Frequently Asked Questions

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) 2012

L204 - Viento en popa

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An Introduction to the L204 ALE

1. What is the ALE?

Background
As an L204 student you are required to attend your residential school to pass the module. You cannot ask to be excused from this component of the module. If however, for reasons outside your control, you cannot attend the residential school, then you will need to complete the Alternative Learning Experience (ALE). Failure to complete either the residential school or the ALE satisfactorily means that you cannot gain credit points for the module, even if you pass all its other components.

Format
The ALE takes place in September and the tutorials are via Elluminate (a computer-conferencing system which allows you to speak with your tutor and fellow students in real time over the internet). Elluminate is accessed via the module website. There is a series of ALE tutorials which will take place on specified evenings or mornings.

2. I can’t attend any of the residential school dates offered. What should I do?

If it is impossible for you to attend, you will need to apply for a place on the ALE. If you don’t want the credit points associated with the module, you do not need to attend the residential school or the ALE.

3. How and when do I apply to do the ALE?

To apply for the ALE, please contact the Residential School team on 01908 653235 or email residential-schools@open.ac.uk. The deadline for the submission of ALE applications is 30th June 2012.

The earlier you apply to do the ALE, the better. Lateness in registering for the ALE causes serious administrative problems which could jeopardise your chances of gaining a place in time. You may still be able to apply for the ALE after the deadline. In this instance please email or telephone the Residential Schools Team as soon as you know that you cannot attend the residential school.

4. What are the dates of the ALE sessions?

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302).
Tutorials will take place in September 2012 over two weeks. The dates of the tutorials are as follows:

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You do not need to prepare anything before the first tutorial, but you will find it useful to have a look at all the material to give you an idea of what will be covered.

5. Can I defer the residential school or the ALE to the next presentation?
   No. It is not possible to defer your residential school or ALE component under any circumstances.

6. I have a very high level of fluency in the target language; do I need to attend residential school or the ALE?
   Yes. Whatever your level of language proficiency, you must attend the residential school or ALE if you intend to gain credit points for the module.

7. What will happen if I don’t attend residential school and I haven’t applied to do the ALE?
   If you haven’t registered for either of these and you haven’t submitted a special circumstance form (see question 9), then you will fail the module. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are registered for the residential school or the ALE.

8. I have registered to go to residential school, but for reasons outside my control cannot now attend. The deadline for applying to do the ALE has expired. What should I do?
   You should contact the Residential Schools Team as soon as possible to reserve a place. Please note that late applications to do the ALE are extremely difficult to administer and it may not always be possible to allocate you to your preferred group.

   Contact the Residential Schools Team:
   - by phone: +44 (0)1908 653235
9. I attended part of the residential school but was unable to complete it. What are my options?

If, for whatever reason, you have to leave residential school early, you must speak to the Course Director in the first instance to discuss your options fully. You may be able to submit a special circumstances form for consideration by the Examination and Assessment Board. This can be obtained from the Residential Schools Team by email: residential-schools@open.ac.uk or tel: +44 (0)1908 653235. However, the reasons for the non-completion must be serious and there is no guarantee that they will change the result. You won’t know the outcome of the submission until you receive your final result. In these circumstances, the only way of guaranteeing that you will pass this component of the module is for you to complete, and gain a satisfactory participation mark in, the ALE.

Computer requirements

10. I am planning to do the ALE online, what is the minimum computer specification required?

Elluminate system requirements are the same as the Open University 'standard' system for the year of study. For further details follow this link to the OU computer specifications http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/atoz/pc-specification/pc_req_1.htm

In addition, in order to use Elluminate effectively you will need a microphone headset (combined headphones and microphone).

Naturally, your computer must be able to connect to the Internet.

Preparing for your ALE

11. Will I receive any Elluminate training prior to the start of the ALE?

Students should already be familiar with Elluminate. If you have never used it before you need to

- Become familiar with Elluminate by using the Elluminate Guidance in the Resources area of the L204 website.
- Attend one of the 'Elluminate for All' taster sessions that will be available for ALE students in August. Details of these will be posted on your L204 website.

12. When will I be sent the materials for the ALE?

The L204 materials are delivered online and are available from the 'Residential School and ALE' page of your L204 website.

13. Do I need to do any work before the ALE starts?

You do not need to prepare anything to do with the course material before your first tutorial, although you will find it useful to have looked through all the material to give you an idea of what will be covered.
You need to ensure that you are familiar with Elluminate and are prepared to take part in online tutorials (see question 11).

**During your ALE**

14. **Will my work be assessed on the ALE?**
   No, your work on the ALE will not be assessed.

15. **How many students will be in my group?**
   There will be up to 15 students in your group.

16. **Who pays for the online costs of the ALE?**
   You will need to pay for any online costs that you incur.

17. **How much time will be required in between the scheduled ALE sessions?**
   You will need to prepare work between the scheduled sessions. You can do this work with another student, or group of students or you can work alone. Your tutor will talk to you about what you need to prepare and what materials you can make use of.
   The total number of study hours allocated for the ALE is approximately 20 hours and you need to ensure that you are able to commit to this amount of time in September.

18. **Will my details be disclosed to other students in my group?**
   To obtain full benefit from the ALE, it is desirable to work with fellow students between scheduled sessions. You will, therefore, be asked whether you give consent to release your email address/telephone number to other members in your group. You do not have to disclose these details to others if you don’t want to. Alternatively, you could open an email account with a free email provider like Yahoo or Hotmail and use it only for the ALE.

19. **As I am doing the ALE, will I be entitled to a reduction in module fee?**
   No. The residential school component is a compulsory element of the module and as such the module fees are calculated on the basis that you will attend.

20. **Will I have a tutor I can contact during the ALE?**
   Yes. There is a ALE forum on the website where introductory messages will be posted by the ALE director indicating the tutor allocated to each group and their contact details. In turn tutors will contact students in their groups giving details on how he or she can be contacted during September.

21. **I can only do some of the ALE sessions. What are my options?**
   In order to achieve a satisfactory participation mark in the ALE you need to fulfil the minimum attendance requirement, i.e. three out of four tutorials. If you do not attend the minimum number of tutorials, your tutor will not be able to give you a satisfactory participation marker and you will not be able to pass the module.
22. What shall I do, if for reasons outside my control, I start the ALE but cannot attend all the tutorials?

In order to fulfil the ALE satisfactory participation requirement, you must attend a minimum number of tutorials. If you do not complete the ALE satisfactorily, you may be able to submit special circumstances for consideration by the Examination and Assessment Board. However, the reasons for the non-completion must be serious and there is no guarantee that they will change the result. You won’t know the outcome of the submission until you receive your final module result.

23. I registered to do the ALE online but I’m having technical difficulties, what can I do?

If you sign-up for the ALE tutorials, it is your responsibility to ensure that your computer has the minimum specification required for using Elluminate. You should contact the helpdesk if you encounter difficulties with Elluminate at any stage:

- By telephone: +44 (0) 1908 653972
  Lines are open from 08:00 to 21:30, 7 days a week
- By email: lts-student-helpdesk@open.ac.uk

If the helpdesk cannot resolve your technical problems, you must contact the Residential School Team (for contact details see question 8). They will investigate if there are any possible alternatives, If not, you should submit a special circumstances form (see question 9) and explain clearly why you could not attend the ALE giving as much detail as possible.

Contacts

24. If I have any queries before or during the ALE, who should I contact?

If your question relates to ALE attendance or applying to do the ALE, you should contact the Residential Schools Team (see question 8 for details).

If your question relates to the content, materials you should contact the module team by telephone:

- +44 (0)1908 652586