

# Student Handbook

## Business and Management



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## Welcome

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Congratulations on becoming a Oakwood College student.

The relationship that we have with our students is extremely important to us and we want to make sure that you enjoy the experience of learning with us and that we meet your educational needs in terms of your chosen career and by providing pathways of progression to maximise your learning potential.

We believe that we have developed focused courses and a way of working that will enthuse and excite you, and develop the skills and knowledge via the flexibility offered by online learning.

As such, if there is anything that is preventing your from experiencing and benefitting from this type of learning, then please let us know, so that we can be assured that we are meeting your needs and expectations...

Academic Director

## Introduction

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The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with information about your chosen programme of study and to direct you to other general information about studying with the Oakwood College

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with other guidelines available on the Oakwood College website [www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk) including all referenced Annexes to this document and other supporting documentation.

The material in this Handbook is as accurate as possible at the time of production. Please forward any comments or suggestions relating to the content of this Handbook to [admin@cob.ac](mailto:admin@cob.ac)

## Programme Philosophy

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### Programme Structure

Oakswood College have written a series of business-related modules, for online delivery.

There are currently 2 levels available:

Oakswood College Level  Business 20 modules

Oakswood College Level  Business 30 modules

The modules have been designed to offer a broad range of skills and knowledge for direct application in the workplace, based on contemporary management practices in real world settings. In addition, they are based on sound pedagogical structures to ensure that the learning is engaging, enjoyable and fun to study.

Oakswood College qualifications can be taken on their own or in batches as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Modules. Accessed and studied in this way will not allow you to gain any credit values for Higher Education progressions but it will provide you with skills and knowledge that can directly applied to the workplace or the enhancement of your career. In addition, you will receive Oakswood College Certification to demonstrate that you have completed your chosen CPD modules.

If however, you undertake all of the Oakswood College modules in a given series and undertake and pass their corresponding assessments will be allowed access to apply for University Top-up degree programmes at the relevant level.

### Qualifications and Progression

Understanding the qualification structure is important in terms of how Oakswood College qualifications fit within the UK Qualification Credit Framework (QCF). The QCF is the national credit transfer system for education qualifications in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The QCF provides a process by which qualifications can be given a value, where one Credit represents 10 hours of learning time and is prescribed by a level of difficulty from entry level to level 8 at the top.

### University Pathways

To facilitate University progression to University top-up degrees, Oakswood College are an Approved ATHE Centre. ATHE are Ofqual recognised Awarding Body. Ofqual is the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.

ATHE provide QCF qualifications in Management, Business, Tourism and Health & Social Care. Details of the qualifications that ATHE offer can be found at [www.atheuk.co.uk/](http://www.atheuk.co.uk/)

The Oakwood College modules have been mapped to the following ATHE course assessments:

Oakwood College Level 7 in Business ➡ ATHE Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management

Oakwood College Level 4/5 in Business Management (240 credits)

## Recruitment and Admissions

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### Recruitment

Details of the available programmes and their structures can be found on the Oakwood College website [www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk) .

To achieve the required entry requirements for each given course, students will be expected to complete a declaration that they have the required level of knowledge and/or experience to embark on their chosen course of study.

For those who wish to progress to a relevant University top-up programme will be required to have the required level of English Level proficiency as prescribed by each University partner and in accordance with the National Recognition Centre for the UK ([www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk))

### Application and Registration

Applications for study should be made through the Oakwood College website [www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk) Those students who wish to have further guidance can speak to the Oakwood College Admissions Team, where appropriate advice and guidance will be given regarding your chosen programme of study.

### Induction

Before students can use the online materials, they will be required to undertake an online induction regarding how to use the materials by making reference to the Oakwood College website, [www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk](http://www.oakwoodcollege.co.uk)

This will also include an orientation module, so that they can familiarise themselves with the processes and procedures that they will encounter. Students will be able to access the induction module, once they have been given a unique username and password.

## Teaching Methodology

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Delivery of learning is through online learning pedagogies with underpinning learner support

### Online Pedagogy

Students will be provided with key concepts and theories, which are underpinned by a series of guided interactive and engaging activities. These have been designed using an online pedagogic approach which facilitates synthesis of knowledge, reflection, and practical application to the work-place. In doing so, real world examples and case studies are used to expose students to contemporary issues and settings.

This approach also develops the analytical skills of students, their ability to problem solve and to develop coherent and structured arguments. Students are also provided with reference to web links, articles and recommended texts to further develop and consolidate their understanding through self-study.

### Webinars

The webinars are designed to expand on the core content and provide students with the opportunity to discuss topics, ideas and theories in a collaborative learning environment facilitated by a Subject Matter Expert. This allows for the sharing of ideas and the stimulation of thought to provide a complimentary depth of learning experience.

### Discussion Forums

In addition, students are actively encouraged to use Discussion Forums and Bulletin Boards to interact and share information relating to study courses. This is an effective way to develop an appreciation and understanding from differing perspectives, particularly as students will be from a variety of different cultures around the world.

### Recommended Reading

The module format is such that if you utilise all the content and interactive activities, you will have enough knowledge to undertaken the assessments and meet the Learning Outcomes for each module. However, each module descriptor also contains a list of recommended texts. These are included to enable you to broaden your knowledge of the subject areas presented. These are also only a guide and you do not have to but are not restrict your selves to the provided texts. Students who wish to embark onto University top-up programmes are encouraged to read as widely as possible to demonstrate that you researched areas from a variety of different perspectives.

## **Student Workload**

In accordance with nationally accepted codes of practice in the UK, each credit unit represents a total of approximately 10 hours of learning. In this programme, each module represents 50 Hours of Study, which is split into 30 hours of Guided Study and 20 Hours of additional self-study, revision time and online assessment.

The ATHE assignments will require that you submit assignments of approximately 10,000 words and you will need to allow sufficient time to research, plan, execute and evaluate your assignments before submission.

As such, you will need to balance the time against other commitments and adhere to the principles for effective study found in the Interim Module that you will need to undertake prior to studying with Oakswood College as part of your orientation activity.

## **Learning Support**

### **Personal Tutor**

Each student will have access (as required) to a Tutor who is a member of the academic staff. They will be responsible for the academic progress of their tutees and to this end regular tutorials will be facilitated to meet candidate needs. The method of delivery of the tutorial sessions is designed to offer complete candidate flexibility and can therefore be:

- On-line via the Virtual Campus
- Telephone/e-mail/Skype

The tutorial process is viewed as an essential aspect of development and support for students. It is informally based and designed to encourage two-way communication, either peer-to-peer or student- to- tutor. As such it includes the following:

- The channelling and dissemination of information.
- The giving and receiving of assessment feedback as a candidate support function.
- Discussion regarding candidate personal development needs.
- Counselling where appropriate.

### **Learners with Particular Requirements**

Each student identified is assessed according to need in line with the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy, both of which are featured in the related booklet, to ensure that the assessment is fair and ensuring that where practicable all necessary support will be provided.

Building candidate confidence is an essential aspect when undertaking study by distance/flexible learning, particularly when candidates may be studying in remote locations and/or have not been in education for some considerable time.

As a result, Oakswood College ensures that candidates have the opportunity to build confidence in the following ways:

- During the advice and guidance stage of the enrolment process
- During their induction and orientation
- Clear policies, procedures and ways of working as contained in the Student Handbook
- By the use of simple unambiguous language in all learning and assessment material
- Feedback on progress via the Tutorial process.
- Social networking and peer support networks/forum



## Assessment

Students will be assessed in 2 ways:

1. Formative assessment - ongoing feedback to monitor and improve student learning. Typically, these will be facilitated via the Oakwood College Online learning modules and the associated activities, therein, including self-tests and self-assessment. These are designed to check and reinforce learning. Note that undertaking the MC assessments are not compulsory but students will not be able to progress to formal assessment required until they have been completed and successfully Passed each module.
2. Summative assessment – this is used to evaluate student learning and is undertaken having completed the required Oakwood College online modules. This includes a Multiple Choice activity, containing 30 questions, which have been mapped against the corresponding Learning Outcomes for each module and the completion of assignment, which covers the required awarding body assessment criteria derived from the Learning Outcomes. All summative assessment will be subjected to the Internal Verification procedures of Oakwood College and the External Verification procedures of the Awarding Body.

Once completed, students will be able to register with ATHE to seek University top-up progression by completing ATHE set assignments designed to apply the knowledge and skills acquired by students to a practical work-based setting and to achieve the required credits for each given qualification. In addition to providing a comprehensive knowledge of each of the major business functions, the structure of the courses ensure that students have the widest possible range of career, employment and higher education options open to them on successful completion of their studies.

**Note:** All aspects of Oakwood College assessment are contained in [Annex - Assessment Policy](#)

## Assignment Grading

Unit assignments are assessed as **Pass** or **Fail**. A Pass grade is achieved by meeting all the requirements defined in the assessment criteria for each Module as defined by ATHE. Students who do not meet all the requirements defined in the assessment criteria for each module will be deemed to have failed.

## Submission of Assignments

Students will be required to submit assignments electronically to Oakwood College . To safeguard against academic malpractice, learners will be required to submit their assignments with a Top Sheet that contains a signed declaration that it is the student's own work. This will be counter-signed by a Mentor, who is known to the student and preferably from their place of work. Refer to [Annex - SAF](#)

All received assignments will be dated upon receipt and will be subject checks for plagiarism. Any breaches of academic malpractice will be subject to the conditions and procedures relating to Malpractice Policy.

### Submission Format

**Word Processing:** We expect that, unless previously agreed, students will submit assignments in typewritten or word-processed format

**Identify it:** All pages must have the learner name, ID number and page number clearly shown.

**Space it:** We advise that students submit word-processed work at least one- and-a-half spaced, with wide margins. Similarly, hand -written material must be well spaced: often writing on every other line greatly helps clarity.

### Assignment Guidelines

- 1 Read the assignment questions thoroughly and identify key words and points of issue.
- 2 Formulate a draft assignment plan featuring the main headings and sub-headings of the assignment.
- 3 Ensure you have good paragraphs of introduction and conclusion with a bibliography reflecting research sources.
- 4 Produce a contents list at the commencement of the assignment.
- 5 The assignment must be in English and preferably typed with each page numbered. Appendices may be included to feature tabulations and other specified relevant data.
- 6 The sequence of points discussed in the assignment should be logical.
- 7 The text should be a rational and analytical commentary. Assignments full of assertions and opinions will receive poor (even failing) grades. Logical and well-reasoned arguments will receive high grades. Avoid checklists and any slang language. Summary lists should be fully explained in the text. Ideally use shorter sentences rather than longer sentences. Overall the assignments should have a strategic focus. It should be professionally presented and, where appropriate, be illustrated by examples drawn from your own experiences.
- 8 All research data used should be referenced in the text and the bibliography.
- 9 The assignment must represent all your own work and not extracts without acknowledgement from research sources or colleagues/students. Assignments, which copy material from the module or textbooks without acknowledgement, will be given a Fail grade. Do **NOT** copy **any** material from a fellow students' assignment. **BOTH** assignments will be given a Fail grade so don't give your assignment to another student.
- 10 Keep to the terms of the assignment and do not introduce irrelevant information. Answer the question set not the one you wish had been set.
- 11 Ensure the assignment is completed by the date specified and has the required number of words. Diagrams are not considered as part of the word count.

## Marking of Assignments

Assignments will be first marked by Study Centre staff and the feedback and grades recorded. They will then be Internally Verified (IV) by a member of the Oakwood College staff in line with. Assessment decision will then be ratified by the Oakwood College Exam Board. External Verification (EV) will be undertaken by ATHE in accordance with their Policies and Procedures.

## Referred Assessments

Referred assessments may be resubmitted within 21 days of receipt of the Student Assessment Feedback. The first re-assessment is covered in the fees paid. Any subsequent resubmission will be charged at the rate of £75 each, payable on application for the re-assessment.

## Resubmission of Assignments

**Referral** - Referrals will be given in the event of insufficient content and/or misinterpretation of assignment tasks, where all assignment questions have been answered or attempted to be answered by the student. In these instances, students will be provided with an opportunity to add content to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria following feedback with their Tutor as long as this is not deemed to be substantial or requires excessive coaching. In this instance the student will use the same assignments as the basis for amendment.

**Fail** - A failed piece of work will be awarded in the following instances:

- Where a piece of work is not deemed to be entirely the students own work. Refer to Malpractice Policy
- Where no attempt has been made to answer assignment questions
- Where an assignment has not been submitted in time (unless there are pre-agreed extenuating circumstances. Refer to Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy)

In the instance of a Fail being recorded, students will be required to undertake a new assignment.

In the event of a Referral or a Fail Students will be able to re-submit on a maximum of 3 separate occasions.

## Student Obligations

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### Academic Honesty (plagiarism)

Plagiarism refers to students who cheat in examinations or present someone else's material as if it were their own

Very few students commit such offences, but Oakswood College believes that it is important that all students understand why academic honesty is a matter of such concern and why such severe penalties are imposed.

### What Constitutes Plagiarism?

Some examples of plagiarism are:

- Reproducing or paraphrasing published material without acknowledging the source.
- Presenting information from electronic sources without acknowledging the source
- Passing off ideas, designs, inventions or any other creative work as your own.
- Copying the work of another student.
- Undeclared collusion with another student.
- Getting someone else to do the work for you.

There are degrees of plagiarism, particularly where published work is concerned.

Minor instances of plagiarism are at the discretion of the Assessor, for example;

- A student fails to reference work properly.
- A student fails to acknowledge the source of a short section of an assignment.

Where an instance of plagiarism has been treated as minor, a warning will be issued about future conduct. The assignment may receive a lower mark than might otherwise have been awarded. More serious infringements, which cannot be treated as minor, will result in a report to the Programme Manager and a record placed on the students' file. The Oakswood College Assessment Board will penalise students who are found to have presented plagiarised work for assessment.

For full details, go to the Malpractice Policy

### Guide to Referencing

When you write your assignment, you will refer to statements and ideas of Authors you have read. As such, you need to show the marker whose ideas they are. There are a number of reasons why you need to reference:

- To acknowledge and give credit to other peoples work, word and ideas
- To allow the reader/marker to be able to locate references easily
- To avoid plagiarism
- To show evidence of the breadth and depth of your reading, research and evaluative skills
- To be as consistent as possible in your referencing

The most commonly used referencing system is the **Harvard system**.

Referencing is a two-stage process: you need to reference in the text of the report or assignment and at the end in a reference list.

### Referencing in the Text

The Harvard system uses the **author's surname and date of publication** to identify cited documents **in the text of an essay or report**. For example:

Brown (1994) notes that traditionally occupations within museums have been undertaken on perceived gender roles.

Or

Traditionally, occupations within museums have been undertaken on perceived gender roles (Brown, 1994).

When referring generally to the work of a number of different authors on a topic, put the authors in **alphabetical order**:

Management is the world's fastest growing industry (Jones, 1998; Pearce, 1991; Walcott, 1999)

When there are **two authors**, give both names in the order they appear on the publication:

Smith & Jones (2000) suggest that the concept of appraisal is now widely accepted in management.

When there are **more than two authors**, use the surname of the first author and '*et al*' (Latin for 'and others'):

According to Cooper *et al* (2001), management is a key construct in organisations

For **corporate authors**, for example a company report, use the company or organisation's name:

Over 35,000 volunteers worked for the National Trust in 1997 (The National Trust, 1998).

For publications with **no obvious author**, for example a government publication, give the title:

Employment Gazette (1999).

For **direct, i.e. word-for-word quotes**, put the quotation in inverted commas and give the author's surname, date, and page number from which the quote was taken:

"A sound tourism strategy will therefore seek a balance between large, tourism-orientated events and local and regional events" (Getz, 1991:128).

Or

Markwell *et al* (1997:96) note that the 'typical' historic property is small scale, with "incomes insufficient to warrant full-time professional management".

If you have several references by the **same author**, they should be put in the order of date of publication, the earliest first.

You can use a, b, c, etc., in the text to differentiate between publications by the same author, but be sure to use them in your reference list and make sure they correspond. For example:

Binning this data vector gives the fold of the operator in model-space Claerbout (1998a); and its inverse.

With the development of the helical coordinate system Claerbout (1998b), recursive inverse filtering is now practical in multi-dimensional space.

Quoting from the **Internet**:

The recently published Global Code of Ethics for Tourism state that tourism should contribute to a "mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies" (WTO, 1999:1).

## How the Reference Should Look

The reference list at the end of the work should only include those sources that have been *directly* referred to in your text, i.e. all texts mentioned in the report or essay should be on your reference list, and vice versa: all the text on your reference list should be in your discussion. If you wish to include other sources that might be of interest to the reader but which you have not directly referred to you need to include a separate list called the **Bibliography**. References should be in **alphabetical order** by authors' surnames.

The following sequence ought to be followed when writing a reference for a reference list:

1. **Author**, editor, organisation, artist or corporate author.
2. **Year** of publication.
3. **Edition** as appropriate.
4. **Editor** in addition to author where appropriate.
5. **Title** – *in italics and followed by a full stop.*
6. **Translator** where appropriate.
7. **Place** of publication.
8. **Publisher**.

You **MUST** be consistent with all your references.

## Common Errors

- Check that all the authors/text referred to in the text are in the reference list and vice versa.
- Reference the source of statistics, including date in tables and figures.
- Put the page number when using a direct quotation, and put the quote in "inverted commas".
- In your reference list, put page numbers for journal articles and book chapters.
- And remember: be consistent!

## How to Reference at the End of the Text

To check that all your references contain the correct information in the appropriate format, we suggest that you use a free online tool or refer to the numerous sites that are devoted to this subject and use those as your guide.

A very good online tool, can be found at:

<http://www.harvardgenerator.com/>

To make sure that you have all the information available record the references using the generator as you use them. There is nothing worse than having finished an assignment and not being able to locate the appropriate references. Also, you need to allow sufficient time to record your references as often this will take longer than you think.

## Complaints/Appeals

Oakwood College are committed to providing the highest quality of education possible within the limits imposed by the resources available, to ensure that students benefit from the academic, social and cultural experience. Where students feel that their legitimate expectations are not being met, whether it is an academic or non-academic matter, students have the right of access to the Complaints Procedure and the Academic Appeals Policy contained in this Handbook

## Student Feedback and Questionnaires

As part of Oakwood College's quality assurance obligations, students will be required to complete a distance learning questionnaire at the end of each module. These need to be administered by the Study Centre completed and sent to the Programme Manager at Oakwood College for each specific module. Refer to the Distance Learning Questionnaire.

In addition, you may be contacted via e-mail 1-2 weeks prior to the quarterly Course Committee Board meetings to give you the opportunity to raise any concerns or to highlight any positive feedback you wish for the Committee to discuss.

# Study Guidelines

## Introduction

To attain the optimum result and reward from time devoted to study, the following sections may prove a worthwhile aid to planning.

## Managing your Study Time

We strongly advise you to 'manage' your study time carefully. You should clarify your aims, identify your strengths and weaknesses, consider the context in which you will be studying and generate a broad strategy for successfully covering the material and completing this course.

You should take a broad overview of the requirements of any particular module and unit; consider your situation, workload and home responsibilities in the relevant study-period, then develop specific and realistic plans for active study and writing.

You should bear in mind the overall aims that we suggest for each module, but you may also find it useful to formulate more personal and specific objectives for yourself. These will help you to focus your study, assess material and apply ideas.

For example, in relation to the process of studying, you might want to set yourself targets for:

- The amount of time within which you will seek to complete a task –  
The quantity of work you aim to do in a particular week
- Progress through the modules and units, bearing in mind your other responsibilities and tasks
- Progress on assignments

You should plan and monitor what you do, and where necessary, act to improve the process, quantity and quality of your work. You should make decisions about the importance you will attach to tasks, the time you choose to allocate to them, and the sequence in which you will do them.

People learn in different ways. We do not expect that all students will approach the business of study in the same way, or in a way we prescribe. We advise and expect you to be able to manage your study and to be disciplined about how you do it.

## Preparing to Read and Study

When you are faced with any study-task or reading, it is helpful to spend a couple of minutes making notes on what you currently know about the topic, or think about the question. This will bring your own ideas and experience into focus. It could remind you of previous relevant information from the course. It will prepare you to respond critically to what you read and to integrate whatever you learn into your current knowledge and practice.

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Brainstorming is sometimes a useful way to start such notes and to ensure that you generate a comprehensive range of points. By this we mean the rapid gathering of ideas, which seem relevant to a particular topic or problem, within a brief time limit and without judgement. You can then reflect on each idea, develop and analyse the material as a whole, and make connections. Brainstorming is a technique you can use on your own, as well as in groups.

### **Effective Reading**

There are various styles of reading, which are appropriate for different purposes. For studying in depth, learning and remembering, you should not necessarily start at the beginning and finish at the end of something you plan to read.

First, look briefly at the whole item to see what is there. Look at headings and tables. Read any introduction or introductory paragraphs, any summary, and any concluding section. You will already be developing an understanding of what is said, without any detailed reading. Skim read each section to amplify your understanding. Finally, read the text in detail. Using these styles of reading, you gradually build up your understanding.

### **Evaluating Ideas, Action and Learning**

People generally seem to find it easier to focus on weaknesses and negative points when they are evaluating propositions, people and projects. However, evaluation should cover positive points and strengths, too. To counteract this tendency, and to explore a range of factors relevant to analysis, it is useful at the beginning of a period of evaluative thought to brainstorm (say for a minute each) first the positives and then the negatives, then the interesting things about the matter in question. This approach will bring key ideas to the surface before you consider them in more depth. Of course, the same idea may fall under more than one category. At this stage, that does not matter; you are simply examining ideas. This process is a tool and a technique to help a certain type of thinking, which you will find helpful throughout this course.

**Note: There is further guidance on Study Skills and additional resources available as part of the Online Induction Module**

### **Consolidate your Learning**

It is important to “consolidate” periods of reading and study, in order to derive maximum benefit from them. At stages along the way, summarise key things you have learned, both about the topic under discussion, and the process of thinking and learning. It is easy to forget new ideas. New tools, methods and skills require practice. To aid your memory, you should review your notes regularly to help develop your skills.

