

A young man with a short haircut, wearing a white button-down shirt, is smiling broadly and looking towards a woman whose back is to the camera. They appear to be in a conversation. The background is a dark, textured wall. The man's shirt has some faint, illegible text on it. The woman is wearing a dark top and a gold bracelet.

Guide for

CREDIT TRANSFER

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY



Credit transfer

If you have successfully completed a course in higher education after leaving school or gained extra qualifications at work, your studies may count towards an Oxford Brookes University award, and may shorten the time needed to study here. This guide aims to answer any questions you might have about credit transfer, and how it works in practice at Brookes.

Please read this guide carefully, as the area of credit transfer is quite complicated. There is no general rule that can be applied to everyone and every case has to be looked at individually. This guide should be used in conjunction with the current *Undergraduate Prospectus*, which gives a full description of all our courses and an overview of life at Brookes. Please note that the number of places available for entry to Years 2 and 3 of our undergraduate courses is limited and variable according to the University's overall student numbers. Applications for entry with credit are subject to the same process of academic selection as for all other applications. You may also find the *Mature Students* and *Part-time Students* guides useful. These are all available from the Student Liaison Enquiry Centre telephone +44 (0) 1865 484848 email query@brookes.ac.uk

What do we mean by credit?

It is our policy at Brookes to encourage students of all ages and from all backgrounds to study with us. We realise that many people will have significant achievements either through work or private study before coming to Oxford Brookes, for which we can give them credit when they apply to join one of our courses. Your 'prior learning', which you might have gained through study at either college or work, can then be counted as credit towards an academic qualification. Prior learning can come in two forms, certificated and un-certificated:

- Certificated learning will have taken place in a recognised institution such as a college or university. It will have been formally assessed and will have resulted in a particular qualification.
- Un-certificated learning comes in a less structured way, perhaps through a company training scheme, or through learning on the job, acquiring skills through experience.

How does credit transfer work?

A large number of higher education institutions now award 'credit' or points to their programmes of study which students accumulate as they complete assessments at each stage of their course. (Depending on the way an institution organises its courses and assessment, this credit may be awarded in small amounts two or three times in the year, or in total at the end of a full year of study.) Most of these institutions, including Brookes, recognise each other's credit so that students moving from one college or university to another can take their credit with them via credit transfer.

It is not an automatic process – whether your prior learning will count as credit towards a course at Brookes will depend on your qualifications as well as the requirements of the course you wish to study. When a potential student approaches us for credit transfer we need to be satisfied that:

- their qualifications are at the necessary level; and
- that they are relevant to the course in question; and
- that they are sufficiently current to be used.

I've heard of CATS points, what are they?

The Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme, or CATS, is a system of credit transfer recognised by Brookes and many other higher education institutions nationwide. Participating institutions are able to measure their awards in terms of the amount of credit, or CATS points, and the level to which it belongs within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

- HE level 1 (NQF level 4) operates at the first year level of an undergraduate course, HE levels 2 and 3 (NQF levels 5 and 6) operate at the second and third year levels on an undergraduate course.
- A normal full-time year at each of the levels is worth 120 CATS points.

Part-time courses operate to the same tariff, the only difference being that students accumulate their points over a longer time. Many but not all institutions, are part of the CATS network. If a higher education institution is not part of the scheme, we will normally be able to give credit in line with CATS if you have successfully completed your award, or passed assessments that show you have successfully completed a full-time year of study.

Using the CAT Scheme, credit awarded at one level will normally only be transferred at the same level.

The points value you have been awarded is not negotiable. If you have credit of 110 points at HE level 1 you may be allowed to continue into your second year and start level 2 study, but will still have to do more

level 1 study to achieve the 120 points needed at that level to meet the requirements for the award.

If we consider that your prior learning does not match the course you wish to join, the amount of credit you have earned may not all be counted towards your new course. This may mean that additional study at a lower level is needed to meet the standard necessary to proceed to a higher level.

Marks awarded by a different institution or a course that is not part of Brookes' Undergraduate Programme will normally be transferred as passed or failed, without marks, and will therefore not impact on the marks earned at Brookes for the purposes of classifying awards.

Awards – General tariff within the NQF	Total credit required	HE level 1/ Certificate/ NQF level 4	HE level 2/ Intermediate / NQF level 5	HE level 3/ Honours/ NQF level 6	Normal period of full-time study
Certificate of Higher Education	120	120	-	-	1 year
Diploma of Higher Education	240	120	120	-	2 years
Degree without Honours	300	120	120	60	3 years
Honours Degree	360	120	120	120	3 years

What kind of qualifications will give me credit?

Brookes recognises certain professional qualifications awarded by bodies such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the English Nursing Board (ENB) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). We are able to give you credit for these awards when you apply for a course in a relevant subject.

Enquiries about this option should go to the Admissions Office, marked:

For the attention of the tutor responsible for credit entry for (here you should enter the subject you wish to apply for).

Which Brookes qualifications will my credit count towards?

It is possible to transfer credit into the following awards offered under the Undergraduate Programme at Brookes: Foundation Diploma, Certificate of Higher Education, Certificate of Associate Study, Diploma of Advanced Study, Higher National Diploma, Diploma of Higher Education, Degree without Honours and Honours Degree.

How do I apply for credit transfer?

All claims for certificated credit gained at university or college must be supported by an official transcript from the awarding institution. This needs to specify the course title, the credit value and level of each unit or module taken, the date each unit was taken, and the results of each unit.

Please note the following:

- It is up to you to provide us with all the necessary information about your previous qualifications and qualifications pending to support an application for credit.
- You must obtain any supporting documentation needed from your previous or present place of study.
- Any enquiries about the credit value of your existing qualifications or previous study should be directed to the awarding institution or body.

I have already been awarded a degree, am I eligible for credit transfer?

Graduates are not normally admitted with credit to courses that would substantially duplicate a previous award. Neither do we normally admit students with credit to 'up-grade' a non-honours degree to an honours degree in the same subject, although there may be exceptional circumstances where we would consider this.

Contact the Admissions Office for advice. Telephone +44 (0) 1865 483040, email admissions@brookes.ac.uk

It is more usual for graduates to gain a qualification in a new subject by taking a Diploma in Advanced Study rather than a second degree. Diplomas can be completed through one year of full-time study at HE level 3 on the Undergraduate Programme. Credit transfer does not normally apply in this case, and it may be necessary to take level 1 modules first in order to be admitted to the Diploma.

The Oxford Brookes *Postgraduate Prospectus* gives full details. This is available from the Student Liaison Enquiry Centre telephone: +44 (0) 1865 484848 email: query@brookes.ac.uk

If you have the time and wish to study for a second degree in a different subject from your first, then you may be able to transfer some credit from your first award. This is because many degrees allow for the inclusion of a proportion of optional or non-subject-specific credit at level 1.

Contact the Admissions Office for advice. Telephone +44 (0) 1865 483040, email admissions@brookes.ac.uk

Will my work experience count as credit?

In some cases it will be possible to assess un-certificated learning acquired through work and award credit for this using a process known as APEL – accreditation of prior experiential learning. This is not a quick or simple process as it involves formal assessment so it is not normally available at the point of application but is carried out once you have been admitted to a course. The University may charge for the assessment either directly or as part of a course fee.

Your first step is to contact the Admissions Tutor for the subject you wish to study giving a brief outline of your previous experience to establish if there is a basis for proceeding with an application and APEL.

If this is agreed you will normally be admitted and enrolled so that you can register for APEL assessment. To demonstrate your learning and competencies you may be asked to prepare a portfolio, complete written tasks, attend a viva or interview for assessment. Following assessment, credit will be awarded through a University Examinations Committee.

Enquiries about this option should go to the Admissions Office, marked:

For the attention of the tutor responsible for credit entry for (here you should enter the subject you wish to apply for).

How much credit can I bring to Brookes?

Up to two-thirds of an honours degree at Brookes may be awarded as credit from your prior learning. Credit can be transferred onto both full-time and part-time programmes, although you must spend at least a year (full-time or part-time equivalent) studying here, no matter how much credit is transferred.

Undergraduate study at Brookes takes place under a modular framework in which courses are made up of equal-sized units called modules. A single module is worth 15 CATS points and is designated either basic (HE level 1) or advanced (HE level 3). Students entering with credit must take a minimum amount of credit at Oxford Brookes to receive one of our awards as follows:

Award	Minimum CATS points to be passed at Brookes	Minimum number of module credits to be passed at Brookes
Certificate of Higher Education	90	6 module credits at HE level 1
Diploma of Higher Education	90	6 module credits including at least 4 at HE level 3
Degree without Honours	90	6 module credits at HE level 3
Honours degree	120	8 module credits at HE level 3 level

Does my study outside the UK count?

Yes. We have procedures for recognising credit achieved abroad. The same rules about levels, volume, relevance and providing evidence apply. Also, students can study abroad for part of their course and bring in credit from another institution to count towards their degree at Brookes. 'Exchange' credit earned in this way will count towards your programme but must always be agreed before you begin your studies abroad.

Are there any time limits?

Yes. If you gained your credit more than ten years ago, it can only be transferred to a new course if you can show it has been kept up-to-date. Also, depending on the amount of credit you wish to transfer into your programme and the length of time you have taken to achieve it, Brookes uses a schedule to determine how long you can spend taking your award – the more credit and study time that you transfer, the less time you will be allowed to complete an award. You should make sure you know how long we will allow you to complete your award because it could affect the rate of study needed to finish in time and the rate at which you are charged fees.

How do I know if my credit is relevant to the course I want to study?

In assessing your credit, we first establish the level and amount and then determine its relevance to the course you wish to take. We make a distinction between general credit, which is not specifically relevant to the subject of a particular course, and specific credit, which relates directly to a named programme of study. Many higher education awards permit, or even require, students to include a proportion of general credit at HE level 1 but significantly less, or possibly none, at level 2/3.

You can find information about all the modules on the Undergraduate Modular Programme at Brookes through the university's website as follows: from www.brookes.ac.uk, Home Page, select Students and Staff, then from Online Resources select Undergraduate Modular Handbook. Each field (subject) has a list of modules that it uses. You can use this information to estimate the relevance of your prior learning to the course(s) you wish to study.

Do not assume that all credit from one course will automatically count towards a similarly named course – there may be significant differences in the programmes at different institutions.

- Students applying for credit must support their application by providing copies of syllabuses so that relevance can be determined within the levels of credit to be awarded
- All course requirements of the Brookes course (eg compulsory modules) must be met irrespective of the amount of credit previously earned.
- Previous academic failure will be taken into consideration in deciding if an offer can be made.

Do I have to claim the credit I might be entitled to?

It is not always appropriate to use all of the credit you have. For example, if you change your mind and restart on a different degree you may be entitled to some general credit at HE level 1. Transferring this credit may reduce your programme to part-time and thereby affect your student loan. In this circumstance, you might be advised to study a normal full-time year without any credit being transferred. However, in no circumstances is it allowed to circumvent the university's academic regulations by selective use of prior credit.

How do I apply for entry with credit?

You must apply via the normal channels using the standard application procedures (see the *Undergraduate Prospectus* for details). There is no separate application route or form for entry with credit. If you want to study full-time starting at the beginning of the academic year (September) you must apply through UCAS. Applicants for part-time study or mid-year entry need to use a university application form.

This can be obtained from the Admissions Office telephone +44 (0) 1865 483040, email admissions@brookes.ac.uk

Please note that as the process of awarding credit is complicated you must allow sufficient time for documentation to be processed and assessed.

- If you are applying for entry with credit for the start of the next academic year after the standard January deadline, you should contact the Admissions Office to enquire if places on the course(s) you want are still available. Many popular courses, particularly for full-time study, are closed to further applications by spring because of the high demand for places. There is usually more flexibility to admit students to part-time study.
- If you wish prior credit to be considered this should be made explicit on the application form, under point of entry, qualifications or qualifications pending as appropriate and the personal statement.
- Wherever possible your reference should be provided by a person with recent experience of your academic performance.
- Send supporting documentation (eg transcripts, academic record,

syllabuses) with a covering letter to the Admissions Office marked: For the attention of the tutor responsible for credit entry for (here you should enter the subject you wish to apply for).

- Do not send additional papers to UCAS – they do not send them on to us automatically and retrieving them will waste time.
- Applications for admission with credit for the start of the next academic year received after 30 June will normally only be considered in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the appropriate tutor responsible for credit entry. Enquiries about this should be made through the Admissions Office.
- Do not rely on obtaining a place and then apply for credit once you have enrolled unless this option has been specifically agreed in writing by the University. Credit will not normally be awarded retrospectively.

How will my application be assessed?

- Once all essential information has been received, your application and supporting papers will be forwarded from the Admissions Office to the tutor(s) responsible for entry with credit to the field(s) you have applied for. For combined courses, two tutors may be involved. Tutors may contact you at this stage for further information or call you for interview. All decisions are then returned to the Admissions Office.
- The Admissions Office will inform you of the decision. An offer may be unconditional or conditional on results in examinations that are pending.



Contacts

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Oxford Brookes promotes an inclusive and supportive environment, enabling all members of the University (staff and students) to reach their potential and celebrate their diversity. We embrace the spirit of all equalities legislation and are committed to tackling all forms of unfair discrimination and to the development of policies and practices to ensure these objectives. We seek to make our courses as inclusive as possible and welcome applications from all sections of the community and from people at all stages of their life. For further information on the University's commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, please refer to the Equal Opportunities Policy for Students, the University's Race Equality Policy and the Students' Charter – available from www.brookes.ac.uk or on request from the University's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Manager (+44 (0) 1865 485929).