Bridging the Learning Skills Divide:

using Open University courses to support academic literacy and maths for students progressing from level 3 to level 4 in creative practice

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1. **Introduction**

1.1. The timescale for this project was September 2007 to July 2008. The project was conceived, in discussion with Creative Way staff, as a potential first phase of a larger project.

1.2 The central purpose of this project was to find ways of utilising the high quality, flexible and learner-centred OU model to support learners progressing along practice based pathways in the creative and cultural industries. OU courses are modular in structure and can be taken as one-off courses awarding credit of between 10-60 points. As an open entry university our courses pay a lot of attention to learning skills and engaging students in active, structured, home-based study. It was felt there was great potential here to support the development of academic learning skills.

2. **Project Aims and Outcomes**

2.1 The aims and outcomes below are extracted from the bid document, for ease of reference:

`The purpose of this project is to investigate the potential for flexible, home-based learning to support student progression from practice-based / vocational Level 3 provision to practice-based provision at Level 4 in selected CCI subject areas.

The project will work within the framework of emerging progression pathways within the Creative Way Progression Agreement Scheme and will:

- Identify skill / knowledge gaps which act as a barrier to progression within selected progression pathways;
- Map skills and knowledge gaps against potentially relevant OU modules, focussing on maths, academic literacy and study skills in the pilot phase;
- Investigate the willingness of selected HE programmes to recognise and accept successful completion of OU modules as evidence of ability to undertake the L4 course applied for;
- Pilot* delivery of selected OU modules and monitor and evaluate the experience of learners as they make the transition from L3 to L4 using home-based learning to plug specific skill / knowledge gaps.
- Develop and pilot IAG materials.
- Negotiate progression agreements with level 4 course providers for students successfully completing modular OU study that, in principle, has enabled them to fill gaps in their knowledge and qualifications or to develop key learning skills at HE level.

* In this first phase of the project we aim to recruit a small number of students to the February-May presentations of appropriate OU modules. The timing is tight to achieve anything beyond a small test of this model as students will need to be registered in December for a February start on the Maths course MU120. This does not give much time to develop the necessary IAG material and to deliver IAG within FE. However, we will be able to trial IAG material and the later presentations of short courses (in March and May) will enable us to recruit a further small number of students to test these.

If this first phase is successful, a second phase could include recruiting and training successful students to work as ambassadors and mentors to other students progressing to level 4, as well as more extensive delivery of OU study modules and fuller evaluation of student experience.`

2.2 Inevitably, perhaps, as the project developed there was interest from Creative Way partners in different kinds of relationships with the OU and, as far as time has permitted, a number of these possibilities have been explored.
In what follows I will report on each of the original aims in turn, addressing the criteria set for the production of the final report where these are relevant. Progress with additional activities is also summarised and analysed. A spreadsheet was used to log the main actions and an updated version was sent to The Creative Way team at regular intervals.

3. Skill and knowledge gaps

3.1 The first two aims were about identifying skill and knowledge gaps which act as a barrier for learners aspiring to progress from level 3 to level 4 in practice-based pathways; and mapping these against potentially relevant OU modules, focussing on maths, academic literacy and study skills. Originally, it had been intended that the project would examine a broader range of the OU curriculum - which in the Arts field is rather academic and not practice based - to see where OU modules could assist learners. This might have included disciplines which are not on the face of it directly relevant, such as Maths, Computing and Technology. After discussion with Liz Pearson and Deborah Egan, it was agreed to focus on short courses which would support the development of generic skills.

3.2 Maths Strand

3.2.1 Maths was identified as a particular skill and knowledge gap by Deborah Egan based on discussions with several FE and HE partners. A maths strand was therefore set up within this project. The project employed an OU associate lecturer, Dhamma Colwell, who teaches MU120, an OU level 1 Maths course, and who has a background in adult education.

3.2.2 There are three Maths entry points to the OU, of which two seemed potentially useful for learners who need Maths competencies at GCSE level in order to progress to HE or into business or self employment (See Appendix 3 for an overview of the entry points for Maths and Appendix 4 for ‘At a Glance’ sheets on Maths courses). The two most appropriate courses seemed to be: MU120 Open Mathematics and Y162 Starting with Maths. Dhamma reviewed the course content and pre-entry diagnostic material and visited South East Essex College. She also reviewed the open content Maths material on the OU Openlearn website, which contains a wide range of extracts from OU courses that can be freely downloaded as study modules or adapted for teaching. We also contacted UEL, Kent University, B6 in Hackney and raised this issue with the South London Lifelong Learning Network.

3.2.3 Following feedback from visits, the most promising possibility for use of OU Maths courses was initially thought to be for students progressing to South East Essex College’s BA in Fashion Design. The key issues seemed to be:

- Graduates from fashion Design courses may be required by employers to have a GCSE Maths Grade C in order to work as designers. Many graduates work in other areas, such as marketing or stock control, where different Maths skills may be needed.
- Concerns were expressed about the ability of students to cope with independent study if they undertook OU courses, or to find the time. However, it was noted that OU courses are highly structured and have a strong focus on developing active and independent learning skills.

It was agreed to target students who did not achieve at least a Grade C in their Maths GCSE but, fortunately, all of the current cohort did manage to achieve this. At this stage we therefore had no take-up of OU Maths courses but Jenny Sinton is interested in considering this option for her students in the next academic year.

3.3 Academic Literacy and Arts Strands

3.3.1 We had identified two additional strands when devising the project: Academic Literacy and Arts, reflecting two different types of OU course: our Openings programme and Arts short courses. The Openings programme is managed by the OU Centre for Widening Participation, which identified a colleague to work on the Openings course element of this project. Openings
courses last 20 weeks and are supported by 1-1 telephone tuition for students. They comprise approximately 50% learning skills and provide a gentle introduction to University level study. The course most relevant to this project is Y160 Making Sense of the Arts (see Appendix 3).

3.3.2 The partners we visited were: Mid-Kent College, Rose Bruford, B6 Hackney, Lewisham College, and the Mary Ward Centre. We also contacted Barking College, but had no interest, and met with Adrian Chappell to consider ways of linking with initiatives in Newham, including the Creative Skills Academy at Stratford Circus.

3.3.3 There was interest primarily in the suite of Arts short courses because these are our shortest courses, at 12 weeks, and are delivered online, unlike most of our other courses. As a result we registered 8 students (2 from Mid-Kent College and 6 from Lewisham College), mainly studying the course A172 Start Writing Essays (see Appendices 2 and 4). We hoped to have a third cohort based in Newham, but this was not progressed. Mid Kent College have expressed interest in having a larger cohort studying with the OU in the Autumn 2008. Finally, we have registered one student on the Start Writing Essays course who progressed from Lewisham College to Rose Bruford but failed her first year. She will study the OU course whilst taking a year’s break.

3.3.4 Internally, I have been talking with our Arts faculty managers who are responsible for the Arts short courses programme. The faculty managers are based at our regional centre in Wales. The list of courses is attached at Appendix 2. About 6000 students have taken these courses nationwide. It is now recognised that the workload is quite high for a 10 CATS point course and consideration has been given to increasing this to 15 CATS points. The courses are delivered almost entirely online with very little printed material and no face-to-face teaching. Each student is allocated an individual tutor who provides support online.

3.3.5 The FECs have expressed interest in developing an integrated or co-delivery model with the OU so that these or other OU courses might be delivered within an FE programme rather than as an add-on. For example, in discussions with B6 in Hackney, we initially thought we would organise an information event to talk directly to students about studying OU short courses but after further consultation staff there felt it would be better to look at our courses in a joint delivery model (see paragraph 6 below).

3.3.6 This project has spurred us on to develop a fruitful relationship with Lewisham College. After discussions with other staff there (Mbeke Waseme and Lesley Murphy) we are planning, through our external development team, a joint outreach event at the Stephen Lawrence Centre and we have delivered some taster teaching sessions for students on pathways other than cultural and creative studies.

3.4 Student experiences on OU Arts short courses (Mid-Kent and Lewisham Colleges)

3.4.1 One student from Mid-Kent College was doing a performing arts course at level 3 and is progressing to level 4 in this area at Thames Valley University. Her writing experience was mainly of log books of rehearsals and evaluating rehearsals and performances. She took the Start Writing Fiction course from the suite of OU Arts short courses. She found it useful to study in her own time. She felt it helped with writing (i.e. how to begin the writing process) and particularly felt it useful to keep a writing journal (which she is still doing). She thought that the course would be difficult, so was a bit daunted at the beginning, but then found it welcoming and the instructions simple. She did not have a great deal of contact with her OU tutor, but that was due to her own personal preference. She found the web based elements fine and the course website easy to navigate. She felt that she did not do her assignments justice because of her time keeping, and that each assignment was done in a big rush, however her scores were good. We do not have any detailed feedback from the second student at Mid Kent College, who took the Start Writing Essays course but did not complete it due to pressure of work.

3.4.2 All the six students at Lewisham College had some difficulty navigating the start of their OU Arts short course Start Writing Essays. Students are sent a welcome letter from the course chair, the course guide and a “getting started” leaflet. Between them, these items provide the
basic information needed to get underway with the course. However, given the volume of
information that students are sent after registering for a course, it would be easy not to notice the
significance of these pieces of information. A student would have to read them closely in order
to know how and where to begin to study the course. Most of the course resources, including
the course materials and the anthology, are only available from the course website. Equally, all
tutorial activity takes place in the online tutor group conference. Therefore, a student would
need to have access to a computer and to the Internet. Of the six students, one student did not
have a computer at home, one student’s computer was not working and a third was in the
process of moving house and did not have an Internet connection.

3.4.3 However, when meeting with all six students, it quickly became apparent that their early
difficulties with the course were more than simply technical problems. Most of the students were
unaware that they had a personal tutor, and even if they had read their welcome email from their
tutor, they seemed to be unaware that this was a source of support. They were also unaware
that they needed to find and print out course materials. Out of the six students, only one had
logged on to their student homepage two weeks into the course.

3.4.4 Of the six students, four submitted their first assignment on time. This was despite the fifth
student needing to complete the course as a condition of her progression to Rose Bruford.
However, we understand that by the time of writing this report, she had completed the
assignment. Of the four that had submitted their assignment, one received a fail mark, and the
other three achieved a pass. The spread of marks was perhaps a little lower than expected,
which may reflect the fact that this was an unfamiliar mode of study. As one student commented,
they were used to having their “hands held”, whereas with this assignment they were largely left
to their own devices. Equally, the nature and presentation of the assignment was perhaps rather
difficult to untangle. The assignment guidance runs to three pages, and the assignment question
is in three parts. For a student who is unused to handling extended questions, and is not
comfortable with “unpacking” fairly complex instructions without immediate support, this
assignment could perhaps seem daunting.

3.4.5 One of the students from the Lewisham group spoke at a workshop we facilitated at the
Creative Way annual conference. Whilst she was finding her OU course challenging she felt she
had learnt about the need to approach assignment writing in stages, and how important the
planning stage is for writing an essay. Also, she now realised that when moving on to HE she
would be expected to work independently: she had a better idea of what that might mean.

3.4.6 The project has now come to the end of its funding period but we will continue to monitor
the progress of these students.

4. Recognition of OU courses by other HEIs and progression agreements

4.1 Two of the project aims concerned establishing recognition of OU courses by other HEIs
that recruit students on to their practice-based pathways. This would involve investigating the
williness of HE programmes to recognise and accept successful completion of OU modules as
evidence of ability to undertake a L4 course pathway in the cultural and creative industries.

4.2 We approached UEL and Kent University about this in connection with the Maths strand.
UEL already have some Maths provision integrated into their first year, but thought that OU
Maths might be of value to students whilst on their level 3 course in FE. There was no response
from Kent University. As we have not achieved any interest from staff in the FECs in introducing
their students to OU Maths, we have not as yet tried to negotiate any progression agreement
with receiving HEIs.

4.3 After discussion with Judy Kenney it was thought that consideration should be given to the
possibility of linking the OU into a progression model being developed with Lewisham College,
Mid Kent College and Rose Bruford College.
5. Potential for OU validation of higher education courses delivered in FE Colleges

5.1 This was an unanticipated development, so it was not reflected in the original project aims. The OU has a validation centre (OUVS) which currently validates a number of undergraduate programmes in FE Colleges, including Foundation Degrees in Art and Design. www.open.ac.uk/validate

5.2 A visit to Sharon Fuller at the Mary Ward Centre during this project, with the aim of identifying students who might benefit from OU short courses, resulted in discussions about the potential for validation of their developing Foundation Degree, through the OU. Although there would normally need to be at least 70 students per year registered at an OU approved institution, and the number at Mary Ward Centre would be smaller, we did engage in various visits and discussions.

5.3 It might be helpful to give some background here. HEFCE will not fund small pockets of HE provision but in some cases will be prepared to do so by funding such provision indirectly, through another HEI or other specially funded institution. Indirect funding happens in the case of some FE colleges, where a franchise relationship is set up. In this situation HEFCE would pay the lead HEI for the amount of students they teach, including those taught at the franchise college. The HEI in receipt of payment then meets with HEFCE’s accountability burden and passes on a top sliced amount to the college provider, who do not have to deal with HEFCE and the onerous accountability measures that they require to be met.

5.4 FE colleges cannot simply approach HEFCE and ask for funding. Those who are already funded either came into the sector with the 1992 Education Act or have applied to HEFCE to achieve designated status (ability to be publicly funded): this is a process that takes up to 2 years, leading to Privy Council approval, and has some very strict criteria.

5.5 The OU does not, as a matter of policy, operate any franchises. If the OU provides quality assurance it would not entitle the FE College to receive any public funds for its HE programme. In order to receive public funds, the Mary Ward Centre would have to be directly funded already by HEFCE (which it is not) or to develop a franchise relationship with an institution that is already directly funded. This is now being explored with another partner in The Creative Way, an institution already validated by the OU.

6. Potential for co-delivery of OU courses in FE Colleges

6.1 Interest in some form of co-delivery of OU courses with FE Colleges was expressed by B6, Hackney, Mid Kent and Lewisham FE Colleges. Collaborative provision raises complex issues for the OU, as a national University needing to deliver a consistent HE offer throughout the UK. It also raises a range of issues for FE Colleges, for example, around validation of any HE offer and what funding they would be able to draw down. Paragraph 5 above refers to some of these issues. The OU is involved in a number of development activities around the potential for collaborative provision, either with other HEIs or with FECs. During the current project I have had several useful conversations with OU staff about the potential for collaboration or co-delivery of OU courses externally.

6.2 One example of a current development, is that the OU is participating in a HEFCE funded Collaborative Models Project, concerned with joint delivery with other HEIs, and through this the University is able to test some different models. The current subject strands are languages and science. One model for collaborative provision being trialled is the ‘2 + 2’ model where students study part-time for two years with the OU and then progress to a guaranteed place at another HEI for a further two years, studying full-time. If we tried to transport this model to joint delivery with FE, i.e. the first part of the degree was taken in FE, and the remainder with the OU, then it would raise some challenging issues around validation and funding especially as the OU does not, at present, franchise other institutions to deliver its courses.

6.3 Another example of ongoing work on collaborative models is a feasibility study around 'shared services', which is primarily looking at sharing resources, such as curriculum, with other
HEIs. An element of this project does, however, involve working with the FE sector. The focus of this activity is the group of 18 FE Colleges - the ‘mixed economy group’ - which are those colleges that already offer HE study programmes.

6.4 As a result of discussions around this project the OU Arts faculty are exploring whether it might be possible to devise a collaborative model for their Arts short courses. A model that might work and which would bypass some of the validation and funding issues already mentioned is being trialled with Milton Keynes College.

6.5 In a separate initiative, the OU is now working on the possibility of joint delivery of a new Foundation Degree pathway in Sport, Health and Fitness, supported by the Linking London LLN. The OU is now costing and piloting different collaborative models which could give FE Colleges a range of options for the co-delivery of an OU course, with the associated quality assurance in place.

6.6 And, finally, the OU is developing a collaborative model for a Foundation Degree in Counselling which is outside the subject remit of The Creative Way but does offer potential for providing a supportive route for students from FE into independent learning at HE level.

7. OU Young Applicants in Schools and Colleges Scheme (YASS)

7.1 The OU has a Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) which enables academically gifted students in Years 12 and 13 to study a range of selected undergraduate modules at first year level alongside their AS and A levels. It is a very successful scheme that operates in over 400 schools nationwide, proving popular with students and teachers. Over 3000 students are currently in the scheme. Participating schools need to enter into a partnership with the OU and to support students with choosing and studying their OU course, which would be in addition to at least three core A level subjects. The Learning and Skills Council may fund the OU component in place of a fourth or fifth A level subject. YASS is simple to deliver as students are registered through their school and treated the same as any other OU student. 80% of YASS students in 2007-8 completed their course, 76.6% successfully. Many students report an increase in confidence. The University is currently working with UCAS to evaluate the effectiveness of YASS in the bridging of the gap between school and university.

7.2 Following the potential interest from (and subsequent registration of) younger students in Mid Kent and Lewisham Colleges on to OU Arts short courses, we have started to discuss the potential within the OU for an adaptation of the YASS model to younger students in FE. An email survey was conducted, as part of this project, of the OU’s 13 regional centres which manage relationships with schools participating in YASS. This survey revealed no evidence of any non-A level students taking OU courses through YASS. Regional colleagues also thought it unlikely that any FE Colleges were involved in YASS, although the picture is complicated as some A level students clearly are taking these course in an FE context. For example, two institutions participating in YASS, which responded to a national questionnaire survey of the scheme, defined themselves as FE Colleges. Also, the OU does admit students under 18 on to its courses outside of YASS if they are supported by a parent or responsible adult, and according to certain criteria. It is therefore likely that there are some students under 18 years of age in FE who are studying OU courses and there will be students in FE who are over 18 who are studying or have progressed on to OU courses.

7.3 There is a separate OU registration process for students under 18 years of age and there are some complications around funding of course fees. An Arts short course, for example, costs £140-155. If students are taking an OU course through a school participating in YASS the course fee may be covered by the Learning and Skills Council. For non-YASS students there is a potential entitlement to an OU financial award which could cover the course fee. But this, too, is more complicated for a student who is under 18, than for students who are over 18. On this project we side-stepped this issue by sponsoring the students from the project funding.

7.4 Finally, the University’s management team for YASS has now agreed to increase the widening participation focus of the scheme. This will be done initially by targeting a small number
of schools that are most likely to offer OU study opportunities to young people from families who would meet the HEFCE criteria for widening participation.

8. Relevance of OU courses to 14-19 Diplomas

8.1 OU short courses could have potential for inclusion as part of the new 14-19 Diploma pathways. School pupils taking an A level programme can already take an OU course (see paragraph 7 above) and this project has identified potential for young level 3 vocational learners to study OU short courses to enhance their academic learning skills.

8.2 The OU is considering its position in relation to the new diploma developments. If a student took an OU course alongside a 14-19 Diploma, they would effectively be in the same position as our current YASS students. OU courses cannot give UCAS points, nor can they count towards the 14-19 Diploma unless they constitute a separate qualification. However, OU courses could easily offer evidence of ‘additional and specialist learning’ for the Diploma and also fulfil the requirements for the proposed Extended Diploma. The inclusion of YASS in the new strategy could also address the challenges being faced concerning timetabling across a cluster of schools. YASS students are studying at a distance and fitting their studies around their traditional school curriculum. Specific presentation patterns mean that students can successfully continue their OU studies during school holidays.

9. Accreditation of prior learning

The OU has established a Recognizing Achievement Project lead by its Centre for Outcomes Based Education (COBE). There are two strands. One is focusing on APEL which may operate in a similar way to the OU credit transfer scheme, which is already well established and awards CATS points for previous formally accredited study at HE level outside the OU. The second strand is the development of a flexible foundation degree for work-based learning. Whilst both strands are at an early stage of development it is hoped that the University can offer a much more flexible structure for accrediting prior and ongoing work based learning. Anyone interested in finding out more about this can contact m.e.harvey@open.ac.uk

10. Conclusions

9.1 In any organisation, and not least in such a large and geographically spread University as the OU, there will be a certain amount of learning that derives simply from the ‘joined up thinking’ which a development fund project facilitates. This project has triggered or contributed to a significant amount of internal liaison and discussion within the OU around a range of issues:

- delivery methods for our Arts short courses;
- validation of study pathways in FE Colleges;
- the potential for opening up study opportunities to younger learners in FECs;
- co-delivery of OU courses with FECs;
- the OU’s potential contribution to 14-19 Diplomas.

9.2 One promising result has been that we have established collaborative working with two FE Colleges within the Thames Gateway, and had useful discussions with three others, one of which has appreciated the advice we have been able to give around validation of their new HE offer. None of this would have happened without the development fund project.

9.3 We have gained valuable feedback from learners about their experience of studying OU Arts short courses which has been passed on to our Arts Faculty centrally. We have identified some particular challenges that learners in FE face and concluded that an embedded model for delivering an OU course is essential when working with students within FE. This has informed our approach to working with FECs within the region and more generally. We are thus in a better position to work strategically with the FE sector to provide learners with high quality learning that is well-supported.
9.4 We have gained valuable feedback on the Maths content of our openlearn website which has been very helpful for the team managing that project. The OU openlearn website offers around 8000 hours of freely available learning that can be downloaded and edited.

9.5 We are making links between the developments within this project and our engagement with another Lifelong Learning Network: Linking London. In that LLN we are just starting to work on progression agreements and possible ways of co-delivery of OU courses with FE Colleges. We have a potential opportunity to join a Creative Way progression agreement.

9.6 Overall, this feels like a successful project which has initiated new and productive relationships outside of the OU and improved understanding within the OU of ways to work effectively to support student progression from level 3 vocational pathways.

10. Dissemination

10.1 A workshop on this project was presented at The Creative Way Conference on 7 July, by Denise Bates, Dhamma Colwell and Zoe Doye, with the assistance of one student from Lewisham College. At this workshop it was noted that:

- Online delivery of courses does not always engage students: about 1/3 do not engage at all and about 1/3 will fully engage in an online environment.

- An introductory DVD might help students to get started with an online course.

- HEIs have fed back that students moving to them from FE need more support with essay writing skills and basic maths, especially maths in context.

- The OU maths courses do teach maths in context, using real life data and incorporating very little abstract maths.

- *Maths is a creative subject.*

- Practical maths is needed for graduates moving into self-employment and needs to support business and financial planning.

- Students in FE are to a certain extent ‘spoon-fed’ (*according to the student*). The move into HE is a challenge. OU short courses need to include face-to-face teaching.

10.2 After discussion with Judy Kenney, it was thought that it might be helpful to offer an IAG focussed workshop on OU study pathways to Creative Way partners in the Autumn.

10.3 Details of OU courses and qualifications, including our Arts short courses, are included in the study pathways database being developed by The Creative Way.

10.4 This report has been circulated widely within the OU and to partners in The Creative Way.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Arts Short courses

Appendix 2: Summary of Maths entry points

Appendix 3: ‘At a glance’ sheets on OU Arts and Maths short courses
Appendix 1: Summary of Arts short courses

The Creative Way Lifelong Learning Network – Open University project

This widening participation project aims to support students in moving successfully on to HE study in practice based pathways in the cultural and creative industries. Open University courses are being used to support academic literacy for students on level 3 vocational study paths, such as performing arts in FE Colleges. We would like to recruit a small group in Newham, in order to create a third cohort. **Courses will be free of charge.**

The OU is an expert in part-time, flexible study and has pioneered a learner-centred and skills based approach to participation in HE, since being set up over 35 years ago. As an open entry University we specialise in making academic study accessible to a diverse audience.

The OU is ranked 5th nationally for teaching quality and was ranked top for overall student satisfaction in the national student satisfaction survey in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

This project will enable us to evaluate the usefulness of our suite of Arts short courses to support the development of academic literacy for students on practice-based pathways who come from non-traditional backgrounds in terms of access to HE.

These are 12 week, online courses:

- Start Writing Essays
- Start Writing Fiction
- Start Writing Poetry
- Start Writing Plays
- Start Listening to Music
- Shakespeare: an Introduction
- Perspectives on Leonardo da Vinci

Successful completion of one of these courses gives 10 CATS points at HE level and demonstrates that the student is committed to, and capable of, developing their skills in HE. Participation will boost confidence by enabling the learner to prepare for the challenges involved in progressing to HE from a non-academic route.

About 20% of OU students are under 25 years of age; the proportion of younger students is growing rapidly. The minimum age for entry was reduced to 16 recently as we already had many 16-17 year olds studying through our successful Young Applicants in Schools Scheme. A parent or other adult needs to sign the registration agreement before an under 18 year old can be admitted.
Appendix 2: Open University maths courses:

Possible entry points

**Y162 Starting with Maths**
- 20 week course.
- Runs 4 times a year starting in March, June, September and November.
- Independent study with 5 telephone or email tutorials, lasting up to 20 minutes.
- 3 written assignments (assessments) due on prescribed dates. Written feedback given. No exam.
- The basics of the GCSE curriculum (no algebra). Use of scientific calculator.
- Focus on development of study skills.
- Taster materials from this course can be found at [www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn). Follow the links to Learners, Learning space, Maths and Stats, Y162 Starting with Maths, taster materials.

**MU120 Open Mathematics**
- 9 month course.
- Runs twice a year, starting in February and October.
- Independent study with 8 group tutorials and unlimited telephone or email tutorials.
- 4 Tutor Marked Assignments (assessments) due on prescribed dates. Written feedback given.
- 4 Computer Marked Assignments (assessments) due on prescribed dates.
- No exam.
- Full GCSE curriculum (algebra, but no calculus). Use of graphical calculator.
- Focus on development of study skills.
- Pass recognised by the Teacher Development Agency as equivalent to GCSE Maths Grade C.
- Taster materials from this course can be found at [www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn). Follow the links to Learners, Learning space, Maths and Stats, MU120 Open Mathematics, taster materials.
Appendix 3

At A Glance

Course Information Sheet

Course Name: Y160 Making Sense of the Arts
(Openings Programme)

Course Aim: (1) A short introductory course designed to develop and identify the range of learning skills needed for degree level study.
(2) Introduces some of the key ideas and ways of thinking involved in studying the arts

Target Audience: Anyone who needs to develop study skills for Higher Education
Course Length: 20 weeks
6 – 8 hours of study each week
Course Start Dates: September, November, March and June
Support: Your own personal tutor who will keep in touch by telephone
Course Involves: Two tutor-marked assignments and an end of course assessment
Course Cost: £110 (Free for this project)
Course Materials: Course Materials and a DVD
You will need: Telephone access, television equipment and/or a DVD player
Course Accreditation: 10 CATS points
Possible Progression: Another Y course; or AA100 The arts past and present; or any other OU course at level 1
Course Name: **A172 Start Writing Essays**  
(Arts short course)

**Course Aim:**  
(1) Introduces and develops essay writing skills  
(2) Builds confidence and develops potential  
(3) Provides an opportunity to practice, improve and reflect on a range of core skills and techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Audience:</strong></th>
<th>Anyone thinking of embarking on University study who needs to improve essay writing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Length:</strong></td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Start Dates:</strong></td>
<td>February, May and October</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Involves:</strong></td>
<td>Two Tutor Marked Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tutor Support:</strong></td>
<td>Your own personal tutor will communicate via email or the online Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Cost:</strong></td>
<td>£140 (Free on this project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Materials:</strong></td>
<td>Course website, computer conferencing online library access, audio CD, printed course guide and set book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You will need:</strong></td>
<td>Use of a computer and internet access</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Accreditation:</strong></td>
<td>10 CATS points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possible Progression:</strong></td>
<td>AA100 The arts past and present; or any other level 1 course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**At A Glance**

**Course Information Sheet**

**Course Name:** Starting with Maths (Y162)

**Course Aim:**
1. Improving your mathematical skills for future studies
2. Developing problem solving strategies
3. Practising general learning skills to help you become an effective learner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Audience:</strong></th>
<th>Anyone who needs an introductory course in mathematics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Length:</strong></td>
<td>20 weeks, 6 – 8 hours of studying per week.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>Your own personal tutor who will keep in touch by telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry requirements</strong></td>
<td>Open access to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Start Dates:</strong></td>
<td>March, June, September, November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Involves:</strong></td>
<td>Writing 2 short assignments and a end-of-course assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Cost:</strong></td>
<td>£110 (Free for this project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Materials:</strong></td>
<td>Course books, a DVD and a calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You will need:</strong></td>
<td>Access to a telephone for contact with your tutor, equipment to watch a DVD. Ideally access to a computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Accreditation:</strong></td>
<td>10 CATS points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possible Progression:</strong></td>
<td>The Open Mathematics MU120 Course (a Maths GCSE equivalent )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Information:</strong></td>
<td>Taster Materials available for this course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Name: **Open Mathematics MU120**

**Course Aims:**
(1) Provides GCSE Maths grade C equivalent
(2) Builds confidence in mathematics and helps to incorporate mathematical skills and thinking into everyday life and studies.
(3) Looks mathematically at matters of general interest e.g. prices, earnings, music, art, maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target Audience:</strong></th>
<th>Ideal for students studying other subject areas who need Maths skills to progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A progression route for those who have successfully completed Y162</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Course Length:</strong></th>
<th>9 months</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Start Dates:</strong></td>
<td>Feb or October</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Involves:</strong></td>
<td>4 Tutor marked assignments and 5 Computer marked assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Cost:</strong></td>
<td>£315 (Free for this project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Materials:</strong></td>
<td>Course books, audio CD, DVD, CD-Rom</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>You will need:</strong></td>
<td>Audio CD and video DVD playback facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Accreditation:</strong></td>
<td>30 CATS points Equivalent to Maths GCSE pass at C. (Recognised by Teacher Development Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Information</strong></td>
<td>Course quiz available to assess suitability and level.</td>
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