

Frequently asked questions - open access language courses

Students often have questions about what their Open Access course will involve and how much preparation is needed:

What if I find the level I have joined is too difficult/easy for me?

Have a word with your tutor at the end of the class and then contact the Languages for All office; it is usually possible to move up or down a level within the first few weeks if you and your tutor feel it is appropriate. It should be noted that all moves must be organised through the LfA office and that moving between levels depends on places being available in your chosen level. It may not always be possible to make the move immediately.

How much work am I expected to do between classes?

Tutors normally set homework each week and students are expected to spend no more than one hour on this. If no formal homework has been set, it is always a good idea to spend a little time consolidating the work you have done and preparing for the week ahead.

It is several years since I left school and I haven't done any language learning since then. Will I cope with the course?

It is never too late to pick up a language you have already studied or, indeed, to learn a new one. Our aim is to teach people how to improve their communication skills in their chosen language and none of our classes are based on the learning of grammar alone. Above all, we want you to enjoy the challenge of learning a new language and to have fun in doing so! Remember that your tutor is there to help as much as possible and will always be happy to respond to any uncertainties you may have.

Do I need to buy the textbook before the start of the course?

Sometimes it is useful to have the book beforehand, particularly if you are picking up a language previously studied, so that you can do some pre-course revision! However, it is not necessary and in some cases (if a course is cancelled or if you move levels) it might not always be a good idea to spend money on a book until you know it will definitely be the one you are going to use.

Do I need to enrol on a course before attending the first class?

Yes definitely. It is essential that you enrol as we have an absolute maximum of 16 people per class and cannot go beyond this number. Tutors have a list of everyone who has enrolled and are asked to refer anyone who just turns up to the office for advice. It's also possible that we may decide to cancel a course if there are insufficient enrolments - and you may turn up to a course that is no longer running and your prior enrolment might have made all the difference!

How do I enrol for a course?

You enrol online. Once you have decided which level language course you require, just click on the 'Book now' link on the Open Access page to access the University online shop. The shop will take you through the stages required to select a course and make your payment via debit or credit card.

Will there be any formal tests?

Yes and no. There won't be any formal tests during the 20 weeks of classes. Your tutor may run some informal tests in class to monitor your progress, but they will not be taken into account as formal evaluation. However, if you wish to take a test, you will be able to do so. A written assessment will take place during May and an oral assessment will take place in the first 2 weeks after the University Easter vacation. Your tutor will provide details on arrangements for oral assessments, by the end of Semester 2 at the latest.

If you wish to take the tests there is a £25 fee. The deadline to apply for the test is Friday 14 February 2014. Your tutor will remind you in class in due course.

How to find Languages for All when travelling by public transport?

The Languages for All office is located in the Ashley building, (R17 in the red zone on the [campus map \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/edgbaston-map.pdf\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/edgbaston-map.pdf)), which is a two-minute walk from the Barber Institute.

By rail

Most cross-country services to Birmingham arrive at New Street Station. Up to six trains an hour depart for the University on the cross-city line (ten minutes to University station, final destination Longbridge or Redditch). The Ashley building is a seven-minute walk from University Station.

By bus

Numbers 61, X62 and 63 travel to the University's Edgbaston and Selly Oak campuses, while the 636 serves the Medical School and Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The services all run frequently from the city centre.

What about parking at the University?

Current parking charges between the hours of 09.00 and 16.30 are as follows:

- Up to 1 hour £2.00
- 1 - 3 hours £3.00
- 3 - 5 hours £4.00
- 5 - 8 hours £6.00

Visitors to campus are requested to park in any of the 4 pay & display car parks, these are

1. Pritchatts Road Car Park (at the junction with Vincent Drive)
2. North Car Park (access via Pritchatts Rd)

Charges will only apply between the hours of 0900 and 1630, Mondays to Fridays, excluding Public Holidays and Closed Days and, therefore, students involved in classes from 5.00pm onwards will not be charged.

What if I miss a class?

Try and let your tutor or another class member know; above all, don't drop out of the course just because you have missed one or more classes. Tutors are always happy to pass on handouts and go over any missed work.

What are the course dates?

You enrol for a 20-week course.

There will be 10 weeks of tuition in the first Semester: all language courses will start in the week commencing Monday 6 October 2014 and finish in the week commencing Monday 8 December 2014.

There will be 10 weeks of tuition in the second Semester: all language classes will resume week commencing Monday 12 January 2015 and finish in the week commencing Monday 23 March 2015. There will be NO classes in the week commencing Monday 16 February 2015

I cannot attend any longer. Can I be refunded?

Fees are not refundable after the end of the second week (i.e. week ending on the 17 October 2014). You must apply for a refund before this date. There will be an administrative charge of £25 per course (equivalent to 2 weeks of classes).

Please note that if you fail to attend for three weeks in a row without notifying the LfA office, the appropriate Language Co-ordinator or your course tutor, your name will be removed from the class register.

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