

# Students

A student at the Open University is defined as a person who has 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 OUI. A student taking two or more courses is counted only once.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 43,511 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses, compared with 42,560 in 2012-2013. An additional 3,903 students were registered for seminar papers only. Among undergraduate students, 13,967 (32%) were new students.

There were 3,597 students enrolled in graduate studies (including students taking qualifying courses), compared with 3,755 in 2012-2013. An additional 108 graduate students were registered for seminar papers, 38 for final projects, and 59 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 three years. In FTE terms, 18,958 undergraduate students were enrolled at the Open University in 2013-2014 (compared with 18,990 in 2012-2013).

## Outstanding Students

An average grade of 95 or over was earned by 213 students (including 37 graduate students), an achievement that entitled them to inclusion on the President's List. The Dean's List included 1,034 students (including 187 graduate students).

## Financial Assistance and Scholarships

In 2013-2014 the OUI awarded 5,425 scholarships, including 4,255 financial aid scholarships. A full scholarship equals the tuition for one course.

## Undergraduate students – special population groups

Arab sector	5,683
High school students	866
Soldiers in compulsory service	550
Ultra-Orthodox students*	565
Students with special needs	587
Overseas students	728
In prisons	90

\* Ultra-Orthodox students participating in special groups

## Students with Disabilities

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 665 students with disabilities studied at the OUI, including IDF veterans, students with hearing and/or visual impairments, and physical or motor disabilities. All benefited from study and exam arrangements modified to their specific learning needs.

## Student Rights

Applications from 950 students were accepted in accordance with the law and with CHE procedures pertaining to terms of study and examinations. These included women who are undergoing fertility treatments, are pregnant, have recently given birth, or have adopted a child.

## Academic Counseling Center

Students are offered academic counseling from the Dean of Academic Studies office, both before and during their studies at the Open University. Four separate units specialize in different areas:

- academic counseling
- study guidance
- The Student Retention Unit assists students who had previously reached an advanced stage of degree studies but, for a variety of reasons, failed to complete their degree. From the time the unit was set up in January

2012 to the present, 361 students contacted by the unit have gone on to complete their studies.

- The Unit for Students with Learning Disabilities received applications from 2,600 students, of which 618 were first-time applications.

## Student Services Call Centers

The two student services call centers offer guidance and information under one management umbrella. Organizational changes to combine the two has resulted in better cooperation, improved work processes, and a smoother transition for students from application to enrollment. The call centers now offer enhanced support during busier times. Uniformity of management is yielding improved performance.

During the past year the Student Information Call Center contacted 75% of new students before the start of studies, in order to welcome them, offer assistance, and confirm that they were ready for the beginning of the semester. In addition, they contacted students before exams to explain the exam registration procedure, eligibility for exams, and, when necessary, to help with registration for the following year.

In the past, students inquiring about an MA degree were referred to the relevant academic department. This year, a pilot program was introduced by the Prospective Students Call Center to manage and follow-up the process from the initial call to enrollment.

## Improved Student Services

**Exams:** improvements have been made to the exam registration process, and students may now view their scanned examination books. Easier processes for exemption exam registration have been developed, as well as online exam notifications via *Sheilta*.

**Responsiveness (cellular compatibility):** Students increasingly use iPads, tablets and other mobile devices, therefore, all OUI websites are being adapted for compatibility.

## Student Association

The OUI Student Association continued to offer academic and social services and benefits to students, with a goal being a basket of services suitable for students all over the country. During the past year the association's activities have included discounted scanning services for exam workbooks, the introduction of preparatory courses for the computer applications exemption course, and the loan of cellular modems to students on military reserve duty.

As in the past, the Student Association organized Students Day, together with the Student Association of Tel Aviv University. The Debate Club reached the finals of the 2014 Israel Championship. The Student Association continues to offer a wide variety of social and legal services to students, in addition to running social projects countrywide.

## Athletics at the Open University

This year, bowling, men's table tennis and women's judo won first place in the international ASA games. The women's rowing crew came in second and the men's teams in track and field, tennis, archery, beach volleyball and squash won third place, as did the women's basketball team (3x3). In addition to team successes, OUI athletes won personal gold, silver, and bronze medals in mountain cycling, swimming, table tennis, judo, track and field, women's kayaking, and archery. Overall, the university was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in men's competitions, 7<sup>th</sup> in women's, and 8<sup>th</sup> overall, out of 28 participating Israeli higher education institutions.

The tradition of OUI intramurals for students and employees also continued this year in chess, table tennis, bowling, debate, rowing machines and tennis. Participating students were awarded certificates of excellence by the Dean of Students, as well as study grants in varying amounts according to their achievements in representing the university in competitions. In the coming year the Open University's sports coordinator is scheduled to judge the rowing competitions at the student world championship in France.