

Students



In the 2009-2010 academic year, 43,118 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses, compared with 42,386 in 2008-2009. An additional 3,752 students who were close to completing their degrees were registered for seminar papers only. 12,503 of the undergraduate students (29%) were new students at the OUI.

There were 3,665 students enrolled in graduate studies (including students taking qualifying courses), compared with 3,274 in 2008-2009. An additional 58 graduate students were registered for seminar papers, 47 for final projects and 41 for theses.

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. 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, 19,656 undergraduate students were enrolled at the Open University in 2009-2010 (compared with 18,884 in 2008-2009).

International Mathematics Competitions

Mathematics students from the Open University were prominent this year, as they have been every year since 2008, in Israeli national teams at international competitions. The six Israelis who took part in SEEMOUS 2010 (the South-Eastern European Mathematical Olympiad for University Students), and the seven participants in the IMC (International Mathematics Competition for University Students), were selected by the Israel Mathematical Union based on a screening procedure held at every university in Israel.

Both delegations included two mathematics students from the Open University, whose achievements were impressive. The two OUI students in the IMC won 2nd prize, while the two who took part in the SEEMOUS competition achieved 1st and 3rd place in the international ranking of all competitors, and were both awarded gold medals.

Sport at the Open University

Heading this year's Open University team sports achievements were the chess and men's table tennis teams, both winning 2nd place in the International Academic Sport Association (ASA) games. The women's basketball and men's tennis teams came in 3rd place. OUI students took part in a wide range of individual entries, with medal winners in table tennis, judo, kayaking, chess and light athletics. At the end of the ASA games, the Open University ranked 15th in men's competitions, 8th in women's events and 12th overall among the 26 participating Israeli higher education institutes.

The University also held its own internal championships for students and employees, in chess, table tennis and – for the first time – ten pin bowling.

An OUI student also headed the Israeli team to win 3rd place in the 5th World University Bridge Championship, which was held in Taiwan.

New Open University Student Union

Throughout the year, the new Student Union continued to strengthen its status and organizational capacity. It developed a new website for students, consolidated its financial situation, appointed external office holders (for example, an administrator) to help manage the Union, and prepared work programs and a budget. The Student Union also published four editions of *Ops* magazine and maintained ongoing contact with students. Special activities were organized, including start-of-semester events, opening a debating club, a trip to Poland and a ceremony to honor IDF reservists, at which soldiers were awarded scholarships.

Elections to the Student Council were held at the end of the spring semester. 1,629 students participated, representing 6.8% of the 25,053 members of the Student Union who have voting rights. Thirty-nine representatives were elected to the new Council, which then appointed various position holders.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

The OUI awarded 3,118 scholarships in 2009-2010 in various categories (a full scholarship is the equivalent of tuition for one course). Of these, 2,925 were financial aid grants and the remainder were academic excellence and sports

scholarships. Scholarships were also awarded to soldiers doing compulsory military service and national service, as well as those who were newly discharged or completing national service. A total of 2,213 scholarships were awarded to soldiers, each covering 10% of course tuition, and 632 to combat soldiers, each for 50% of course tuition.

Hatchel: Veteran Students Help New Students

In some courses, new students in their first semester are offered mentoring. The mentors, who undergo brief training, are carefully selected from among outstanding veteran students. This year, 117 mentors coached 218 new students in the following courses: "Introduction to Microeconomics," "Introduction to Statistics for Students of Social Sciences I," "Introduction to Psychology," and "Introduction to Computer Science Using Java."

Social Involvement Projects

OUI students take part in various social involvement projects. The following are notable among these:

- **Sela – Students for the Community:** The *Sela* Project operates in conjunction with the Loewenstein Hospital & Rehabilitation Center in Raanana. Psychology students accompany adult patients (and their families) after hospitalization when readjusting to independent life in the community. Students participate in tutorials with hospital personnel to discuss their experiences with the patients and their families, and receive information about the patients' medical progress. To date, one student group has participated in this project.
- **Perach, Sachlav and ISEF projects:** Some 980 students tutored through *Perach* (a mentoring project for schoolchildren) this year. Through the *Sachlav* project (enrichment programs for schools and kindergartens that function in a long-day format), 63 students mentored elementary school pupils around the country either in groups or individually.
- This year, 18 students, 16 undergraduates and 2 graduates, participated in ISEF, the International Sephardic Education Foundation. ISEF activities take two forms: social involvement via *Perach* and a theoretical aspect, including a social leadership workshop held throughout the academic year.

Students with Special Needs

In the 2009-2010 academic year, 374 students with special needs studied at the Open University. Among these, 36 were deaf or hearing impaired; 59 blind or vision impaired; 53 with motor disabilities; and 118 had a variety of chronic medical conditions. All benefited from specially adapted study conditions and special examination terms, customized to their requirements and disabilities.

Undergraduate students – Special populations

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| Arab sector | 3,206 |
| High school students | 530 |
| Soldiers in compulsory service | 847 |
| Haredi students* | 223 |
| Students with special needs | 374 |
| Overseas students | 617 |
| Prisoners | 311 |

* Haredi students in special projects

Career Guidance and Placement

The Open University makes every effort to ease the entry of students and alumni into the employment market, exposing them to a wide selection of employment opportunities in various fields, all over Israel. This year, 2,100 different jobs were advertised on the Placement website, *OpJob*. Over 6,000 applications were submitted online directly to the companies.

Two employment fairs were held, one of them a virtual (online) fair. Twenty-five leading companies from different parts of the country took part, with extensive information about them available on the special website built for the fair. On offer were 700 jobs in different fields, including banking and finance, software, technology, human resources, marketing and sales, administration, and customer service. Applications were submitted directly via the website. Participants also could take part in a forum offering helpful tips and articles on subjects like employment, how to write a CV, how to prepare for work interviews, and more.

Another employment fair took place on the University campus in Raanana, in cooperation with the Raanana Municipality and the National Employment Service. The primary goal was to offer solutions to former high-tech employees and academics from the Sharon region. 23 companies offering a variety of jobs participated in the fair, which included enrichment lectures.

Computerized Services for Students

Virtual student services continue to expand in scope, and this year saw further innovations, including:

- A list on the OUI website of **examination centers and exam dates, by course**: The website now lists all OUI exam centers in major cities, together with exam dates. Information is also classified by course and by exam dates for each semester.
- **Special exam conditions through *Sheilta***: The system was changed to make all current information fully accessible to students at any given time through *Sheilta*.