



## 1 Overview of the course

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# Introduction

Online learning is a fact of modern life. A simple internet search finds thousands of freely available or paid for online courses, while online learning is also found within workplaces, as professional development activities, or augmenting traditional face-to-face learning. This free course, *How to make an open online course*, has been designed by the Free Learning team at The Open University to give you the skills to design, structure and produce an open online course. It explores planning and design for a course planned to be freely open to the public. It includes: developing content, use of assessments and social learning, consideration of production aspects such as hosting platforms, editorial, testing and evaluating your course. Opportunities are available throughout to explore examples of online learning from a range of providers, and to experience elements of course design first hand.

Included within the course are a number of resources which will help you to design your own online course. The focus is primarily on learning design, course structure and production processes. Examples are given of free or commonly available software and hosting platforms, with some key features of OpenLearn Create and Moodle explored in more depth in order to help you to understand and apply the theory of course design and production. Detailed technical aspects of online production, such as the use of specialist software to edit video or code interactive assets, are not covered in this course.



**Figure 1** The Free Learning team at The Open University. From left to right: Anna Page, Sas Amoah, Jane Roberts, Rosie Storrar, Matthew Culnane, Hannah Parish, Matt Driver, Patrina Law and Simon Hull.

Listen to the following audio recording in which Patrina Law introduces the course.

Audio content is not available in this format.

[Course overview](#)

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# Learning outcomes

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After studying this course, you should be able to:

- appreciate and feel confident in designing, structuring and producing an open online course
- recognise examples of good online course design, social learning and assessment
- understand the appropriate use of rich media to teach online and its associated licensing
- find and reuse existing free materials in a course
- identify suitable platforms for publishing a course
- optimise a course for search engines.

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## 1.1 How you can study this course

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This course can be studied sequentially, or the material can be used as a reference guide with sections explored in any order. If studied as a course the core content should take around 15 hours to work through.

We have also provided downloadable alternative formats of the course. You can find these on the first page of each session.

If you work through all of the content in this course and pass the end-of-course quiz you will be awarded with a digital badge to recognise your learning.

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## 1.2 Badge information

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By studying this course, you have the option of gaining a digital badge.

### What is a badged course?

Badges are a means of digitally recognising certain skills and achievements acquired through informal study and are entirely optional. They do not carry any formal credit as they are not subject to the same rigour as formal assessment; nor are they proof that you have studied the full unit or course. They are a useful means of demonstrating participation and recognising informal learning.

If you'd like to learn more about badges, you will find more information on the following websites:

- [Open Badges](#) – this information is provided by Mozilla, a leading provider of the open badges system.
- [Digital Badges](#) – this information is provided by HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory), a global community working to transform how we learn, and particularly making use of technology.

## Gaining your badge

To gain the badge, you will need to have visited every page within the course, and scored at least 50% in the end-of-course quiz. When you have done this you will receive email notification that your badge has been awarded and it will appear in the My Badges area in your profile. Please note it can take up to 24 hours for a badge to be issued.



Your badge demonstrates that you have participated in the course. The digital badge does not represent formal credit or award, but rather it demonstrates successful participation in informal learning activity.

## Accessing your badge

From within the course:

- 1 Go to the navigation block and under My Profile you can access My Badges. When you click on My Badges you will be taken to your My Badges page on OpenLearn Create.
- 2 To view the details of the badge, to download it, or share it, click on the badge and you will be taken to the Badge Information page.
- 3 You can download this page to your computer.

## Sharing your badge

Badges awarded within OpenLearn Create can be shared on multiple platforms using a badge aggregator such as [Badgr](#), [Badge Passport](#) or [Credly](#). They can then be shared to other platforms such as LinkedIn and Wordpress.

Get started with Session 2.

## Acknowledgements

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This session of the course was written by Rosie Storrar on behalf of the Free Learning team at The Open University.

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