



# Planets: An Introduction

## Quick facts

Computer required  
No residential school  
1 Computer-marked assignment (CMA)  
No examination

## Course content

Want to know more about planets? Although they have many characteristics in common, each of the planets in our solar system is different. This course concentrates on the planets and planet-sized objects in orbit around our own star (the Sun), but also delves into our rapidly advancing knowledge of planets of other stars. You will examine some of the amazingly detailed images of planetary surfaces available thanks to the space programme and modern telescopes. This course will also develop your understanding of some aspects of science that you can apply to other situations.

If you are a beginner in science you will find that the course guide introduces new scientific ideas as you need them, progressively developing more sophisticated concepts and skills. If you are an amateur astronomer, or have read popular books on astronomy, you will find that the course develops your understanding and introduces areas of planetary science that you have not met before.

If you are keen on geology or meteorology, you will find much to interest you in the study of comparable processes on other planetary bodies.

This course is based on a new edition of *Teach Yourself Planets*, which is a popular science book written by the course author, supported by a library of planetary images on CD-ROM.

## Entry

You need little more than an interest in planets and the motivation to discover more about them.

Mathematically, you need only be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide simple numbers. The structured teaching will take you to a level at which you are happy to use maths as a tool in a range of scientific contexts.

To cope with the printed material you should be able to understand the sort of articles printed in the broadsheet newspapers. You should also be able to

write your thoughts down comprehensibly.

If you have any doubt about the level of study, please seek advice from your regional centre.

## Qualifications

This is a specified course in our:

- B27 BSc (Hons) Physical Science
- B25 BSc (Hons) Geosciences degrees

It can also count as 10 points towards an Open University bachelor's degree, and would be particularly suitable for inclusion in one of the BSc (Hons) Natural Sciences degrees alongside other 10-point science courses. We advise you to refer to the relevant award descriptions for information on the circumstances in which the course can count towards these qualifications because from time to time the structure and requirements of a qualification may change.

## If you have additional requirements

The course materials are available on CD-ROM in Adobe (pdf) format. This can be used with a screen reader or large print can be produced. Large print versions of the course materials can also be provided on request. If you have severely impaired sight you may find the course challenging, as it relies heavily on coloured images. You will need to make considerable use of a personal computer. If you have concerns about taking this course please contact your regional centre for advice. We provide a range of support services but some of these may take several months to arrange. If you are a new student, or new to courses using a computer, make sure that you have our booklet *Meeting Your Needs*.

## Course materials

We use a mixture of media to help you learn. Our courses may include any of the following media that you will use from home (or wherever you choose to study): specially written texts, set books, online resources, audio CDs, audio and video cassettes, DVDs, CD-ROMs, computer software, a home experiment kit.

## Teaching and assessment

### Study support

You can telephone a study adviser who will be able to help you with academic questions to do with the course and the assessment. There will also be a computer conference facility that you can use to get in

touch with study advisers and other students.

### **Assessment**

You will be asked to submit a multiple-choice, computer-marked assessment at the end of the course. There is no examination.

### **More information**

For full details, including course fees, start dates, services for disabled students, any computing requirements and information on how to become a student, visit the Course and Qualifications website [www.open.ac.uk/courses](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses).

We make every effort to ensure that this information is accurate but it could change if regulations or policies change or because of financial or other constraints.