

RESPONSE TO STUDENT CONSULTATION ON MASTERS STUDY WITH THE OU BUSINESS SCHOOL

SUMMARY

This is a response to the consultation on Masters study which took place between 22 April and 4 May 2021 on the **Postgraduate Business Board of Studies Student Consultative Forum**.

Background information

- Link: [Postgraduate Business Board of Studies Student Consultative Forum - April 2021](#)
- Students registered: 66 registered in advance, therefore, the forum was opened to all (3,440) eligible students. However, due to concerns about a student's contributions the forum was then closed to only those registered.
- Posts by students: 77
- No. of students posting at least once: 32
- Total ratings (likes and favourites): 33
- Estimated readers (minimum): 89

The focus group questions

The following questions were posted for students to consider:

- With the pace of change also increasing, does the OU offer postgraduate taught qualifications which are sufficiently future proofed to meet your personal and organisational needs?
- In what way could we better meet your study needs?
- What importance do you attach to professional accreditation: e.g. Triple accreditation (AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS), CIPD, CFA?
- With the COVID-19 pandemic causing all learning to be online, what has been the impact on your learning experience?

Additional threads were started by students covering;

- Open book exams – MSc Finance
- Enrolment on modules

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- Students recognise the value of online learning, but many would value a textbook in addition.
- Students understood the reason why face-to-face events had to be cancelled during the COVID-19 lockdown but felt that the online alternatives were not to the same standard.
- Inconsistent marking by ALs (tutors) was flagged by a number of students.
- Students felt that some module content was dated.
- Adobe Connect, the standard system used to deliver tutorials and other events was felt to be out of date when compared to other systems.
- Tutor Group Forums (TGFs) were felt to be not fit for purpose.
- Overlap of module presentations which meant that students had to register on their next module before getting the results from their last module was criticised.
- The move from set three hour face-to-face exams to more flexible online EMAs was welcomed.
- Most students felt that external accreditation was valuable and was a contributor to some in choosing to study with the OU.
- Many students felt that COVID-19 restrictions had helped them in their study, whilst others saw this as a negative issue.

Action: The specific comments provided by students will be referred to the next meeting of the Postgraduate Business Board of Studies in September 2021 to consider what changes and improvements can be made.

FULL RESPONSE

Q1. Current significance of qualifications

With the pace of change also increasing, does the OU offer postgraduate taught qualifications which are sufficiently future proofed to meet your personal and organisational needs?

You said	OU response	Next steps (if any)
I am studying HRM MSc and feel very much that this course recognises the profession is evolving and caters for this in the coursework and study materials.	Thank you	
I think the MBA is respected enough for this not to be a concern for me. More important is how the course content is future proofed. Already some of it seems out of date and this is a new presentation.	Thank you for this feedback. In some areas of the curriculum, industry does move quickly, but we always strive to present current academic thinking.	Refer to Board of Studies.
I am currently studying for the MBA and its content seems to be getting updated regularly and is quite highly thought of. I am surprised, however, that the OU Business School does not offer a postgraduate economics course. I think this could be a good addition.	Thank you for this suggestion. Whilst it will not be relevant for many prospective students, we have developed an MSc in Law, Economics and Governance in partnership with the University of Bologna, with the first year studied in Italy.	
Even though others complained some of the content was old, I found the material on the B176 and B835 extremely relevant, however the lack of the HR focused module is disappointing since this is becoming ever more important.	Thank you.	The lack of an HR focussed module will be referred to the Board of Studies.
Yes I am studying the MBA course - the construct of the approach means your draw from contemporary experience, so it is a lot of your own practice that you apply the theory too - so works well for me.	Thank you. This is very much what we expect from study of the MBA.	
I am studying the MSc in Finance, a route that was about to enter teach out but has been saved by an external partnership. The material in the modules is very dated, much is 7 or 8 years old and does not really reflect today's financial markets. I would have thought it could be refreshed with fairly minimal resource commitment, and I hope this will now happen with the death sentence being reprieved.	There is no external partnership on the MSc Finance. This does apply to the new MSc in Law, Economics and Governance in partnership with the University of Bologna. However, the existing MSc Finance is being completely revised and updated with the first new module due to start in November 2022.	
Some of the course content on the MSc HRM is dated so I think more frequent reviews would be more beneficial to enable to relate some themes with ongoing situations. There are continuous references to the profession evolving though so the learner can evaluate and anticipate more change in the future. The CIPD has also just changed it's own qualifications so there was some uncertainty regarding the validity of my studies, but I understand that the OU has been having discussions with them to ensure the MSc still delivers the correct learning material and facilitates CIPD accreditation.	Thank you. We are completely revising the MSc HRM with a new module code, F93, with the first module due to start in November 2022.	

Future-focused postgraduate qualifications would benefit from comprising the following:

- ♣ Diversity and culture awareness
- ♣ Career-related learning and impact on the labour market
- ♣ Changes in employment law, working from home/ hybrid working and employee and employer liabilities
- ♣ GDPR, online data laws and the effects on businesses
- ♣ Gig economy, e-HR architecture to handle monitoring of employees
- ♣ AI technology, AI analytics, e-HR and their effects on the workplace, data analysis and strategic management and how to manage and lead a modern e-enabled work environment

Thank you for this considered set of recommendations. Much of this is already on our agenda and the university recently created a new post of Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, appointing Professor Marcia Wilson. We have also, over the last four years, significantly expanded our Careers and Employability Service.

Your comments will be passed to the Board of Studies for further consideration.

Q2. What can we improve on?

In what way could we better meet your study needs?

You said	OU response	Next steps (if any)
<p>I'm currently completing the dissertation module of the MSc Finance and would prefer a textbook as the core study material, with the online portal being supplementary rather than the reverse. The online learning portal was awkward / frustrating when 'on the road' and I would only work through when sitting on my desktop computer at home (nowhere near as often). That said, the online portal is probably the most appropriate way to structure the dissertation module - it would have been nice to see more materials to help structure the assignment along with more 'theory' on the different elements / chapters.</p>	<p>Thank you. Textbooks are only provided where they add to the online module delivery. Feedback on the limitations of the portal whilst mobile is welcome.</p>	<p>Comments on the online portal will be passed to the Board of Studies.</p>
<p>I think - for the MSc in human resource management, providing some face-to-face discussions or zoom (as with the current situation). The online content is great, but I learn using a number of different styles and rather miss the ability to have a discussion, debate, question as you go along, face-to-face as it really supports my understanding of different views. I also think it would be beneficial to offer tutorials at differing times, a lot are in the evening and at the weekends. I think providing more days and times (throughout the day) would really help. One thing I struggle with, is the lack of 1:1 - tutors reading paragraphs of assignments - it gets challenging as different tutors seem to mark your work at different levels - so for one tutor where you are getting a good percentage, another where you use the same technique, same writing style marks it down but based on the writing of your work rather than the knowledge applied and this feedback is only given once you have submitted the assignment.</p>	<p>Thank you. We recognise the value of face-to-face events to students. Unfortunately, due to ongoing uncertainty about how the pandemic will progress it is difficult to plan for a full return to face-to-face events. The timing of tutorials is limited by the availability of tutors, the capacity of Adobe Connect and the timetabling within the module content. We strive to ensure consistency of marking by tutors, in large part by peer review and appropriate feedback.</p>	<p>Consistency of tutor marking will be referred to the Board of Studies for consideration of additional support to tutors.</p>
<p>My experience has also been inconsistency from different tutors appearing to mark work at different levels. A student can begin to think they are working in the right direction, then the next tutor can mark differently which can create despair for the student and confusion over their processes.</p>	<p>Thank you. We strive to ensure consistency of marking by tutors, in large part by peer review and appropriate feedback. As a result, the great majority of our tutors do work consistently and within the guidelines set for each module.</p>	
<p>I have completed the MSc HRM and have also struggled to attend online tutorials so there has been no opportunity to have proper discussions with my peers. My learning style generally suits</p>	<p>All face-to-face events have an online alternative provision. These do not use Zoom</p>	<p>The suggestions on audio recording, tutor meetings and video</p>

day schools anyway and I appreciate that they have not been possible lately, but there have not been any alternatives offered (such as Zoom sessions).

I have also found it difficult to anticipate what each tutor wants because they don't seem to have the same standards/expectations. The first TMA for each module always feels more like a "test run" to gauge what is expected of me for the rest of the module. A big gamble to take if there are only 2 TMAs and an EMA because this can eat into your overall grade by quite a bit if you don't "guess" correctly!

More interaction would also be good to engage students with the course material such as.

- Audio recording of texts to allow for listening when driving
- Zoom or similar meetings with Tutor and Tutor Group to discuss the material being studied (the offered tutorials are too seldom.) Many students already do this themselves but many tutors advise against it as "things may be misunderstood." Less chance for misunderstanding if the tutor is also present.
- Tutors that have had the chance to read and understand the material we are studying.
- I would enjoy some video recordings of actual lectures (Yale has some good examples of this.) I understand that this does not currently fit with the OUs teaching method.

Ironically, I have just completed the employee engagement module and it was the least engaging course I have ever studied!

but are facilitated through the university standard system, Adobe Connect.

The expected standard of tuition on each module is set by the team that created the material. Tutors are provided with guidance on marking and through peer review and management oversight we strive to ensure consistency. No student should be expected to guess what is required of them.

Thank you for your suggestions on audio recording, tutor meetings and video recordings of lectures.

All tutors are expected to be fully conversant with the material being taught.

recordings of lectures will be passed to the Board of Studies for further consideration.

Totally agree with you on the audio recording.

Also, the Tutor Group Forums are very 20 years ago - a more modern social media style would be great.

I agree that basically the online learning portal is only possible on a desktop / laptop - the mobile experience is below par.

Further, I agree that tutor inconsistency is a big sticking point for many students - both in their marking criteria and also their level of assistance, both of which vary widely.

I think it's worth also mentioning that describing the MBA that I am most of the way through as a 'taught' masters is a bit of an overstatement. While there are teaching components, they are very rare. If you are struggling with anything (as I did in the finance module), in practice you are on your own, or at best learning from other students. I got an independent tutor for that module as my tutor was largely unhelpful in this regard.

Thank you for these comments.

The MBA is a taught Masters in the sense that it is taught, through correspondence distance learning. It is very much for the individual student to engage with the module material through which the teaching is delivered. When students need support with studies they have a dedicated tutor who can advise and offer guidance on the academic components. Your Student Support Team (SST) is also available to provide wider support.

I also agree audio of reading to suit all learning style.

I also find some of the material on MSC HRM outdated. I have only done the 1st module but we were studying material from early noughties to 2015ish feels outdated and expected more modern literature at MSc level. HRM can be such a quick changing subject area i would have like to see reference to more current issue instead of reference to the bp oil spillage for example

Thank you. We are currently revising and updating the MSc HRM with the first new module starting in November 2022.

I've just completed a module in the MSc Finance.

When preparing for the exams it would be useful to have solutions to the calculations in the past papers. I understand that the OU does not provide model answers but numerical answers would be very helpful to determine whether you are taking the right approach. Both positive and negative feedback is useful when completing past papers as part of the revision process, no

The OU does not provide answers to past exams or provide feedback on exam or EMA questions to preserve the integrity of future exams and EMAs.

These comments will be referred to the Board of Studies.

feedback is unhelpful. Tutors do respond to questions asked but cannot respond to every question on a past paper from every tutee.

Absolutely agree that the forums and Adobe connect is so out of date. Doing a remote residential school became a joke.
For the MBA I think what it lacks is someone who brings together all the modules and gives an overview. For example there could be a six monthly online session where all students come together for general updates and perhaps a topical lecture, panel discussion session or a guest speaker. The modules feel very isolated, I don't feel part of something bigger.
Also the journey isn't always clear, for example the route I should take picking modules. Be nice to have an online session on this at the start.

Thank you. We are aware of concerns and issues around use of Adobe Connect but the university has worked hard with Adobe to improve performance for students and staff. Thank you also for the suggestion regarding bringing the tuition together through a lecture or discussion.
For advice on study options including study order, your SST is available to offer advice and guidance.

The suggestion regarding bringing the tuition together through a lecture or discussion will be passed to the Board of Studies for further consideration.

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- 1) The tutor group forums are not fit for purpose. Tutors are often not very responsive on these and the clunkiness of them does not allow for a flowing discussion. They are often neglected. My suggestion would be to use an app similar to Slack whereby you can encourage more of a flowing conversation.
 - 2) The OU's correspondence is often very poor. There were times when I never received information that I should have. An example was after completing my first module (B716) from my MBA studies, some students received an email telling them that they needed to log on and choose their next modules. I never received this so was shocked when I asked what the process was from moving from B716 to the next stage at a residential and the staff informed me that I should have already selected my modules. I only had a small window to choose and sign up. Other students said they had received notification way earlier about this. This could have meant I missed out on the modules I wanted to choose. This is something that needs to be addressed. Important notifications should appear on our home screens. Sometimes tutors used email or the forums to communicate but never both.
 - 3) The difference in what the tutors require is massive, from simple formatting to referencing to content within the assignments. This means it is imperative as a student to discover when getting a new tutor, exactly what they are looking for. However, surely, some of these points should be standards across the OU and it shouldn't matter which tutor you receive.

Thank you for these comments. We are very sorry that you did not receive the same communication as other students regarding future study.

I agree that I like to have a textbook to refer to for the main points of the module.
I also think that although the Tutor Group Forum can be good for exchanging ideas about your module, it would be good if the tutor was more active in posting items/ comments / guidance on the Forum to let us know if we are on the right track when we are learning about new topics.

Thank you.

A few things have stood out over as obvious candidates for improvement over my MBA
The workload needs to be rethought
The B716 was unrelenting, with no contingency built in. I came down with appendicitis and needed a three week extension to my first TMA. While this did allow me to submit, because there was no padding, I started three weeks behind on the next unit, and had to work like crazy to catch up. Given the module is 1 year, it is not unreasonable to expect some kind of issue, or

Thank you for these points. We recognised that B716 was very intensive and it has been replaced on the new MBA by two smaller modules, B870 and B872. These can be studied in sequence to spread study, or in

even for people to want a holiday. The situation was even worse for those students on the apprenticeship, who frequently had two assignments with very close submission dates. The strategy module was also unbalanced, with group work required every night for some weeks and hardly any work scheduled for others.

Video Essays are a terrible idea

The Entrepreneurship Module introduced the concept of a Visual Essay - a five minute video with voice over (roughly 800 words). Creating the video took approximately five times longer than writing an equivalent document due to editing, but added no value. Even worse, because of lockdown I couldn't record it during the day due to frequent interruptions from the kids, and people banging doors etc, so ended up having to do all the recording late a night when the house was quiet.

Open Studio

I get the sense that the OU are hyper sensitive to encouraging student collaboration because this is something which regular universities have a natural advantage in. It's clear to see there's been an evolution from the TGF, to largely abandoned wikis and now Open Studio. The trouble is that you aren't a cutting edge software house, so the implementations are always clumsy and dated. It's been my experience that students rarely engage using these mediums and form their own groups using their preferred tools. Stop trying to flog a dead horse.

Inconsistent Tutors

I've been very happy with all my tutors. The marking has been prompt and feedback good. I haven't had many useful answers when I asked questions, but I'm OK with that. It's a masters level course after all. However this has clearly not been the case with many students. I've heard several complain that marking has been late and feedback poor.

Assessment Weightings

The B716 weighted TMAs evenly, but every module since has heavily weighted the last assessment. I can understand the temptation to do this, since the early assessments can be considered a bit of a practice run, but it's caused me to come unstuck. I misunderstood the requirements for my final strategy TMA and just scraped a pass. Not only was the paper weighted heavily, but because the exams were cancelled due to covid, it counted twice. I achieved a merit on the B716, distinction for corporate finance and 71% / 80% on strategy TMA01 and TMA02 respectively, but thanks to a single bad mark, the best I can hope for is a pass.

To sum up, I expect three things from the Open University.

1. Great course content
2. Competent organisation (it is an MBA after all)
3. Fair assessment

You only hit one out of three, which isn't nearly good enough for the £20K price tag.

parallel where students wish to complete their degree quickly.

Thank you also for the feedback on the video essay.

Regarding student collaboration, this is an increasingly important aspect of learning due to the importance of collaboration in the workplace. We seek to use the best medium to facilitate this and thank you for your comments regarding Open Studio.

Thank you for your positive comments regarding your tutors, which is reflective of the vast majority of our tutors' work.

Assessment weightings are designed to support student learning, where greater understanding is expected the further into a module the student has progressed. We are very sorry that the cancellation of exams had an effect on students but through a rigorous review process the mean scores achieved were very much in line with previous presentations.

I was studying a MSc in Finance until I arrived at one of the required modules being the statistical unit. At this point I lost interest. The OU suggested that I go down the path of the MA/MSc (Open). The advantage was I could retain credits of the modules I had already studied under the Masters in Finance.

The combined Masters is very interesting as it allows the student to cherry pick within reason the modules he or she wishes to study. So I have three finance and will have two law modules with the possibility choosing a third law module to finish on. But the down side is people ask what

Thank you. The Open Masters qualification offers students the opportunity to study a wide variety of subjects in each module and has become very popular. By its very nature, an Open Degree cannot have a subject title due to the very wide range of options open to students.

masters are you studying for? Is it business administration, or finance, or law? So possibly the studies could be channelled to provide a tag of what has actually been studied (e.g., Corporate finance/law).

Also one is left in some doubt as to which faculty the student belongs too (is it the business faculty, the law faculty and so on).

Apart from the heading denoting expertise one is striving to achieve and the lack of identity of the faculty one belongs to it is a very rewarding masters path to pursue.

The online technology esp adobe if not really fit for purpose and fails consistently. Tutor consistency would help too especially if you are attending a back up online tutorial - having your personal tutor only do tutorials in the working week, makes it difficult to attend and you are attending twice to listen to their recording as well as the live one from another tutor. Not being able to have a video chat with student support makes communication and relationship building difficult (and my tutor was happy to do so) because the OU needs to record sessions. I would also like a reader that includes all material including the reader the text from the module and the transcription of videos - all in one place that I can annotate as I learn. and can be also provided electronically as a single document (or module based) - but chapters in a module for the download just causes extra work and is complicated by my disability

Thank you and some of your comments have been responded to elsewhere. Tutors frequently have other jobs and their availability to diary tutorials across the week is simply not possible. However, tutorials are recorded and available to all students. Thank you for your suggestion of video chat with the SST. Provision of additional readers and other material would increase the overall cost of modules. However, as a disabled student you are entitled to an alternative format set of study materials which can be arranged through the SST. Other students can request a print on demand service, for which an additional charge is made.

The SST will be asked to consider the provision of video calls.

The module timings in the MSc in Finance (perhaps others) mean that you have to chose, register and pay for your next module before you have the result from the current one. The presentation schedule also does not allow for any down time between modules unless you take a full year off (which I have done), although I only wanted a mere 6 months off, as I don't qualify for any student loan and wanted to save up. I realise this is an old qualification but even students need break sometimes. A simple request. Allow students to discuss during all tutorials, enable their microphones. If I want a one way lecture I can watch a video.

Tutors should encourage students to use their microphones but many choose not to do so.

The presentation schedule will be referred to the Board of Studies.

I agree about presentation patterns. If you don't study 'year round' then you have to have a whole year off. I would also like an OU Module textbook for all Modules. When you use someone else's text as the Text Book it is unsatisfactory. Reading the selected OU pages/chapters means you miss some of the flow. TGFs are frequently dead. Some tutors are good at stimulating tuition, but there is inconsistency and I feel that some oversight is needed.

Textbooks are only provided where they add to the online module delivery. Producing a textbook for every module and all students would significantly increase the cost of modules. However, a print on demand service is available at an additional cost. Thank you for comments regarding the TGF. We do recognise that consistent effort is required to maintain student interaction and the academic managers of tutors are required to monitor the forums.

I have just finished studying for my 4th module towards the MSc in HRM. Hopefully moving onto my dissertation in November.

I have similar experiences to others in terms of inconsistency with different tutors and how they work. In my first module, my tutor was almost too responsive and sending emails/message well into the evening. But I've also had the opposite where questions can go unanswered for a week or so. Their marking styles also feel unaligned, with no clear guidance on how to achieve a higher mark. My previous university experience had marking criteria that indicates what is considered to be a poor, good, or excellent answer for example.

I've mentioned to several of my tutors that the study guide is completely unusable. Assignments are often due before you have read the content required to answer the TMA questions. This means you have to create your own timeline so seems pointless to have an OU one.

I'd also benefit from more frequent tutorials. 6 hours (4 tutorials) over the space of 6 months feels quite low. I'd prefer one tutorial for each module to check for understanding and allow for debate with peers. I'm not sure what the solution is but it would be great for more vocal contributions from other students. Too often the chat box is relied upon which can eat into the small amount of time we have together. I do like the recordings that are made available in case you miss a tutorial or want to hear another version.

Due to the contemporary nature of HRM, it feels like there is an opportunity to more regularly update the course content. Some of the content has not been updated for 5+ years. There are a lot of web based links that have expired which can be quite stressful when studying on limited time. It is useful to research for alternatives but I prefer to plan for this type of thing than come across it by accident when I've set aside studying time for a specific module activity.

Thank you for this comprehensive feedback. We will refer the points specifically related to module content, assignment timings and tutorials to the team leading on a revision to the MSc HRM.

Refer to Board of Studies to feed into revision of MSc HRM.

I just wanted to flag that I experienced several technical difficulties registering with the OU. Once I had been accepted, these continued (i.e. gaining access to Student home) which were then sorted. I had to make contact with the OU about half a dozen times to resolve these issues, as the help online was referring me to Student home (which I was unable to access).

We are very sorry that you have had this negative experience.

It may be beneficial to the University, with a view to retaining students and improving qualification outcomes, to re-think financial assistance arrangements and module presentations.

Postgraduate study can be funded in various ways from upfront payment, to (Student Finance England) SFE loans, OUSA arrangements and sponsorship. The current global pandemic has disrupted how viable and valid some of these options are. Many students are being furloughed and facing reduced income, redundancy and facing no income or receiving benefits. Each action reduces their choice of financial assistance for their academic journey. Most students are finding that their individual circumstances have afforded limited choices on financial assistance, mainly through SFE and OUSBA. However, the issue I am presenting does seem to be one that was present before the global pandemic.

Most OU postgraduate qualifications are flexible however this is not considered by SFE. They view OU qualifications as part-time regardless of what a student chooses to study per academic year. The SFE also have limited options for length of study i.e. two years, three years. This may

Thank you. As students will know, the postgraduate loan process can be a little complex, and can leave students in awkward situations due to the regulations the OU and Student Finance England need to follow.

Postgraduate Loans are paid directly to students and are defined as a 'contribution towards the cost of postgraduate study' and are not considered a tuition fee loan. They are intended to support students with a range of study-related and maintenance costs that may arise throughout a period of study. For this reason, the UK Government has spread payments over the duration of study, rather than paying the whole amount

be different for other qualifications, for MSc HRM, these are the options. The payment scheduling for two years is very different to that for three years, both scheduling arrangements do not take into consideration the OU module presentations each year and SFE have a legal responsibility to only issue a specific amount of financial assistance per academic year to students.

The OU SST are very helpful when responding to students' queries and will provide a plan for each qualification in relation to each discipline. Using the MSc HRM qualification again as an example: the plan provided by SST for two years is B863 and B866 in Autumn, as these are the only presentation times for each of those modules, and B864, B867 and BXR868 (residential school) in Spring/Summer, while B804, the dissertation, follows for the second year. This on the surface provides a reasonable plan until the financial assistance is brought into the equation and/or there is a consideration to study over three years.

The SFE only issue payments once the OU confirms a student has commenced their studies. This then requires a student to consider an OUSBA arrangement which can coincide with the scheduling of the SFE payments. However, not all modules coincide with this scheduling and their presentation cannot be changed due to cost-effectiveness to the OU of being presented once per academic year.

The entities or stakeholders in this matter are unbeknownst to the issues enacted on their customers and clients as a result of following individual organisational procedure and processes that were originally designed to serve the very customers or students at the centre of this matter.

Students are either abandoning their studies and pursuing work, choosing a different institution or struggling to work full-time and study modules on a full-time study plan while facing difficulty in sustaining a financial arrangement which potentially affects their module outcomes.

With regards to me: I will have to study 90 credits next year to complete my MSc HRM and the difficulty within that arrangement is that if I do not study my remaining module next year, SFE will not provide the stipulated payments. The remaining module, B867, is a pertinent one to the focus of my qualification and career and will face its last presentation the following year, 2023. SFE have a signed contract from me indicative of a two year plan not a three year plan. The remaining module, B867, is being presented at the same time as the required residential school, which is necessary for my CIPD qualification and at the same time as the final, crucial months of my dissertation. Many students will be facing the same issue in their last year of their MSc HRM qualification.

Financial support requires a re-adaption to contemporary student needs or the presentation of modules may require re-adaption to contemporary student needs.

up-front at the start of a course. While we are aware that many students intend to use the loan to pay for tuition fees, the University has no guarantee that all students will do so. This means that regrettably, there is no capacity for an arrangement to exist between The Open University and the Student Loans Company (SLC) which would allow students to register for study on the understanding that fee costs will be covered later.

The introduction of the Postgraduate Loan in 2016 to England and in 2017 to Wales was a major benefit to our students however, as mentioned above the UK Government did not create a Tuition Fee Loan product, with this in mind the university needs to manage financial risks. The Open University has a large cohort of postgraduate students, many of whom would prefer to pay their modules fees in instalments aligning with the Postgraduate Loan instalments.

The Open University model of teaching means that we incur significant costs for individual students prior to course start, particularly in relation to distribution of high-quality teaching materials and allocation of tuition support. We therefore continue to require that postgraduate students have paid tuition fees prior to course start. Our 2018/19 Fee Rules states part of the administration of the Postgraduate Loan is that:

'We are required to confirm your registration is complete and that you are participating in study before Postgraduate Loan instalments are released. This means that all relevant paperwork must be returned to us together with full payment of any module fee before a Postgraduate Loan instalment can be paid to you.

Postgraduate Loans are available to students to be paid over 2 or 3 years. Students can specify on the SFE PG loan application whether their course is 2 or 3

years duration, and the maximum amount of loan that they apply for (they can choose the full amount of £11,570 or a lower amount) will be paid over this duration, always in 3 instalments per year. Where students study for 2 years, the overall amount they applied for is spread over this period, so the student receives 6 equal instalments overall, and 9 instalments overall if they go for the 3 year option.

I think most of my thoughts have been captured very succinctly by my fellow students, however I just wanted to echo the main area for improvement already noted being around the technology available - TGF/AdobeConnect etc are extremely outdated, and especially not suitable for the delivery of 'residential's'. During the B870 residential in Feb, we had to abandon some of the exercises as the tutors couldn't get AdobeConnect working. Using MS teams (or similar) would allow for more interactive tutor discussions, tutorials, student-to-student engagement etc.

I would also echo the registration process as requiring a significant rethink - using paper based/PDF forms again seems extremely outdated. My application for the B870 module last year was processed late, which meant I joined the course nearly a full month late (despite having all my paperwork etc submitted well in advance of the deadline). I understand that the OU were overwhelmed with additional applications due to Covid, however the old fashioned paper-based process meant it was impossible to check on the progress of my application and meant I was calling student support a few times a week to be told completely different updates every single time - the most regular update being that 'my forms were sitting in somebodies pile and hadn't been looked at yet'. This meant I had a month of work to catch-up on the module when I eventually started causing extreme stress; while I was delivering the national covid vaccine programme for NHS Scotland - this gave me and my employer a very poor first impression of the OU.

I understand covid has created new challenges for the university, however as a digitally delivered MBA course I would have expected them to be at the forefront of thinking and technology in a strong position to adapt, and have been surprised at the outdated process and technologies in place. In a world where technology and digital transformation has moved at great pace due to Covid, it feels as though the OU have been thoroughly left behind.

We are sorry that registration in Autumn 2020 was more difficult than we would have wanted. This was partly due to increased numbers of students applying to study with the OU and also our own staff being sent home due to the Pandemic lockdown. We do not anticipate a recurrence.

Q3. Value of professional accreditation

What importance do you attach to professional accreditation: e.g. Triple accreditation (AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS), CIPD, CFA?

You said

OU response

Next steps (if any)

<p>A lot! That is part of the reason to do an OU MBA as it is well respected. I also think that doing an online MBA is probably worth more. If one can dedicate time for work, family and MBA, shows that they have good time management and drive to succeed.</p>	<p>Thank you for these kind words.</p>
<p>I attach a lot of importance to professional accreditation. Studying the MSc in human resource management - I am working towards CIPD accreditation to progress in my career as a professional. I believe that showing continued professional development and managing study alongside work (as I do) really speaks volumes to time management, motivation, drive, and ambition.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>This was one of the determining factors in choosing the organisation to study for an MBA. If the OU had not had triple accreditation, I would have decided on another supplier.</p>	<p>Thank you. We have just completed another round of accreditation visits and hope that we have retained our triple rating.</p>
<p>I am studying HRM MSc and having the CIPD accreditation made the decision a 'no-brainer'.</p>	<p>Excellent, thank you.</p>
<p>The professional accreditation for the MBA was the primary reason I chose to study with the OU in the first place. After I completed my MBA I went on to study other topics with the OU for which I was not so concerned by the accreditation as my later studies have been more about personal interest rather than career related but if it had not been for the professional accreditation I would never have taken that initial step and signed up.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>It's really important, especially when you are spending so much money and looking for a qualification that is well-recognised.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Probably not the right answer, but for me (MBA) no relevance at all.</p>	<p>That is absolutely fine. We do realise that accreditation is not a determining factor for everyone.</p>
<p>A member of the OU said to me that employers would not know what a triple accredited MBA means.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. We recognise that not all employers understand what triple accreditation is or what it means. The value to students, and through them their employers, is that the OU Business School has been assessed by three high profile external agencies in terms of the quality of our teaching and the content of our modules.</p>
<p>Triple accreditation was an important factor for me when choosing the MBA as an indicator of programme quality</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Accreditation was only a secondary aspect in choosing the OU. The main reason for choosing the OU was the overall concept which I knew from my daughter being on an undergraduate programme. And esp. the great flexibility in studying at an individual pace to manage work, family and study. I didn't</p>	<p>This is interesting and thank you for sharing.</p>

care about which accreditation OU has, but if OU had no accreditation at all, I probably would have chosen a different university.

This was an important consideration - on the choice of course - but not the main reason for coming to the OU. It does however give a good degree of credibility - especially internationally - as I work for a US company. OU is not a familiar name

Great to hear, thank you.

A minority report, I attach no importance to it at all as I'm a leisure student, studying for 'fun'. Don't forget us though, we still pay fees.

Great that studying our Masters degrees can be seen as fun. We hope that the fees continue to be justified by the quality of our qualifications.

The triple accreditation was probably what made me choose OUBS above other universities.

Thank you.

It's great to see these views about triple accreditation. I wonder if the differences between the specific accreditations is important, or just that it is the three main accreditors that matters? Maybe it varies with country/region of the world?

Each accreditation is different but we are incredibly proud to have three in such a competitive market.

I think professional accreditation is very important. I want to progress in a career in HR so I specifically chose the MSc in human resource management to obtain CIPD accreditation.

Thank you, we are pleased to be able to support these choices.

I'm studying towards MSc HRM but will not be completing the residential school to gain CIPD accreditation as I do not feel this is necessary. I still have no experience in this field and this is usually more important to employers

This is entirely understandable and thank you for sharing.

Complying with the best standards is important in today's education/work system. There are plenty of substitutes for each level of achievement but having something that means something objectively cannot be undervalued.

Thank you.

The value in the triple accreditation the OUBS (Open University Business School) holds, is from the understanding that few business schools globally, hold this type of accreditation. The value is from the understanding that OUBS is comprehensively appraised and the OUBS has maintained a high level of professionalism and high quality standard consistently. The industry specific accreditations provide confirmation that all required knowledge and understanding has been achieved sufficiently and an individual understands it represents what 'better' looks like and demonstrates this (CIPD, 2017). The value is present within the recognisable establishments behind those accreditations ('triple') and specific 'professional accreditation' the importance is in the credibility and assurance each accreditation brings with it to each employer, contract, client, as we passionately fulfil the service we dedicate to purvey.

Thank you.

I am currently studying the MBA, and when I applied last year a connection with the Chartered Management Institute was advertised on the MBA overview page - which was one of the reasons I

We have not been able to get an answer to this issue so far but will publish a full response in due course.

chose the OU. However when I look on the MBA page now there is no mention of this. Has something changed?

I would be keen to understand how we can use our MBA modules/qualification to also gain CMI accreditation? This seems to be a natural link, and feel this should be promoted more to MBA students.

Q4. Impact of COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic causing all learning to be online, what has been the impact on your learning experience?

You said	OU response	Next steps (if any)
<p>Covid has made it easier for me (more WFH) and I love that all exams are home exams. Hopefully this can continue in the future.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	
<p>Minimal, although less spare time for study (e.g. due to 'home-schooling')</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	
<p>I agree, that during Covid-19 and working from home, it has given me that little bit more time to dedicate to my studies. I save an hour a day on commuting which can be put to use studying, so that is a positive. I do prefer not sitting exams. Trying to write a 3 hr essay by hand, especially when you are not used to it, probably doesn't show our abilities in the best light. I prefer the EMA approach or open book exam with 24hrs to complete. Also the day schools, being online tend to be more useful. It is often hard to dedicate a whole day to driving to somewhere for a tutorial day, but spending 6 hrs online with w break in the middle is far more doable. I hope these things remain, and while there probably is a place for fact-to-face meetings, hopefully these can be reduced, and maybe online day schools could be increased?</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	<p>These comments will be passed to the Board of Studies to include in future final assessment planning.</p>
<p>Totally agree that there is now no need to return to any exam hall setting. The take home exam - which is like a mini TMA - is much more appropriate for the digital age and more reflective of what employers look for; that it is open book so you can consult materials etc. as opposed a memory test over a short time period. I think from reading the posts on here it seems most if not all want exams to be home based, open book, and over "days" not hours e.g. up to 3 days to complete an exam. That means can spend that amount of time on it or finish it sooner but it gives you that longer window. One improvement suggestion - make this fall over the weekend so students dont need to take as much holidays from work e.g. If its a 3 day window to complete an exam, then it could be Friday to Monday. or Saturday to Monday. This means 1 day off if you wanted to work on it over 3 days.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	<p>These comments will be passed to the Board of Studies.</p>
<p>Unlike others in this discussion - I unfortunately have seen less time to apply to my studies. Late 2020 my studies took a massive hit, which demotivated me greatly - this was not an issue of working from home, it was because my workload had increased so much - the time I had dedicated to my studies was used in my working day - I would work earlier in the mornings and finish later at night.</p>	<p>We are really sorry to hear this experience but hope that things have begun to settle back to normal. We will return to face-to-face events as soon as it is safe to do so.</p>	

In February 2021 I agreed to have one day a week dedicated to my studies, this has supported me in getting back on track and finding my motivation again!

In my time with the OU I have not experienced face-to-face meetings/tutorials and this is something that I think would be beneficial - I am able to learn online - however, I find it really supporting to be able to have a discussion with a tutor, to bounce ideas back and fourth and get a really good understanding of the subject.

I think the TGF's are useful but if people get involved in them which doesn't always happen.

I have been fortunate not to notice a significant impact on my day to day study, partly because my work has not been hugely affected by covid and I have not had a family to home school! Like others on this forum I have not missed exams - and reflecting on this, I believe that the way exams test knowledge retention is less well suited to the subject of business than testing students' ability to find and apply relevant material.

What I have REALLY missed, though, is having a face-to-face element. I'm a member of all the WhatsApp groups but they are less impactful, for me, when I haven't met the other participants in person. I know the travel is a total pain or even impossible for some, but the day and residential schools in my first, pre-covid year made a difference to my overall experience.

Thank you.

For me it also gave more time working at home. However, due to added work pressures during lockdown, I sometimes felt that requirements or expectations on OU work didn't take into account added demands. For example it was hard to do the online residential as there were work interruptions which needed dealing with. Always at the wrong moment!

Thank you for this and we are sorry that there were conflicts of timing.

I'll be honest and say that the modules which I did during the pandemic were largely online to begin with, so it didn't make much difference (they were the additional modules where you get to choose 3 from about 9 options).

However, I deliberately postponed taking the last module of the MBA as there was no face-to-face tuition or residential. For me, this was a deal breaker as you are manifestly not getting the same value for money or experience. My workplace was also closed, making it borderline impossible to get anything of the sort of work I wanted to do done.

Thank you for this. The academic experience is exactly the same for face-to-face and online events. As you rightly say, there were online versions before the pandemic and these have consistently been assessed as providing the same level of pedagogic value to students.

1) The residentials and tutorial days were moved from in person to remote. I totally understand why this happened but the online replacements were not as helpful as the in person events. The residentials I attended in person allowed me to collaborate with others, speak to tutors about my assignments and gave me 4 days to focus entirely on it without distractions. The online residential that I had to complete for my final module ran over too many days. We were told we would have to log in everyday, which just isn't possible when working full time. Not only that, I was in a group of 4 others and we were reliant on others getting to a particular point before we could complete our section. I found I had the most time in a morning but unfortunately, the group I was in, tended to do work in the evenings which meant I was blocked for several hours. I really got very little out of the online residential as the tutor had no real involvement as it was completely peer assessed. The online tutorials were just hour long recordings which are hard to follow as well. The thing that I found most astounding about this was that the OU never adjusted the price of their courses to take this into account. I paid the same for a module with zero in person tuition as I would have done if I was able to

Thank you for this.

Regarding the fees for face-to-face events, the University said at the time that whilst we take all reasonable steps to provide the educational services that you have registered or enrolled to receive there may be circumstances outside of our control where we are unable to provide those services in full or in part, including during a pandemic. We will seek to minimise disruption so far as we are reasonably

Whilst the pedagogic value of online events is the same as for face-to-face events we will pass these comments to the Board of Studies for further consideration.

attend the residential and tutorial days. Surely our fees went towards: accommodation, food, tutor expenses, etc so I am guessing this was just pocketed. I did raise this at the time with the OU and nothing was done about it.

2) The rest of the course was online anyway so made no real difference.

able to and, wherever practicable, will provide students with reasonable alternative arrangements to continue with their studies.

The regulator of Higher Education in the UK, the Office for Students (OfS) supports this approach and has provided the following guidance:

In some cases, it will not be possible for assessment to continue as originally planned. Providers will need to determine the extent to which each component of assessment is necessary to the award of credit or a qualification. This might include considering the removal of a component of assessment, revision of a component, substitution of one component for another, or deferral of a component to a later date.

Through the alternative delivery method of the Residential School, the University has complied with our Conditions of Registration and the OfS guidance and there is no justification for a refund of all or part of the module fee.

Covid has given me more time to study as I dont have travel time to factor in as I have been working from home.

I started the MBA and have found on line learning beneficial. I didn't mind having tutorials and residential school on-line as it meant I didn't have to worry about arranging travel for a particular time and date. The residential school online was well organised although very intensive.

I am also in favour of not having formal exams which you have to attend in person. I find that EMAs give a better chance to showcase what you have learnt without the nervousness of travelling to a venue and attending an exam hall.

Thank you.

COVID hasn't made much difference. I worked from home previously and completed the modules with residential elements prior to the pandemic. In fact the only impact has been with assessment process. The corporate finance exam was open book and had a 24 window, which removed almost all of the

Thank you. Cancellation of exams was an extreme response to the very early days of the COVID-19 lockdown. Through moderation at module results

stress. However the strategy exam was cancelled, and we were assessed purely on the TMAs. I had performed poorly on the last TMA which was heavily weighted, so this counted against me twice.

panel meetings we have been able to ensure that the overall standard of parks awarded was entirely in line with the results prior to the pandemic.

Covid-19 has presented many challengers. It has been interesting to see many traditional universities have to adapt to distance learning which is the bedrock of the OU.
I have found two things that my masters course provided me that my non student friends did not have during the lock downs.

Thank you for this feedback.

- 1 - It provided a structured past time in which to fill my time at home whilst in lock down. Many people were able to work from home but many were not able to do so.
2. EMA's replacing formal 3 hour sit down exams has been a God send. I am better able to demonstrate my knowledge with a well constructed thought out response to the question via an EMA as opposed to a 3 hour rushed reply. Plus my hand writing is appalling. So I feel I am achieving higher scores now with the change in the end of module assessments. This unfortunately I must thank Covid for.

For me it made studying much easier and great i didnt have to incur travel time but the resi school was very disorganised and hectic.

Thank you.

The only real impact I experienced was the residential school which has been converted to an online school. In my programme (MBA) the OU did a great job and offered two different versions, a short version which lasted a few (long) days and a long version which was spread across 10 days with many asynchronous activities in the forum and only a few short online meetings. I took the long version and it worked out surprisingly well, esp. the asynchronous activities went much better than I expected. The feedback from the participants of the short version was mixed, it seems to me that the long version worked better.

Thank you, and we are sorry that you were unable to travel to the UK.

However, although OU made the best out of this situation, I missed traveling to UK and meeting my fellow students in person. There is only one more residential school in the programme, towards the end, so hopefully this is post-COVID.

Generally this has been good - as I WFH part time and travel (normally) part times, so I have had more time to concentrate on my studies
However the online residential school was challenging to navigate and ensure completeness, which with Tutor support I managed. There were significant IT failures with the new Adobe.
Also accessing support takes a few days to a week, and some departments have been very slow, inc disability support

Thank you. We appreciate that in the early stages of lockdown our response times were longer than we would want. This was almost entirely due to our own staff being sent home and unable to access university systems.

Unlike many here, the pandemic had a negative impact upon my studies and forced me to defer from a module in 2020.

Thank you and we are sorry for these negative experiences.

However, committing to one hour study per day over a number of weeks as a residential school replacement was not really something I felt able to handle. I had to study in bursts, often solely over the weekend - and finding even an hour in the week was sometimes difficult. At the time, a more condensed online residential school replacement would have worked much better.

From a learning perspective - unfortunately I did not receive some communication regarding online sessions - or was unable to access them. As a result I missed out in participating with fellow students and missed out on building some relationships which had aided me significantly with previous modules. Online forums were not a match for meeting up with people in real life and exchanging ideas and views.

<p>I found that I had less time to study because I was working from home whilst home schooling. I work part time so I usually have an hour or two between finishing work and needing to do the school run. This crucial time was not long available and I found it difficult to study in the evenings when my daughter wanted to do fun things with me. By the time she was in bed, I had very little energy left to open the books.</p> <p>The MSc HRM residential school in Autumn has also been converted to an online equivalent, with an hour or two each evening for a few weeks. This is going to be a challenge for me because it is easier for me to arrange for my daughter to spend a weekend with her grandparents than it is for me to organise childcare for a few hours each evening for so many consecutive days - especially as she has extra-curricular activities on some of those evenings (swimming lessons, brownies...) so her babysitter will need to be her taxi too.</p>	<p>Thank you for this feedback which will be passed to the Board of Studies.</p>	<p>Board of Studies to consider the effects on some students of online residential school.</p>
<p>The pandemic itself has had little impact on my studies as my time was all spent remotely anyway except for 2 exams which have already been sat and passed. I also already worked from home before the various lockdowns. What it has made me realise is that I prefer studying when using the printed text rather than online module content. On work/study days I am using a computer screen for 12+ hours in one day which is very straining on the eyes and physically tiring</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	
<p>The pandemic has meant that my time to study has been more limited and less predictable, as the child care situation has been so challenging. However, it has been manageable.</p> <p>As others have said, I've found online day schools and residential schools to be much less beneficial than the face-to-face variants. The aspects that make these meetings most beneficial - developing soft skills, focussed team work, meaningful personal exchanges, networking opportunities - are entirely missing in the online variants. While I understand that during the pandemic face-to-face schools cannot be offered, I do think that the OU can work on the online formats used to make them more beneficial. For example, I've not experienced <u>video</u> being used in any tutorial or day school, which would make it much easier to communicate. Break-out rooms can be used more beneficially - it is not possible to discuss a topic with others meaningfully if you a) don't know who they are, b) can't see them, and c) have only 5 to 10 minutes. Perhaps new approaches or a different software can be explored.</p>	<p>Thank you for this considered feedback, which will be passed to the Board of Studies.</p>	<p>Board of Studies to consider content and delivery for online residential schools.</p>
<p>Just wanted to add that I preferred the online residential, day school and exam for B873. The format of schools was really good. My only comment is that releasing the exam paper at 12 midnight was unhelpful - do you stay up? 10pm or 6am release time would have been much better. The online exam took me 14 hours, not the 3 hours we were meant to spend on it.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>	
<p>The impact for me was moving the B860 exam to remote.</p>	<p>Thank you, especially for understanding the complexity of the</p>	

I think this was a positive move as I was able to consider the questions in more depth rather than scribbling! for 3 hours.
 The downside was the somewhat chaotic contradictory messages at the beginning. Obviously being one of the first set of OU exams to change, communications were not at their best for both students and ALs

situation we faced in the early stages of the pandemic.

I think like a lot of others in this discussion, it's been absolutely fine. I started a new job after 6 months furlough/unemployed just after I applied for the course, so I wasn't sure I'd be able to balance work and study, but it's worked out brilliantly.
 Without having to commute on a daily basis, that's 2 hours easily given back and I'm not so tired. So I look forward to the study at the end of the day, or get up a bit earlier to do some study before work.

Thank you.

Open book exams – MSc Finance

You said

Totally agree with what most students are saying on the forum - no need to return to any exam hall settings. The take home exam - which is like a mini TMA - is much more appropriate for the digital age and more reflective of what employers look for: that it is open book so you can consult/research materials if required and carefully formulate your answers as opposed a memory dump over a short time period.

I think from reading the posts on here it seems most if not all want exams to be home based, open book, and over a set number of "days" as opposed a set number of hours e.g. up to 3 days to complete an exam rather than up to 3 hours.

One improvement suggestion - make this time period fall over the weekend so students don't need to take as much time off from work e.g. If its a 3 day window to complete an exam, then it could be Friday to Monday for the 3 days or Saturday to Monday. This means 1 day off if you wanted to work on it over 3 days as a lot of students in the OU postgraduate business will be working during the week.

OU response

Thank you for these comments.

Next steps (if any)

I think this is worth further discussion.

I come from the era when 3 hour exams were the norm, even at school. It developed the skill of learning by rote - starting with nursery rhymes, going through time tables and on to complex functions. However, in practice, I had text books - just to make sure. On the new MSc Finance I know you are looking at some Modules having an EMA rather than an exam. I think that B860, the Statistics Module, is especially suited to that. Modern day practitioners use spread sheets and computers to build their models. I doubt they are done by hand. It is surely better to test the understanding of how to do it and how to interpret it than it is to see if I can add up, manually.

Even the Law School are using EMAs on their Modules. Perhaps the Accountants can agree to consider it, too.

Thank you.

I thought the open exam worked very well - I took 2 days off just in case and started the paper when it became available. I took longer to work on it than if I'd been in an exam hall because I was double-checking all my calculations. I did a read-through the next day and found I'd missed out one part of a question - I usually don't have time to do the review properly.

Thank you.

Like others, I treated it as a short-timed TMA rather than an exam and enjoyed doing it.

Student registration

You said	OU response	Next steps (if any)
<p>Student enrolment is an interesting topic to bring up. I am studying for the MBA and completed a six month long module (B870) only to find that the follow on module (B872) was full and I was placed on a waiting list. I was very surprised to find I could not get a place on the second module as it was mid-way through the academic year. I subsequently altered my plans and am now studying the MBA compulsory modules in a different order.</p>	<p>A response was posted on the forum and is repeated below.</p>	
<p>The following message was posted on the forum in response to questions around registration on modules. "Regarding the issues with over-capacity on B872, we had twice as many students tried to register on the module as we would normally expect. We were aware of some of the anticipated increase and therefore recruited additional tutors for the module. The timing of our processes meant that there was a rush just before we closed module registrations. This was an extremely rare, possibly unique, situation but I am very sorry to everyone who was affected by this."</p>		

Two students emailed their contribution rather than posting on the forum and are copied below with responses.

Emailed comments

You said	OU response	Next steps (if any)
<p>If I may, I would like to offer some brief feedback. I studied for a PGCERT in HRM and completed the two foundation models B863 and B864. Overall my experience was a good one, the content of the course is good.</p>	<p>I am sorry that your experience with tutors was inconsistent. We strive to ensure consistency through peer review and feedback by managers. Feedback on exams and EMAs is not possible. However, past exam papers are available.</p>	
<p>My main comment would be that there should be more consistency in approaches used by the tutors when offering advice/tips on how to draft or structure a TMA. My first and second tutor had slightly varying views on certain aspects concerning TMAS. In fact I also noticed this when participating or listening to recordings on TMA tutorials other than my own.</p>		
<p>Another point I'd like to raise concerns EMAS. I think that feedback to students on this is essential in particular if their studies are ongoing or even if they are at point where they are thinking of continuing to study with the OU. I was told that feedback on my exam was not an option. Perhaps a last tutorial with students on this could be an option. It would provide a nice conclusion to the module.</p>		
<p>I've tried to contribute to the forum posting some comments but the system has prevented me from contributing. It is not the first time that technical glitches (to use a euphemism) get in the way. Since I do not want this to be a missed opportunity, I'll use a simple email to share some thoughts.</p>	<p>The Open University is a distance learning provider of correspondence tuition. As such, the learning is provided by experts, through the correspondence tuition materials.</p>	<p>These comments will be passed to the Board of Studies.</p>
<p>I've started my second year at Open University (MBA) and, I've to say, I'm not particularly impressed with how the course has been organised so far.</p>		

When I enrolled I was expecting to be able to Learn from experts, I was expecting to be able to participate to actual lectures (even though virtually) or to have the possibility to view the recordings. I was expecting to be shown how to use the tools provided. The MBA with OU is something completely different and far from those expectations.

Tutors are not lecturers. The exposure to tutors is often limited to Tutorials which ,in most cases, do not add value to the modules and do not help understand how to prepare the TMAs.

A lot of emphasis is put on the TGF which has its value (I cannot deny it) but it is something that can hardly justify the fee paid (£ 20,000) for an MBA.

For the fee paid, not even textbooks are provided. The platform used for delivering the tutorials is outdated and ,sometimes, embarrassing.

I?m very disappointed. I?m currently considering whether to continue my studies with OU even though I?ve already invested nearly £ 10,000

If I may suggest some improvements :

- Lectures (live and recorded) must be made available to students. Students must be exposed to the materials, students must be taught how to use the tools provided, students must be guided.
- Text books must be provided along with additional content present online
- Tutorials must take advantage of the new technologies (Adobe connect is outdated)
- Tutors need to be closer to students and should be more transparent with their requirements (the difficulty in writing TMAs is also in being aligned with tutor?s expectations ?)

Remaining at your disposal for any further clarifications

Date: 02/08/2021