

MOOCs

Massive Open Online Courses are an opportunity for U3A members to learn with short courses presented by experts. Anyone can join – the only requirement is **internet access**.

MOOCs

- are easy to get into and to register for
- are free
- vary in length e.g. from 2 - 6 weeks or longer
- vary in starting dates and are often repeated
- stipulate a variety of study hours per week but the material is often available for weeks or can be downloaded
- have no penalties for dropping out
- require no tests or assignments

Some MOOC providers:

Coursera: www.coursera.org (American Universities)

Edx: www.edx.org/courses (American Universities)

Futurelearn: www.futurelearn.com (Open University)

Alison: www.alison.com (Ireland)

Futurelearn has MOOCs in all of the following categories:

- Business and management
- Creative Arts and Media
- Health and Psychology
- History
- Languages and Culture
- Law, Literature
- Nature and Environment
- Online and Digital
- Politics and the Modern World
- Science, Maths and Technology
- Sport and Leisure
- Teaching and Studying.

How can MOOCs be used by U3A groups? Here are some ideas:

1. Group Leaders and members could use the MOOCs as extra material for existing groups
2. Individual members of a group could use MOOCs as an aid for presentations

3. A devoted MOOC Group could be organised where members agree to study particular MOOCs and use the materials for discussions at support meetings
4. A group could follow a MOOC course together in weekly sessions

The advice from an expert is that the use of MOOCs is more likely to be successful with participants completing the course if the members are given the opportunity to meet and discuss what they are doing with their peers.

Here are some other **online resources** which may be useful but they but not MOOCs:

TED: www.ted.com/talks (100s of lectures, varying lengths, starting from 6 minutes!)

BBC documentaries: www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/documentaries/highlights

If you are interested in joining a MOOC Group please send an email to member@eastgrinsteadu3a.co.uk