

The OU – where we are





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The OU – where we are

‘Where we are’ is more than just a title for the Annual Report – traditionally a review of an organisation’s past 12 months.

For The Open University – the world leader in delivering university education via supported open and distance learning – it is also a statement of how and where it engages with its students wherever they are. It is a declaration that the OU is on every continent every hour of the day reaching people via television, computer, social network and mobile device.

The OU is at work and at home, in the study, living room, canteen, cabin, classroom and tent. OU research is beneath the waves, in volcanic craters, in the air and in space. The OU is a partner of academic institutions and business leaders worldwide. It is a driver of economic growth and opportunity for all.

It is where we are.

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Image: Thinkstock

2010/11 at a glance

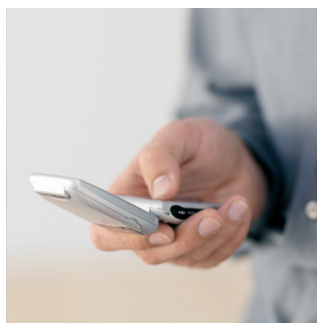
7

years in the top three UK universities for **student satisfaction**



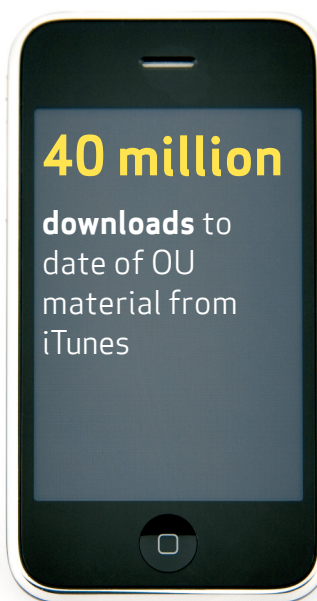
42%

– the percentage by which our student numbers have increased in the last **10 years**



27,750

students accessed the OU's Student Home website using mobile devices during **one month in 2011**



40 million

downloads to date of OU material from iTunes



Students under 25 now make up

17%

of The Open University's undergraduate student population, a rise of **6.4 per cent** from 2009/10



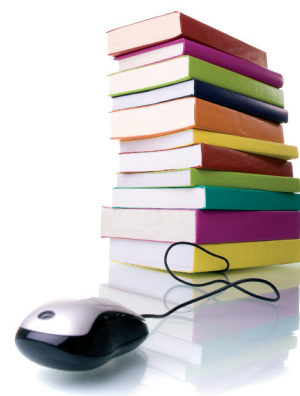
people in **15 countries** took part in an OU-led citizen science project to map evolutionary change **in snails**

4 in 10

campaign was **key in winning access** to student loans for part-time students for the first time

19,300

research publications freely available in the OU's Open Research **Online repository**



40th

anniversary of the OU and BBC making prize-winning programmes together

54,000



fans of the OU's **Facebook page**

18 million

visits to OpenLearn, the OU's free learning website, **to date**

800

videos, making the OU the largest UK university channel on



capital cities – en route for the unicyclist, testing the OU's famed flexibility during a **two-year charity cycle ride**



22,172

OU MBA graduates working in **88** countries



A partnership with **UNISON** which has so far helped

5,500

people into OU study won the **The Widening Participation Initiative of the Year**

£400,000

grant from the Scottish government to support the OU's TESSA programme training teachers in **Malawi**

8,500

people and organisations made donations to support the OU's mission in **2010/11**



Chancellor's foreword

“OU research is looking at those who have been left behind, older people and the socially excluded, and seeking ways for all to understand and engage with it.”



As the courts dealt with the fallout of an English summer's scorched streets the OU celebrated the first graduates of its Foundation Degree in Youth Justice, understanding and tackling the issues youth crime raises for our whole community. There were celebrations too for the OU's award-winning television co-productions and, I was pleased to see, for its first feature-length documentary film.

Read how the OU is delivering improved health outcomes to the people of sub-Saharan Africa and life chances for children in South Asia through learning English. Globally and at home the OU, not surprisingly given its pioneering use of technology, employs the latest mobile devices to deliver education in areas once regarded as unreachable – in every sense.

The internet, iPads, ebooks and apps mean anyone anywhere can plug in to the OU's vast resources and learn, while social network sites allow students to connect with a unique learning experience over distances.

In a complex world shaken by seismic events, social, economic, political, or by nature itself, there has rarely been a greater need to understand our role in it and, where we can, effect change.

With its core missions to widen participation in higher education and promote social justice The Open University is delivering understanding through education to its hundreds of thousands of students. Within these pages you will read how an OU that is relevant to today's world is reaching out to students in their workplace whether a city trading floor or a busy hospital ward.

But not everyone is plugged in to the digital planet. OU research is looking at those who have been left behind, older people and the socially excluded, and seeking ways for all to understand and engage with it.

This Annual Report is a reflection of how an innovative and inclusive Open University is meeting the challenges of a complex world.

Lord Puttnam of Queensgate, CBE
Chancellor

Pro-Chancellor's foreword



We live in unprecedented times faced by a recession that is worse than anything in the 20th century, including the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is no longer possible to take for granted many of the assumptions that we have made for generations – constant economic growth, rising social security and greater expectations. We have to rethink what sort of society we want, to find new ways of achieving economic and environmental sustainability and to increase our engagement and co-operation with the rest of the world. The Open University is particularly well equipped to make a great contribution to tackling these problems.

For 40 years we have given people a unique opportunity through part-time study, to develop their skills and broaden their opportunities. Economic recovery will only be achieved through an educated and constantly re-skilled workforce. The most effective and relevant way of doing this is through the part-time flexible mode of learning pioneered by The Open University.

Furthermore our reach is now truly global – for example, we are helping to train 7,000 teachers in Ethiopia. An astonishing 89 per cent of part-time students study to further their career

objectives, with 81 per cent of them remaining in work as they do so. Therefore they not only contribute to the economy and pay taxes but are also able to apply their learning immediately.

The Open University has pioneered engagement between higher education and the workplace, whether it is the likes of Waitrose in the private sector or the Armed Services and the NHS in the public sector. All of this is directed towards helping people to broaden their skills-base, thereby making a greater contribution to their organisation and society in general. And, of course, our students benefit enormously as well.

In a world full of uncertainty, the one continuing certainty is that mankind's progress is wholly dependent on a rising tide of education and skills in society. The Open University has made and will continue to make a vital contribution to this crucial objective.

Lord Haskins of Skidby
Pro-Chancellor



Vice-Chancellor's foreword

By any measure this has been a landmark year for The Open University and UK higher education more broadly: a period of significant challenges, important successes and, underpinning both, the opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to the University's founding mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

In October 2010 the Browne Committee's report into the future funding of higher education in England was published, heralding a new era in which Government's financial support for the sector would largely switch from grants to universities to enhanced loans to students.

With four in ten of the UK student population studying for their qualification part-time, it was imperative that we secured a level playing field for all learners. We were delighted to see that our arguments on behalf of part-time learners had been heard. For the very first time, our learners will have the same access to government-backed student loans as their counterparts in full-time education.

“For the very first time, our learners will have the same access to government-backed student loans as their counterparts in full-time education.”

Fairness and equality of opportunity have always been fundamental to how the OU operates, but at a time when economies are stagnating and unemployment is rising no nation can afford to squander the potential of large sections of its adult population. We have a long and distinguished track record of opening up opportunities to all; reaching people and communities others aren't able to; delivering the highest levels of support; and pioneering innovative teaching methods in order to help our students achieve their study and career goals.

I am proud that today, of our 264,000 students, 20 per cent of our newest students come from the 25 per cent most disadvantaged communities (according to the National Index of Multiple Deprivation); 18,000 of our students enter through tailored access programmes and more than 12,000 of our students have registered disabilities. But we have no intention of resting on our laurels.

In July 2011 we announced our fees for the academic year 2012/13, after having taken the time to thoroughly understand the implications of a cut in Government teaching grant in excess of £90 million and to consult extensively with both our existing and prospective students. Our fee for a full-time equivalent undergraduate course is among the lowest across the sector and also the lowest we could manage without threatening the OU's sustainability. It represents a drop in



income per student compared with the past, but one that we believe we can afford because of the steps we have already taken to effect an institution-wide programme of economies.

The landscape will continue to change, and the OU with it. What won't change, as the successes in the pages that follow will demonstrate, is our commitment to putting our students at the heart of all that we do, and to continuing to provide the unique blend of quality, value and flexibility that makes us first choice for them, their employers and our partners around the world.

Martin Bean
Vice-Chancellor

“Our fee for a full-time equivalent undergraduate course is among the lowest across the sector and also the lowest we could manage without threatening the OU's sustainability.”



We are transforming the workplace

With more than 25 years' success in fulfilling employer skills and training needs, the OU is now such a successful partner for business that four out of five FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff on OU modules. Over the last 12 months career change and development remained the most important motivation for those taking an OU award. And 70 per cent of our students were in employment – enabling them, their

employers and the wider economy to benefit immediately. Our workplace partnerships range from large corporates, multinationals and SMEs in almost every industry sector to professional institutions, sector bodies and the armed services – just a few of which are featured in these highlights from 2010/11.

“If we are to secure a healthy pipeline of talent coming into the industry then we need to engage people at all stages in their career. As a flexible and adaptable education provider The Open University is perfectly placed to do this.”

Mark Ratcliffe,
Director of Higher Education,
e-skills UK

OU helps IT industry unlock skills gap

The Open University is responding to an IT recruitment crisis in the UK. Two new degrees, BSc (Hons) Computing and IT and BSc (Hons) Computing and IT and a second subject will meet the needs of employers struggling to fill hundreds of thousands of new IT roles over the next five years.

The new undergraduate programmes also address concerns from employers that potential recruits lack business acumen and the ability to put technical skills to use in the workplace.

Internet security presents career opportunities

With internet security a growing threat to business worldwide, the OU saw registrations onto security management and computer forensics modules double in 2010. The OU, a leading CISCO Academy, has added *Network Security* to its portfolio of internationally recognised modules. Andrew Smith, Lecturer on the CISCO Certified Networking Associate and Professional programmes said that the module will open up career opportunities in network security systems.



Image: Thinkstock

Supporting a clear career path for information officers

The Open University is mapping its online industry curriculum to the CIO Executive Pathways competency framework – providing future chief information officers with

essential skills to reach board level. The Pathways framework helps companies attract professionals into the industry with the promise of a clear career path.



Image: Waitrose

High Street giant partners OU to boost staff's career development

The Open University is helping Waitrose supermarket deliver career development opportunities to its staff.

PartnerLearn is an online tool designed to provide personal and team development and can be accessed at work or outside the

workplace. It provides content from four of the OU's professional development modules in addition to more than 100 20-minute modules.

Jo Kelly, Head of Talent at Waitrose, said: "We are a rapidly growing company so it was important we came up with a new tool to embed learning and development across a bigger and more complex business."

"The material is very much about combining workplace experience with academic thinking so it can be readily put into practice to the advantage of all those involved."

Simon Rae,
Lecturer in Professional Development,
The Open University

"We are confident PartnerLearn will help us continue our commitment to helping employees develop themselves and achieve their career aspirations."

Jo Kelly,
Head of Talent, Waitrose

OU helps meet youth crime challenge

As the courts handled UK riot prosecutions of children as young as 11, the OU saw its first students graduating with a Foundation Degree in Youth Justice.

The degree represents a partnership between the OU and the Youth Justice Board, aimed at helping address the issues raised for society by youth crime. Rooted in practice, the qualification will equip those who work with children and young people in the justice system to be more effective and creative.

The first graduates include Nicolle Gordon (pictured below) who will use her new

knowledge to help young people in her own community. "I'd love to work with the sort of children I grew up with," said Nicolle, from London.

Rod Earle, of the OU's Faculty of Health and Social Care, said working in and around the youth justice system is not easy. "It is a complex area of practice in which research and knowledge about young people's offending behaviour has grown enormously over the last 10 years," he said.

Footballer scores after pass from OU

Footballer Richard Hinds scored a first-class honours law degree from The Open University while keeping his eye on a career off the pitch. The former Sheffield Wednesday defender juggled his studies with League One football fixtures and then while recovering from a broken leg.

The OU's flexibility makes it a popular route for many professional footballers. It has partnerships with the Professional Footballers' Association and League Football Education to offer options for footballers beyond their playing careers. "The OU were great with me and the level of support they provided has been a different class," said Richard.



OU Business School is a Superbrand

The triple-accredited Open University Business School notched up another accolade when it was voted fifth in the Business Superbrand 2011's Executive Education, Training and Development category.

The Business Superbrands survey recognises brands with an exceptional reputation in their sector, offering customers tangible advantages over competitors. Since 2006 the OU's business and law undergraduate modules have grown in popularity by 48 per cent.

Opening up opportunities in healthcare

The Open University has responded to the expanded and changed role of healthcare assistants/healthcare support workers and assistant practitioners in healthcare services and to the needs of employers.

A new learning and development programme is 50 per cent theory and 50 per cent practice with the theory related back to the practice. After a general introduction to the fundamentals of caring for patients, students can choose to specialise according to their needs and current role.

Healthcare assistants can study towards a Certificate of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice and build towards a Foundation Degree (in Scotland a Diploma of Higher Education) which, responding to employers' feedback, has a 'fast track' option.

Professor Jan Draper, OU Director of Nursing, said: "Not only can students work while studying, but it means employers can address the training needs of staff in a way that minimises the time needed out of the workplace."



Image: Thinkstock

Career lift-off for Fleet Air Arm Officers

Fleet Air Arm officers (pictured on page 10) received a Foundation Degree in Military Aviation Studies from The Open University.

Study is alongside operational flying training with the FAA's

Military Aviation Academy. That can mean studying on exercise, on a warship, in a tent or at home.

Sea King pilot Lieutenant James Wallace joined the Royal Navy as a mechanic at 17 with GCSEs, rising to be an officer and a pilot – his boyhood dream.

He plans to turn his foundation into a full degree with the Navy. Commander Ivor Milne MBE, who helped design the Foundation Degree, said with a validated degree programme the FAA attracted A-level students who stay in longer and achieve a higher rank younger. "We are the start of

lifelong learning, longer service, more retention and at a younger age. It's a win-win situation for everybody."

We are at the forefront of research



Image: Thinkstock

Within a few years we will possess the technology to secure all our mobile communications, be able to detect infectious disease outbreaks and learn more about the make-up of Mars. These are just a few of the areas of research at The Open University that contribute to our knowledge and quality of life.

While we are often best known for our teaching it is our high-quality research and enterprise portfolio that underpins the University's teaching and collaborations with business and industry. The OU rose 23 places in the last Research Assessment Exercise (2008), securing a place in the top third of UK universities.

Environment

Better ways with waste

The OU is assessing the performance and environmental impact of one of the most advanced Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) plants, designed to reduce landfilling of household waste. Research suggests this type of MBT can separate unsorted household waste like metals, glass and plastics as well as biodegradable material automatically. By composting the biodegradable material under controlled conditions, the plant reduces the amount of methane produced when this is landfilled. The composted material can also be suitable for restoring land and generating electricity.

Low carbon living

Exploration of the barriers to adoption of electric vehicles (EV) is contributing to the £5 million EV project in the Milton Keynes Low Carbon Living programme. It is part of a 20+ year plan to make the city – where the OU's campus is based – an exemplary low carbon community. The OU's research into public perceptions, and institutional and financial barriers to EV uptake, is considered as important to the project's success as resolving the technical issues.

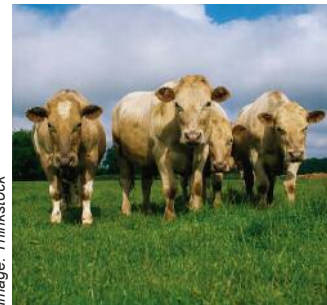
A sound way to boost food production

Measuring how sound bounces off soil could help boost wheat production and help meet a 50 per cent rise in global food demand by 2030. Wheat yields can be hampered during water shortages because of an increase in soil strength but existing methods of soil strength testing are invasive and laborious.

Open University Professor Keith Attenborough leads a £680,000 EPSRC-funded project investigating a non-invasive acoustic-seismic method. Sound at several frequencies is played near the ground surface and sound pressure and soil particle movement measured using microphones and a laser. Sound speeds in soils depend on water content and soil structure. The proposed technique provides information relevant to root growth and there is a future commercial potential for detecting buried objects.



Image: Thinkstock



The OU is leading the MethaneNet project, bringing together specialists to generate ideas and solutions to address the urgent need to better understand the threat methane could pose to climate stability.



In Brighton Jon Bird asked the residents of Tidy Street to monitor their electricity use. The results were translated daily into a giant chalk graph on the street, which helped drive down energy use significantly.

Society

Privacy research gets international recognition

Managing privacy of personal and professional data poses huge challenges in a world where so much information is changing hands via mobile phones and computing devices.

Research by The Open University using ground-breaking methods, including personal memory phrases, encouraged people to remember privacy-sensitive actions such as changing their Facebook status or privacy settings.

The PRiMMA (Privacy Rights Management in Mobile Applications) research by Bashar Nuseibeh, OU Professor of Computing, won the Golden Mouse Award at the 2010 International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction.

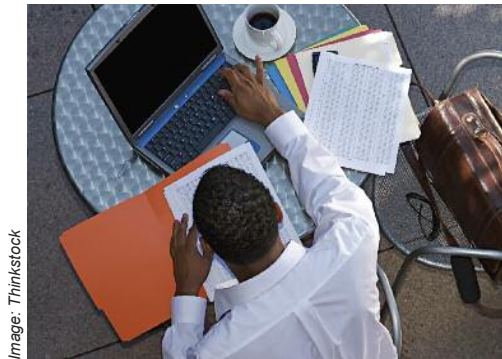


Image: Thinkstock

After the financial crisis

FINNOV (Finance, Innovation and Growth) has been cited by the European Commission as one of the most important projects related to growth and jobs in Europe. The project, a research partnership between seven leading European institutions, is coordinated by the OU. FINNOV aims to understand the relationship between changing financial markets, innovation and economic performance. The findings will contribute to a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Prospects for small businesses

The Quarterly Survey of Small Business in Britain (QSSB), edited by the OU's Richard Blundel and Emeritus Professor Colin Gray, received extensive media coverage during the year for its insights into the changing performance of small and medium-sized enterprises. Now in its 26th year, the QSSB tracks key trends in this vital sector of the economy.



Image: Thinkstock

OU Business School research is investigating the role emotions play in making financial decisions. Sensors build a picture of the wearer's emotional state to help traders and investors work with their emotions more effectively.

Health and wellbeing

“We are focusing on two main areas, reducing the number of spurious detections and developing more sophisticated evaluation methods.”

Professor Paddy Farrington,
Research Team Leader

Early warning on epidemics

Recent outbreaks of swine flu and SARS have shown that populations are still at risk from mass outbreaks of infections. An OU team is developing an enhanced computerised detection system to give early warning of epidemics as well as ‘bio-terrorism’ attacks.

Outbreak detection systems currently in place in the UK and other European countries were developed in the 1990s. The new system, developed by a team from the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, will mean information can be evaluated in near real time, with the capability of surveying thousands of different infections which pose a potential threat. Elements of the automated system are planned to be in place for the 2012 London Olympics and 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

Keeping the NHS cool

Many people are admitted to hospital during heatwaves, and hospitals need to provide a comfortable environment for their recovery. But air conditioning uses too much energy and the NHS must cut its emissions. Claudia Eckert of the OU’s Department of Design, Development, Environment and Materials is researching ways to make NHS buildings more resilient during heatwaves.

Including older people

The Faculty of Health and Social Care is looking at older people’s relationships with technology, in order to help increase their engagement with it. Research found that in the right circumstances older people are as likely to be interested in social use of technology as younger people. It also took a critical look at older people’s alleged fear of technology and inability to ‘get it’.

The OU Business School and the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology have contributed to research into the impact that moving government and public services online can have on those with no web access or who lack the skills to use the web. The research is part of EGOV4U an EC-funded project to accelerate engagement with digital technologies among some of the EC’s most socially excluded citizens.



Image: Thinkstock



Image: Thinkstock

Engineering for safety

Professors Mike Fitzpatrick and John Bouchard of the OU Materials Engineering Group are leading research into safety critical structural integrity in two key industries.

Work on stresses in welded structures led to collaboration with Airbus and a programme assessing bonded crack retarders. Their research also assesses the stresses and integrity of welded joints in nuclear power applications.

Science

Mission to Mars

The Department of Physical Sciences has a leading role in the ExoMars missions which will be investigating the evolution and habitability of Mars and looking for signs of past or present life. OU scientists will be interpreting the 2016 ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter’s observations of ozone, dust and clouds, as well as observations of the Martian surface made by the Orbiter’s small base station. The OU is also involved in the development of the ExoMars Climate Sounder which will provide daily temperature, pressure, dust, water vapour and ice measurements.

Public gets an eyeful of space

A team from the Faculty of Science is creating an interactive online database of high resolution microscope images of space rocks, making the study of these rocks an option for everyone for the first time. Rocks, including those from the Moon and Mars, that were previously only accessible by scientists, can now be examined on the Space Eyeful website aimed at 11 to 18-year-olds, their parents and teachers.



Image: NASA/Sean Smith

Predicting eruptions

Better predictions for when volcanic eruptions will take place and how long they might last will benefit both those living nearby and air travellers further afield. OU Dean of Science Professor Hazel Rymer is pioneering micro-gravity

techniques to understand what is happening at the Askja volcano in central Iceland. The research shows that the volcano is sinking and suggests that magma is draining away from beneath it. Earthquakes to the north of Askja indicate magma moving towards Krafla volcano.

Micro-gravity measurements will reveal how much magma is moving and where, providing valuable insights into when an eruption at Krafla might occur.



We are pushing the boundaries of online learning

“It is crucial for part-time students to be able to study when, where and how it suits them and we excel at finding new and better ways to enable students to study on the move.”

Martin Bean,
OU Vice-Chancellor

OU hits 40 million downloads

The Open University is a global leader in the number of downloads from iTunes U, driven by the surge in new mobile platforms such as smart phones and tablets. In 2011 the OU reached 40 million free downloads of module-related material via video and audio. OU material on iTunes U is open to anyone, not just OU students, and 90 per cent of downloads are from outside the UK. In autumn 2011 Beginners' French and Beginners' Chinese were the most popular downloads.

The OU was one of the first universities worldwide to make ebooks available free on iTunes U with hundreds of titles now available. Link to the OU on iTunes U: <http://open.edu/itunes/>

Election win for OpenLearn

Using social media to contrast coverage of the 2010 general election with that run in 1992 earned the OU's acclaimed open learning website, OpenLearn, another award. *92 Rewind* (pictured on page 20) used headlines from events 18 years earlier to reflect on similarities and differences to the 2010 campaign.

The material was delivered via regular tweets, blog posts, podcasts and videos on YouTube, driving traffic to political content on OpenLearn. It was judged Best Use of Social Media in the 2010 E-Learning Awards.

Visit OpenLearn: <http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/>

Free apps make learning memorable

A free app to help parents teach their children to read has been created by The Open University. *Our Story* can be used on mobile devices and provides the experiences known to develop the ability and motivation for reading. Parents can create their own personal picture books, stories and games helping children relate to the content and providing a foundation for a lifetime of reading. The app is free to download from the Apple store.

The processes behind creating a photo-fit likeness of a criminal have been captured in an app by The Open University that lets anyone turn friends and family into crime 'suspects'. *PhotoFit Me* is a fun way of explaining how we translate a mental picture of someone into a verbal description. The app was developed with input from OU Professor of Forensic Psychology Graham Pike.

A key feature of the OU's famed flexibility is the way we continue to harness digital technologies to enrich and expand the learning experience – not only for our own students, but as part of our social mission to a world-wide audience via the global open access movement.

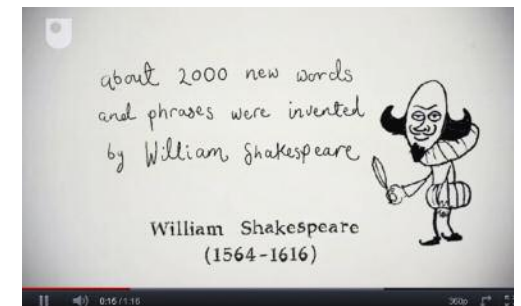
From online science experiments to the 40 million plus downloads of OU learning materials from iTunes U, our pioneering of new channels, greater interactivity and exciting new tools is bringing high-quality education even closer to learners.

Animated English a hit on YouTube

The Open University's presence on YouTube, OUView continues to attract hundreds of thousands of viewers world-wide. In the summer of 2011 – and just months after its release – *The History of English - in 10 Minutes*, a light-hearted animated look at the language

in bite-size chunks, had recorded more than 250,000 hits on YouTube and went on to fill all top 10 slots on iTunes U. The cross-platform commission was voiced by Clive Anderson.

To see OUView: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheOpenUniversity>



Where we are on social media



Baffled by science? Have a look at these from @OpenUniversity and listen to me pretending I understand what I'm reading. <http://t.co/nnDCfN0K>
RealDMitchell via web

Magenta writes...
Assorted thoughts about life and the universe from a woman on the edge

This is my seventh OU course and my fourth year of study towards a BA Open Hons degree. I love the start of a new module; opening up new textbooks, the starting of a new notebook, the feeling of wonder as it all starts to come together. I will also be starting module A251 World Archaeology in November, so a packed nine months is ahead of me. Dear Husband is also studying with OU this year...

www.magentawrites.co.uk



This is genius. OU History of English in 10 minutes <http://t.co/TvtNYvsd>
Very funny cartoons. @openuniversity
melanieH73 via Tweetdeck



Muslimah Mauthoor
Just qualified with the OU this week, got my BA (Hons) in English Language and Literature! Very pleased! :-)
9 people like this.

Officially got started with the good old @OpenUniversity today!
It's been my 'smart move' of the year!
Saralowesmusic via web

Hello everyone, Im new to open university and going to be studying K101 An introduction to health and social studies. Anybody got any hints and tips of getting thorough with my sanity in one piece?
Ian Wallace

My mum is doing her @OpenUniversity physics exam this am, just dropped her off on my way to my lecture, I feel like a mum today!
#goodluck
AnnaKerwin via UberSocial for Blackberry



My Open Experience
If I had to sum up my week there in three words, I think they would be 'challenging, captivating and inspiring.' It was a fantastic week where I was able to meet other students, old and young, and challenge myself into the world of Philosophy and Ethics. On the car journey up to Bath I felt quite uneasy because I ignorantly assumed I would be the youngest person there. However two other people in my tutor group were 21 and 22 years of age, so all pre-supposed thoughts were instantly banished from my mind.
<https://myopenexperience.wordpress.com/>

@OpenUniversity
'The OU is my midlife crisis' <http://cot.ag/q8OEPy> #ou_plat
Joe Pasquale student and comedian

Congrats Muslimah! (I'm doing the same degree, but only two courses in so far). xx
Kirsty Ormson

Martin Bean @openuniversity VC on widening participation 'we cannot afford to waste untapped potential' THE
LaurenHardy via web

The OpenDream
Reasons to study after 30: Development of character and personal traits:
persistence, time management, curiosity, ability to summarise, setting personal boundaries. This for me is a great motivating factor. It is not just what you study, it is what you become in the process by developing the necessary skills to reach that goal.
www.theopendream.com

There's a FB page dedicated to K101 as well as your OU student forums! Best tip: pace yourself, put time aside just for study BUT make sure u still have a life!
Good Luck!
Karen Fraser

To The Open University and Beyond
It's meant to be the end of the world today but still did TMA03 (just in case).
<http://littlemissyce.blogspot.com/>

One problem with the Open University is that you get used to high standard quality teaching and teachers who are actually available and helpful. When you try studying at another university, you suddenly realize that the OU are very much the exception. (Or one of the very few exceptions...)
Rupert Ewing

Have been doing some work on @OpenUniversity website today! Love that I can sit in the garden and study!!
@shabbaUK

Citizen science online

iSpot, The Open University's online nature observation, identification and social networking site, won a coveted Panda Award. The site, which has helped identify thousands of animals, birds, plants, fish and more, won the ARKive New Media Award 2010.

Jonathan Silvertown, OU Professor of Ecology, said the honour ranked iSpot as one of the best new media environmental projects in the world. iSpot makes naturalists and scientists of members of the public wherever they live by allowing them to upload pictures and share observations from their local areas.

Link to iSpot: <http://www.ispot.org.uk/>



Image: Thinkstock

Award for Life

The OU-BBC co-production *Life*, narrated by David Attenborough, won the Jury's Special Award at the Panda Award Ceremony in 2010.

The Pandas are the most prestigious awards for film of the natural world, attracting the world's leading filmmakers. David Robinson, OU Senior Lecturer in Biological Science, said the ten-part series was the culmination of more than four years' work.

“The OU team is proud to be part of this award-winning series which raises the standard of natural history filmmaking to a new height.”

David Robinson,
OU Senior Lecturer in Biological Science



Image: Thinkstock

Gerry Mooney, Academic Consultant for the OU, said the series provided a platform to explore some of the key social sciences issues of today including community, sustainability, inequality, diversity and power. The programmes were also linked to additional learning resources via the OpenLearn website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/>

OU on-screen awards

The Open University and BBC co-productions have been consistently recognised with awards. A documentary for BBC Four looking at mental health, *Sectioned*, won the 2011 Learning on Screen General Education Broadcast Award and was named 'best documentary' at the MIND Mental Health Media Awards in 2010. The OU, BBC and Lion Television series, *Syrian School*, won the prestigious Japan Prize 2010 in the Youth Category. The five-part series was broadcast on BBC Four and the BBC World Service and has been translated into 10 languages and shown in more than 40 countries.

OU puts Town on the map

The OU/BBC co-production *Town* with Nicholas Crane, broadcast on BBC2 in summer 2011, explored four iconic British towns: Scarborough (pictured above), Ludlow, Perth and Totnes. Smaller than cities but more sustainable and much greener, Nicholas said that with a predicted 92 per cent of the UK population living in urban areas by 2030, towns should be put back on the map as important sustainable communities.

Turning the lens on poverty

The OU's first feature-length documentary film, *Vortex*, looking at Roma families in Hungary, won the Authors' Award at the 2010 Budapest Faces of Poverty Film Festival. The hard-hitting film, an OU/Hunnia Filmstudio co-production, was co-directed by OU Senior Lecturer John Oates.



Image: Thinkstock

Broadcast in August 2011, *The Secret Life of Buildings* was the first OU series co-produced with Channel 4 and linked to the OU module: *Design Thinking: Creativity for the 21st century* (U101). The programmes looked at the impact buildings have on our lives and how they affect our emotions and identity.



Image: Thinkstock



We are
wherever our
students are

With seven years in the top three UK universities for student satisfaction, the OU can truly claim to be putting our students at the heart of everything we do. The economic and social challenges currently facing nations across the globe place an even greater responsibility on us to continue to develop the ways in which we provide all our students with the quality, flexibility and value for

money that make an OU qualification the best fit with their lives, careers and budgets. During 2010/11 one in three part-time students chose to study with the OU. The stories that follow represent a snapshot of the ways in which more than a quarter of a million students each year are harnessing that flexibility to achieve *their* goals.

Vice-Chancellor Mary's learning journey started with the OU

The Open University transformed an academically under-confident social science student into someone who wanted to pass her new-found love of learning on to others. Now, Professor Mary Stuart (pictured right) is Vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University and says the OU has a special place in her heart.

In the 1980s she was a drama teacher in London but wanted a 'proper job' and another degree. She chose the OU. "I fell in love with social sciences because it is a language that tells the story of my life and explained what was going on around me," said Professor Stuart who grew up in apartheid South Africa.

She gained a first-class honours degree and went on to do a doctorate with the OU before embarking on an academic career which led to her taking up her role at Lincoln. Of her old university Professor Stuart said: "It is highly regarded and valued and I got a very good education there."



Funny man Joe is serious about learning

For comedian Joe Pasquale (pictured opposite) having a 'mid-life crisis' meant doing an Open University degree. Some men go for younger women and motorbikes said the 50-year-old, "I went for a BSc." Joe has

returned to learning after a teenage accident saw him miss a year at school. Like most students Joe fits study around home life and work and that means doing his homework in the car being driven to gigs and in his dressing room. "At home there are more distractions,

family, dogs and parrots, but I put the hours in because I want to get it right," he said.

Since he began his OU studies Joe has spoken about them extensively on national TV, radio and in print. His aim is to teach geology on TV with an

OU PhD in his sights. He also praised the module materials and support from his tutor. "I have learned more in the last year with the OU than in my previous 49, it's just so rewarding," he said.



Travel broadens the mind

The Open University is where its students are – but on a bicycle pedalled around Europe? 40-year-old Steven Primrose-Smith (above) hit the road in spring 2011 with a tent, sun cream and an e-reader loaded with OU modules for degrees in maths and physical science. He aims to spend three years visiting 50 European capitals and add to his OU MA in philosophy – after almost dying from a brain haemorrhage in 2008.

Steve has met fellow students on the way and many others follow his 'The Unicyclist' blog on the OU community website Platform.

Putting the OU's famed flexibility to the test he has already taken a Planetary Science exam in the OU's Vienna office, attended residential weeks in Majorca and Nottingham, and eaten a marmot pasta sauce in Switzerland.

"This life is short and can be snatched away. Whatever it is, just do it. Don't hang around. In other words, literally or metaphorically, get on your bike!" he said.

www.open.ac.uk/platform

The best of both worlds

Doing an Open University MBA course equipped Richard Baker with skills he could use in his job right from the start. He heads up employee engagement and internal communications for train operator London Midland but was working in a different role for another operator when he began his six years' study.

Richard went to a traditional university but dropped out to go out to work. Early jobs included flipping burgers and sewing together boiler suits but he does not regret learning later in life, especially the support he got from the OU and the flexibility it offered while working. "I have had the best of both worlds," he said.

Decade-long battle for Robert's degree

Colour Sergeant Robert Giles of the Irish Guards completed his Open University degree while recovering from wounds received serving in Iraq. C Sgt Giles was shot in the chest in 2003. He has achieved a BA (Hons) in Politics and Philosophy

after 10 years during which he combined his OU study with active service duties in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Trying to learn and work at the same time has been my biggest challenge but the OU's support was outstanding," he said.

New career beckons for Walter at 73

Walter Smith began writing to fill off-duty hours on an oil and gas plant in Orkney. But it was The Open University which nurtured the project engineer's career change into a playwright at the age of 73.

Walter turned to the OU when he retired and says it was a lifesaver. "You can't play golf five times a day and I am no gardener," he said. In 2011 he finished an Open Degree in English Literature with the Creative Writing element encouraging him to write plays. In 2010 his black comedy *The Living End* was staged by a leading amateur theatre company.

"Seeing your words come to life is quite a thing and the OU played its part," he said. "It fulfilled me and it saved my sanity."

Support when Pam needed it

The support The Open University gave Pam Williams (pictured right) when two years into her MBA her husband became seriously ill was immense, she says. Tutors, staff and fellow students rallied round, says Pam, whose husband is now recovering.

She had gained professional qualifications in a career in HR but missed out on higher education after losing both parents and

having to support herself and her brother. She is now HR Manager for a Fortune 500 company, having achieved her MBA in 2011.

Pam urged others to take advantage of the support network the OU offers including tutors and local study groups. "There are so many ways to keep in touch. There is always someone on the end of the phone when you need them," she said.



Students on the move

For Margaret Ogunmefun travelling is a big part of her life and the flexibility of The Open University allowed her to fit learning around globetrotting. Originally from Nigeria, Margaret grew up in the US, is now based in the Netherlands and her husband works in Kazakhstan.

Fitting studying humanities with English around visiting family was a tall order but in 2011 she received her BA (Hons). "Travel is a part of life but the OU met my needs," she said.

Tony Bateman racked up the air miles too as his job in power plant construction takes him around the world. When he is

at home his family naturally want to see him. "The OU is great for remote working and at home, even when studying, you can put your books down and play," he said.

We are opening access to all



Improving the life chances of all, fuelling social mobility and supporting the economy through tapping into the potential of the whole adult population are at the heart of the OU's mission. Today, 43 per cent of our students join with one A level or less, we have more than 11,500 disabled students – more than the entire populations of some universities, 11 per cent of our student population are from ethnic minority groups and 20 per cent of our

new undergraduates come from the 25 per cent most disadvantaged communities in the UK – many from families in which they are the first to enter higher education. The following pages highlight a few of the many and varied ways in which we continue to pioneer new ideas and new methods to deliver our mission.

Caring for the carers

The Open University counts many carers among its students, offering them a fully flexible approach to learning which makes it possible to fit successful study around the demands of caring.

National charities, academics and student carers took part in a special conference hosted by the OU to explore how educational institutions, government and funders could do even more to reach and support carers in transforming their life chances through education.



Image: Alamy

Participant Jane Green, a single parent with two sons with medical conditions, began studying for an undergraduate degree because she could not understand some of the medical and educational jargon on her children's reports.

She achieved a BSc (Hons) in Psychology, completed her PGCE, Advanced Diploma in Child development and now a Masters in Education. She has since been elected onto the Autism Education Trust steering committee. Another delegate, student carer Maxi, spoke of her plan to use her OU humanities degree to enter teacher training. "I love learning – it affirms life!" she said.

Learners' story inspires

The Open University in Wales has formed a partnership with Hafal, a national mental health charity encouraging individuals recovering from serious mental illness to study. Four Hafal students were named as winners at the Inspire! Awards organised by NIACE Dysgu

Cymru promoting adult learning in Wales.

Shan Davies, Sharon Harris, Susanne Mahoney and Christina Hodges (pictured right), all from the Merthyr Tydfil area, are now on their second OU module and able to study without extra support.



“These learners make a huge commitment to their development so they can continue to deliver a high standard of public services.”

Dave Prentis,
General Secretary, UNISON

Award for OU UNISON partnership

The Open University’s partnership with UNISON, which has helped more than 5,500 people access OU modules and training, was named Widening Participation Initiative of the Year in the *Times Higher Education Awards 2010*.

The partnership was set up to increase participation in education among public sector workers. Jeremy Roche, Dean of Health and Social Care at the OU, said widening access to education was at the heart of the OU’s mission. “Working together with UNISON we have been able to extend our reach further.” Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary, said he was delighted the partnership had been recognised.

More young students choose the OU

Students aged under 25 now make up 17 per cent of The Open University’s undergraduate student population with 18 to 19-year-olds the fastest growing group of new students reserving modules. More and more young students see the OU’s flexibility, enabling them to learn and earn, as an attractive alternative to traditional university.

Jennifer Turl, aged 24, completed her geography degree with the OU in 2011. With four A’s at A level she turned down a place at a traditional university so that she could combine work and study. “It meant I could work while studying to fund myself and avoid crippling debt. It was the best decision I ever made,” she said.



“We are proud to be supporting 'Race Online 2012'. Of the 10 million adults across the UK who have never used the internet, almost half are from socially excluded groups. The OU’s mission is to open access to education to everyone and our teaching provides students with the IT skills to help them learn effectively using technology and to access the vast resources online.”

Martin Bean,
Vice-Chancellor,
The Open University

Race Online 2012 – a great fit with OU

The Open University is proud to support Race Online 2012 – the nationwide challenge to get everyone in the UK online by the end of the Olympic year. Launching the partnership, Vice-Chancellor Martin Bean said it is the OU’s mission to open access to education for everyone using technology and the vast resources online.

As well as producing a range of ‘How to’ videos on developing IT skills and developing animation shorts introducing students to subjects such as ‘what is an online library?’, the OU has donated redundant IT equipment to AgeUK and other organisations. A competition on the OU community website Platform to find ‘digital champions’ for the campaign attracted 11,000 reads.

Opening doors to less confident learners

With 18,000 people registered on the OU’s Openings, access and taster modules, programmes aimed at easing less confident learners into study are growing from strength to strength.

Designed to teach study skills and build confidence, modules are often linked to TV broadcasts or current hot topics, in order to reach and engage those who might not have even considered higher education.

Additions to the Openings programme during the year included *Starting with Law* and *Starting with Management*; while new short modules included *Living without Oil*, and *The Frozen Planet*, linked to the OU-BBC co-production TV series with David Attenborough.

www.open.ac.uk/study



Image: Thinkstock



Support is key for Tim

Registered blind, Tim Musson says he was in the minority at work – but that was because he did not have a degree. In 2009 he began an OU Business Studies degree. “I felt it would give me a bit more credibility at work,” said the financial risk specialist, registered blind since he was three.

“I have access to the Disabled Students’ Allowance for some equipment and to create an accessible version of tables, charts and pictures from text books,” he said. “I can’t highlight enough how good the Associate Lecturers are.

“I like the fact the OU allows me to study very flexibly in my

own space and my own time and provides the support which allows me to do so,” he said.

More about OU Services for Disabled Students:
<http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/>

We are delivering our mission on a global scale

Image: Thinkstock

As well as extensive partnerships with business the OU continues to partner governments, educational institutions, NGOs and a host of other agencies to share our expertise and technologies to reach more people in

more places. A flavour of the ways in which these partnerships enable us to expand and extend our social mission appears in the following pages.

“We want to work with colleagues from all over the world, to get better ideas, share our expertise, but also to share their ideas about what is effective learning.”

Professor Steve Swithenby, eSTEEem director (Science)

Child health a priority for OU and WHO

The Open University and the World Health Organization have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to address some of the world’s urgent health needs – in particular those relating to child and maternal health in sub-Saharan Africa. The partnership will build on work the OU is currently doing with WHO, UNICEF and local agencies in Ethiopia to upgrade rural community health workers’ knowledge and skills through the Health Education and Training programme (HEAT).

International conferences at Walton Hall

Delegates from Nigeria, Ghana, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, India and Brazil were among those attending the first International Perspectives on the Development of Distance Learning Colloquium at The Open University. The event, in April 2011, was hosted by eSTEEem, the joint Science and Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT) Faculties Initiative, with Open University Worldwide to foster international collaboration in e-learning.



Image: Thinkstock

Scottish government supports teacher training in Malawi

More women in Malawi will be able to train to teach thanks to a £400,000 award from the Scottish Government to the OU-led Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) project. The grant will fund 1,000 scholarships for women

aspiring to become primary school teachers. TESSA is currently supporting school-based training of more than 400,000 teachers in 12 African countries. In 2011 the project received an award from the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) for its “outstanding quality and... exceptional impact”.



Validation by the OU has international appeal

There are more than 30 Approved Institutions, many of them outside the UK, approved by the OU to offer higher education programmes leading to Open University Validated Awards.

Through its partnerships, the OU validates awards which have a parity of esteem with awards offered throughout higher education. Validation arrangements are managed through Open University Validation Services (OUVS). OUVS validates around 300 programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level and to date more than 100,000 students have achieved an OU Validated Award.



Mobile learning methods boost teacher confidence

Teachers in Bangladesh are speaking and teaching English more confidently thanks to the English in Action (EIA) programme in which The Open University has a leading role delivering language learning via mobile technologies.

During a fact-finding visit to schools in 2011 Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Secretary of the Bangladesh Ministry of Education, was told teachers and their students use more English in the classroom than ever before.

EIA is a £50 million, nine-year programme funded by the UK Department for International Development to help 25 million Bangladeshis develop English language skills using innovative methods including mobile phones and iPods with speakers.

There are 50 million mobile phone users in Bangladesh and learning content can be delivered for less than the price of a cup of tea. Students were enjoying learning English and a much higher degree of interaction was taking place between them, teachers told the Secretary – in English.

We are working with our supporters to deliver our mission



OU has global research links

OU research has worldwide reach, including partnerships with Affiliated Research Centres (ARCs). ARCs register their students for OU research degrees. They include world-renowned organisations such as the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and

Biotechnology, Italy; Stowers Institute for Medical Research, Kansas (*pictured left*); Wellcome Trust tropical medicine research programmes in Thailand, Vietnam and Kenya; the Architectural Association's School of Architecture; and the British Antarctic Survey.

The Open University is extremely grateful to the individuals, organisations, trusts and foundations who, between them, contributed £2.4 million during 2010/11 to support the OU's work in widening access to education in the UK and across the globe. In total, 8,500 people

and organisations chose to make a philanthropic contribution or bequest to the University last year. A full list of donors is available at <http://www.open.ac.uk/donors>

Thank you to our supporters

“I decided to retrain for a career that would give me work opportunities in my local area once my son began school. I am extremely grateful for the financial support that I have received which has created opportunities and given me a life of my own.”

Sue, OU student

Open to people

The OU was delighted to receive a number of generous donations to support our work enabling access for all to high-quality education. Supporters include the Open University Students' Educational Trust (Ouset), which made a donation of £100,000 to support future OU students. This gift is worth £133,000 to the OU thanks to a Government-matched funding scheme. Below, is a snapshot of the many ways in which this partnership is making a difference.

Open to places

The OU received a grant of \$750,000 from a group of charitable foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to improve the staying-on rates among poorer students in US community colleges.

In the United States, only 26 per cent of low-income students who enrol at community colleges successfully gain bachelors degrees. The OU's Open Learning: Bridge to Success project offers free and open content to provide developmental support to students at risk of dropping out of college – and draws on the OU's vast experience of engaging non-traditional students in higher education, working in collaboration with community colleges and US universities.



Image: Thinkstock

Closer to home, the OU is working with local partners in some of Ireland's most disadvantaged communities to help people take their first step towards realising their potential through higher education. Money from donations is enabling the OU to offer some students free places on the University's Openings programme – modules especially designed to ease adults into higher-level study while building confidence and learning study skills.



Open to methods

The African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) and The Open University signed a high-level agreement to work in partnership for the development and implementation of health education and training for mid-level and community health workers in Africa. The two organisations will draw on their existing expertise and commitment to improving health and health care in Africa.

The agreement builds on the OU's successful collaboration with AMREF in Ethiopia. The partnership will enable the HEAT programme, which has a particular focus on maternal and child health, to achieve its aspiration of reaching hundreds of thousands of health workers who are delivering crucial health services to millions of people in remote areas in sub-Saharan Africa.

www.open.ac.uk/africa/heat/



Image: Alfredo Caliz/ Panos

“Due to my disabilities I was given extra support. Not only does this help people like me to move forward and pursue their goals; it also gives hope, encouragement and opportunity to people who would otherwise go without.”

Charlene, OU student

More stories

about those who benefit from donor support is available at www.open.ac.uk/giving



Open to ideas

Donations are helping to fund research into the restoration of one of the UK's most important habitats. The 'Floodplain Meadows Partnership: Safeguarding their Future', led by the OU, aims to understand the impact of current

management practices on floodplain meadows, and monitor and promote successful restoration methods – helping to restore damaged sites and increase the number of these vital wildlife habitats.

We welcome your support

Legacies

The University is very grateful to the ever-growing number of alumni, friends and staff who choose to support the OU with a gift in their will. In 2010/11, the OU received £925,000 from legacies. In addition, a further 200 people have informed the University that they have remembered it in their will.

Mervyn Pitman

The University was the sole beneficiary of the estate of the late Mervyn Pitman. Mr Pitman was an OU alumnus and left more than £440,000 to the University. His support will be used to ensure that students can benefit from an OU education whatever their background.

Robert Beevers

Dr Beevers was one of The Open University's founding generation. He was appointed as the first Director of Studies in 1969 and, as the University's first Director of Regional and Tutorial Services, was responsible for creating an effective team of colleagues working with each other and with other agencies across the UK.

At his death, Dr Beevers generously left £200,000 to support OU graduates engaged in research towards the award of an OU higher degree.

Vice-Chancellor's Circle

We value *all* donations to support the OU's work. Donors giving more than £1,000 in a year are invited to become part of the Vice-Chancellor's Circle and donors of over £5,000 become part of the Vice-Chancellor's Gold Circle.

Vice-Chancellor's Circle donations 2010/11

Mr G Ahier; Mr & Mrs M Bean; The Bombardier Aerospace (NI) Foundation; Dr A Cieslakowska; Mrs P Clayton; Dr D Day; Dr J Drysdale; Lord and Lady Gough; The H & J Visram Foundation; Lord Haskins; Mr P Hewitt; Mrs L Hodgson; Mr K Hydon; Mr I Johnson; Mrs C Kakembo; Ms K Knowles; Ms C McEwen; Dr D McGibney; Mrs J Murphy; Ms L Powers-Freeling; Mr P Prior; Mrs S Shean; Mr N Sparks; Mr M Steen; Professor M Stuart; Mr P Todd; Weinbren Charitable Trust; and two anonymous donors.

Vice-Chancellor's Gold Circle donations 2010/11

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust; Mr H Brown; Comino Foundation; EDUCAUSE; The David and Elaine Potter Foundation; Open University Students Educational Trust; Mr M Ellis; Esmée Fairbairn Foundation; Mrs J Hunt; Mr F Neale; Mrs Y Perret; The Shears Charitable Foundation; Ulster Garden Villages Ltd; The Waterloo Foundation.

A full list of donors is available at www.open.ac.uk/donors



Supporting us to support opportunity for all

- To make a donation to the University please visit www.open.ac.uk/giving
- To learn more about remembering the OU in a will please visit www.open.ac.uk/legacies

The OU at a glance

1,700,000 students since **1969**



currently studying with the OU – of which **18,000** overseas and **40,000** on validated programmes

75% **FTSE**

100 companies have **sponsored** employees on OU modules

43% of OU students have **one A level** or less on entry

16,300 studying at **postgraduate** level

61,000 current OU students receiving **financial help** ££££££££

Over 70% of OU students **working** while studying

31 – **average age** of our new undergraduate students



Over 29,000 students are **under 25**

12,467 OU students have **disabilities**



place rise in the last Research Assessment Exercise to ensure a place in the **top third** of UK universities

13 national and regional centres and **350** study centres

Financial highlights 2010/11

	Year Ended 31 July 2011 £m	Year Ended 31 July 2010 £m
Results, cash flows, assets and reserves		
Funding body grants	257.8	244.0
Tuition fees and education contracts	164.0	156.7
Research grants and contracts	15.6	17.0
Other income	29.2	29.1
Endowment and investment income	3.9	3.3
Total income	470.5	450.1
Total expenditure	423.2	424.6
Surplus for the year before taxation and exceptional items	47.3	25.5
Net cash flow from operating activities	55.9	29.2
Net returns on investments and servicing of finance	4.7	3.3
Net cash flow before investing activities and tax	60.6	32.5
Fixed assets	172.8	182.4
Endowment assets	0.5	0.4
Net current assets	191.5	78.4
Total assets less current liabilities	364.8	261.2
Total reserves	215.2	166.1
Other key statistics		
Number of full-time equivalent students	85,704	84,253
Total number of students	256,674	264,616
Percentage of students satisfied with the quality of their module (taken from the respondents to the National Student Survey)	93%	93%

Results for the year

The Group's results are summarised in the Financial Highlights on page 42.

Total income increased by £20.4 million or 5% to £470.5 million.

Funding body grants increased by £13.8 million or 6% to £257.8 million. The recurrent grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was £189.5 million and represented 86% of all recurrent grants from the various funding bodies. It decreased by £1.7 million or 1% from the total of £191.2 million in 2009/10. Recurrent grants from other funding bodies increased by £0.6 million from the total in 2009/10 to £30.9 million. Specific grants increased by £15.1 million to £31.9 million. This increase comprised a one-off grant from HEFCE of £20.6 million, partially offset by decreases in specific grants from all funding bodies totalling £5.5 million.

Fee income increased by £7.3 million or 5% to £164.0 million. The bulk of the increase was in respect of fees paid by students, or on their behalf by their employers, in the United Kingdom, which increased by £7.8 million to £141.6 million. The overall increase results from a combination of general fee inflation and the increase in full-time equivalent students referred to on page 42.

Income from research grants and contracts decreased by £1.4 million or 8% to £15.6 million, due to decreased value of work funded from Research Councils and other sources. Other income increased by £0.1 million to £29.2 million. Endowment and investment income increased by £0.6 million or 18% to £3.9 million as a result of increased balances invested.

Expenditure decreased by £1.4 million or less than 1% to £423.2 million.

Total staff costs increased by £1.4 million or 1% to £276.6 million. £2.7 million of this increase resulted from nationally negotiated pay awards and progression of staff up incremental pay scales, offset by a £6.3 million saving from reductions in the

number of full-time equivalent staff. A further £1.9 million of the increase is as a result of early retirement and severance payments. The balance of £3.1 million arose from an increase and change in mix in full-time and part-time staff.

Other (non-pay) operating expenses, excluding depreciation and interest, decreased by £1.5 million or 1% to £136.1 million.

The net result was a surplus before tax and exceptional items for the year of £47.3 million compared to £25.5 million last year. In addition, exceptional items, comprising £0.7 million relating to a refund of VAT from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and £1.1 million relating to the sale of an office building, increased the surplus after the exceptional items to £49.1 million (year ended 31 July 2010, £26.1 million).

The 2010/11 surplus as a percentage of income was 10%. This highly creditable result was due to a combination of factors affecting both income and expenditure. The major improvement in income arose from the receipt of the University Modernisation Fund from HEFCE. In addition, cost increases were held at a much lower rate than the increase in income, due to a programme to reduce costs over an extended period to meet cuts in teaching grant as a result of the previous Government's decision to end funding for students in England studying for 'equivalent or lower qualifications' to those they already hold and the coalition Government's stated intention to reduce the public expenditure deficit.

The early commencement of expenditure reductions allows costs to be cut in a measured way so as to ensure that the quality of service to students is maintained and has the beneficial effect of increasing the University's reserves at a time of such great uncertainty, which will allow time to deal with any unexpected revenue reductions.

For a full understanding of the University's financial position please refer to the audited financial statements, which can be found at www.open.ac.uk/foi/p3_1.shtml

How to contact us

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Fax: +44 (0)1908 638145

Email: fundraising@open.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk/giving

For student enquiries in the UK:

Student Registration and Enquiry Service

Tel: +44 (0)845 300 6090

Lines are open (UK time)

08.00 to 20.00 Monday to Friday

09.00 to 17.00 Saturday

Email: general-enquiries@open.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk/nextstep

For student enquiries in the

Republic of Ireland:

Enquiry and Advice Centre in Dublin

Tel: +353 (0)1678 5399 or

The Open University in Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)28 9024 5025

Email: ireland@open.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk/nextstep

For student enquiries in other

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Tel: +44 (0)191 4776100

Email: europa@open.ac.uk

www.open.ac.uk/nextstep

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One university four nations

The OU in Scotland
The first bespoke OpenLearn unit, ***Gaelic in Modern Scotland***, is launched at the Scottish Parliament

The OU in Ireland
More than 7,500 students are supported by 61 staff and 348 part-time tutors with offices in Belfast and Dublin

The OU in Wales
BBC News presenter Huw Edwards films ***The Story of Wales***, the first direct collaboration between the OU in Wales and BBC Cymru Wales

The OU in England
The **Walton Hall** campus hosts visits by hundreds of the OU's first students – the original **'pioneers'**

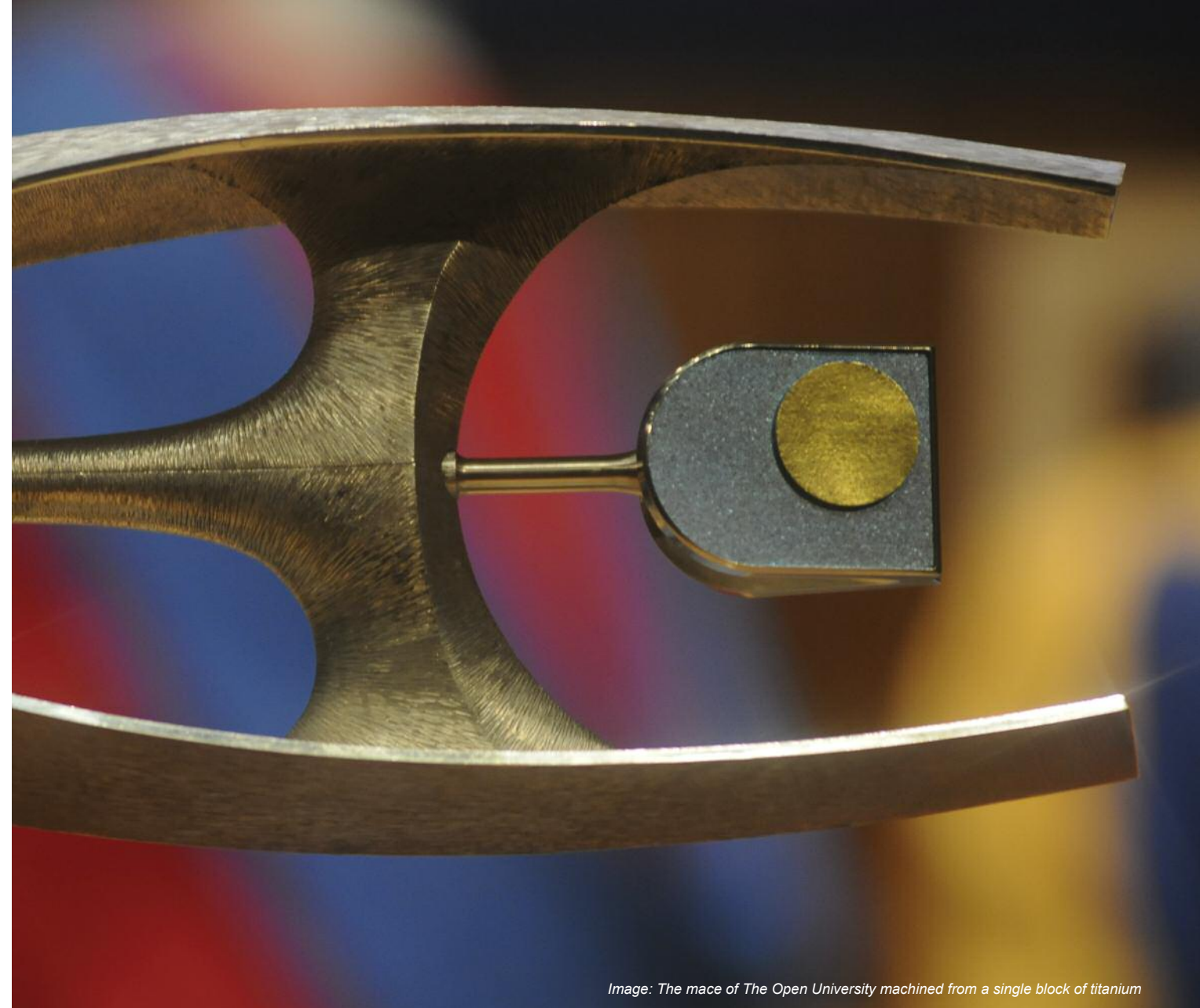


Image: The mace of The Open University machined from a single block of titanium

Council Membership

Ex officio members

Lord Christopher Haskins,
Pro-Chancellor (Chair)
Martin Bean, *Vice-Chancellor*
Michael Steen, *Treasurer*
Marianne Cantieri, *President of the Open University Students' Association*

Appointed members

Dr Sharon Ding
Sue Dutton
Dr Isobel Falconer
Professor Joyce Fortune
Dr Meg Hopkins
Rob Humphreys
Dr Christina Lloyd

Laura Murphy
Dr Toby O'Neil

Co-opted members

Howard Brown
Edward Briffa
Dr Anthony Freeling
Claire Ighodaro

Brian Larkman
Shonaig Macpherson
Peter Mantle
Ros McCool
Ruth Spellman
Professor William Stevely (Vice-Chair)

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