



# Online Courses (MOOCs) Information for Students in Basel

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## 1. Background

With effect from the 2015 autumn semester, the University of Basel is offering its own Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) via the FutureLearn platform ([www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)), which may be a part of in-class lectures.

A MOOC is a specific type of online course,

- which does not have any restrictions on participation ('massive'),
- where anyone, irrespective of their age or educational background, is able to participate without any formal access restrictions ('open'),
- which is offered entirely via the Internet ('online'), and
- which takes place within a defined time frame, has a curricular structure and for which learning support is provided ('course').

The University of Basel pursues two objectives with its own MOOCs. The first objective is internationalisation, with the intention of illustrating research foci at Basel that are of international interest. The second objective is to promote innovations in teaching, as the MOOCs also explicitly address the students at Basel in terms of a research-based education in an international environment. This way, students at Basel have the opportunity to be "virtually mobile" during their studies, to participate in the global discussion about their learning content and to be awarded credit points at the University of Basel in the process.

Basel MOOCs (subsequently referred to as online courses<sup>1</sup>) are integrated in the study programmes of the University of Basel. Courses that incorporate online courses are advertised in the University's course catalogue. Students can enrol in the respective courses the same way as in any other course. The online courses are accessed via the FutureLearn platform. Registration for the online course on FutureLearn, thus, is not sufficient for enrolment in the study program at the university (see page 4: credits at your home institution). In the following we will provide information on the FutureLearn platform and the integration of the online courses in the courses at the University of Basel.

## 2. Using FutureLearn

FutureLearn is a platform of the Open University<sup>2</sup> through which publicly available online courses are offered by more than 70 partner institutions in all faculties. The University of Basel has been one of the partner institutions since 2015. The FutureLearn platform is very easy and intuitive to operate. At <https://www.futurelearn.com/using-futurelearn> you will find information that helps you to start using FutureLearn. Furthermore, it is worthwhile taking a look at the FAQ: <https://about.futurelearn.com/about/faq/>

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<sup>1</sup> As the term "online course" (instead of MOOC) is customary on the FutureLearn platform, we generally also use the term "online course".

<sup>2</sup> The Open University offers university degrees through distance learning courses and is the largest public university in Great Britain and Europe.

### 3. How do I register with FutureLearn?

In order to sign up for online courses with FutureLearn, you must register first (Figure 1). To do so, enter your first name, last name and a valid e-mail address, and select a password.

We recommend that you do not use the password of your university account.

By clicking the register button you agree to

- the **terms & conditions**,
- the **privacy policy**, and
- the **code of conduct**.

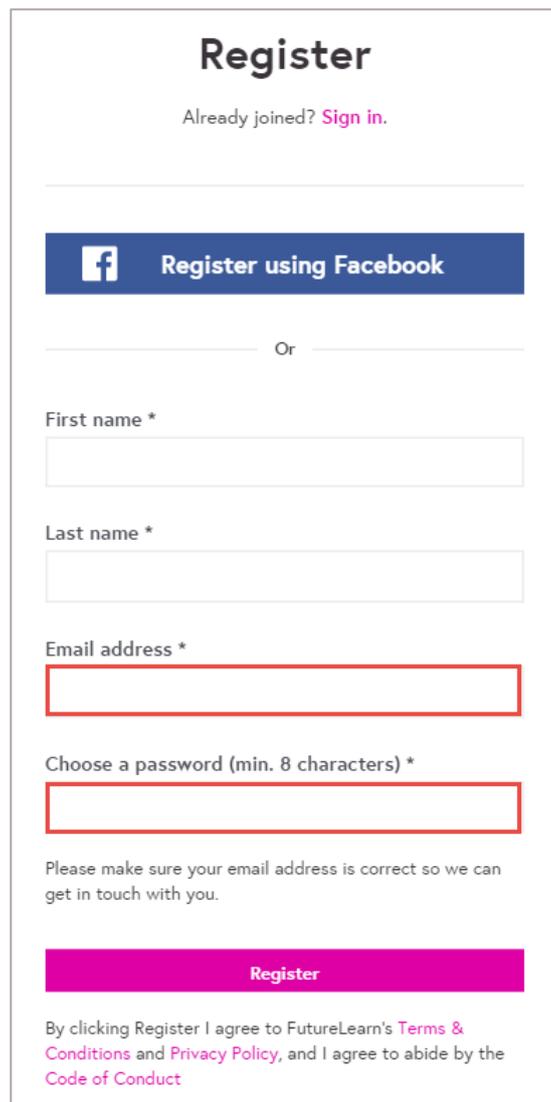
More detailed information on the terms & conditions, the privacy policy and the code of conduct, which requires your particular attention, can be found on the following pages.

Once you have registered, you will receive an e-mail from FutureLearn, asking you to confirm your e-mail address via the link contained in this mail.

Subsequently, you will be registered with FutureLearn and can participate in any of the online courses on offer.

You will find all online courses offered by the University of Basel at:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/partners/basel>



The image shows a registration form titled "Register". At the top, it says "Already joined? Sign in." Below this is a blue button with a Facebook logo and the text "Register using Facebook". Underneath is the word "Or" flanked by horizontal lines. The form contains four input fields: "First name \*", "Last name \*", "Email address \*", and "Choose a password (min. 8 characters) \*". The "Email address" and "Choose a password" fields are highlighted with red borders. Below the password field is a note: "Please make sure your email address is correct so we can get in touch with you." At the bottom is a pink "Register" button. Below the button is a disclaimer: "By clicking Register I agree to FutureLearn's Terms & Conditions and Privacy Policy, and I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct".

Figure 1: Registration with FutureLearn

## 4. What do I need to bear in mind when using FutureLearn?

The terms & conditions and the privacy policy of FutureLearn regulate the use of the online contents and courses on the FutureLearn website by the learners. Furthermore, they explain the rights and responsibilities of the learners towards FutureLearn on the one hand and those of FutureLearn towards the learners on the other hand. They are intended to prevent any conflicts or statutory violations between the two contracting partners.

The items regulated in the terms & conditions are implicitly contained in the code of conduct. If you adhere to the latter, it is very unlikely that you will violate the terms & conditions. Therefore, we ask you to read this code of conduct very carefully, even if many points may seem self-evident:

**Code of conduct: <https://about.futurelearn.com/terms/code-of-conduct/>**

As a FutureLearner you agree that:

- You are at least 13 years old.
- You will communicate in English only (or the specified language of a course).
- You have registered for one account only, and use an appropriate profile name
- You will not share your personal contact details on the FutureLearn platform, or ask another learner for theirs.
- The comments and assignments you post are your own work, and if you quote anything from another place (including other comments), you credit the author.
- You are respectful of others, and do not use words or share content that is offensive or inflammatory.
- If you disagree with someone's ideas you will discuss their ideas, rather than criticise or attack them personally.
- You take part in tests and assessments honestly, and don't share the answers.
- You are supportive and constructive when offering feedback to other learners in activities such as Peer Review and discussions.
- You are law-abiding and do not participate in, condone or encourage unlawful or potentially harmful activity.
- You are here to learn, not to advertise products or services, and you will not use FutureLearn as a platform for campaigning.
- You add to conversations and do not 'spam' other learners by posting the same comment multiple times, or by posting comments that are unrelated to the course.
- You will help the FutureLearn community by reporting comments that you believe have broken this Code of Conduct.

**Terms & conditions: <https://about.futurelearn.com/terms/>**

The terms and conditions (the "Terms") apply to FutureLearn's provision and your use of the information, services and materials ("Online Content and Courses") through the FutureLearn website (the "Website") including you visiting and browsing the Website (being a "Visitor") and registering with FutureLearn as a student (a "Learner"). In addition to the details of the terms & conditions implicitly contained in the code of conduct, the following points must be kept in mind:

### Registration and Account

- You must register for a personal account on the Website (a "Learner Account") by providing a name, an email address and a password. You agree that you will never divulge or share access or your access information to your Learner Account with any third party for any reason.

### Your Content

- Throughout your use of the Website, Courses and Content, FutureLearn may provide you with the ability to provide content in the form of uploading notes and replies, Learner discussions, profile pages, and other content and media for social interaction, or certain information and materials for use

with the Website or Online Content and Courses, e.g., written assignments, surveys, questions, hypothetical, examples, etc. (collectively, “Learner Content”)

- FutureLearn has no rights in any learner content except as explicitly stated in this agreement.
- Vice versa, as a learner you agree that with respect to any Learner Content you submit to FutureLearn (including, but not limited to, for inclusion on the Website or Online Content and Courses) or that is otherwise made available to FutureLearn, you grant FutureLearn an irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free and non-exclusive licence to use, distribute, reproduce, modify, adapt, publicly perform and publicly display such Learner Content on the Website and/or in the Online Content and Courses.
- Any Learner Content that is published on the public discussion areas of the Website (for example, the forums or areas where posts are made) will be subject to a Creative Commons Licence (Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivates; BY-NC-ND). FutureLearn will not make available any Learner Content related to your assignments or assessments. For further information on the Creative Commons licences, please visit: <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/licensing-examples/>

#### Credit points at your home institution

- Online courses offered by the university course providers are also open to their own students (in the case of courses of the University of Basel, for students who are enrolled at the University of Basel).
- The awarding of credit points at the home institution is regulated by the respective university (in this case the University of Basel) and not FutureLearn.
- **FutureLearn does not award credit points.** Although FutureLearn offers you the opportunity to upgrade and acquire (subject to a charge) a FutureLearn certificate (Certificate of Achievement, Figure 2), this certificate is neither an equivalent nor a requirement for the awarding of credit points at the home institution. To be awarded credit points at the University of Basel, students at Basel do not need to show this certificate (see item 5; Awarding of credit points); **therefore, they DO NOT need to register for the Statement of Participation.**



Figure 2: FutureLearn certificate

#### **Privacy policy:** <https://about.futurelearn.com/terms/privacy-policy>

FutureLearn attaches great importance to data privacy. As a platform based in Great Britain, the data protection at FutureLearn complies with EU law. This means that the learners' data is protected to a greater extent than with comparable US-American platforms, where data is protected in accordance with their respective law.

The privacy policy states which information FutureLearn collects, what this information is used for and where it is stored. For an administration fee of £ 10, any registered person will be given details on which information is stored about them.

For further information on data protection, please visit the data protection policy at <https://about.futurelearn.com/terms/data-protection-policy/>.

## **5. How are online courses generally integrated into courses at the University of Basel?**

### **Integration format**

- Online courses are being introduced at the University of Basel as a new teaching aid format and are not a new course format.
- They can be integrated into various course formats (lectures, seminars, practical courses etc.).
- The integration of the online courses is implemented within the scope of a so-called “blended learning concept”: In addition to the online course, we offer in-class courses (individual session of lectures or seminars, accompanying block courses, practical courses or parallel tutorials, group or project work etc.).
- The course concept specifies whether the online course is a compulsory teaching aid or not. If it is a compulsory teaching aid, participation in the online course is mandatory.

### **Access and attendance**

- The online courses are publicly accessible and free of charge (for all).
- Participation in the online course will not be checked, even if the online course is a compulsory teaching aid and therefore an obligatory component of a course (comparable to compulsory reading).
- It is assumed that all students have access to the online course as nowadays, access to the Internet is a requirement for academic studies and the online courses on FutureLearn are barrier-free.

### **Data protection**

- The University of Basel will not and cannot access individual learner data from FutureLearn.
- No data is exchanged between the student administration of the University of Basel and FutureLearn.

### **Awarding of credit points at the home institution (performance review)**

- Credit points in courses that incorporate an online course will be awarded solely through a performance review at the University of Basel. This review will be undertaken as specified in the study regulations of the University of Basel. It will not be undertaken on FutureLearn.
- The examination content corresponds to the contents imparted and competencies acquired in the online courses according to the course concept.
- No credit points will be awarded for the successful completion of the online course based on the FutureLearn certificate (see Figure 2).

## **6. How is the online course integrated into the specific course you are taking?**

Within the scope of the first in-class session, the university lecturers will provide information on how the online course is integrated into the course.

### **Organisation of the course (procedure, duration, expenditure)**

- What is happening at which point of the course?
- Is participation in the online course an integral part of the course (obligatory) or an additional, optional component?
- How many personal meetings will there be, and when and where will they take place? Is participation in the personal meetings mandatory?
- When does the online course start and how many weeks will the course take?
- How many hours per week do learners have to schedule for participation in the online course?

### **Contents**

- Which contents are imparted via the online course?
- Will additional contents be imparted in the in-class lectures and if so, which ones?

### **Learning activities**

- What happens in the online phases?
- What happens in the in-class phases?

### **Facilitation**

- Who facilitates the overall course?
- Who provides learning support in the online course?
- Is additional learning support available for the students at Basel?

### **Media (teaching/learning materials / software / Internet platforms)**

- Are further media (software, websites, ADAM, textbooks, literature etc.) used in addition to FutureLearn?

### **Performance review**

- How is the performance reviewed?
- Which contents and competencies imparted via the online course are relevant to the exam?