

Teaching



The Open University's unique characteristics are reflected in various aspects of teaching. Unique teaching/learning methods are devised to suit academic courses that are studied via distance learning rather than on a central campus. Many courses have more than one tutor and the University invests considerable efforts to maintain uniformity in teaching, assessment and grading, and thoroughly trains new and veteran course coordinators and tutors. Among the students studying at the Open University are populations that require unique teaching solutions. These groups include high school students, soldiers, Arabic-speaking students, students with learning disabilities, students residing abroad, and more. We strive to expand the circle of students and aspire to reach additional population sectors by offering solutions that meet their unique needs.

Decisions of the Academic Committee in the 2004-2005 academic year

The following programs of study were approved:

- M.A. in Social Psychology
- M.A. in Psychology: Cognitive Neuropsychology
- B.A. in History of the Middle East and its Cultures [dual-disciplinary and single-disciplinary]
- B.A. in Sociology
- B.A. in Sociology with a Division of Studies in an Additional Field
- B.A. in the Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management
- B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Logistics
- B.A. in Cognitive Sciences
- B.A. in Psychology and Life Sciences
- B.A. in Psychology with a Division of Studies in Mathematics
- B.A. in Mathematics and Chemistry
- B.A. in Computer Science and Chemistry
- Dual-disciplinary B.Sc. in Physics and another discipline
- Adapting the B.A. in Computer Science to a B.Sc. in Computer Science

Undergraduate programs of study offered for the first time this year

- B.A. in Psychology [single-disciplinary]
- B.A. in Chemistry and Management
- B.A. in Chemistry and Economics
- B.A. in Chemistry and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)
- B.Sc. in Chemistry and Life Sciences
- B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in the Arts
- B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in Music
- B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in Mathematics
- B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in the Arts
- B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Music
- B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Literature
- B.A. in Natural Sciences: Emphasis on Chemistry



Courses taught for the first time this year

Graduate courses

Capital Markets and Financial Intermediaries
Curriculum Development and Implementation
Information Product Economics
Location Theory
Participation Programs in Work Organizations
Project Management for Business Administration
Research Methods in Education
Seminar: Behavioral Economics and Finance

Seminar: Globalization – Its Effects on the Economy, the Production Sector and Financial Markets
Seminar: Information Systems Development Methodologies
Seminar: Knowledge Management
Seminar: The Information Value of Financial Reports
Technology and Learning
Theories of Learning and Instruction

Undergraduate courses

Accounting Information Systems
Auditing
Communication and Public Opinion [as intermediate course]
Computer Graphics
Contemporary Sociological Theories
Corporate Law
Data Communication for Industrial Engineering and Management
Democracies and Dictatorships – Ideas, Contexts, Regimes
Evaluation in Education: Theory and Practice
Field Laboratory: The Social Life of the Arabian Babbler
Financial and Managerial Accounting
Fundamentals of Decision Theory and Operations Research
German Jewry and the Challenge of Modernization [rewritten]
Identification with Groups

Intergenerational Economics
Introduction to Computer Science Using Java
Introduction to Geophysics
Introduction to the Social Sciences
Laboratory in Meteorology – Observations and Synoptic Analysis
Landmarks in Western Literary Criticism
Modern Literary and Cultural Theory: An Introduction
Molecular Dynamics of Chemical Processes
Nutrition
Operations and Production Management II
Operations Management II
Plant Physiology
Prophecy in the Bible [as advanced course]
Reading Disabilities
Simulation for Industrial Engineers
Social Gaps and Inequality in Israel
Social Security
Strategic Information Systems [rewritten]

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

To prepare for the reduction in the number of tracks in A-level courses, the number of assignments combining different study fields was increased: Political Science, Sociology, Economics and Management were added to the Social Sciences; Philosophy, Judaism, History, Literature, Art, Music and Linguistics were added to the Humanities.

The course **Teaching English to Students with Learning Disabilities and Students with Difficulties** was adapted for online instruction and is currently offered in its new format.



Course Coordinator Involvement in Setting Teaching Policy

Together with the work of the Committee for Examining the Status of Course Coordinators, a forum of academic teaching faculty was established this year and its representatives participate in those bodies that deal with OU policy, particularly its teaching policy. The Teaching Committee conducted a joint meeting with the new forum of course coordinators and a representative of the forum recently joined the Committee as a permanent member.

Training Teaching Staff

Towards the Fall semester of 2005 a survey was conducted among course coordinators with the primary aim of examining if and how the ongoing course assessment survey helps them manage the course and improve the quality of instruction. The results showed that the ongoing assessment survey, conducted every semester, is used by the coordinators to provide feedback to tutors and to make decisions concerning continued employment of tutors and their assignment to different tutorial groups.

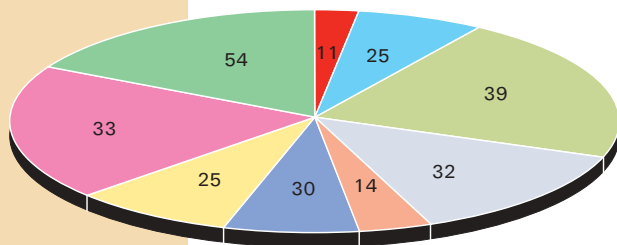
Training program for veteran tutors: This year, for the first time, we opened a forum of “partners for veteran tutors,” a unique method of training, enabling consultation and cooperative learning, aimed at participants with similar backgrounds. Participating in the partners’ forum allows tutors to examine

professional and organizational issues which concern them, to learn from one another, and to get new ideas and solutions on the basis of the experience gained by their peers in the group.

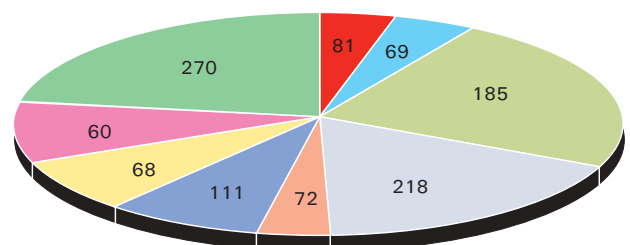
Training program for veteran course coordinators: For the third time, this Fall a development program for veteran course coordinators was held. This time the program was based on a different approach: it assumed that while course coordinators are recruited for their professional expertise, their role demands managerial skills as well. The aim of the program was to train and develop managerial aspects, and the topics addressed included role perception, assessment and feedback, recruiting tutors and motivating and encouraging self-study.

Course Coordinators and Tutors, by Department

Course Coordinators *



Tutors



- English Unit
- Natural Sciences
- Sociology, Political Science, Communication
- Education, Psychology
- Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Literature, Language, the Arts
- History, Philosophy, Judaic Studies
- Management and Economics

* Course coordinators who belong to more than one department are counted only in the department in which they primarily work.

Decisions Pertaining to Teaching Processes

This year efforts were invested in examining and improving various processes with the aim of creating financial savings that would not have a negative effect on academic activities. Moreover, earlier decisions pertaining to savings thought to have a potentially damaging effect on academic activities were slightly modified.

- It was decided to increase monitoring of extra tutor activities
- It was decided to monitor the implementation of the final exam grading procedure.
- It was decided to encourage use of the online assignment system.
- The procedure for sampling assignments by course coordinators was finalized and implemented.
- New and more equitable rules were formulated for rewarding course coordinators who handle seminar papers, without increasing expenses.
- Greater emphasis was placed on the procedure for opening groups due to the budget ramifications of tutorial expenses.
- Typing course booklets (including assignments) was transferred to the academic departments. Course coordinators and departmental administrative coordinators received training and support.

Decisions Pertaining to Graduate Studies

- It was decided not to give priority to OU graduates in acceptance to graduate studies.
- It was decided not to demand additional English requirements beyond those required for an undergraduate degree.
- If possible, tutorials in graduate programs will be held on the Raanana campus.

Master's Degree Programs in Companies

We are interested in developing an offering of graduate programs to companies. As a first step, we opened an M.Sc. in Computer Science this year at ELTA Electronic Industries in Ashdod.

Meeting of Computer Science Graduate Students

Ninety-one students participated at a meeting of graduate students with Computer Science faculty members. The goals of the get-together included acquaintance between students and faculty, establishing personal communication channels and transmitting news and updates from the Computer Science Division. In the second part of the meeting, faculty members sat in separate rooms and graduate students were invited to hear about the various faculty members' areas of specialization in greater detail and to examine possible topics for theses and final projects. Following this meeting, clear procedures were formulated and published for studies and for choosing a thesis or final project advisor, and a liaison person was appointed. New communication channels were also established between the Division and its graduate students.

Study Guidance

To the workshop on learning skills for the course **Introduction to Micro-Economics**, this year we added a section preparing students for the exam and for answering questions.

Academic writing skills training is offered to students embarking on writing a seminar paper. Assistance is also offered in finding sources relevant to the paper.

Outstanding Students

Students who excel in their studies during an academic year receive a certificate of academic excellence. President's List students also receive a scholarship amounting to basic tuition for one course. Eligibility criteria for academic excellence certificate are: the student completed at least 4 academic courses during





the academic year (at least 3 academic courses for students up to 18 years of age and for soldiers); the student studied 1 to 3 courses in the previous 3-4 consecutive semesters and completed the courses with an average grade of 95 or above (President's List) or 90-94 (Dean's List); the student did not fail any of the courses and was not reprimanded by the Discipline Committee.

In 2005, certificates academic excellence were awarded to 904 students for the academic year 2004: 172 President's List students and 732 Dean's List students. The number and proportion of outstanding students increases annually. In 2001 they comprised 1.5% of all students pursuing a B.A. in the academic track, whereas in 2004 this proportion rose to 2.9%. Among the President's List students, 159 are studying towards an undergraduate degree and 13 towards a graduate degree. Among the Dean's List students, 645 are pursuing an undergraduate degree and 87 are studying towards a graduate degree. It is interesting to note that 5.8% of the President's List students and 3.4% of the Dean's List students have learning disabilities; are all undergraduates.

About 80% of the students at the Open University focus on Social Sciences and Education. Their representation among Dean's List students corresponds to their proportion of all OU students, however they are under-represented among President's List students – only 57%. 18% of the students at the OU study Mathematics and Computer Science; they comprise 25% of President's List students and 14% of Dean's List students. In other fields of study, the proportion of outstanding students in each field corresponds to their proportion in the general OU population. The proportion of outstanding students in Computer Science and Mathematics has declined over the years with the concomitant increased share of Social Science and Education students in the two groups of outstanding students. Among President's List graduate students, 6 study Computer Science, 4 are pursuing a degree in Democracy Studies and 3 study Business Administration. Among Dean's List graduate students, 16% are Computer Science students, 31% Democracy Studies students and 53% study Business Administration.

Outstanding High School Students

In 2004, 90 high school students were awarded certificates of academic excellence: 30 President's List and 60 Dean's List. In 2004 high school students comprised 1.5% of all OU students, however their proportion among outstanding students was 10%.



Teaching in Project Russia

OU teaching activities in the former USSR are made possible by close collaboration with the Jewish Agency. More than 7,000 students in over 300 cities are enrolled in OU courses.

An agreement was signed this year with the Moscow State Pedagogical University according to which students can now pursue an OU Bachelor's degree in Judaic Studies in Russian through the University in Moscow. The Open University will be responsible for course development and teaching. Furthermore, we renewed the agreement with Moscow University for distance education services for Project Russia.

Seminars and advanced professional training: As in previous years, annual seminars for tutors and local coordinators were held in Moscow and Kiev, and our course coordinators conducted study seminars in many towns, including Minsk, Novosibirsk, Riga and Vilna. A 5-day intensive advanced professional training session for four local tutors was conducted with the support of the Claims Conference Rabbi Israel Miller Fund.

Courses in Russian conducted in Germany: Two Russian-language seminars of OU academic programs were held in Germany this year with the active participation of our course coordinators.

New immigrant students: 40 new immigrants attended the traditional meeting of the project staff and heads of the program with students who moved to Israel in the last year.

Reaching Out to Minority Students

The Open University strives to promote academic studies among the Arabic-speaking community. Beyond the difficulty of studying in Hebrew and dealing with study materials in English, one of the main problems facing Arabic-speaking students is their prior learning background, including the frontal learning method and an emphasis on “producing knowledge” rather than on self-study and critical thinking. The proportion of Arabic-speaking students in higher education in Israel is growing annually, yet it remains significantly smaller than their share in the general population.

Arabic-speaking students at the Open University study in regular study centers and at study centers close to concentrations of Arab populations. The main study center in the Arab sector is the Wadi Ara campus at Givat Haviva, with additional study centers in Nazareth, Kaukhab, Yarca and Tira. Our experience shows that following the opening of study centers in close proximity to concentrations of Arab populations, the number of Arabic-speaking students increases, especially the number of female students from this sector.

By its nature and owing to its study method, the Open University can provide a solution to some of the difficulties facing Arabic-speaking students: at the OU students can study without relocating, thus avoiding the need to adapt to a new social environment; transfer options help OU students who wish to enroll in other universities. Despite these advantages, it has become clear that awareness of the Open University and the possibilities it offers among the Arab population is very low and that the proportion of Arabic-speaking students at the OU is also small (we do not have accurate data since the registration form does not ask about religion, nationality or language).

Recommendations of the Committee for the Examination of the Arabic-Speaking Sector

In 2003 the OU established a Committee for the Examination of the Arabic-Speaking Sector. The Committee, headed by the Dean of Studies, Prof. Itzhak Dotan, submitted its recommendations this year. The main recommendations are:

Marketing and increased awareness – The Committee recommended preparing a substantial marketing plan for the Arab sector that underscores the relative advantage of the Open University (the ability to study from home, the possibility of combining employment and studies, no admission requirements, flexibility with respect to study rate and study method, a wide-range of studies in many fields, transfer options to other universities, etc.).

Translation of courses into Arabic – The Committee recommended translating one introductory course in each field that is popular among these students (Literature, Education, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Communication and History (or alternately, the course **Introduction to the Social Sciences** for all social





science fields). Meanwhile, study guides in Arabic should be produced for these courses, as well as a lexicon for courses studied in the Arab sector.

Preparation for academic studies – The Committee recommended creating a preparatory program which would include cover learning skills (combined with contents from academic fields popular among the target population) as well as academic language in Hebrew and English. It also recommended offering a preparatory workshop in Mathematics for students interested in studying the sciences or economics and to consider offering these workshops to 12th grade students and to high school graduates.

Examinations and course booklets – The Committee recommended translating exams and course booklets in each course approved for teaching in Arabic, under the scientific supervision of an expert in the relevant knowledge field. The option to receive the translations and to submit assignments and exams in Arabic (subject to limitations) will be offered to interested students. Every examination center will have exam forms in Arabic available in relevant courses and every student entitled to submit exams in Arabic will receive the appropriate forms.

Tutoring – The Committee recommended preparing a list of courses in which tutorial sessions will be carried out in Arabic. The list will be updated annually. The list of courses will not include advanced courses and will focus on courses studied during the initial stages of study. In courses offered in Arabic, course coordinators will be obligated to find an Arabic-speaking tutor.

Academic supervision – The offering of instruction components in Arabic will depend on the inclusion of at least two Arab-speakers on the course instruction team. If this is not possible, the Committee recommends recruiting an additional individual from academia who speaks Arabic to help the course coordinator supervise tutorials and check assignments and exams. The Committee recommended that the Dean of Students' decision to open a course for instruction in Arabic be binding.

Facilitating studies – Currently students are entitled to study up to 6 courses in Arabic. Some students save this privilege for courses towards the end of their studies. The Committee recommended limiting this privilege to 6 of the first 9 courses students take. It also recommended canceling the sweeping guideline concerning an additional tutorial hour for every tutorial session in the Arab sector and to examine each case individually. If exam forms are translated into Arabic, the Committee recommended canceling the exam time extension of 30 minutes for students writing their exams in Arabic.

Counseling and study guidance – The Committee recommended expanding counseling and study guidance for Arabic-speaking students, developing learning aids that suit the needs of this population and expanding the circle of mentoring and individual tutorials. The Committee recommended considering individual tutorials in Arabic in courses which are conducted in Arabic.

The Wadi Ara Campus

Measures in the spirit of the Committee have already been implemented in the Wadi Ara campus and the number of new and prospective students increased in 2004-2005. The campus course offering was expanded to additional fields; a workshop on writing seminar papers was offered for the first time; more information meetings were held than in the past and academic counseling hours were extended. A mentoring project funded by the PBC was also implemented on this campus (as well as in Nazareth).

Courses for the Ultra-Orthodox Population

Measures have been taken to open another study center for the ultra-orthodox population on the campus of the Or Yehuda College. A program for special learning assistance for this population is under development and contacts with various entities to expand our activities in this sector continue.

Mahat Colleges: Studies Towards an OU Degree in Management

An agreement was signed with *Mahat* (the Governmental Institute for Technology and Science Education, that qualifies engineering technicians and technicians in technological engineering fields) for integrating studies at the OU for engineering technicians into *Mahat* colleges. Engineering technicians will study towards a B.A. in the Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management.

Assistance to Students with Learning Disabilities

The OU offers students with learning disabilities special services at the Raanana campus and at study centers throughout the country. About 2,000 students with learning disabilities received a variety of services in 2004-2005:

Academic counseling focusing on the unique needs of these students.

Study guidance in small groups (6-8 students) offered by course tutors to students in about 20 academic courses. To this end, tutors are trained in unique learning strategies necessary for working with students with learning disabilities. About 550 students participated in these groups this year at the various study centers.

Individual study guidance was provided to 220 students.

Learning skills for English courses provided by tutors who receive special training in working with students with learning disabilities.

English assignments were sent to students on CDs and not on tape as in previous years.

Special exam arrangements are provided to all students with learning disabilities, based on their didactic diagnoses, the special needs of every student and accepted arrangements at the Open University.

Treatment to reduce exam anxiety is provided to students on an individual basis.

Students with Physical Disabilities

In 2004-2005, 30 blind and vision-impaired students, 23 deaf students and 35 students with other physical disabilities studied at the Open University.

Survey of Vision-Impaired Students

Over the past five years, 53 students with vision disabilities (recognized as blind or vision-impaired) studied at the Open University. Six of them received a Bachelor's degree. Twenty-one students were enrolled in the 2005 Spring semester. As these students can neither read the study units printed in regular size font nor what is written on the blackboard when material is summarized or drilled during tutorials, the OU helps these students through a variety of technological solutions, audiotapes of study units, special exam arrangements, allowing students to submit recorded assignments, etc. These students are entitled to record tutorials or to bring an escort to take notes during tutorials. During exams the students are entitled to hear the exam read by an exam proctor and to dictate their answers to the proctor or to enter them into the computer, to use enlargement devices and to receive a time extension.

Twenty-three students responded to an OU survey in a telephone interview. The findings indicated that 75% of them enrolled in the OU in order to pursue an academic degree. The majority are enrolled in courses in the Social Sciences in an organized group. Study difficulties were not reported, except in methodology courses (statistics and research methods). Most respondents did not encounter difficulties in their contacts with teaching staff or with University entities and communicated well with proctors during exams. These students prefer formal assistance from a reader, mentor or private teacher to informal assistance from a family member or friend.



Survey of Hearing-Impaired Students

The difficulty to hear, understand and be understood creates difficulties in communication, in realizing learning potential and in developing social capabilities and skills. The Open University offers an advantage over other universities for the hearing-impaired, since studies are based on written materials adapted for self-study at home rather than on frontal lectures, and in most cases tutorial attendance is not mandatory. 53 hearing-impaired students studied at the OU in the past five years, 6 received a Bachelor's degree; 17 were enrolled in the 2005 Spring semester.

Twenty-four students responded to the survey questionnaire. 75% of the students enrolled in the OU with the aim of pursuing an academic degree. They chose to study at the OU due to factors such as admission requirements and the ability to

combine studies and employment, however they also indicated characteristics that meet their unique needs such as self-study based on written materials or studying in small groups which enables them to lip-read the discussion.

Assistance to Students with Special Needs

Assistance offered to vision- or hearing-impaired students is varied and involves internal and external OU entities. An additional 200 students with motor, mental and other disabilities also study at the OU, and receive an adjustment package that includes, among others, special exam arrangements, reinforcement lessons and learning aids. This year, 151 individual tutorial hours were provided in students' homes to 9 students confined to their homes due to various physical and sensory disabilities, and special test conditions were approved for 285 students.

Enrollment Data

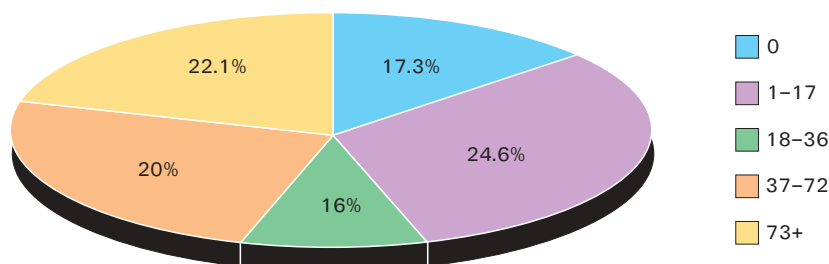
"Course enrollment" refers to registration for one academic course. Thus a student taking two courses is listed as two course enrollments. In the 2004-2005 academic year, there were 106,532 undergraduate course enrollments, and 8,097 graduate course enrollments (including qualifying courses).

Enrollment in undergraduate courses, by department

Department	Course enrollments	%
History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies	5,016	4.7
Literature, Language and the Arts	5,168	4.9
Education and Psychology	25,947	24.3
Sociology, Political Science and Communication	15,512	14.5
Management and Economics	29,730	27.9
Natural Sciences	3,502	3.3
Mathematics	6,358	6.0
Computer Science	12,437	11.7
English Unit *	2,862	2.7
Total	106,532	100.0

* The data refer only to A-level (academic) courses. In lower-level courses, there were 3,546 enrollments.

Undergraduate Students, by Number of Credits (including accredited prior studies)



Enrollment in graduate courses, by degree

(including qualifying courses)

Degree	Courses	%
Computer Science	604	7.5
Democracy Studies – Interdisciplinary	918	11.3
Biological Thought	152	1.9
Business Administration	5,834	72.0
Education, 'Learning Technologies' and 'Learning Systems'	589	7.3
Total	8,097	100.0

Regional distribution of enrollments and study groups in academic * and EFL courses

Region	Course enrollments	Number of groups
North	11,652	589
Sharon	10,509	442
Center	71,592	2,807
Jerusalem	8,625	385
Shfela	4,892	258
South	5,416	297
Special tutorials	5,548	-
Total	118,234	4,778

* Including course enrollments in certificate and teaching certificate studies.

Study Centers

Course offerings at OU study centers

The Open University developed a computerized system for handling course offerings at the study centers. The system handles all stages, from planning in colleges and campuses to actual student registration. The system was activated in some of the study centers for the 2006 Fall semester registration period, and will be fully operational in the Spring semester.

Campuses

On the campuses, there were 21,427 course enrollments this year, which represent 18% of all OU enrollments and an increase of 8% compared to last year.

Enrollment data on OU campuses

Campus	Course enrollments	Increase compared to 2003-2004
Haifa	7,784	6.2%
Jerusalem	8,962	8.4%
Beer Sheba	3,724	9.3%
Wadi Ara	957	14.1%