



The OU student experience: achieving high quality support in an open and distance education environment



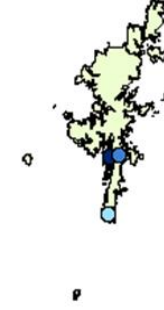
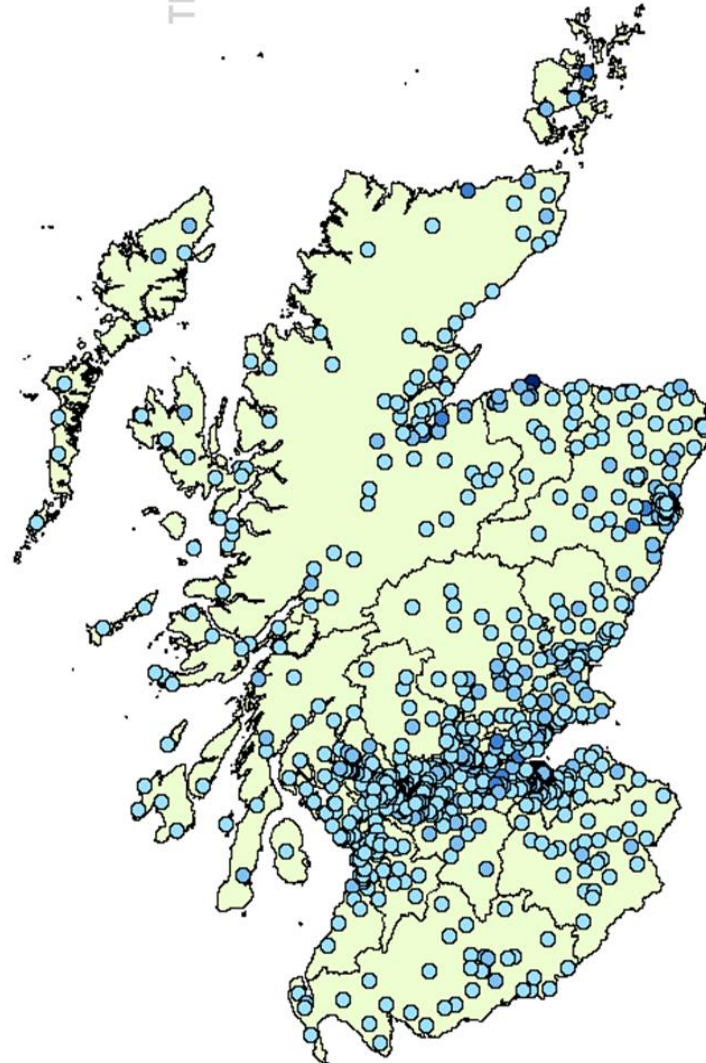
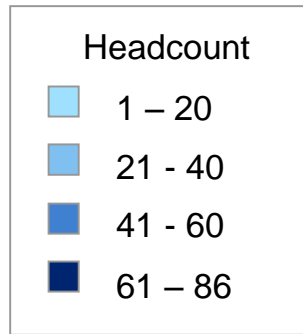


What do you know about the OU?

- How many students?
- How students learn in the OU? / How does OU teach?
- What support do students get in the OU?

The OU in Scotland Campus

Students by postcode district



The Open University





Profile of OU in Scotland students

| All students (undergraduate and postgraduate) 2009/2010 16,138 (6,219 new entrants) | |
|--|--|
| Male: female ratio | 40:60 |
| Median age of new undergraduate students | 32 |
| Students sponsored by employer | 9% of undergraduates 23% of postgraduates |
| Students receiving help with fees | 45% of undergraduates 7% of postgraduates |
| Students with disabilities | 7% |
| Credit transfer awards prior to study | 1,780 |
| Urban: small town: rural ratio | 62:13:25 |

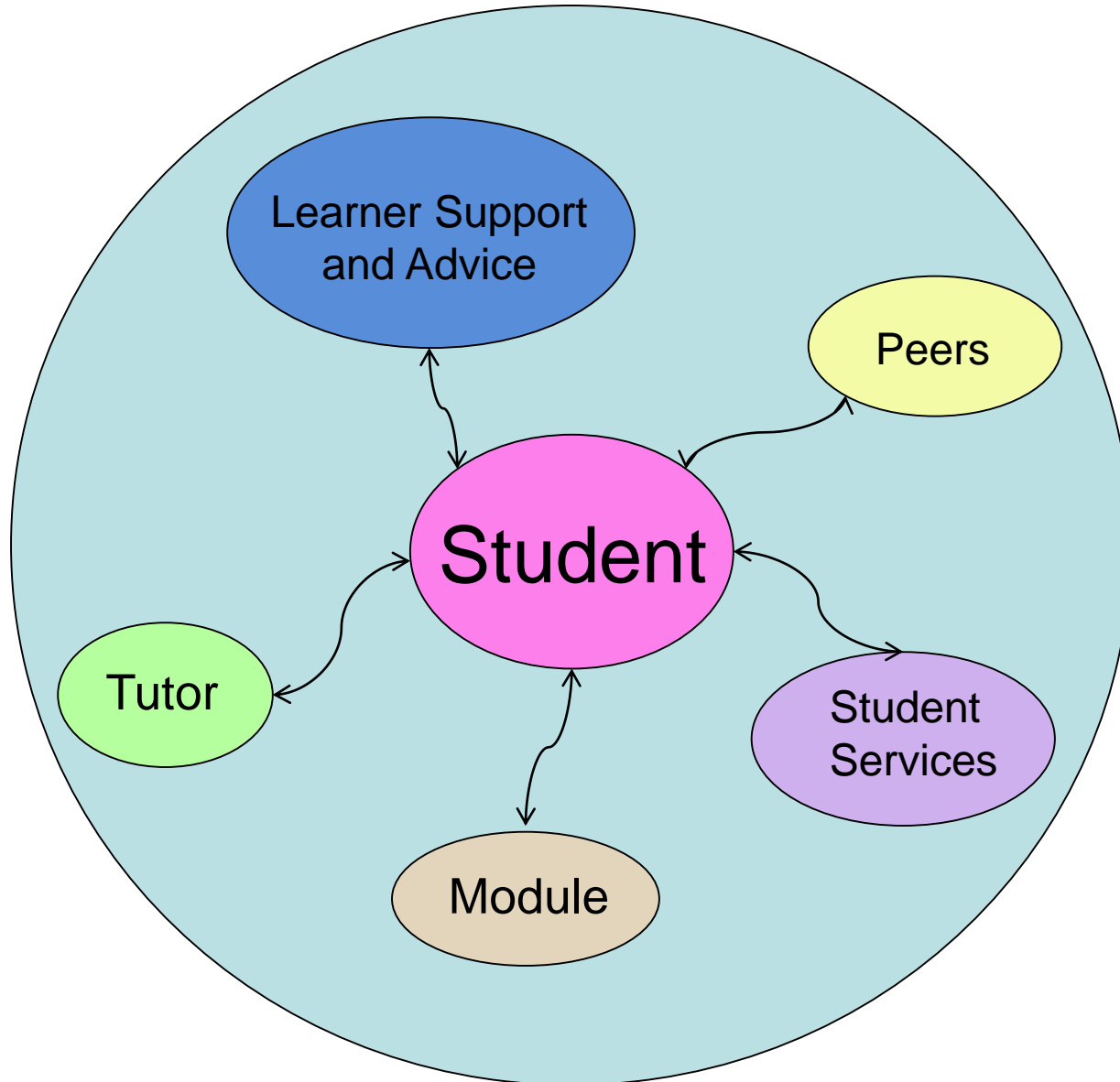


Student satisfaction

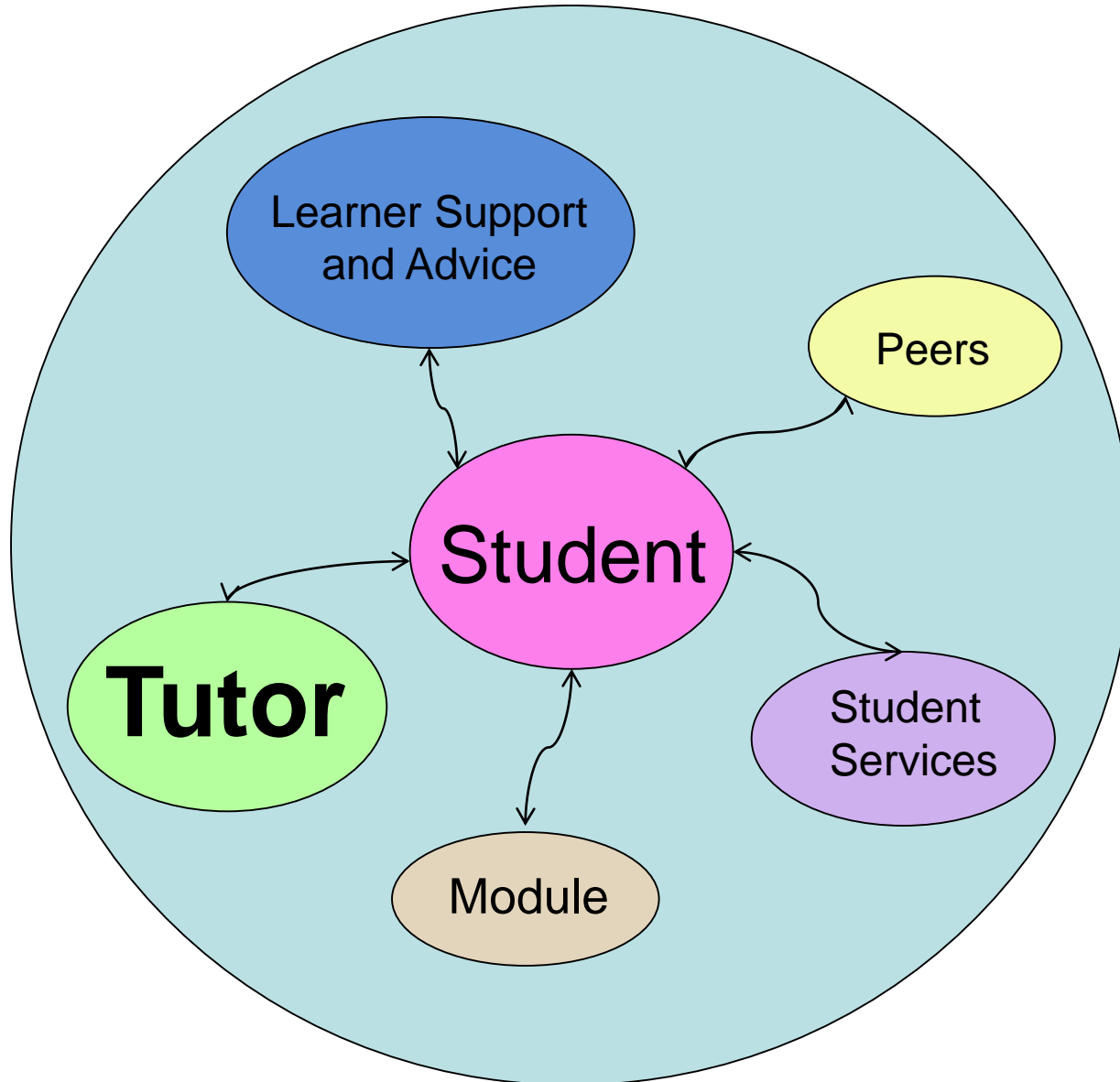
- Consistently high levels of student satisfaction in internal evaluation of the student experience and in the National Student Survey



Photo: Andy Hendry



The OU
model of
supported
open
learning



The OU
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Tutors



The OU Tutor

- ~ 530 tutors (Associate Lecturers) in Scotland
- Tutors work from home
- Approx 65% also work for another employer;
- Approx 26% work full time in another University
- Group size of 15 – 25 students per tutor



Tutors

- Facilitators not lecturers
- Feedback and feed-forward on assignments
- Optional tutorials: face to face, online (synchronous and asynchronous), phone
- Answering queries by email & phone, facilitating online forums



Photo: Richard Learoyd



Types of interaction (Macdonald, 2006)

| | Tutor with individual | Tutor with group | Student with student |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Formal | Assignments; feedback | Tutorials; practical work | Collaborative projects; peer assessment |
| Informal | Individual needs | Keeping in touch | Peer support; plenary online groups |



Tutor role – tuition, support, academic guidance

“In my feedback I wanted to raise her confidence in her own ability and point her in the direction of improving – particularly with analysis of the course materials.”



“Co-teaching [means we can] split the students into ability (and confidence) groups more easily and they can thus work at their own level/pace”

“I have suggested a timetable for completing [assignment] 2 (really focusing in on the guidance notes/question and cutting out some suggested sources) and leaving 2 weeks to get to grips with [assignment] 3 (which is more straightforward). I emphasized the need for time management.”



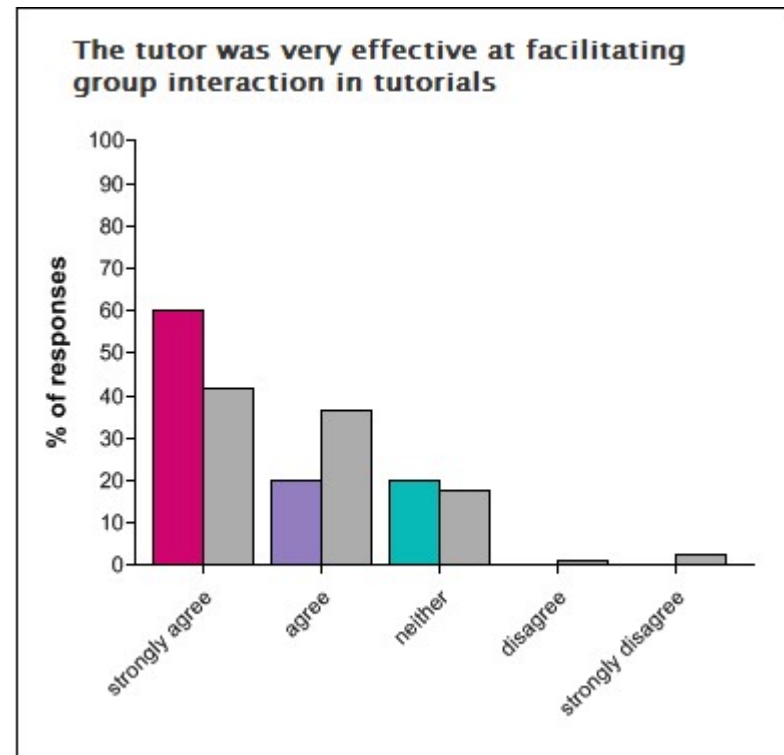
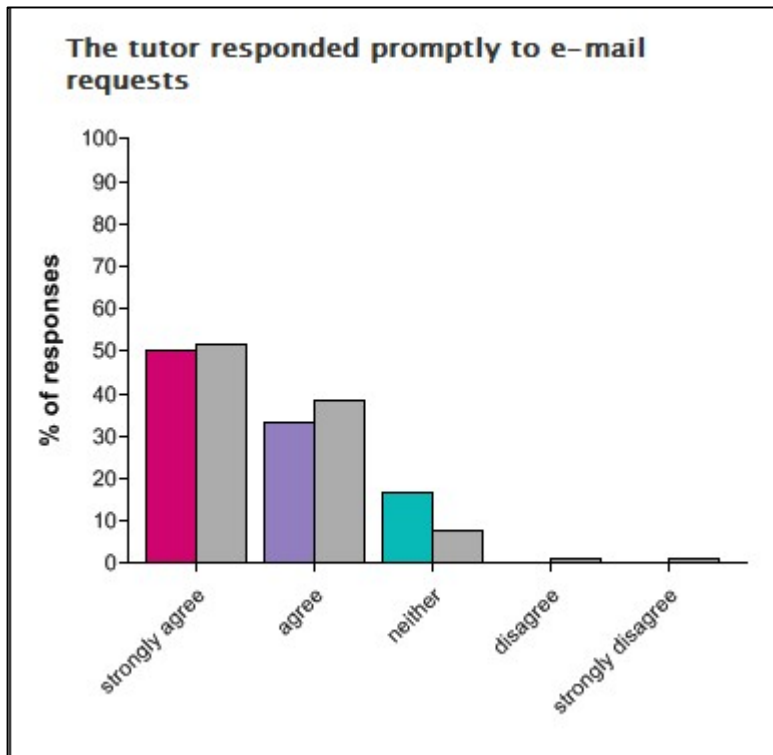
Quality assurance of tutors

- Induction and staff development
- Monitoring of assignments; 1 to 3 of each batch of marked assignments checked by member of the faculty or peer tutor
- Turnaround time and spread of grades monitored for consistency and equity across the UK
- Visiting face-to face and online sessions
- Review with line managers
- Annual feedback from students

Student surveys & feedback to tutors



Online questionnaire at module end



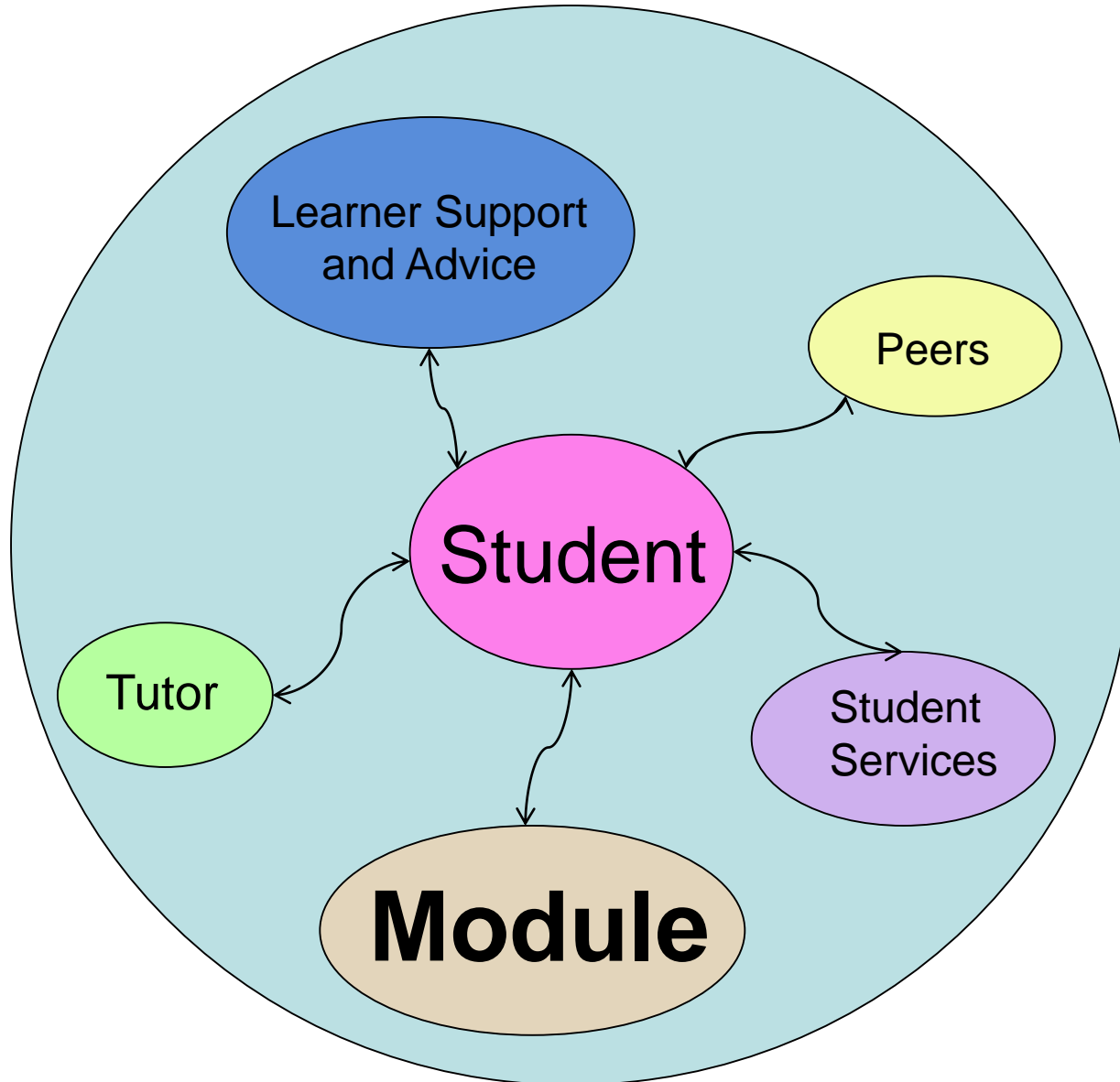
“She encouraged me, and in a way I think I managed to finish this course thanks to her encouragement.”

“...provided excellent (and quick) feedback regarding assignments which really assisted my development as the course progressed.”



Personal tutor role

- Is there a personal tutor role in your institution? If so, how does our model compare and could you adapt anything from it to use with your students?
- What would be the impact or differences for full time compared to part time and distance compared to campus students?



The OU
model of
supported
open
learning

Modules



The module

- Multi-media, using latest technology as well as traditional texts
- Distance learning: distance teaching
- Flexible in time and place
- Core experience the same independent of student location
- Structure framed by assessment



Photo: Andy Hendry



How modules are written

- Two year process
- Might start with feedback from a previous module; market analysis; research interests of academics
- 14 or 15 people involved in writing material, with internal and external reviewers
- Materials must be accessible to all
- Cost of ~ £1,000,000
- Tested against real students before going live












Your progress ?

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 3 | <p>19 February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Week 3 Reading - Observational activities (Sections 1, 2 & 3) 📖 Week 3 Activities - Preparing for observing 📖 E-tutorial (The Planisphere) <p>Tutorial (Anne Campbell) (19 February, 10:00; for 2 hours)</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <p>26 February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Week 4 Reading - Chapter 2 (The working Sun) 📖 Week 4 Activities - Sunspot number, The magnetic Sun | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <p>5 March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Week 5 Reading - Chapter 2 (The working Sun) 📖 Week 5 Activities - Our invisible Sun 📖 E-tutorial (TMA 01 Help) <p>Tutorial (Anne Campbell) (5 March, 10:30; for 2 hours)</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | <p>12 March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Week 6 Reading - Chapter 3 (Measuring stars) 📖 Week 6 Activities <p>TMA 01: cut-off date 17 March</p> <p>🌐 Click here to go to the Assessment web page</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | <p>19 March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Week 7 Reading - Chapter 3 (Measuring stars) 📖 Week 7 Activities - Stellar distance and motion <p>Observational activities start</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |



Online study planner





An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - PDF versions

-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 1** (2MB PDF document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 2** (1MB PDF document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 3** (1.4MB PDF document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 4** (700.8KB PDF document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 5** (document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 6** (document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 7** (document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 8** (document; printed material)
-  **An Introduction to the Sun and Stars - Chapter 9** (document; printed material)


Resources

-  T183 FAQs
-  Study resources
-  Assessment
-  Library resources
-  OpenDesignStudio

Course links

-  Learning with the OU
-  OU Computing Guide

Calendars

-  Personal calendar

Electronic
and/or hard
copy texts

Online
resources



Student surveys on modules

- Large scale student surveys on new modules – content, student support
- Repeated on regular basis for lifetime of module
- Other indicators – returns/results of continuous assessment, exam results, retention on specific module
- - Data from students & about students
- Reported to module and programme committees
- Ties into module review/curriculum development
- Feeds up through OU governance structure



Student representation

- OU Students Association
- OUSA Scotland on Scottish Committee and several sub-groups
- OUSA on Senate and almost all appropriate central committees, including academic committees
- Students are equal members so can (and do) influence policy



Student feedback

- What student feedback mechanisms are there in your institution and how do they work?
- How do they feed back into module/curriculum development?



Open University in Scotland

- <http://www3.open.ac.uk/near-you/scotland/p3.asp>
- Learning development team blog at <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/LearnDevDist/>