Operational Projects

Measurement and Evaluation

As in previous years, in 2011-2012 studies and evaluations were conducted in order to provide information and feedback on processes, trends, needs, and level of satisfaction among various stakeholders at the Open University, including:

- Attitudes of students and faculty towards the upgraded VC system
- Evaluation by an additional student group regarding efficacy of e-books
- Student attitudes towards filming of classroom tutorials
- Evaluation of support systems for students writing seminar papers
- Survey of student preferences regarding Open University learning support systems
- Service evaluation survey among students
- Data from the Council for Higher Education's evaluation of the Dept. of Computer Sciences
- First-time launch of the teaching survey portal

Open admissions and flexible learning at the Open University

An Open University study was undertaken for the first time this year to follow-up on students who began studying for an undergraduate degree between 2001 and 2005. OUI data was combined with Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) figures on students involved in higher education up until 2008. The study examined the academic status of students falling into this category at the Open University or other higher-education institutions (including graduates, students and dropouts), to determine whether a link exists between that status and other student data (OUI study history, learning characteristics prior to enrollment at OUI, etc.). The study focused on the issues of open admissions and of student retention, in order to evaluate the extent to which the OUI fills the academic needs of those students who have not been accepted at other educational institutions. In addition, the retention rate of those students towards completion of a degree at the OUI or other higher education institutes was studied. Like other studies that include CBS data, the anonymity of the subjects was strictly observed and students cannot be identified from the records contained in the files.

The following findings arose from the study:

Open admissions

- Approximately one-third of students had no high school matriculation certificate (*Bagrut*).
- Approximately half of the students submitted psychometric examinations.
- The psychometric grade of 28% of Open University BA graduates was below 500 and 21% of graduates had no *Bagrut*.

Retention of new OUI students between 2001 and 2005

- Many students who stopped studying at OUI before completing their degree continued to study at other institutes of higher education; some managed to complete their degrees and continued on to advanced degrees.
- Half of the students who transferred to other educational institutions switched to universities. Of these, a high percentage (46%) completed a degree or were still studying in 2008 (36%).

In summary, the findings indicate that the Open University is fulfilling one of its main objectives by offering an opportunity for young people who do not meet the acceptance criteria of universities, to study towards an undergraduate degree, complete it either at OUI or another educational institution, and to continue studying for an advanced degree thereafter. A further study is currently underway to evaluate these issues in light of CBS figures through 2010.

System for special requests

In order to simplify the process for deferring an examination date or assignment through the Teaching Services System, a newly-designed site enables study centers to feed requests directly into the Oracle system. Responses are also via Oracle, and replies are sent via email to the student. The process offers transparency and eliminates the need for individual letters to be sent to students and to the Teaching Services System.

Upgrade of ERP system

A project was undertaken in 2011-2012 to carry out a complex and large-scale upgrade on the ERP system to Version 12.0. The new version includes Oracle support for the product up to 2017 and contains functional improvements and add-ons that will allow for the integration of new processes and technological advances in computerizing OUI's financial and logistics systems. The ERP system handles all of the organization's financial, logistics and procurement processes. It is closely interfaced with the student administration and other operational systems. Among other improvements, the recent upgrade has resulted in the operation of a new payment and collection module and a unified structure for the suppliers and customers database.