth keeping a brief note of these things, therefore, so that you have the information at your fingertips when applying for jobs.

Reference – If you apply for a job, you'll need a reference. Your Personal Tutor is able to provide this, and their job is made easier by having access to this part of your plan. This gives them the information they need, making it much easier for them to wax lyrical about your achievements.

6 Work placement information

6.1 Rationale

The importance of your Work-Based Learning (WBL) placement

Work-Based Learning (WBL), sometimes known as Professional Practice, is a defining feature of your Degree. It involves students spending time in a real-world working environment, bringing the knowledge they're garnering in their studies to bear in a professional context.

At University Centre Somerset, students undertake WBL in a variety of places, relevant to their degree programme. Whatever you end up doing, it will be a valuable opportunity to establish yourself in a working environment, and gain experience of the professional world.

In addition to completing placements in work environments, you may be given live industry-focused projects to complete. As a result of these activities, you will always be encouraged to ground your academic learning in a practical context. This is one of the things that will give you an edge when it comes to seeking employment, because you'll already understand the world of work, and be comfortable operating within it.

The skills you'll develop through WBL

Here are some of the skills we expect you to develop by the end of your degree, thereby enhancing your appeal among prospective employers:

- Career management skills: *e.g. preparing effectively for the recruitment and selection process*
- Skills in lifelong learning: *e.g. reflecting critically on academic, personal and professional development, identifying and articulating achievements and planning for the future*
- Business and organisational awareness: *e.g. understanding changing working practices, including self-employment, with particular reference to the professions and sectors relating to your programme of study*

- An international outlook: *e.g. understanding the attributes and breadth of outlook appropriate for working in a global economy*

6.2 Criteria and approval processes for suitable placements

We encourage you to set up your own placement, drawing on contacts you make in your chosen industry. We believe that this helps you to develop your independent and professional transferable skills. However if you have difficulties, staff will offer support and guidance. Staff will approve the placement, ensuring it is suitable and safe, as well as providing a realistic opportunity for you to meet your programme learning outcomes.

It is essential that you discuss any proposed work placement with your Personal Tutor or a member of teaching staff. That way, we can ascertain its suitability, then you can get on with setting it up.

6.3 Responsibility for finding and arranging placement

It is your responsibility to accrue appropriate industry experience during your studies, and to establish links with relevant employers in your chosen field. But we'll support you every step of the way. You won't be alone, therefore, thanks to our advice and assistance in what could turn out to be one of the most significant experiences of your life.

6.4 Student responsibilities

When you go on your work placement, it's important to remember that you represent University Centre Somerset, Bridgwater and Taunton College and The Open University. We therefore expect the highest standards of behaviour from you, thereby ensuring you project a professional, courteous and conscientious image. This will also benefit you, by enhancing your appeal with a potential employer, and help you establish a good reputation.

6.5 Supporting and feedback arrangement

You'll be allocated a UCS-based supervisor for every placement that you undertake. Their role is to provide a single point of contact, both for you and your work placement provider. So if either of you have any problems, your placement supervisor is the first port of call.

7. Facilities, Resources and Services

If you've visited University Centre Somerset, you'll know that we have outstanding facilities and services. For further details, please look at the UCS website: www.somerset.ac.uk

Facilities - Social Spaces – you are welcome to use the facilities on any campus
Taunton:

The Core – Including: Wellbeing Team, SU, BTC Active, Multi-faith service, comfy seating, books, computer area, sexual health clinic – C Card service

The UCS Common Room – quiet study spaces, social space, comfy seating, kitchenette facilities (microwave, fridge, hot water etc.)

The Restaurant – variety of nutritional meals, snacks, drinks etc.

Quantock Restaurant – a professional working restaurant run by staff and students in Taunton

Cannington:

UCS Study Room – with informal study space, hot water, fridge and microwave

The Common Room – Residential Team, SU, BTC Active at request, Multi-faith service at request, comfy seating, Ping-Pong table, pool table, large screen TV, books, sexual health clinic – C Card service

Gym – located in the NCfN building

National College for Nuclear (NCfN) Social Space – comfy seating, working spaces

The Farm social space – catering outlet, social seating, TV

Animal Management Centre

The Restaurant – variety of nutritional meals, snacks, drinks etc.

Walled Gardens & Tea Room

Bridgwater:

The Hub – Wellbeing Team, SU, BTC Active, Multi-faith service, comfy seating, books, computer area, study space, health advisor room, sexual health clinic – C Card service

Gym

HE Room in LRC

The Restaurant – variety of nutritional meals, snacks, drinks etc.

Resources

Taunton:

- Hair Salon
- Barbering
- Stationery Shop
- The Core
- UCS Common Room
- Catering Outlets
- LRC
- Student Accommodation
- Student Union
- BTC Active sessions
- Counselling Service
- Health Advisor
- Wellbeing Team

Cannington:

- The Common room
- Catering Outlets
- LRC with a dedicated HE Room
- Student Accommodation
- Residential Team
- Student Union
- BTC Active sessions
- Counselling Service
- Health Advisor
- Wellbeing Team
- Riding Stables
- Golf Course

Bridgwater:

- Hair Salon
- Shop
- The Hub
- Catering Outlets
- Costa Coffee
- LRC with a dedicated HE Room
- Student Union
- BTC Active sessions
- Counselling Service
- Health Advisor
- Wellbeing Team

Services

Students Union (SU)

As a student at UCS you are automatically a member of the Students Union. The Students Union is led by the annually elected HE Student President who is also the HE Student Governor and sits on the Board of Governors as well as being a full member of the Senate that oversees Higher Education at UCS.

Do consider getting involved as a student representative for your course or an area-wide representative to help us ensure that we hear the student voice so that we can respond to it.

Learning Resource Centres – Study Skills

The LRCs at Taunton, Bridgwater and Cannington offer the HEADStart programme to support our undergraduates with building their study skills, referencing and research skills. They offer group sessions as well as one to one sessions. Online materials are also available to support you 24/7. Do go and ask for guidance and support.

Additional Learning Support Team

Do make contact with the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team to discuss any disability or learning difficulty. You can contact them by email at: learning.support@btc.ac.uk.

Support via the central HE Team for Long Term Health Conditions

If you have a long term health condition, do disclose this to your tutor at the start of the course or as soon as it becomes apparent. Your tutor can then arrange with the central HE Team HE@btc.ac.uk to record this with evidence, so that if your condition flares up during your course we can assist by seeing how we can best support you, without needing to bother you with forms at what might be a difficult time for you later on.

Wellbeing Team

The Wellbeing Team provide emotional support, mentoring, advice on sexual health, help and advice in relation to drugs and alcohol, mental health support, advice in relation to family issues, relationship issues, signposting to external support.

Counselling Team

The Counselling Team provide a confidential and flexible counselling service

Health Advisor

The Health Advisor provides a confidential service with guidance in relation to sexual health and pregnancy, drugs and alcohol support, health conditions/concerns, first aid.

Student Support

The Student Support Team can offer you advice on finance, transport and housing.

Residential Team

The Residential Team can provide you with information about student accommodation. We have student accommodation on the Cannington Campus.

Multi-faith Service

We have quiet rooms available for contemplation, meditation or prayer. Our Chaplain is willing and able to support those of any faith and none.

Safeguarding and Prevent

UCS and Bridgwater and Taunton College take their responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults / adults at risk, very seriously. If you have any concerns about your own or anyone else's safety and wellbeing please contact one of our Safeguarding Team. There are posters around each campus to tell you who the members of the Safeguarding Team are and how to contact them. Reception can always help you to make contact with them as can your tutor. Do talk to someone if you are worried about something or worried about someone else.

Prevent is the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people from becoming radicalised or supporting terrorism.

A useful film available from the following link shows what to do in the case of a terrorist attack – to run, hide and tell: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

Central HE Team

The HE Team, based at the Taunton Campus are the main link between UCS and our partner universities. Led by the Head of Higher Education, the HE Co-ordinators work with the curriculum teaching teams to ensure that everyone works in line with the academic

regulations of their awarding university and the policies and quality processes in place within UCS.

The HE Team process Extenuating Circumstances / Mitigating Circumstances forms and those relating to Long Term Health Conditions.

8. Award Assessment Boards and External Examiners

Award Assessment Board

The Award Assessment Board considers and confirms the marks for formal assessments and records the resulting degree classifications. This is where your performance in modules, and in your overall qualification, is formally verified and confirmed.

Any marks given to you by tutors in advance of the Award Assessment Board, must be treated as provisional. They only become final marks once approved by the Board.

External Examiner

Every Higher Education provider has to submit its marking to an External Examiner. This is usually an academic from another institution, who has relevant subject knowledge and is an experienced marker and assessor in your field.

Their role is to ensure the rigour, quality and consistency of marking, and compare it with other institutions. That way, we – and you – can be confident that the mark you receive withstands scrutiny at a national and international level.

The External Examiner reads a sample of all marked work in any given award. They usually do this during a twice-yearly visit to UCS, when they review work and offer comments about its grading. They then report to the Award Assessment Board, verbally and subsequently in writing, identifying areas for improvement and confirming the accuracy of the tutors' marking.

Course Leaders then write a response to this report, and identify steps being taken to meet the External Examiner's recommendations.

The External Examiner on the programme you're studying is:

Name	Johanne Child
Institution	Wakefield College
Position (<i>within own Institution</i>)	Senior Lecturer and Course Leader BA (Hons) Early Years

For further information on the role of the External Examiner go to...

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B7.pdf>

9. General reading list

Please consult your tutor for the most up to date reading list for your programme of study.

10. Quality Handbook - Programme specification and Module Specifications

Please refer to the programme's Quality Handbook which contains the Programme and Modules Specifications for your programme. This sets out the aims of your programme, the overall learning outcomes and the modules that you will be completing. It provides full details about what you will be studying.

Assessment Matrix

Year 1 – Level 4

	LEVEL 4
Outstanding* 86-100% Pass	Comprehensive coverage of relevant issues. Extremely well informed knowledge base relevant to assignment. Very clearly written, logically structured and presented. Critical discussion of current issues and their influence on practice. Excellent application of theory to practice. Evidence of consistently safe and exemplary standard of practice.
Excellent* 70-85% Pass	Thorough coverage of relevant issues. Well informed knowledge base relevant to assignment. Clearly written, logically structured and presented. Discussion of current issues and their influence on practice. Excellent application of theory to practice. Evidence of consistently safe and high standards of practice.
Very Good* 60-68% Pass	Descriptions based upon a broad range of relevant knowledge and reading. Theory consistently applied to practice. Describes relevant issues. Awareness of current issues and their influence on practice. Clearly and logically presented and structured Incorporates evidence of safe and consistently well-applied practice.

Good* 50-58% Pass	Utilises appropriate and relevant theory. Consistent application of appropriate theory to practice. Incorporates evidence of safe practice. Well structured and developed presentation. Clearly expressed References and/or supporting material generally accurate.
Satisfactory 40-48% Pass	Meets the criteria and requirements of the module assessment Meets module specific criteria. Meets relevant Learning Outcomes for module. Some appropriate and relevant theory described. References and/or relevant supporting material generally accurate. Some relevant knowledge applied to practice. Evidence of safe practice (described). Structure and presentation not always clear
Failure to Achieve a pass grade 30-38% Not a pass	Does not fully meet the criteria and requirements of the module assessment Does not meet module specific criteria or relevant learning outcomes. Limited range of relevant theory. Frequent referencing errors and/or inappropriate use/selection of supporting materials. Inappropriate description and application of theory to practice. Poor understanding of practice issues. Lacking in logical structure and sequencing. Evidence of unsafe practice
Clear Failure to achieve a pass grade 29% and below	Unreferenced and/or no supporting material. Lacking any relevant theoretical content. Poorly organised presentation. Difficult to read and follow. Unsafe practice

Year 2 – Level 5

LEVEL 5 Generic Assessment Criteria	
Outstanding* 86-100% Pass	Consistently logical and critical analysis throughout. Exemplary linkage of recent research to practice. Demonstrates consistent independent thought on contemporary issues. Extensive and wide-ranging knowledge of relevant theory and contemporary issues. Incorporates evidence of the highest standards of, and consistently safe practice.

	Incorporates a reasoned ethical dimension throughout the work.
Excellent* 70-85% Pass	Well argued presentation and critical analysis throughout. Identifies and discusses relevant ethical issues. Excellent relationship of recent research to practice. Evidence of independent thought on contemporary issues. Comprehensive and wide-ranging knowledge base of relevant theory. Incorporates evidence of consistently safe and high standards of practice. Advocacy and sensitivity for clients and colleagues demonstrated.
Very Good* 60-68% Pass	Balanced arguments and presentation. Accurate application of relevant theory to practice issues. Evidence of safe and good practice. Provides a sound rationale for interventions. Evidence of ability to critically analyse information. Advocacy for clients and colleagues demonstrated. Well structured and logical presentation.
Good* 50-58% Pass	Sound knowledge of subject matter. Evidence of ability to apply knowledge to new situations. Analysis of current issues. Some argument introduced. Demonstrates (understanding of) safe clinical / professional practice. Sensitive empathy with clients, carers and colleagues demonstrated. Correct citation of references & literature used effectively and/or relevant supporting material generally accurate. Structured and clear presentation.
Satisfactory 40-48% Pass	Meets the criteria and requirements of the assignment/examination. Meets module specific criteria. Meets relevant Learning Outcomes for module. References, bibliography and/or supporting materials generally accurate. Some appropriate and relevant theory utilised. Some evidence of understanding and discussion. Safe and relevant practice described. Structure and presentation not always clear.
Failure to Achieve a pass grade 30-38% Not a pass	Does not meet the criteria and requirements of the module assessment Does not meet module specific criteria or relevant learning outcomes. Limited evidence of reading and underpinning knowledge. Frequent referencing errors and /or inappropriate use/selection of supporting materials. Poor understanding of practice issues. Almost completely descriptive. Misconceptions and basic errors of underpinning theory. Lacks structure and difficult to follow.
Clear Failure to achieve a pass grade 29% and below	Limited and inaccurate referencing and /or supporting materials. Lack of understanding. Lacking structure and difficult to follow. Serious misconceptions and basic errors of underpinning theory. Unsafe practice

Year 3 – Level 6

	LEVEL 6
Outstanding* 86-100%	Critical analysis and synthesis of the possibilities and limitations of methodology and theory. Extremely well constructed and logically presented argument throughout.

<p>Pass</p>	<p>Sound ethical reasoning consistently demonstrated. Able to select and apply specific theories to generate innovative solutions to complex situations. Outstanding comprehension of contemporary issues. Excellent application of recent research to practice. Incorporates evidence of consistently safe and highest standards of practice. Leadership and assertive advocacy for clients and colleagues demonstrated where appropriate.</p>
<p>Excellent* 70-85% Pass</p>	<p>Identifies limitations of methodology, theory and scope of practice. Well constructed and logically presented argument. Sound ethical reasoning demonstrated. Able to select and apply specific theories to complex situations. Excellent comprehension of contemporary issues. Excellent relationship of recent research to practice. Incorporates evidence of consistently safe and best standards of practice. Assertive advocacy for clients and colleagues demonstrated where appropriate.</p>
<p>Very Good* 60-68% Pass</p>	<p>Evidence of ethical reasoning. Evidence of wide knowledge base and critical reading. Evidence of critical reasoning to solve problems. Critical understanding of relevant issues and processes (e.g. Research process). Argument founded on the basis of evidence. Safe and evidence-based practice consistently described or executed. Good range of sources used appropriately. Very well written and engaging</p>
<p>Good* 50-58% Pass</p>	<p>Well referenced and cited. Applies relevant research to current practice issues. Capacity to analyse concepts and balance arguments. Selects specific and appropriate theory to enhance arguments. Sensitive and insightful empathy demonstrated. Consistent safe practice (described) with some reference to evidence based rationale Structured and clear presentation. Clearly expressed and well structured</p>
<p>Satisfactory 40-48% Pass</p>	<p>Meets the criteria and requirements of the assignment/examination. Meets module specific criteria. Meets relevant Learning Outcomes for module. Some appropriate and relevant theory described. Scope for deeper arguments and issues.</p>

	<p>Safe practice (described) with some reference to evidence-based underpinning. References, bibliography and/or supporting material generally accurate, but limited Structure and presentation not always clear.</p>
<p>Failure to Achieve a pass grade</p> <p>30-38%</p> <p>Not a pass</p>	<p>Does not meet the criteria and requirements of the assignment/examination. Does not meet module specific criteria or relevant Learning Outcomes. Limited analysis or synthesis. Poorly developed argument. Restricted range and understanding of underpinning theory. Inappropriate application of theory to practice. Frequent referencing errors. Poor understanding of practice issues. Poorly written/presented. Poorly structured. Evidence of unsafe practice</p>
<p>Clear Failure to achieve a pass grade</p> <p>29% and below</p>	<p>Few or no source references used. Lacking in analysis and synthesis. Poorly informed knowledge base. Limited and inappropriate links between theory and practice. Large number of grammatical and spelling errors Unsafe or ineffective practice</p>

Appendices

Appendix A - Assessment and progression regulations

i. Identification of all elements of assessment, including type, volume weighting and timings of assessment

Types of assessment

Assessment can take the form of coursework, exam or presentation. For the majority of our programmes we use coursework to assess your performance throughout the year, please check your Programme Quality Handbook for more information on the assessment structure for each module. In order to receive your award, you must pass all of your assessed work.

The precise type of assessment you'll undertake varies from module to module. Your lecturers will give you clear guidance about the methods used, and they could include any of the following:

- Individual and group project work
- Coursework: research journals, reports, reviews (which may also be peer assessed), essays, reflective logs
- Case studies – gallery / exhibition reviews
- Student presentations
- One-to-one and group critiques

Whatever method is adopted, you'll be given clear assessment criteria, so that you know exactly what's expected of you.

Please note that, until the Award Assessment Board confirms your marks, they are all provisional.

ii. Submission of Coursework

You'll be given a deadline for every assignment, and you must hand your work in by that date or receive a penalty.

Work should be submitted via Turnitin UK (unless told otherwise), you will then receive a digital receipt via email.

iii. Assessment Rationale and Assessment Methods

If you want detailed guidance about the assessments you're undertaking, you should refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University Validated Awards*. These apply without exception and further details can be obtained from your Course Leader. Alternatively, a copy of the regulations is kept on the UCS website.

Calculating marks

An overall mark for each module is calculated on the basis of an average of marks for every assessed piece of work you submit. Note that each piece of work will be weighted, so some may make a larger contribution to your overall mark for a module than others.

iv. Minimum pass marks for modules

The pass mark for all modules that you'll study is set at 40%. You need to achieve this in every module, and across your degree as a whole.

If you fail a module, you will be asked to resubmit the assessment/s that you failed. In the case of examinations, that requires a re-sit at a later date. The maximum grade awarded for resubmissions/re-sits is 40%.

v. Rules governing extensions to submission deadlines

It's important that you have a good reason if you require an extension for a piece of course work, or want to miss an examination.

Extensions cannot be granted by your lecturers or the Course Leader. Instead, you must submit an Extenuating Circumstances form (xvii), with valid independent evidence to support your case. It will then be considered by a panel, who will reach a judgment.

For more details, please ask your Course Leader or lecturer, or refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University validated awards* regulations.

vi. Penalties for late submission or non-submission of work

If you are late or fail to submit an assignment, or miss an exam, a penalty will be applied. Coursework submitted after the deadline has passed will incur a deduction of marks, with the following penalties in place: Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction for each working day late down to the 40% pass mark and no further.

If you have valid extenuating circumstances you may be granted an extension to the published deadline.

For more information about extenuating circumstances, see section xvii, below.

vii. Process for requesting deferral of modules

Your Course Leader and tutors will be able to advise you further on rules surrounding deferrals. For more information, please refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University validated awards*, available on the HE Info Hub or on the UCS website. As a general rule students may defer their studies for no more than 12 consecutive months.

viii. Assessment of work-based learning, where applicable

Work-based learning opportunities (placements) are assessed through 'work placement diaries' and through formal presentations to staff and peers.

ix. Assessment of presentations and performance, where applicable

Presentations and/or performance assessment

All presentation materials (PowerPoint presentations / PDF documents) will be submitted at the same time and work will be moderated.

Please note: where student presentations take place over a number of days to ensure there is not an unfair advantage of the latter presentation all work is submitted at the same time and closed groups of students make up the audience of the presentations.

x. Definitions and consequences of academic misconduct, including plagiarism

xi. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious matter, and the punishments are severe. It involves passing off someone else's work or ideas as your own. If you do this, you could fail your module, or even be asked to leave your course.

That makes it very important to use appropriate referencing in your work, whether you're quoting from a book, journal or the internet.

The following extract is based on a *Learning and Study Skills Leaflet*:

“Plagiarism not only refers to copying work from another student or author. It also refers to copying creative work, audio-visual material, software programmes and written work.

Furthermore, it includes the unacknowledged use of other authors' concepts, theories, research findings or novel ideas.

Clear acknowledgement of the source of your material is required for any direct usage of written material, and includes material from electronic academic journals, downloaded documents or another person's web site. You must seek permission if you wish to use artwork, graphics or other images you find on the Internet. Always assume that copyright applies even if the web site is in another country.”

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Submitting work that is drawn in whole, or in part, from other sources without appropriate acknowledgment
- Submitting work that has been prepared by someone else, purchased or otherwise, and passing it off as your own
- Submitting work that is identical or very similar to work submitted by other students
- Submitting work that has already been submitted elsewhere

Reasons not to commit plagiarism

There are good academic reasons not to commit plagiarism. Here are some of them:

- When you submit work for an assignment, you need to be responsible for the facts and ideas that you use. By citing your sources you are providing evidence of these facts and ideas. That means you can show what your ideas are based on, and where they came from
- You need to demonstrate that you have understood the material and developed your own conclusions from the material you have read or information you have heard. Copying from textbooks, or pasting text from the internet and passing it off as your own writing, is not good enough. The emphasis should be on working with other people's ideas, rather than reproducing their words
- Plagiarism is against the regulations and you will be penalised for it. If you plagiarise, the lecturer cannot appreciate how well you understand the course, meaning they cannot give you useful advice and support to help you improve

If you are not sure about what constitutes plagiarism, consult your tutor, Course Leader or visit the HE Info Hub where you can access the OU Academic Regulations on plagiarism and other academic offences.

For information on correct referencing why not visit the [Cite them right](#) website or consult further guidance on p. 27 of your student handbook.

Using Turnitin



Turnitin is an internet-based tool that compares documents to see if there is any matching content, thereby helping you avoid inadvertent plagiarism. It checks your assignment against other documents on the internet, as well as journal articles and previously submitted work.

Because it is based entirely online, Turnitin is available around the clock. It's a great way of checking your citations and referencing, and ensuring you haven't accidentally passed someone else's ideas off as your own.

To ensure you have access to Turnitin, your tutor will provide you with a special ID and password for the programme. That gives you free use of the tool, and should help you avoid unintended plagiarism. The HEADStart programme, run via the LRC will also help you identify the correct ways to research and reference your work.

For more information and guidance on academic offences please consult your [OU Academic Regulations](#) or visit the [Research Hub](#) on Blackboard.

xii. Mechanisms for provision of feedback to students on performance, and the role of formative and summative assessment.

All modules offer both formative and summative assessment of work. The formative assessment (mid way) takes place two thirds of the way through each module, offering each student guidance on their progress at that point. This guidance is offered to assist students in developing their skills and work prior to final (summative) submission of coursework. The summative (final) assessment takes place at the end of the module. An assessment

feedback document is provided to each student (within twenty working days after the final submission of work) containing written feedback discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each submission.

xiii. Acceptable forms of academic referencing and citation

A guide to referencing

Writing assignments means reading, researching and thinking carefully to help you form your own opinions. In addition, you must abide by copyright law, reference correctly and avoid plagiarism.

“Copyright” is a law that protects the rights of owners (authors, visual creators, editors, publishers, performers, etc.) or their representatives, to have their work used with their permission. However, for educational and study purposes a so-called “fair-dealing” rule permits you to copy a limited amount of material:

- 5% of a book or one chapter of a book
- One journal article from an issue

It is important that you reference all the sources that you have used in your academic work in order to avoid plagiarism. These sources may be printed, electronic or audio-visual materials (books/e-books, journals/e-journals, newspapers/e-newspapers, websites, DVDs, digital recordings, visual data, etc.)

You must acknowledge your sources whenever you paraphrase or summarise another person’s ideas or points, or when you quote another person’s work, or use tables, graphs, images and the like that you have found from another source.

xiv. Harvard Referencing System

When the Harvard system is used, acknowledgement of the work of others appears within the text. This should include both direct quotations and paraphrases of what you’ve read. (Note that footnotes do not need to be used with this system, but your tutor may allow you to use them to expand or qualify points in the text).

Using the Harvard System is straightforward. When referencing within your essay, you need to note, in brackets after the quotation: the author’s surname, followed by the year of publication and, for a direct quotation and paraphrasing, the page number. For example (this is an imaginary quotation, by the way, so don’t go searching for the book in the library!):

‘I still remember Paul Gascoigne’s tears in Turin. It was a heart-breaking moment for the whole England football team.’ (Lineker, 2001, p. 24).

Then, when you add the details of the source to your reference list (a list of books at the end of your essay), you should include: the author’s surname and initials, the year of publication (in brackets), the full book title (in italics), the place of publication, and the publisher. Thus:

Lineker, G (2001) *Paying the penalty: memories from Italia ’90*. London: FA Publishing Ltd.

Further Help

Don't worry if this all seems rather complex. You'll receive detailed guidance about referencing as part of your lectures. And if you need further help, just ask your tutor, or consult staff in the LRC. In addition, you could look at a study skills guide, of which there are plenty in the library or on Blackboard.

UCS strongly recommends using the following text as a reference source for Harvard Referencing:

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2022) *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. 12th ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

xv. Progression regulations

Calculating final results

Your Course Leader and tutors will be able to advise you about how your final degree result is calculated. For more information, please refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University validated awards*, available on the UCS website or on the HE Info Hub, accessed via Blackboard.

Once you have completed your degree, it may be possible to progress to another programme. You should discuss your individual situation with your Personal Tutor or another member of the teaching staff, who will be able to identify the opportunities open to you.

xvi. Reassessment and re-sits

Failing an assessment

Your Course Leader and tutors will be able to advise you further on the rules surrounding re-sits of exams and resubmissions of course work. For more details, please refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University validated awards* on the HE Info Hub, accessed via Blackboard, on the website.

xvii. Extenuating circumstances

If you experience difficulties in submitting a particular assignment, you may apply to have extenuating circumstances taken into account. These are circumstances that:

- Affect your ability to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments
- Are exceptional
- Are outside your control
- Can be corroborated by independent evidence
- Occurred during or shortly before the assessment in question

If you want to apply for extenuating circumstances, you need to ask your Curriculum Area Administrator Office for a claim form. Fill this in and return it to the office, accompanied by independent corroborating evidence. This should be before the assignment deadline if

possible, but if there is a good reason for it to be delayed, you should submit it as soon as possible after the deadline has passed.

Extenuating Circumstances claims with respect to formal examinations should be submitted no later than the Monday after the end of the formal examination week.

Examples of circumstances that would not normally be considered valid:

- Alarm clock did not go off
- Car broke down, train/bus delayed or cancelled, other public transport problems (unless you can demonstrate that you allowed adequate time to compensate for such problems as might reasonably have been anticipated)
- Childcare problems that could have been anticipated
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless serious, or you are a sole carer)
- Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, upper respiratory tract infection, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of an examination, end-of-module test or in-class test and the corroborating evidence refers to the impact on your performance
- Financial problems (other than cases of exceptional hardship)
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events where you either have control over the date or may choose not to participate
- Computer problems, corrupt data, disk or printer failure or similar
- Problems with postal delivery of work (unless recorded delivery or registered mail)
- Time-management problems (e.g. competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical etc.) that could be rearranged
- Territorial Army commitments or similar (unless unavoidable)
- Sporting or recreational commitments (unless the student is representing UCS in a national competition or representing his/her country in an international competition)
- De-registration

Examples of circumstances that might be considered valid:

- Hospitalisation, including operations
- Health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which you are undergoing counselling or have been referred to a counsellor or other qualified practitioner
- Childbirth (including a partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact/effect
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline or an examination or test, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of a term
- Clinical depression or other mental health problem
- Recent burglary/theft/serious car accident
- Jury Service that cannot be deferred
- Representing UCS at national level or your country at international level in a sporting event
- For part-time students in full-time employment, exceptional pressure of work or permanent change of employment circumstances

- Late diagnosis of, for example, dyslexia, resulting in no support or examination provision
- Separation or divorce - student or parental (provided the facts and the effects are independently corroborated)
- Unavailability of the upload facility prior to the deadline for an assignment or examination where it has been confirmed by the module leader that this would have had a material effect on the preparation for an assessment

If you are unsure about any of these areas, please consult with your Course Leader or Personal Tutor.

For more information about extenuating circumstances, refer to the *University Centre Somerset Academic Regulations for Open University validated awards*, available via the HE Info Hub, accessed via Blackboard or the website.

Appendix B - Appeals and complaints procedures

If you wish to appeal against a grade you've received, you need to follow a formal process. Here is an extract from the regulations, to give you more guidance.

To appeal against the decision of an Award Assessment Board, you must meet the following criteria:

that the Academic Appeals Committee is satisfied on the evidence produced by the candidate or any other person that:

- there has been a material administrative error
- the assessments/examinations were not conducted in accordance with the current regulations for the programme or special arrangements formally agreed
- some other material irregularity relevant to the assessments has occurred
- ***in most exceptional circumstances*** the candidate has established to the satisfaction of the Academic Appeals Committee that performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or factors which the candidate was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the Award Assessment Board reached their decision. The candidate's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Academic Appeals Committee.

Disagreement with the academic judgment of an Award Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual element of assessment cannot constitute grounds for an academic appeal.

The Award Assessment Board will reach decisions based on marks or grades and other information related to student performance, and students' disagreement with such decisions cannot constitute grounds for an appeal.

In other words, you cannot appeal a grade just because you disagree with it. There must be some concrete reason for your appeal, such as those outlined above.

Bearing this in mind, if you decide to appeal a grade, you will need to submit a formal appeal to the HE Team by email: HE@btc.ac.uk by the deadlines stated in the Academic Regulations. You should not appeal directly to your tutors or the programme administrator.

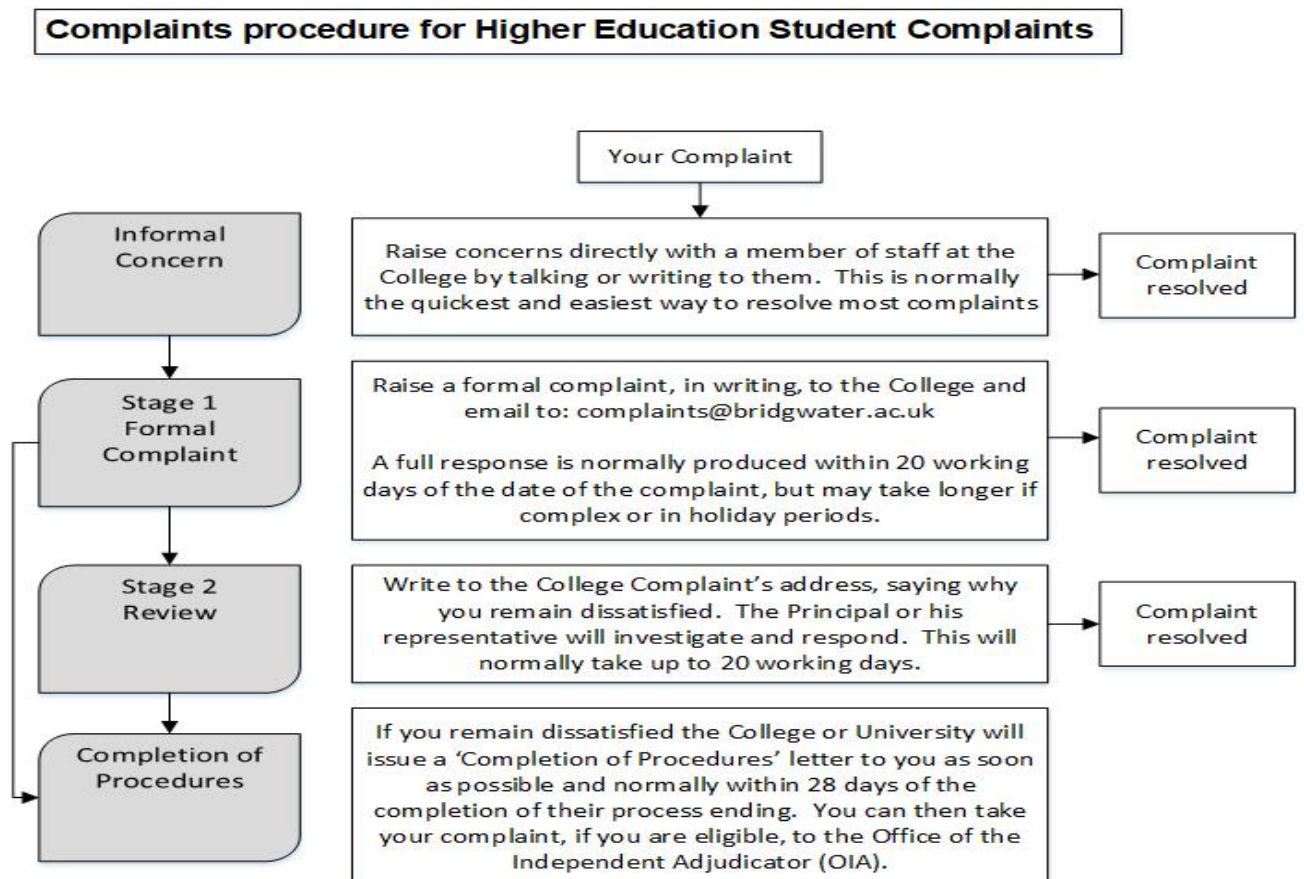
To find out further details about academic appeals, please refer to the Academic Regulations and the appeal form itself.

Complaints

We greatly value student feedback, and have procedures and policies in place to ensure your views are heard. If you have a particular concern, we hope to deal with it informally in the first instance, either via your tutor or Course Leader or through the Student Representative/Learner Voice system.

If your problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, or if you believe that your concerns are not being addressed then you may wish to submit a complaint by emailing complaints@btc.ac.uk

Here's an overview of the system in place for dealing with formal complaints:



Please note the complaints procedure is accurate at the time of printing / publication and is subject to review every three years or as required. Therefore please refer to the OU Academic Regulations on the UCS website for up-to-date information.

<https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about-us/wider-information-set/>

Appendix C - Determination of results

i. **Assessment weightings for the overall scheme and within specific modules.**

How your work is assessed

When you start a module, you will be briefed about the criteria used to assess your work, as well as being given the hand-in dates for assignments, and guidance on how to submit them.

As you work through the module, your tutors will review any assessed work that you have in progress and provide informal ('formative') feedback on it. This will help you refine your work prior to formal submission, thereby giving you every opportunity to achieve your full potential.

At the end of each module, your performance is assessed using the methods described in section 9.1, above. A feedback form will be completed by the marker for each assessment, and given to you so that you know how you have done. The mark awarded will provide an overall picture of your performance.

ii. **How results are finalised and communicated to students**

At the end of each academic year the Award Assessment Board meets to discuss modules and individual student marks. Once this has taken place and the marks are agreed, you will receive a full transcript containing your approved and final marks for the year. In your final year, this document will tell you the grade you have been awarded for your whole degree.

iii. **Rules for determining degree classification, and for the award of honours, distinction, and merit, as applicable.**

Your award

The award you receive will depend upon the amount of modules completed, and how many credits you accrue as a result. Here is a guide to the qualifications available:

Qualification	FHEQ Qualification Level	Overall Number of Credits required for award
Certificate of Higher Education	Level 4	120
Foundation Degree	Level 5	240
Non-Honours Bachelor's Degree	Level 6	300
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	Level 6	360

Degree classifications

You will receive a classification that reflects your overall performance in your certificate or degree. Here's how classifications are set at each level:

Overall Mark	Certificate of Higher Education	Foundation Degrees	Bachelors Degrees
0% - 39%	Fail	Fail	Fail
40% - 49%	Pass	Pass	Third (3 rd)
50% - 59%			Lower Second (2.2)
60% - 69%	Merit	Merit	Upper Second (2.1)
70% - 100%	Distinction	Distinction	First (1 st)

iv. Other institutional policies and regulations

If you want to view any of University Centre Somerset's institutional policies and regulations, you can do so on the UCS website <https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about/policies-regulations/>

Appendix D - Student participation and evaluation

As a student, we want you to be involved in every facet of UCS/College life. With that in mind, we have a number of formal policies in place to ensure student representation at the highest level of our institution. These enshrine our commitment to our students, and give you a direct role in the UCS/College's management.

i. Student Representation

Every Higher Education programme team at *University Centre Somerset* participates in Annual Programme Monitoring.

This involves taking student evaluations of modules and staff feedback into account and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning on the course. It can also draw on the views of employers involved in Work-Based Learning, and will consider the External Examiner's report.

On the basis of this process, the programme team produces an action plan that identifies goals, and sets out steps to achieve them.

ii. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning.

Peer Review teaching observations enable teaching staff to observe each other and both learn from the experience.

Staff development sessions are organised regularly so that academic staff can build their skills in teaching and learning by working with other skilled practitioners.

In addition, we are committed to drawing on student experiences when assessing our performance. We invite feedback as part of the module evaluation process, and each

curriculum area has a student representative. This person is a go-between, communicating student views to the teaching staff, and reporting back to their peers on quality assurance meetings.

The LRC staff attend PCMs to gather feedback on the quality of the service they offer and at the same time provide LRC updates.

Annual student survey

Each year, we invite our students to complete a survey that assesses UCS in a variety of areas. This is a valuable source of insight for us, and we build on the findings in refining our activities for the future.

Student board members

Student representatives sit on the Board of Governors, Programme Committees and the *University Centre Somerset Senate*. This is responsible for all of the HE programmes delivered at UCS.

You should also have a Student Union representative on your programme, who can liaise with you in relation to all union matters.

The quality of the programme is annually monitored through evaluating:

- External examiner reports (considering quality and standards).
- Teaching observations and staff Peer Reviews reviews.
- National student surveys (NSS) and Student Perception Questionnaires (SPQ).
- Statistical information, considering issues such as pass rate.
- Student feedback (Student Voice), including module evaluation questionnaires.

The course team use this information to undertake annual monitoring, which, in turn, is monitored by the *University Centre Somerset Senate*.