

Students

A "student" at the Open University is defined as a person who has registered for one or more courses. The "total number of students" refers to the number of people studying at the OUI. A student taking two or more courses is counted only once.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, 42,865 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses, compared with 43,511 in 2013-2014. An additional 3,709 students were registered for seminar papers only. Among undergraduate students, 13,194 (31%) were new students.

There were 3,296 students enrolled in graduate studies (including students taking qualifying courses), compared with 3,597 in 2013-2014. An additional 104 graduate students were registered for seminar papers, 32 for final projects, and 60 for theses.

The study method at the Open University does not require students to enroll in a structured program over a specific period of time. Therefore, in addition to absolute numbers, we are presenting data that enables a comparison with students pursuing a full program towards a degree (FTE – Full Time Equivalent). The calculation is based on the number of course enrollments divided by a factor that expresses the number of annual enrollments that would allow the student to complete a degree in four years. In FTE terms, 25,019 undergraduate students were enrolled at the Open University in 2014-2015 (compared with 25,277 in 2013-2014).

Outstanding Students

An average grade of 95 or over was earned by 273 students (including 37 graduate students), an achievement that entitled them to inclusion on the President's List. The Dean's List included 1,162 students (including 186 graduate students).

Undergraduate students – special population groups

Population	Number of students
Arab sector	6,354
High school students	1,040
Soldiers in compulsory service	620
Ultra-Orthodox students*	561
Students with disabilities	631
Overseas students	725
Incarcerated students	71

* Ultra-Orthodox students in special groups

Students with Disabilities

A total of 715 OUI students, represented on all of the academic tracks in 2014-2015, have disabilities and special

learning needs. They include IDF veterans, students with impaired hearing, impaired vision, physical or motor disabilities, and students with various chronic illnesses. Study materials have been made accessible, and conditions for taking exams have been adapted and tailored to their special requirements.

Student Rights

In compliance with the law and the practice of the CHE regarding adjustments of terms for studying and exam-taking due to fertility treatments, pregnancy, birth, adoption, or child custody or fostering, requests were submitted by 970 students.

Access to Services and Inclusion – OUI Regulations Regarding Students with Disabilities

The Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law was legislated in 1998. Its purpose was to allow the full participation of people with disabilities in society, including in institutions of higher education. Since its legislation, amendments have been added with respect to accessibility of buildings and public places (2011) and accessibility of services (2013). The Knesset procedure for ratifying amendments regarding accessibility of existing places which are institutions for higher education has yet to be completed.

Accessibility, and all that it entails, has been the focal point of the Office of the Dean of Students this year. As required by the injunctions, surveys of the accessibility of OUI buildings, services, and websites were conducted and the university is making all of its study centers accessible, adapting them to students with disabilities, in accordance with the survey results. During the year, the emphasis was placed on access to OUI campuses, establishing relevant internal institutional procedural regulations, assistance in making services accessible, and workshops to spread awareness in accordance with the law.

High School Students

This year, 1,040 high school students, from 9th through 12th grade, studied at the OUI. Of these students, 44 were acknowledged for academic excellence, 30 students were included on the Dean's List, and 14 were included on the President's List. Among those students graduating this year, 63 began their OUI studies while still in high school.

This has been the third year of the Academia in High School – Higher Education in High School joint program with the Ministry of Education, which allows high school students to take courses for academic credit with the support of their schools. Students may exchange specified OUI course credits for particular high school matriculation exams. Of the high school students this year, 824 were part of this program (approximately 21% more than in 2013-2014). At a ceremony held in February 2015 at the OUI, 138 of the students in the program received honors certificates and scholarships for their achievements in 2013-2014.

Since the launching of the program, the number of participating schools has reached 137, of which 43 joined this year. At the end of the school year, 396 grades for OUI courses in exchange for matriculation grades were transmitted to the Ministry of Education Exams Department. These numbers are three times higher than in the previous year.

Scholarships

This year, 4,859 tuition scholarships were awarded, based on a wide range of criteria, including 3,784 scholarships based on financial need.

Student Services Call Centers

Prospective Students Call Center Pilot

Optimum call center management is a function of balancing parameters: demand for personnel to handle the anticipated flow of calls at various times in order to meet defined goals, system constraints, and personal availability of the representatives. Therefore, the number of operators assigned to work each shift varies and depends on predictions for incoming and outgoing calls for any given day.

Academic Counseling Center

Student Retention Unit

The Student Retention Unit was established in 2012 to assist students who have reached an advanced stage of studies but, for a variety of reasons, have failed to complete their degrees. This year, in accordance with a decision by the steering committee, counselors began handling the cases of students with at least 60 credits. The Unit helps students complete their studies and receive a diploma. By June 2015, 544 students had graduated as a direct result of assistance offered by the Unit. This represents 17% of the total number of students currently being assisted.

Improvements in Student Services

New registration website: A new registration website is available, which meets international access standards. The site is responsive to all kinds of screens and screen resolutions. The website is user-friendly and a tuition calculator is displayed.

Registration procedures: Study centers will now be able to complete the registration process for students.

Study skills workshops: The workshops have been integrated into the course offerings system, and an option for online registration to the workshops has also been added.

Candidacy submission: An option has been added to the online registration system for submitting candidacy for other degrees, programs, and courses previously unavailable for online registration.

Exemption exams: An option has been added which allows students to see and order copies of exemption/placement exam scores through the *Sheilta* system.

Additional time option for examinees during the fast of Ramadan: Muslim students may submit a request for special conditions for exams while fasting in the month of Ramadan.

Career Guidance and Placement

This year, a new and advanced system was purchased for students and alumni seeking employment. Approximately 3,300 students and 900 alumni are currently registered in the system. Over 1,500 positions are updated daily by over 700 employers. The new system will be part of a website which will provide a range of programming and information for students.

OpJob offers and advertises lectures and spotlight days offered by companies and organizations on subjects related to employment and careers. Likewise, this division holds occupational guidance workshops. This year, a workshop designated for students with disabilities dealt with integration in the workplace. A symposium for career counselors at the OUI was also held.

Student Association

The OUI Student Association continued to offer academic and social services and benefits to students, with a goal of providing services suitable for students all over the country. This year, a "coffee corner" was placed on the Ashdod campus (where there is no cafeteria), and microwave stations are being installed on two or three campuses. The OpPortunity Project has been launched, which empowers students who own businesses or are artists and performers, to advertise to all our students. The Culture Store was launched, which offers a broad range of performances and plays available throughout Israel, for a range of ages, including performances for families and children.

After leading an initiative to reduce prices for scanning exam workbooks, the option was added this year for members to receive one exam each semester at no cost. Preparatory courses for the English exemption exam have been extended and are now available in Dimona and Eilat. This year's trip to Poland took place in collaboration with the National Student Association, which added yet another dimension to the experience.

This year, Students' Day became a six-location event – in Haifa, Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Jerusalem, Beersheva and Eilat – making it more convenient for many more students to attend. The Student Association continues to offer a wide variety of social and legal services to students, in addition to running social programs and projects countrywide.

Open Radio

An "open radio" station which was launched this year broadcasts several hours per week via radio 103.6 FM in Ramat Hasharon. The station is under the auspices of the OUI communications department and is directed by Dori Ben-Ze'ev. University students work at the station on a voluntary basis, and receive training and support by professionals. Twenty students currently present programs on diverse topics such as culture, music, science, and entertainment.

Athletics

The OUI came in eighth place among thirty participating institutions of higher education in Israel in the 46th international ASA games. The men's team was ranked ninth and the women were ranked tenth. The OUI's leading teams this year were bowling, men's table tennis, and women's judo, which took first place. The squash team came in second place. The men's judo team came in third place. A number of teams also took fourth place (men's windsurfing, debate), fifth place (men's swimming), and sixth place (men and women's beach volleyball, men and women's track and field events, men's tennis, and chess). One of the debate team couples made it to the finals and finished in second and fourth places. OUI athletes also won individual gold medals in mountain biking, swimming, bowling, table tennis, judo, track and field, women's kayaking, chess, and silver and bronze medals in these fields and in squash. Our athletes also participated in 3X3 women's basketball tournaments, open water swimming, and women's table tennis. Participating students received certificates of excellence from the Dean of Students, and various degrees of tuition scholarships.