

# Students

In the 2004-2005 academic year, 37,046 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses. An additional 2,378 students who were close to completing their degrees were registered for seminar papers only. There were 2,912 students enrolled in graduate studies (including students taking qualifying courses). 150 graduate students were registered for seminar papers only, 17 for final projects and an additional 11 for theses. One quarter of the graduate students have undergraduate degrees from the Open University.

A "student" at the Open University is a person who registered for one or more courses and has not cancelled or deferred studies. The total number of students represents the number of people studying at the Open University. A student taking two or more courses is counted only once.

The study method at the Open University does not require students to take 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 three years. In FTE terms, 15,972 undergraduate and 1,186 graduate students were enrolled at the Open University in 2004-2005. 75% of the students reported that they had a matriculation certificate.

## Graduate students, by degree

(including those taking qualifying courses) \*

Degree	Students
Computer Science	310
Democracy Studies - Interdisciplinary	396
Biological Thought	21
Business Administration	1,960
Education, 'Learning Technologies' and 'Learning Systems'	232
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,912</b>

\* In 2004-2005, 7 students were registered for more than one graduate degree.

## Financial Assistance and Scholarships

This year a computerized system for the financial management of scholarships was introduced, which enables monitoring, managing, and reporting on scholarships. This year a total of 1,458 scholarships of varying types were awarded, as specified below:

Type of Grant	Total grants
Financial assistance	1,055
Outstanding students	172
High school students	100
ISEF	76
Sports	44
Other	11

In contrast with last year, no scholarships were awarded to graduate students in Democracy Studies due to lack of funds.





## Scholarships Based on Community Service

The Open University conducted a meeting with the national management of *Perach* for the first time this year, creating an opportunity for increased cooperation between the two organizations. The involvement of students in community service entitles them to receive scholarships through several projects:

**ISEF**, the International Education Foundation, awarded scholarships to 25 Open University students this year. Each student received NIS 9,500.

**The *Perach* mentoring project:** 898 Open University students mentored children in 2005. Each mentor received a *Perach* scholarship of NIS 4,562. Two OU students received an excellence award for their activities in the project.

**Virtual *Perach*:** Students participating in this project mentor children with physical disabilities similar to their own. Mentoring is conducted by e-mail and through an Internet forum. Ten *Perach* scholarships were allocated to the project this year, half of them to OU students.

**Mentoring of Arab students:** The PBC allocates funding for this project to help Arabic-speaking

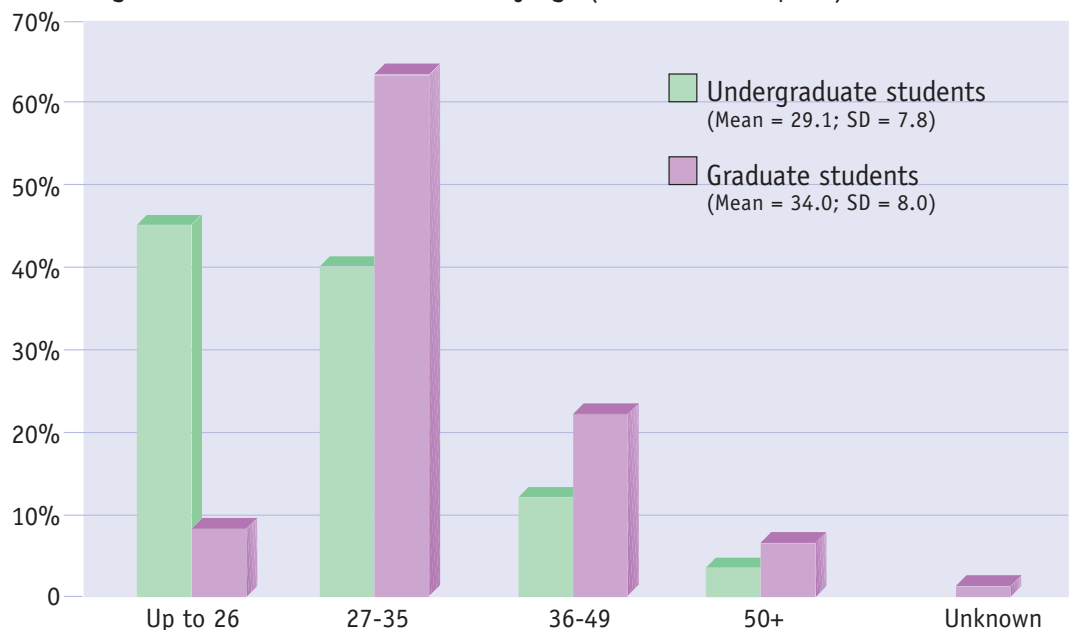
students cope with courses in which they encounter difficulties. This year, 7 mentors and 14 students in Nazareth, and 5 mentors and 10 students in Wadi Ara took part in the project. Each mentor received a scholarship (50% of the tuition of a course) for each trainee mentored, as well as a certificate of appreciation.

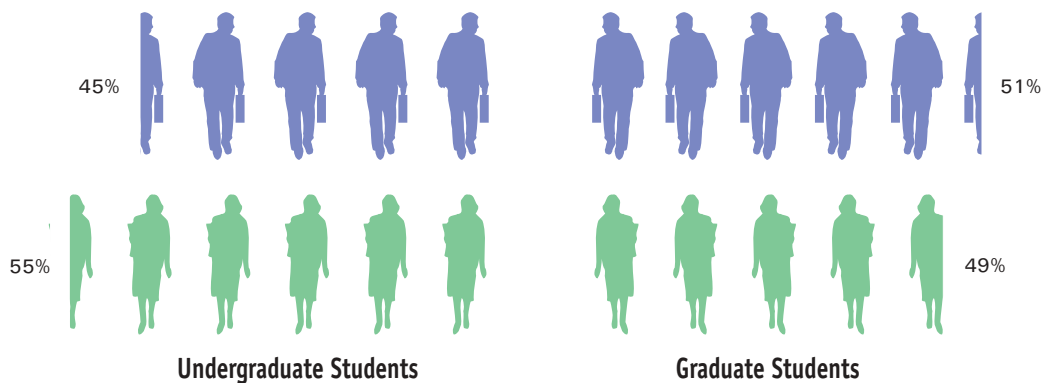
## Sport

Open University athletes took first place in several fields in the Academic Sport Association (ASA) championships, the ASA winter games and the 37th International ASA games. The Open University men's teams in beach and indoor volleyball took first place in all the competitions in which they participated. The basketball team took second place, and the mini-football and chess teams took third place. A number of athletes won individual medals in various sports. Two athletes represented the Open University at the University Olympics this summer.

**Sports excellence scholarships:** 54 students received scholarships of varying amounts and were awarded Dean of Students certificates of excellence for their achievements in representing the Open University in competitions during the year.

## Undergraduate and Graduate Students by Age (based on self-reports)





## Meetings on Campus

To enhance the sense of closeness between students and the new Raanana campus and to lend an ear to their thoughts and feelings, the University conducted a series of guided tours for students on campus along with get-togethers with senior management representatives and heads of academic departments.

### A personal story: A student with special needs

A student with advanced muscular dystrophy, confined to a wheelchair, requiring artificial respiration with an oxygen mask and unable to move any limb in his body began his studies towards a degree in Psychology this year. He was donated a laptop computer with a special mouse (head mouse) through which he could use head movements to point to a virtual keyboard displayed on the screen. The computer enables the student to write on his own, to browse through course websites and to communicate with the world. The student also received a mentor, a volunteer who is also an OU graduate, who helped him weekly in his studies and in preparing assignments. The student has successfully completed his first courses.

### Students Who Dropped Out Resume Their Studies

As in past years, the University conducted a questionnaire survey among students defined as “drop-outs”. These are students who proved their ability to deal with academic studies but had not enrolled in courses at the University for three consecutive semesters. The aim of the survey was to examine why the students dropped out, and to encourage them to resume their studies. The majority of respondents attributed the discontinuation of their studies to factors external to the OU such as difficulty fulfilling various requirements and financial hardships. Others indicated scholastic difficulties, including course or degree requirements.

The “drop-out” population as defined by the survey this year was composed of 1,473 students. Following the survey and a personal appeal by the Dean of Students, 13% resumed their studies in the Spring 2005 semester. Academic advisors personally contacted those students defined as “drop-outs” who expressed their desire (in the questionnaire survey) to receive academic counseling. The advisors attempted to identify the difficulties and special needs of each individual and to find a suitable solution. Approximately 20% of this group resumed their studies following this process.

In 2004, some 20,000 drop-outs included in the three recent surveys (from 1999 onwards) were approached and 26% resumed their studies according to the following distribution: 11% resumed but dropped out again,





10% resumed their studies and are still registered and 5% completed their studies and received a degree (about 1,000 graduates).

### High School Students

In the 2004-2005 academic year, 589 high school students, of whom 270 are new students, were registered at the OU in 1,241 courses. Most studied in regular groups, while a minority studied in groups composed of high school students. In addition, 480 students who had begun their studies while in high school returned to the University as regular students (1,574 course enrollments). Among the high school students, 75% enrolled in Science courses and 19% in Social Sciences courses. 24 of our high school students who completed 50% or more of their degree requirements by the time they graduated from high school received deferment from military service to complete their studies. 41 students who commenced their studies at the OU while in high school completed their studies towards a degree this year, and more than half of them graduated with honors.

### Improved Computerized Services for Students

**Electronic messages to students:** As of this year the University sends e-mail and SMS messages to students. These messages are also displayed on *Sheilta*. This method makes information transfer to students faster and reduces the amount of mail they receive

from the University. Students expressed their satisfaction with the change.

**Sheilta:** The system, which aims to facilitate student communication with OU administrative systems, continued to be developed and improved. Among the services added this year are registration for exam sittings, and cancellation of registration.

**Study group search engine:** A search engine was integrated into the main search on the Open University homepage and on the course catalog webpage. Users indicate their preferred study location, tutorial hours (morning, afternoon/evening), tutorial days and tutorial format (regular, intensive, online) and the search engine finds groups that meet the students' preferences.

**User support:** Increased support was provided this year to students using the online assignment system and library courseware.

### Employment Counseling and Placement

This year the University placed an emphasis on exposing its students and graduates to potential employers and initiated contacts with employers at employment fairs throughout the country. The University also held a symposium for human resource managers that generated job offers from new employers. New initiatives are being considered in light of the success of this activity, such as a symposium for career counselors.

Undergraduate Students, by Years of Schooling (based on self-reports)

