

Graduates

In 2019-2020, The Open University of Israel granted bachelor's degrees to 3,328 students. Another 41 graduate students completed programs for studies following a degree. Master's degrees were awarded to 515 men and women. Of those receiving degrees and certificates, 17% did not have high school matriculation certificates. (For data on bachelor's degree graduates, see Appendix B. For data on master's degree graduates, see Appendix D. For data on diploma studies and teaching certificates, see Appendix E).

Salam Biadsee, BA in Humanities and Social Science, with an emphasis on Middle East Studies

My name is Salam Biadsee. I am 48, married, and the mother of four. I finished high school with a full matriculation certificate, and have always dreamed of higher education and of earning a bachelor's degree. I married young and was a mother at 20. I raised my children, and only after they grew up did I begin thinking about entering the employment market. In 2009, the Baqa al Gharbieh municipality employed me as a temporary worker in the town's welfare bureau. I was good at my job, and two years later, the bureau manager appointed me as the head of the local branch of SHEMESH – Complete Family Rehabilitation for Families of Children with Special Needs. This is a national program run in four large cities in Israel. Our town was the first Arab city to participate in it. The program was a great success, and we became a model for the agencies who ran it: the JDC - Ashalim, The Welfare Ministry, and Bituah Leumi. While I was working for the program, I also worked as the financial manager of an experimental elementary school, and as the school's head secretary.



Photo: Erez Miller

At the age of 43, I decided to realize my dream, and looked for a university that would help me in doing so. I discovered that the Open University was the only place where I could study proudly and receive an academic degree. In 2013, I began studying while working at two jobs that together, amounted to 125% work hours. Of course, I went on caring for my home and family. This was not easy. I coped with all the difficulties and never missed a class. It was thrilling and interesting, and I had great fun. But it was not always easy, and I wouldn't have been able to do it without the help and support I received from my family. At certain moments I considered quitting my studies, but my husband and children helped me in every possible way. My husband helped with shopping and cooking meals, my eldest and only son helped me cultivate our garden, which previously had been the focus of much of my time, and my daughters helped me keep house and complete my academic assignments.

One other point that helped me during my studies was the extraordinarily warm and supportive attitude of the Open University Wadi Ara campus management, secretariat, and, of course, the wonderful lecturers and tutors who embraced and helped us throughout our studies. This helped me immensely to achieve impressive grades and complete my studies on time.

Shon Levkovich, BSc. in Life Sciences, summa cum laude



Photo: Erez Miller

Having been interested in life sciences and in medicine from the day I was born, I enrolled in biology studies at the OUI when I was in the 9th grade. I enjoyed my studies very much, while also remaining in contact with my friends at school and studying for my matriculation exams. My achievements were a by-product of my sincere desire to understand the mysteries of life. Two years ago, I graduated high school and deferred my military service for one year to complete my BA studies at the OUI. During that year, I joined the research group of Prof. Ehud Gazit at Tel Aviv University. Last year, I graduated summa cum laude and received a BSc in the life sciences. During my studies, I was on the President's List four times, and received four certificates of excellence from the Academia in High School program. Throughout my time at the OUI, I thoroughly enjoyed delving deeply into the life sciences that I love so much, without giving up the social framework of high school.

Immediately after I completed my studies at the OUI, I entered the direct PhD track in biotechnology at the laboratory of Prof. Gazit in Tel Aviv University. I am currently working on my PhD, and plan to continue in the next few years. Six months ago, I enlisted in the army in the academic reserve track, and am currently serving as an officer in an elite technological R&D unit, about which I cannot divulge too much information. People have difficulty understanding how I managed to immerse myself in high school, an academic degree, research, and military service, all at the same time. But, as you can see, this is in the DNA of OUI graduates. Looking back from the "advanced age" of twenty, I still remember the day, six years ago, when I went with my mother to the Ashdod College, to register for my first course at the OUI – General Biology I. I could not have imagined that within a few years I would be at the heart of the scientific-technological world in academia and in the Israeli Defense System. I am grateful to the OUI for giving me the chance and offering me a platform to grow personally and academically, and to prove to the world that age is nothing but a number.