Studying and the OU

Many students choose the OU because they like the idea of studying flexibly. You may have chosen the OU because you think some things at a traditional university might be difficult for you – like listening to lectures and taking notes, or working in a group of students where you might not be able to join in the discussion easily.

This section explains what OU study is like, and what you need to think about before you start (see Figure 1).

- Some courses send you books and other printed materials, CDs and DVDs. Other courses have all their material online.
- You learn by studying course material, working on course activities and assignments.
- A lot of this work can be done on your own, but most courses have tutorials where you work face to face with your tutor and other students; on other courses these tutorials are online instead.
- Some courses have residential or day schools.
- For most courses you need a computer and access to the internet

![Figure 1 Some of the things you might do during your course](image)
2.1 What may help you at the beginning

Start by thinking about the last time you studied. How did you learn and what did you find difficult?

Find out as much as you can about how your course will be taught and what support you might need. For example, what help might you need at tutorials?

- If British Sign Language (BSL) or Signed Supported English (SSE) is your preferred language, you may need communication support from an interpreter.
- If you have some hearing you will need an environment that suits listening and lip reading.
- If you speak but cannot hear, you may need a lip speaker or a note taker, or both.

Try this exercise

Think about these questions and maybe write down your answers, or go over them with a friend or someone close to you (see Figure 2).

- How do I feel about doing this course?
- Is there anything about studying that worries me?
- Will I take longer to study if I have to read a lot of transcripts or unfamiliar words?
- How will I manage in group activities?
- How will I manage lip reading and taking notes at the same time during tutorials?
- Am I confident with reading and receiving feedback in written English?
- Am I confident in expressing myself and my thoughts in English?
- What communication support do I need?
- Do I need extra time to study or do exams?
- How can I access study materials in audio that are not signed and don’t have subtitles?
My reflections

What do I feel about doing this course?

How can I make sure I can make the most of group discussions?

How will I lipread unfamiliar words?

How will I tell my tutor what I need.

What do I do if I get behind in my studies?

Figure 2 Reflecting on how you feel about studying can help you prepare for your course

Some students worry about managing all the reading. However, many D/deaf students study successfully with the OU and you will find useful tips in this booklet and online to help you survive.