

 **THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF ISRAEL**

**Department of Sociology,
Political Science and
Communication**

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Political Science

Editor: Dr. Denis Charbit

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The Open University of Israel
POLITICAL SCIENCE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT
Executive Summary

The Open University of Israel (OUI) is unique on the Israeli academic scene. Although it resembles other universities in its pursuit of excellence in teaching and research, it differs from them in its educational mission – to widen access to quality higher education, and in its method of instruction – distance teaching. The OUI is dedicated to the creation of university-level materials that are suitable for independent learning, and to the development and implementation of versatile means of support for individual study.

To date, the OUI has prepared close to 700 university-level courses. It offers a variety of study programs toward Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a wide range of disciplines in Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences and Engineering. The academic development and teaching activities are carried out by seven academic departments, backed by a sophisticated, centralized administrative system.

In keeping with its mission, the Open University has created a singular framework for university studies that enables uncompromising adherence to pre-set, high standards, without imposing admission requirements on undergraduates, without dictating specific yearly loads and without demanding regular class attendance. Student screening at the OUI is solely through performance.

The elaborate teaching method developed by the OUI allows students to study throughout Israel and abroad, whenever and wherever, alongside other personal and vocational obligations.

The gates of the OUI are open to all; however, only individuals who are intellectually inclined to acquire up to date advanced knowledge, capable of doing so and willing to work hard, can meet the strictly maintained level of academic excellence.

OUI learning materials are prepared by field specific experts. They undergo thorough (internal and external) peer-review to ensure their scholarly value. Extensive additional measures and quality control procedures are employed to ascertain their didactic merit as well. As a result, OUI texts are highly regarded and widely used in all institutions of higher education in Israel.

Students: In the 2008/09 academic year, over 44,500 students took OUI undergraduate courses and about 3,250 took graduate courses (in FTE terms, this represents about 18,550 undergraduates and 1,300 graduate students); 2,259 students completed various undergraduate programs and 331 received Master's degrees.

Learning at the OUI: Unlike traditional universities, at the OUI, students enroll in specific courses of their choice each semester. Study materials for each course (books, study guides, readers, etc.) are mailed to them before the beginning of the semester with learning instructions and homework assignments for the entire semester. They study mainly on their own, and submit assignments according to a predetermined schedule. The individual learning process is supported by detailed personal feedback on assignments and by various learning aids, printed and electronic, mailed or delivered via the course websites (home laboratory kits, videotaped enrichment lectures, online demonstrations, multiple choice drills, etc.).

Tutorials held at study centers throughout the country help to clarify and practice applications of the subject matter and encourage socialization with peers. At the end of the semester, students take monitored written final exams. Since the assignments and exams are prepared in advance, the same pre-set high standard is preserved throughout the country, regardless of study center or tutor.

Academic staff: The academic staff consists of senior faculty, course coordinators (academic teaching staff), and tutors. The senior faculty (about 75 members in all) is the academic leadership; its members initiate study programs, and are in charge of the development of all course materials. Senior faculty members are also responsible for quality control. In particular, they supervise all ongoing instructional activities, by guiding and monitoring the performance of course coordinators (about 300), who, in turn, are responsible for the smooth, effective running of the teaching system. Each course offered by the OUI has a course coordinator, usually a member of the academic teaching staff, whose task is to hire and supervise tutors, prepare new assignments and exams for each semester, maintain the course website and enrich it with appropriate materials. Tutors (about 1000 in all), whose number in each course depends on the number and geographical dispersion of students enrolled, conduct group tutorial sessions, grade homework assignments and provide personal support when necessary.

Technologies: Extensive administrative and instructional services are provided to students and teaching teams via the internet. The OUI naturally invests considerable efforts in learning and teaching technologies: *Shoham*, the Center for Technology in Distance Education, investigates/adapts/creates platforms and technologies for use on the course websites. Faculty and teaching staff take part in the endeavor to use educational technologies wisely, creatively, innovatively and effectively. The versatile outcomes provide a multitude of means to remain academically updated, to liven up the lonely process of individual learning and to bridge physical distances.

Research: As in all universities in Israel, senior faculty members at the OUI conduct research as a major part of their role. Although their relatively small number limits the overall impact of their research, individually they achieve high research standards, as measured by the numbers of papers in leading, refereed professional journals, review articles in refereed books, grants, memberships on journal editorial boards and contributions at international conferences. The OUI Research Authority encourages research by helping OUI faculty to locate external funding sources and submit proposals, and by competitively allocating grants from its internal research fund. The internal fund is also used to encourage and support research among members of the academic teaching staff. The *Chais Research Center* at the OUI encourages research on theoretical and practical issues related to educational technologies.

Quality control: Parallel to the development of the various components of its teaching method, the OUI has developed intricate peer-review-based quality control mechanisms of ever-increasing sophistication for almost every product, process and function. These enable the University to constantly examine its teaching performance and to address problems when necessary.

The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication: The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication, which is one of the seven academic departments at the University, was established in 1997 when the

OUI was reorganized on a departmental basis. It comprises three disciplinary groups – the **Sociology** group, the **Political Science & International Relations** group and the **Communication** group. Each is responsible for developing and teaching all the courses in its discipline. The head of each group is one of its senior faculty members. There are nine senior faculty members in the department; 2 full professors, 3 associate professors, 3 senior lecturers and 1 lecturer; in addition, one full professor from the Hebrew University serves as a development consultant in Communication. In 2008, there were 49 course coordinators in the department, and about 200 tutors.

Political Science has been taught at OUI since its inception. Underlying our approach is an integrative notion of political science that eliminates the division found in many academic institutions in Israel. Our programs of study are based on the idea that political science is a discipline with its own guiding principles and research tools, irrespective of the topics taught. Thus, the programs include courses that provide an introduction to the different domains: “Introduction to Theories and Methods in Political Science,” “Introduction to International Relations,” “Government and Politics in Israel,” “Introduction to Political Thought,” “Democracies and Dictatorships: Ideas, Contexts, Regimes” and either “Democratic Regimes” or “Dictatorships in the 20th Century” (comparative politics), as well as courses in Public Policy and Administration and methodology courses. Students may choose to specialize in one domain; however, they must take courses in all the domains to acquire a common core of basic knowledge in all aspects of the discipline.

In 2008-09, the department offered various undergraduate degree programs and a graduate degree in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary). In cooperation with the Department of Literature, Language and the Arts, a new interdisciplinary Master’s degree in Cultural Studies was offered. The department offers general programs toward a Bachelor’s degree in the Social Sciences, single- and dual-disciplinary programs, and a program toward a degree with a division of studies in an additional field. Dual-disciplinary programs combine studies in sociology, political science or communication with other disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. On the undergraduate level, we currently offer 70 courses, of which 28 are advanced seminar courses and workshops. In addition, 26 graduate courses are currently offered. In 2008, 10,880 students took undergraduate courses in the department (about 19,705 course enrollments) and 248 students took graduate courses (539 enrollments). Last year, 416 students graduated from undergraduate programs offered by the department and 46 received Master’s degrees in Democracy Studies.

Within the **Political Science** group, students can take two general programs toward Bachelor’s degrees: BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations and BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Political Science, as well as dual-disciplinary programs in Political Science & International Relations combined with various other fields. In 2010, a BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Administration and Public Policy will be offered. In the last five years, 684 students received undergraduate degrees in Political Science and 161 students received Master’s degrees in Democracy Studies.

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Additional Materials

Enclosed with this report: *Programs of Study – Political Science & International Relations* (in English)

On CD:

Catalog and Registration Guide (in Hebrew)

Rules and procedures (in Hebrew):

- Code of appointments and advancement – Senior faculty
- Disciplinary code
- Financial assistance application form
- Program approval procedure
- Regulations for preventing sexual harassment
- Tuition fees

Syllabi: Course descriptions

Curriculum vitae: Updated CVs of the faculty and academic teaching staff

Extras

- Programs of Study – Political Science & International Relations* (booklet)
- Seminar paper guide (in Hebrew)
- Seminar paper evaluation form
- Teaching survey

Chapter 1 – The Institution
The Open University of Israel

1.1 About the Open University of Israel

1.1 *A brief summary describing the institution and its development since its establishment, including details of the campus(es) where the institution's teaching activities take place (number and location), names of the faculties /schools/departments in the institution, the over-all number of students studying towards academic degrees in the institution according to faculty and degree (first degree, second degree with thesis, second degree without thesis, doctoral degree), the date of recognition by the Council for Higher Education.*

The Open University of Israel (OUI) is unique on the Israeli academic scene. It is dedicated to the creation of quality university-level materials suitable for independent study, and to the development and implementation of extensive means of support for individual learning. OUI academic materials, which are available to the public and widely used by other universities, contribute to the Israeli academic community at large. The OUI teaching method allows its students, whenever and wherever they are, throughout Israel and abroad, to pursue university-level academic studies alongside other personal and vocational obligations.

Historical notes and landmarks: The OUI was conceived in the early 1970s in realization of the fact that the traditional Israeli universities do not, and cannot, exhaust the latent academic potential of the population. Backed by the government of Israel and the Council for Higher Education (CHE), and supported by the Rothschild Foundation, it was established in 1974, originally as an experimental project aimed at widening access to higher education, by offering people the opportunity to pursue quality academic studies without preconditions, neither of previous formal achievements, nor of place of residence.

- 1974 The OUI recruits a nucleus of faculty, and begins developing teaching methods, programs of study and study materials.
- 1976 The OUI opens its gates: 1431 students enroll, 17 study centers are opened. Each student takes one of five academic courses offered: introductory level courses in mathematics, physics, biology, geology and Jewish history.
- 1980 The CHE recognizes the OUI as an institution of higher education and authorizes it to confer bachelor's degrees.
- 1982 The first graduation ceremony takes place: 42 graduates receive their diplomas.
- 1996 The CHE approves the first OUI graduate program: MSc in Computer Science.
- 1997 The OUI undergoes a major structural reform: from separate central management of development teams on one hand and teaching teams on the other, to autonomous, unified academic departments.
- 1998 The Research Authority is established, manifesting the fact that research is an integral component of the faculty's rights and duties.
- 2001 The CHE approves the first OUI program in engineering: BSc in Industrial Engineering.

Since 1976, the Open University has evolved into the largest Israeli university in terms of number of students. Today it offers a wide range of undergraduate degree programs and six graduate programs: Master of Business Administration (MBA); MA in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary); MA in Education – Learning Technologies and Learning Systems; MA in Biological Thought; MA in Cultural Studies and MSc in Computer Science. The University also offers study programs toward high-school teaching certificates in several areas, as well as certificate studies in Computer

Science for graduates of adjacent disciplines. The OUI does not yet offer doctoral studies.

Academic departments: Seven academic departments function within the OUI: History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies; Literature, Language and the Arts; Management and Economics; Sociology, Political Science and Communication; Education and Psychology; Natural Sciences; Mathematics and Computer Science. An additional unit for teaching English as a Foreign Language operates alongside the academic departments. Each department deals with all academic matters related to the disciplines within it.

Academic staff: The academic staff consists of the senior faculty, course coordinators (academic teaching staff), and tutors. Senior faculty members are involved in research, curriculum design, course development, supervision of ongoing teaching and counseling, and they participate in the academic management of the university. Members of the academic teaching staff coordinate the distance teaching and learning process, monitor group tutoring and provide individual support. Some of them conduct research, some participate in course development and some assist as academic advisors.

Location – Main campus and study centers: From its campus in Raanana, the OUI operates study centers throughout the country. In the 2007-2008 academic year, 5,280 tutorial groups met in over 50 study centers, located throughout Israel. Most of the study centers provide registration, academic counseling and some library services, as well as classroom facilities. Each semester, tutorial groups for courses are opened in response to the demand for each course in the vicinity of each study center.

OUI books and courses: Since its inception, the OUI has developed close to 700 undergraduate and graduate courses in a wide range of disciplines. An OUI course is first and foremost a printed scholarly work, written by specialists from Israel and abroad for the benefit of students at the OUI and elsewhere. Open University books merge exercises, mental teasers and other didactic elements into content, thus contributing to the students' active, independent learning. The books are widely used in all institutions of higher education in Israel.

The texts are mailed to the students' homes before the beginning of the semester, together with a course booklet that includes the course timetable and all the homework assignments. During the semester, students submit assignments and receive detailed personal feedback; at the end of the semester, they take a monitored written final exam. The individual learning process is supported by various learning aids, printed and electronic, mailed or delivered via the course websites. Tutorials at study centers serve to enrich, clarify and review the subject matter, but they cannot and do not replace the written texts. Thus, the same uncompromising standard of studies is preserved throughout the country, regardless of study center or tutor. To ensure uniform grading of assignments and the provision of instructive feedback, these are monitored by the academic departments. The course coordinators supervise the tutors and visit study centers regularly. Classroom observations provide invaluable insights into learning processes that can be applied in future course development.

Degree entitlement: Successful completion of a single course entitles students to 3-6 credits, depending on its scope. To earn a bachelor's degree from the Open University, students need to accumulate at least 108 credits. Dual-disciplinary degrees may require up to 128 credits, and a BSc in Engineering, up to 160 credits.

Degree candidates must demonstrate English language proficiency, library and bibliographic skills, and computer application skills before enrolling in advanced courses. These requirements may be fulfilled either by passing exemption exams or by taking relevant non-credit courses. All degree candidates must accumulate at least 24 advanced credits, submit seminar papers and meet the specific content requirements of the degree program selected. In most programs, students are required to include at least one course that is not related to their main field of interest, so as to widen their horizons.

Number of students: Students at the Open University do not enroll in a department as is customary at other universities, but rather register for individual courses. An OUI student's program of studies typically includes courses for which different departments are responsible. Thus, the term 'a student in a department' requires interpretation, and will be discussed in the following chapters. Likewise, at the OUI, the terms 'first-, second-, third-year students' are ambiguous, as each student progresses not only along a different path, but also at a different pace.

In 2008, 44,542 students were enrolled in (one or more) undergraduate courses and 3,244 were enrolled in graduate courses. In FTE (full-time-equivalent) terms, this represents about 18,550 undergraduates, and 1,300 graduate students (the calculation is based on the number of course enrollments divided by a factor that expresses the number of annual enrollments that would allow a student to complete a degree in three years).

Channels to other universities: These channels, which were established with the encouragement of the CHE, officially guarantee the option of transfer from the OUI to various programs in all other Israeli universities. After examining the OUI study materials, the assignments, the exams and the students' grade averages, various departments in other universities formally undertook to admit any OUI student with an appropriate record to second-year studies. Students who achieve a specified minimum grade in a suitable cluster of OUI courses (defined jointly by the two academic institutions) can transfer credits from the OUI to the other university, and complete their studies there.

Number of graduates: The large OUI student body is not reflected in the relatively low percentage of graduates, which can mainly be attributed to the open admissions policy: Many of the students enrolled are not suited for university-level studies and many others take individual courses for personal enrichment or professional advancement, without aspiring to complete degree programs. Also, for students who were successfully initiated into academic studies at the OUI, alternative opportunities often become available; the university encourages them to consider all their options, including transfer to other institutions of higher education. In 2008, the University conferred a total of 2,259 bachelor's degrees and 331 master's degrees.

Research: Leaders of knowledge dissemination need to be creators of knowledge, i.e. researchers. The OUI aims to create a university-wide culture of excellence by increasing the proportion of its faculty who are regarded by their peers as excelling in their disciplines, and by inviting candidates who are involved in cutting-edge research, beyond planned recruitment. Basic and applied research achievements, measured against national and international standards and active participation in national and international academic forums, are central to the advancement of OUI faculty.

The *Pe'er* project: Through the *Pe'er* project (the Hebrew acronym for 'Opening the Treasures of the Mind'), the OUI offers free access to dozens of its academic

textbooks and to a variety of complementary study materials in electronic format. Records of entries into the *Pe'er* site indicate great public interest. By providing access to its unique assets, the OUI reflects a changed perspective of knowledge ownership; the contribution of academic study materials to the public without compensation or intent to profit is a challenging idea that has not been tried to date in Israel and in this sense, the OUI is a trailblazer.

1.2 Mission Statement of the Institution, Aims and Goals

1.2 *Mission statement of the institution, its aims and goals*

The mission of the OUI is to facilitate access to university-level education in a range of disciplines in Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences and Engineering to all interested individuals who are intellectually inclined to acquire it, capable enough of doing so and willing to make the effort it demands. This mission is reflected in several of the OUI's unique characteristics:

Open admissions: The OUI is open to anyone who wishes to study toward a bachelor's degree, without preconditions or admission requirements. One of the objectives is to enable university-level education to those who, for various reasons, have not formally completed their high school education. At the OUI, the first few courses constitute a self-administered hands-on entrance test. Only those capable of academic studies continue to higher-level courses.

Distance teaching: The OUI specializes in distance teaching and promotes independent study. Textbooks are the primary component of its method of instruction. Every course offers optional tutorial sessions, wherever there are enough students to justify study groups. The OUI integrates innovative technologies and Internet based tools into its method of teaching: interactive instruction through broadband communication, multimedia, videotaped discussions and problem-solving sessions, indexed for easy navigation, etc. The teaching aids afford enjoyable and effective learning, and enable students with different learning styles and needs to study without time or place constraints.

Flexibility: Within the framework of a semester, OUI students can study on their own time, anywhere in Israel or abroad. They can adjust the rate of progress toward an academic degree to their needs, constraints and lifestyle. The OUI does not require students to complete a structured uniform program of studies during a specific academic year; students can determine their own pace, based on their intellectual capabilities, ambition, diligence, and the time at their disposal. On the other hand, students who wish to do so can choose to follow a structured program that leads to a degree at a pace similar to the customary pace at other universities.

Learners can sample a variety of subjects before they decide either to create a broad-scope individual program of study that incorporates several disciplines in the Sciences, or in the Humanities and Social Sciences, or to focus in greater depth on one or two disciplines. In either case, they are bound by the rules of the chosen degree program, which ensure the inner logic of each graduate's record of studies and its overall scholarly justification.

The OUI offers different types of optional tutorials: regular (2-3-hour sessions, once every two or three weeks) and intensive (2-3 hours weekly). There is also a 'reduced' tutorial option (one or two tutorials per semester). Many courses offer virtual tutorials, using diverse communication technologies.

The OUI teaching method suits those who prefer independent study and is, by nature, adaptable to the particular needs of special groups. Through its numerous study centers, the OUI is able to reach residents of **peripheral** areas. The flexibility offered by the OUI enables the **working population** to study at their own pace, toward a degree, or for enrichment. The OUI attempts to address the needs of **Arabic-speaking** students by recruiting competent tutors, fluent in Arabic, and by translating introductory courses into Arabic. It offers a complete program of Judaic and Land of Israel studies in Russian, for the benefit of **Russian-speakers** in the former Soviet Union as well as new immigrants in Israel. Groups of **ultra-orthodox** students may request separate tutorials for men and women (but not adjustment of contents to religious beliefs). OUI teaching methods are particularly suitable for **soldiers**, and we hope to expand access to soldiers by establishing study centers on the larger military bases. The OUI enables **teachers** to improve their disciplinary background while teaching; it is engaged in a variety of **continuing education** activities for teachers; it awards teaching certificates in several subjects and offers an MA in Education. Individuals representing Israel or temporarily **living abroad** can study in Hebrew. OUI distance teaching methods meet the needs of **physically disabled** students who cannot attend classes, and provide special assistance, when needed. For instance, many OUI materials have been recorded on audio-cassettes for the benefit of **visually impaired** students; **expectant mothers** (especially those with high-risk pregnancies) are allowed to take final exams at home on regular exam dates in the presence of personal proctors. The prison authorities allow **prisoners** to take OUI courses. For **retired** people, the OUI offers a unique intellectual challenge.

Separation of academic requirements from students' profiles: Competent lecturers in traditional institutions of higher education must adapt their expectations and demands (at least to some extent) to the capabilities and background of the students who attend their lectures. At the OUI, the academic standards are preset by the texts, and reflected in homework assignments and exams that are prepared in advance. The OUI can and does support weaker students in various ways, but at the end of the day, only those who meet the preset demands pass. The mission to provide a fair chance does not include a promise of success. Because of the open admissions policy, the OUI's student body is extremely heterogeneous. As a matter of principle, in spite of the high dropout rates, OUI examination scores are never normalized.

1.3 The Organizational Structure of the Open University

1.3 A description and chart of the institution's organizational structure

1.3.1 Statutory Open University Authorities and Officers

Authorities

The **Council**, headed by the Chancellor, is the supreme authority of the University. It determines university policies, oversees their implementation, and administers the affairs and assets of the university.

The **Executive Committee**, elected by the Council from among its members, serves as the Council's current executor and guide for policy implementation.

The **Academic Committee**, headed by the President, is the highest academic authority of the university, responsible for monitoring its long-term academic policy and maintaining academic quality. It is composed of senior faculty from the OUI and from other Israeli universities.

The **Faculty Council**, composed of all internally appointed senior faculty members, includes representatives of the academic teaching staff. The Faculty Council discusses current academic issues. Its resolutions require the approval of the Academic Committee.

Officers

Chancellor – Head of the university, Chairperson of the Council.

Deputy Chancellor – acts as Chairperson of the Council in the absence of the Chancellor.

Vice Chancellor – acts as Chairperson of the Council in the absence of the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor.

Chair of the Executive Committee – elected by the Council from among its members.

President – the academic and administrative head of the university, elected by the Council with the approval of the Academic Committee.

Vice President for Academic Affairs – responsible for all the academic aspects of the university's activities; serves as acting President in the President's absence.

1.3.2 Central Academic and Administrative Bodies

Academic issues are dealt with by a succession of committees and authorities before they are presented to the Academic Committee. Since the development and teaching activities performed by OUI academic departments require non-standard organizational casings, administrative services are unusually sophisticated; the departmental secretariats link the functions performed within the departments to central administrative units. The main academic and administrative bodies that monitor or support the work of the academic departments are briefly described below.

Subcommittees of the **Academic Committee** include the **Disciplinary Subcommittees** (Humanities, Social Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Engineering). They discuss new course proposals and new study programs initiated by the academic departments, examine writing samples from proposed authors and consider external experts' reviews. Proposals approved by the subcommittees require ratification by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Faculty Council, the Academic Committee and the President (in that order).

The **Accreditation Committee** and the **Study Program Approval Committee** also operate under the auspices of the Academic Committee. The Accreditation Committee considers requests for accreditation from students who previously studied at an institution of higher learning in Israel or abroad. Regardless of the extent of previous studies, to be awarded an OUI degree, students must accumulate at least 48 credits at the OUI.

The Open University does not confer a bachelor's degree without the approval of the Study Program Approval Committee. Students are urged to submit personal study programs as early as possible, to ensure that all the degree requirements are met. The committee is also responsible for documenting approved changes in existing study programs, for setting dates of implementation, for locating and informing students whose studies may be affected by the change, and for including the information in the official OUI catalog and website.

The office of the **Dean of Academic Development and Technologies** is responsible for the **Academic Development Unit**, which supports course development by performing, among others, the following functions: coordinating the activities of the Academic subcommittees; handling course proposals and professional reports concerning them; drafting contracts with external course writers, consultants, translators, editors, etc., and managing payment to all involved; coordinating development schedules; updating databases on courses and handling copyright issues. It also serves as a link between course development teams and the **OUI publishing house**, which is responsible for the graphic design and production of all Open University textbooks.

The Center for Technology in Distance Education – Shoham, which also functions under the auspices of the Dean of Academic Development and Technologies, develops, evaluates and integrates technology-based pedagogical tools to make learning more effective and enjoyable. *Shoham* developed and maintains the Internet-based learning environment 'Opus' – the infrastructure for all OUI course websites. It tests new technologies and helps integrate them into appropriate courses. *Shoham* examines distance-learning methodologies, and assesses their value as alternatives to tutorial sessions. It produces a variety of study materials rich in images, sound and motion to complement written study materials. It trains and supports course coordinators and faculty who wish to participate in creating and integrating technology in their teaching. *Shoham's* staff includes pedagogical experts, multimedia and video specialists, and technology professionals.

The office of the **Dean of Academic Studies** is responsible for university-wide issues related to studying and tutoring at the OUI. It sets general rules and regulations that all students must observe, and supervises all Open University study centers. It defines policies concerning the qualifications of tutors and regulates the number and dispersion of study centers, as well as the number of tutorial hours and the tutorial format. It manages the central Open University **Library** and the libraries in study centers. The Dean of Academic Studies formulates guidelines for collaborating with institutions in which OUI courses are taught, and maintains ongoing contact with them. Within the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, the **Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center** supports students throughout their studies by providing general counseling, by referring students who need field-specific counseling to the academic departments and by imparting learning skills through workshops or individual guidance. A special unit in the center focuses on students with learning disabilities. Also within the office of the Dean, the **Training Department** develops and implements pedagogical training programs for tutors, and provides managerial guidance to course coordinators and department heads.

The Dean of Academic Studies is the chairperson of the **Teaching Committee** whose members are representatives of the senior faculty and academic teaching staff, and co-chairs the **Forum of Department Heads** together with the Vice President. Both bodies convene regularly to discuss ongoing instructional and managerial affairs.

The **Dean of Research** is responsible for the Research Authority and the University's research centers. The **Research Authority (RA)** encourages research by helping OUI faculty locate external funding sources and submit proposals to these funds. In addition, the RA supports research through grants and scholarships from the internal research fund. It is responsible for financial and administrative monitoring of all (fully or partially) funded research work.

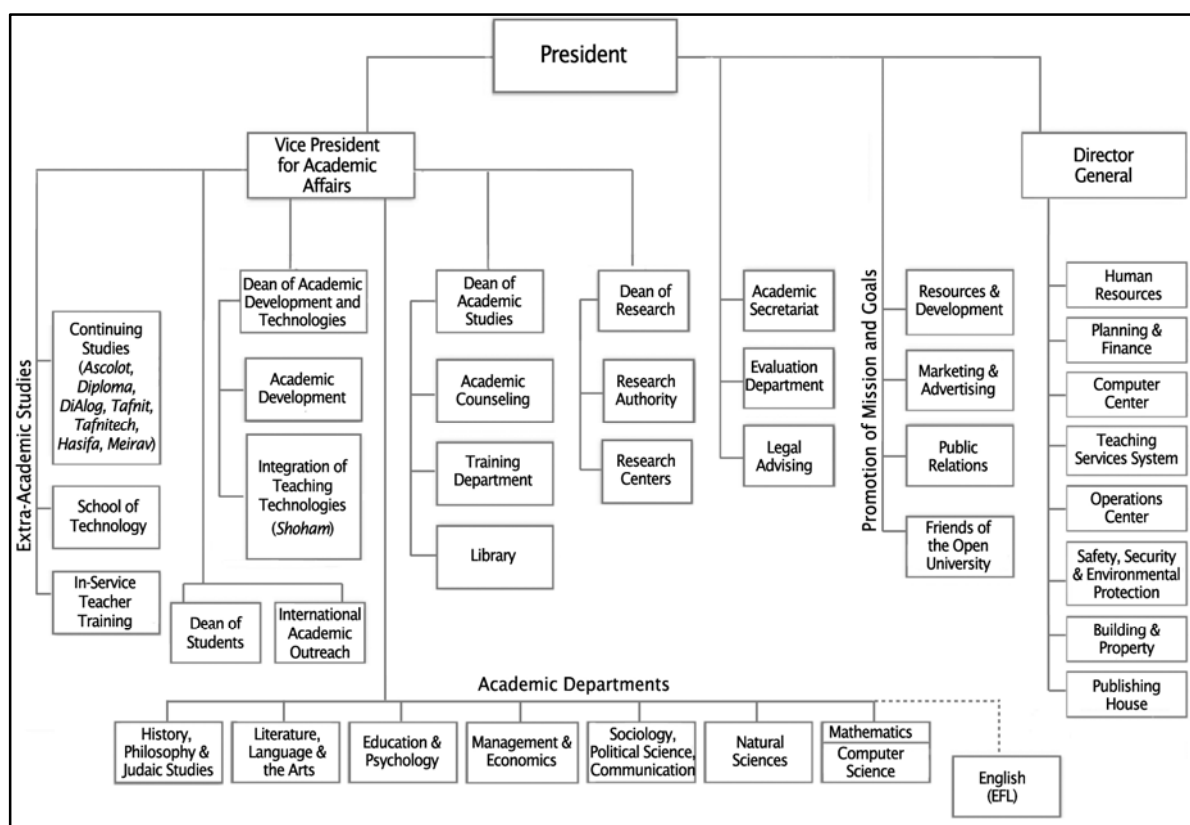
The **Chais Center for Integration of Technology in Education** is the OUI's largest research institute, whose purpose is to investigate all aspects of integration of technology into teaching processes. It promotes theoretical and practical research among OUI faculty and visiting scholars. The Chais Center provides a platform for cooperation among faculty from various departments, and awards scholarships to outstanding graduate students involved in its research projects. The Center holds regular symposia and workshops for the benefit of the academic teaching staff and for the public.

The **Teaching Services System**, administered by the Director General, is responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating and implementing all the learning-related services provided by the university. It manages administrative information and registration, handles the distribution of study materials and loans of teaching aids, coordinates activities in study centers and organizes examination centers; it administers students' assignments, final exams and transcripts and handles administrative requests, queries and complaints.

The office of the **Dean of Students** initiates and coordinates activities that relate to students' welfare, including financial aid. The Dean of Students also serves as the students' Ombudsman.

Other committees that function within the University include the **Disciplinary Committee**, which deals with offenses detailed in the Student Code of Conduct. In accordance with this code, the committee may dismiss from courses, revoke diplomas, suspend, expel, or fine students who commit disciplinary offenses. Students are entitled to appeal Disciplinary Committee decisions, and if denied – submit a request for a pardon to the President of the University. The **Ethics Committee** deals with ethical issues related to the distribution of questionnaires in classes by mail or e-mail. It examines proposals for empirical studies (of students and faculty alike). It regularly reviews OUI registration forms to ensure that, in adherence with the OUI open admission policy, they do not request irrelevant or unnecessary information.

The organizational structure of the OUI is summarized in the following chart:



The organizational structure of the OUI

1.4 Senior Academic and Administrative Office Holders

1.4 Names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions

Chancellor – The Rt. Hon. the Lord Woolf

Deputy Chancellor – The Rt. Hon. the Lord Rothschild

Vice-Chancellor – Prof. Abraham Ginzburg

Chairman of the Executive Committee – Mr. Zeev Abeles

President of the Open University – Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron

Prof. Gershon Ben-Shakhar (until 9/2008)

Vice President for Academic Affairs – Prof. Judith Gal-Ezer

Prof. Ora Limor (until 2/2009)

Dean of Academic Development and Technologies – Prof. Yoav Yair

Dean of Academic Studies – Prof. Sonia Roccas

Prof. Tamar S. Hermann (until 8/2009)

Dean of Research – Prof. Anat Barnea; until 9/2009, Prof. Miriam Souroujon served as Head of the Research Authority

Director General – Mr. Amit Streit; Mr. David Klibanski (until 9/2009)

Dean of Students – Dr. Haim Saadoun

Chapter 2 – The Parent Unit
The Department of Sociology,
Political Science and Communication

2.1 Overview

2.1 *The name of the parent unit and a brief summary of its "history", its activities and development in the period of its existence*

The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication was founded in 1997 following a major organizational change in the structure of the Open University: the establishment of seven departments, each of which combined related disciplines, unlike traditional universities in Israel and abroad. The department incorporates the fields of Sociology, Political Science, International Relations and Communication. The resulting cooperation contributes to interdisciplinary productivity among the various staff members and constitutes an asset to the department and its development.

In 1997, the senior staff of the department included Prof. Benyamin Neuberger (Political Science & International Relations), Dr. Yael Enoch (Sociology), who has since retired, and Prof. Tamar Hermann (Political Science & International Relations). They were later joined by Prof. Motti Regev (1999), Prof. Yair Auron (2000), Dr. Denis Charbit (2002), Dr. Zeev Rosenhek (2004), Dr. Oren Soffer (2006), Prof. Yagil Levy (2008) and Dr. Dafna Hirsch (VF, 2008). At present, there are 58 staff members in the department, 9 senior faculty and 49 course coordinators, as well as 200 tutors.

Courses in sociology and political science have been offered since the founding of the university. The first two courses were "The Emergence of New States in Africa," and "Introduction to Sociology." Thirty years have passed since then, and the number of courses in the department, particularly in the field of political science, has considerably grown, and today 96 courses are offered, representing about 13% of all the courses taught at the Open University. The undergraduate course offering includes 34 courses currently offered in Political Science, 22 in Sociology, and 14 in Communication. On the graduate level, the department currently offers 26 courses in Democracy Studies and 9 courses in the new Cultural Studies program.

The department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication initiates and is responsible for the development of new courses; updating existing courses, and shelving courses that are outdated or superfluous. In recent years, special emphasis has been given to the development of learning materials and teaching aids made available by advanced technology – sophisticated course sites, video lessons via the internet, a variety of discussion forums, and more. The department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication is held in high esteem in the university. Many students take our courses, and our course books are highly recommended by and taught at other Israeli universities. These help students take their first steps in academia, because they are written in Hebrew and maintain a high academic level, due to the meticulous review process customary at the OUI for all aspects of the teaching material. Most of the courses were developed by senior OUI faculty or by leading experts from other Israeli universities. Some of the courses are based on Hebrew translations of leading texts in English. Special efforts are made to update courses in accordance with research developments in the field. Updating takes the form of adding new articles and updated information to existing materials, or, when necessary, rewriting the course. At the end of 2008, ten courses were in the process of being completely rewritten.

Initially, OUI degrees were of a general nature: a BA in Social Sciences. In order to acquire this degree, the students were required to complete a quota of courses in various fields in the Social Sciences, among others in political science, psychology,

economics, sociology and others. However, in time, due to increasing specialization and to the scope of course development, a plan for dual-disciplinary study was submitted to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) for approval. In 1998, the university was authorized to offer a dual-disciplinary program including Political Science & International Relations combined with another discipline. In 2004, the department was authorized to grant single-disciplinary Bachelor's degrees in both Sociology and Communication. The CHE is currently reviewing a single-disciplinary Bachelor's degree program in Political Science & International Relations. In 2000, the CHE approved the department's request to grant an interdisciplinary Master's degree in Democracy Studies.

2.2 The Mission and Goals of the Department

2.2 Mission statement of the parent unit, its aims and goals

In keeping with the mission of the OUI, the department's mission is to increase access to university-level studies in political science, sociology and communication through a system that offers open admissions and does not require adherence to specific yearly loads or regular classroom attendance. In particular, the aim is to provide a suitable framework for academic and professional advancement in these domains to promising candidates who, for a variety of reasons, cannot or do not choose to study at traditional universities. Notable among these are soldiers during military service, gifted high-school students, civics teachers, and lifelong learners who wish to study particular topics without necessarily committing to a full degree program, as well as the working population and individuals who live in peripheral areas.

The specific goals of the department are:

- To teach students through the various programs offered by the department
- To promote the spread of high-level scientific knowledge by developing learning materials and utilizing advanced educational technology
- To conduct scientific research in order to generate and advance knowledge
- To characterize the department as an academic center of knowledge and research within the general context of Israeli society, by opening seminars and conferences to the general public and publishing academic material
- To develop students' learning skills, enabling them to accumulate knowledge independently; develop their skills in searching and accessing information on the internet; and examine critically and methodically all information appearing in the public domain
- To supply students with a springboard for continued studies and advanced research degrees in top academic institutions both in Israel and abroad, by providing them with personal counseling and professional guidance

The department is characterized by its academic variety, offering studies on democratization, social mobility and the enhancement of social equality, non-democratic politics, political violence, equal rights, social stratification, the sociology of economics and culture, and communication and society.

2.3 The Organizational Framework

2.3 Description and chart of the unit's academic and administrative organizational structure (including relevant committees).

The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication includes three groups of faculty members who specialize in Sociology, in Political Science & International Relations and in Communication. Each group is in charge of developing and teaching all courses in the discipline it represents. **The Academic Subcommittee for Sociology, Political Science and Communication**, a joint body that includes all the senior faculty of the department and members of the academic teaching staff as well as representatives from other departments, examines all proposals for new study programs and for curricular changes in existing programs, as well as all proposals for new course and course revisions initiated in the department.

One senior faculty member is appointed by the President to serve as department head, usually for a 3-year term. A faculty member in each group serves as head of each field. The department staff also includes an instruction technologies supervisor, a student inquiries and complaints officer (from among the academic teaching staff), and three administrative staff members.

Senior faculty members are recruited in adherence with the long-term plan set by the academic authorities of the University. When a senior faculty position becomes available in one of the departmental divisions, an ad hoc search committee, composed of senior faculty members of that division, representatives of other OUI academic departments and external scholars seeks candidates through open tenders published in Israeli newspapers and international professional websites. Only applicants who are fluent in Hebrew can be considered, and those are screened primarily on the basis of their research achievements. Candidates who reach the short list are asked to submit a writing sample to demonstrate their verbal and pedagogical skills as potential course developers. Nominees are initially appointed as Visiting Faculty (VF) with senior faculty rights and duties. Following a trial period of up to two years, during which VFs are expected to demonstrate the ability to combine research with specific OUI tasks (particularly course development and supervision of teaching), a departmental recommendation is needed to trigger the senior faculty academic nomination procedure. The nomination and advancement procedures of senior OUI faculty are detailed in Rules and Procedures, 'Appointments' (in Hebrew).

At present, there are five senior faculty members in the Political Science group (an additional one will be recruited this year). In the Sociology group, there are three senior faculty members, one of whom is VF, and in the Communication group, there is one senior faculty member (an additional one will be recruited this year) and one development consultant, a full professor from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Senior faculty members are responsible for writing, developing and updating the courses; hiring the academic teaching staff; and approving assignments and exam questionnaires in the various courses and are involved in the smooth running of the courses every semester. Senior faculty members are responsible for a cluster of courses that lie within their field of expertise and act as academic advisors. The email addresses of the faculty members responsible for each course are posted on every course website to enable the students to contact them when needed.

Course coordinators (academic teaching staff): At present, there are 49 course coordinators in the department: 11 in the Sociology group, 30 in the Political Science & International Relations group and 8 in the Communication group. Of these, 29 have

doctoral degrees; 9 are studying toward their doctorates, and the rest have MA degrees.

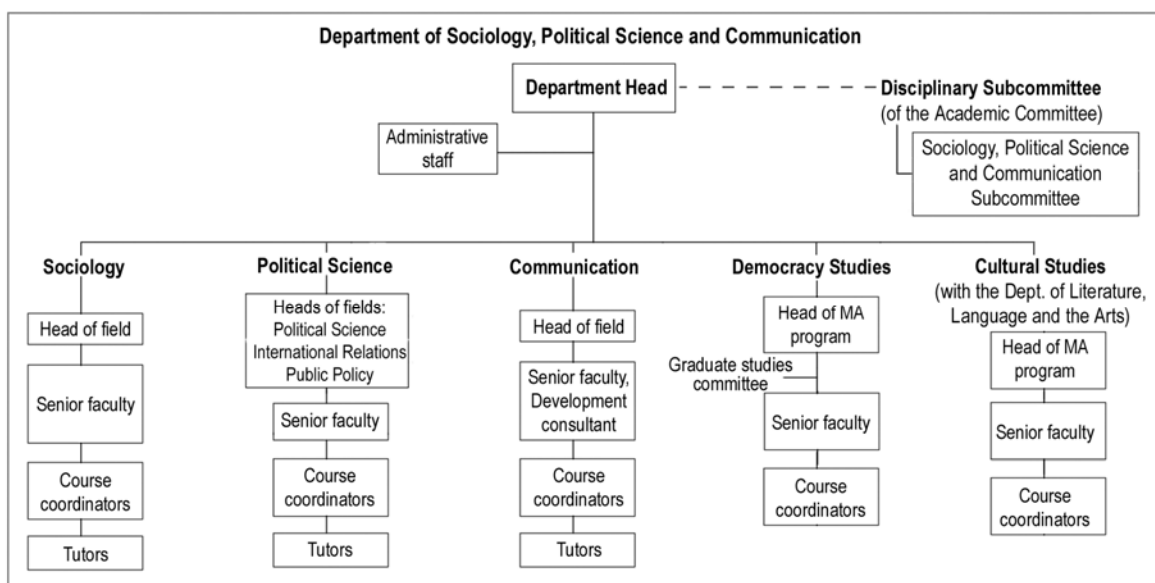
The course coordinators are responsible for the planning aspects of teaching, and for the smooth operation of courses. They are also responsible for the administrative management of the course and participate in ongoing course development and updates. Course coordinators with the academic expertise required for each course are recruited, when needed, by the senior faculty. Coordinators are initiated into their academic tasks by veteran members of the relevant group, and since course coordination requires pedagogical and managerial skills, they receive extensive training and guidance from the office of the Dean of Academic Studies. Veteran course coordinators continue to participate in workshops related to diverse aspects of their unique vocation. The training of course coordinators is described in section 3.3.2. Senior faculty members regularly monitor the various academic tasks performed by the course coordinators, and periodically evaluate their overall performance. The scope of a course coordinator's position depends on the average number of enrollments in the course and on the number of semesters in which the course is taught each year. Course coordinators who are involved in research may apply to the Research Authority for support. The OUI internal research fund provides grants, scholarships and paid leaves of absence for academic advancement.

Tutors are recruited by the course coordinators according to academic guidelines set by the Dean of Academic Studies and by the heads of the fields. Currently, they are contracted per semester, though their employment terms are expected to change as a result of ongoing negotiations between representatives of the tutors and the university management. Typically, tutors are doctoral students in sociology, political science or communication from other universities, Master's degree candidates in the final stages of their studies, second or third degree holders with pedagogical interest and skills who are employed elsewhere as well, or course coordinators who usually tutor at least one group per year, either in the courses they coordinate or in other courses. Tutors participate in a tutor-training program before and during their first semester of teaching (see section 3.3.2). The number of tutorial groups opened each semester depends on the number and dispersion of students enrolled. A few weeks before the beginning of each semester, the office of the Dean of Academic Studies and the heads of the fields check the enrollment pattern of each course to decide in which of the University's study centers the number of students justifies a local tutorial group and where small groups have to be combined. The minimal number of students considered sufficient to open tutorial groups in peripheral areas is smaller than the number required in central areas. When the total number of students in a course is low, and their geographical dispersion high, all students are grouped into one course-group, and the course coordinator is the sole tutor; s/he provides personal tutoring or concentrated but infrequent tutorial meetings in addition to a variety of technological means of student support. In 2008, approximately 200 tutors were employed by contract for all courses in the department.

The coordinator of student queries, requests and complaints is appointed from among the academic teaching staff to deal with students' requests (for example, a request to retake an exam) or complaints regarding courses, exams, procedures, lecturers, and more. The department instructional technologies coordinator has continual contact with the teaching teams concerning the course websites and is responsible for implementing instructional technologies in the various courses, while at the same supplying technical support and help to all members of the department.

The department's referent for evaluation in the university's Evaluation Department is responsible for assisting the department in the process of assessment and evaluation of the various projects initiated by the department.

Members of the department's administrative staff assist the head of the department in various managerial tasks. In addition, they provide office and administrative services to all members of the department, advisors and students. The administrative team is also responsible for producing course booklets, managing correspondence and contact with the staff and the students, and the administration of seminar papers.



The organizational framework of the department

2.4 Senior Academics and Position Holders

2.4 Names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions.

Senior faculty: Prof. Yair Auron (Political Science & International Relations), Dr. Denis Charbit (Political Science & International Relations), Prof. Tamar Hermann (Political Science & International Relations), Prof. Benyamin Neuberger (Political Science & International Relations), Prof. Yagil Levy (Public Policy), Prof. Motti Regev (Sociology & Anthropology), Dr. Zeev Rosenhek (Sociology & Anthropology), Dr. Oren Soffer (Communication), Dr. Dafna Hirsch (Cultural Studies, VF)

Department Head: Dr. Denis Charbit

Head of field, Sociology: Dr. Zeev Rosenhek

Head of field, Political Science: Prof. Benyamin Neuberger

Head of field, Communication: Dr. Oren Soffer

Head, MA Program in Democracy Studies: Prof. Benyamin Neuberger

Head, MA Program in Cultural Studies: Prof. Motti Regev

Chair, Academic Subcommittee for Sociology, Political Science and Communication: Dr. Zeev Rosenhek

Development Consultant (Communication): Prof. Tamar Liebes

2.5 Study Programs and Enrollment Numbers

2.5 The number of study programs (departments, etc) operating in its framework; the names of the academic degrees (in English and Hebrew) granted to the graduates of these programs (the phrasing that appears in the diploma); the number of students who have studied (and are studying) within the parent unit in each of the last five years according to the level of degree (first degree, second degree with thesis, second degree without thesis, doctoral degree). Please provide this data in the format of a table

2.5.1 Academic Degrees Granted by the Department

In 2008-09, the department offered a variety of undergraduate degree programs and a graduate degree in Democracy Studies. In cooperation with the Department of Literature, Language and the Arts, a new interdisciplinary Master's degree in Cultural Studies was offered.

Undergraduate degree programs: The department offers general programs toward a degree in the Social Sciences; single- and dual-disciplinary programs, and a program toward a degree with a division of studies in an additional field. Dual-disciplinary programs combine studies in sociology, political science or communication with other disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. The tables below list the degree programs offered by the department and the year in which they were first offered.

Single-disciplinary and general degree programs

BA in Sociology	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בסוציולוגיה
BA in Sociology with a Division of Studies in Education, Psychology, Political Science, Communication, Economics, Management, the Arts, Literature, Music, Film Studies, History, Judaic Studies, Philosophy, and Mathematics	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בסוציולוגיה עם לימודי חטיבה ב_____
BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations	2008	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדעי החברה בהדגשת יחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Communication	2008	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדעי החברה בהדגשת תקשורת
BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Political Science	2009	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדעי החברה בהדגשת מדע המדינה

Dual-disciplinary programs within the department

BA in Political Science & International Relations and Sociology	1993	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Communication and Sociology	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בתקשורת ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Political Science & International Relations and Communication	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובתקשורת

Dual-disciplinary programs with other departments

BA in Management and Political Science & International Relations	1993	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול ובמדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Management and Sociology	1993	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Sociology and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)	1993	בוגר אוניברסיטה בסוציולוגיה ובחינוך (במגמת תכניות לימודים ושיטות הוראה)
BA in Psychology and Sociology	2000	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Political Science & International Relations and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)	2002	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובחינוך במגמת תכניות לימודים ושיטות הוראה

Dual-disciplinary programs with other departments

BA in Economics and Political Science & International Relations	2002	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה ובמדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Economics and Sociology	2002	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Psychology and Political Science & International Relations	2005	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה ובמדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Sociology and History	2005	בוגר אוניברסיטה בסוציולוגיה והיסטוריה
BA in Sociology and Computer Science – Systems & Applications	2006	בוגר אוניברסיטה בסוציולוגיה ובמדעי המחשב – מערכות ויישומים
BA in Communication and Computer Science – Systems & Applications	2006	בוגר אוניברסיטה בתקשורת ובמדעי המחשב – מערכות ויישומים
BA in Communication and History	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בתקשורת ובהיסטוריה
BA in Communication and History of the Middle East and its Cultures	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בתקשורת ובהיסטוריה של המזרח התיכון ותרבותיו
BA in Communication and Philosophy	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בתקשורת ובפילוסופיה
BA in History of the Middle East and its Cultures and Sociology	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בהיסטוריה של המזרח התיכון ותרבותיו ובסוציולוגיה
BA in Management and Communication	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול ובתקשורת
BA in Political Science & International Relations and Computer Science – Systems & Applications	2008	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובמדעי המחשב – מערכות ויישומים
BA in Political Science & International Relations and History	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובהיסטוריה
BA in Political Science & International Relations and History of the Middle East and its Cultures	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה במדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים ובהיסטוריה של המזרח התיכון ותרבותיו
BA in Psychology and Communication	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה ובתקשורת
BA in Philosophy and Political Science & International Relations	2009	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפילוסופיה ובמדע המדינה ויחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Philosophy and Sociology	2009	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפילוסופיה ובסוציולוגיה

Programs with departmental divisions of study

BA in Economics with a Division of Studies in Sociology	2001	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה עם חטיבה בסוציולוגיה
BA in Economics with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2001	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה עם חטיבה במדע המדינה
BA in Management with a Division of Studies in Sociology	2001	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול עם חטיבה בסוציולוגיה
BA in Management with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2001	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול עם חטיבה במדע המדינה
BA in Management with a Division of Studies in Communication	2001	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול עם חטיבה בתקשורת
BA in Economics with a Division of Studies in Communication	2003	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה עם חטיבה בתקשורת
BA in Psychology with a Division of Studies in Sociology	2005	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה עם חטיבה בסוציולוגיה
BA in Psychology with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2005	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה עם חטיבה במדע המדינה
BA in Psychology with a Division of Studies in Communication	2005	בוגר אוניברסיטה בפסיכולוגיה עם חטיבה בתקשורת
BA in Economics with a Division of Studies in International Relations	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בכלכלה עם חטיבה ביחסים בין-לאומיים
BA in Management with a Division of Studies in International Relations	2007	בוגר אוניברסיטה בניהול עם חטיבה ביחסים בין-לאומיים

Master's degree programs

MA in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary)	1999	תואר מוסמך אוניברסיטה בלימודי דמוקרטיה בין-תחומיים
MA in Cultural Studies (in cooperation with the Dept. of Literature, Language and the Arts)	2008	תואר מוסמך אוניברסיטה בלימודי תרבות (בשיתוף עם המחלקה לספרות, ללשון ולאמנויות)

The department also offers studies toward teaching certificates in Civics:

Teaching Certificate in Civics for students with a BA	תעודת הוראה באזרחות לבעלי תואר ראשון
Teaching Certificate in Civics for students with an MA in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary)	תעודת הוראה באזרחות לבעלי תואר מוסמך בלימודי דמוקרטיה בין-תחומיים

2.5.2 Number of Students

We cannot specify the number of students in the department's undergraduate degree programs, since OUI students enroll in individual courses, not in departments or programs. The table below shows the number of enrollments in courses offered by the department for 2004 through 2008, and the corresponding number of students.

At the OUI, students can decide on their program of study at a relatively late stage of their studies, though they may submit a study program for approval in advance. As a result, defining a "Political Science student" is not trivial. In the following table, a "Political Science student" is defined as a student who was enrolled in at least one political science course during an academic year (3 semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer) and had taken at least four courses in political science until and including that year.

The figures for graduate students include students taking qualifying courses.

Enrollments / Students taking courses in the department, 2004-2008

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All undergraduate students	Enrollments	16,855	16,348	17,838	18,340	19,705
	Students	10,012	9,720	10,158	10,536	10,880
Political Science students	Enrollments	6,531	6,540	7,663	8,254	8,682
	Students	1,574	1,629	1,654	1,703	1,750
Graduate students	Enrollments	969	918	853	683	539
	Students	424	396	365	300	248

2.6 Number of Graduates

2.6 The number of graduates of the unit in each of the last five years according the level of degree (first degree, second degree with thesis, second degree without thesis, doctoral degree). Please provide this data in the format of a table.

The table below lists the number of graduates of degree programs offered by the department between 2004 and 2008 (by discipline). Included in the table are those graduates in whose focused program of study at least half of the required and elective courses, and at least one advanced course, were offered by the department (not including basic courses, which are prerequisites to other programs in the social sciences and humanities).

Graduates of the department, 2004-2008

Undergraduate Degree	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Political Science & International Relations						
Economics and Political Science	0	0	0	1	0	1
Political Science and Sociology	3	3	4	2	4	16
Management and Political Science	30	29	28	27	34	148
Management with a Division of Studies in Political Science	0	0	0	2	1	3
Psychology and Political Science	0	0	0	1	2	3

Undergraduate Degree	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Social Sciences (focus on Political Science & International Relations)	6	7	11	7	7	38
Social Sciences (focus on Political Science and Communication)	6	9	0	5	9	29
Social Sciences and Humanities (focus on Political Science & International Relations)	82	84	82	99	96	443
Social Sciences and Humanities (focus on Political Science and History)	0	1	1	0	1	3
Sociology						
Management and Sociology	31	46	36	31	48	192
Management with a Division of Studies in Sociology	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sociology and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)	2	3	0	4	2	11
Psychology and Sociology	4	9	10	8	10	41
Social Sciences (focus on Sociology)	12	11	8	14	9	54
Social Sciences (focus on Sociology and Communication)	1	2	7	3	1	14
Social Sciences (focus on Psychology and Sociology)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Communication						
Management with a Division of Studies in Communication	0	1	1	5	8	15
Social Sciences (focus on Management and Communication)	51	38	63	73	80	305
Social Sciences (focus on Psychology and Communication)	9	4	6	1	10	30
Social Sciences (focus on Communication)	83	90	101	109	93	476
Total	320	338	358	392	416	1,824

**Distribution of graduates of the MA program in Democracy Studies,
by area of specialization (in absolute numbers)**

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
History of Democracy		4	2	5	6	17
Graduated with honors		0	0	1*	1	2
Society and Politics	15	20	23	21	32	111
Graduated with honors	1	5	3	3	3	15
Education and Citizenship	1	9	8	7	8	33
Graduated with honors	0	3	2	3	2	10
Total graduates (thesis track)	16 (1)	33 (1)	33 (4)	33 (5)	46 (5)	161 (16)

* with highest honors.

Today, the Democracy Studies program has five areas of specialization. The table above shows the division of graduates, by specialization. Most of the students specialized in "Society and Politics." No students have yet graduated in the fourth area: "Communication and Culture." The fifth area, "Government and Public Policy," opens in 2009-2010. Between 2004 and 2008, less than 10% of the graduates chose the thesis track; only 16 thesis track students successfully completed their studies.

2.7 Deciding upon the Rationale and Goals

2.7 What bodies (internal/external) decide on rationale, mission and goals of the parent unit and of the study programs, how they are decided upon, examined and, if deemed necessary, changed? Have they been discussed within the last five years? If so, please specify when these discussions have taken place and what were their outcomes? If not, when were changes made (if at all)? How are the mission, goals and changes brought to the attention of the teaching staff, the students and the institution's authorities?

The department itself converts the OUI mission into departmental goals. The rationale, goals and objectives of the programs of study are determined by the senior faculty of each field in the department. Each new course or new program proposal is reviewed by internal and external reviewers, and then undergoes an approval process by the Academic Subcommittee for Sociology, Political Science and Communication, the Faculty Council and the Academic Committee. The goals and objectives are discussed at regular meetings conducted by these bodies, at department meetings, at ad-hoc meetings convened for a specific purpose and in informal conversations.

Suggestions for new study programs are usually initiated within the department. The initiative begins with a rough draft submitted by senior faculty members to the Strategic Forum for preliminary review; if the idea is deemed feasible and worthwhile, a detailed proposal is prepared by the faculty, stating the rationale and the structure of the new program; extensive (written) expert opinion is collected and the program is compared with comparable programs at other universities. The proposal usually undergoes several rounds of revision; it is discussed and approved/modified by the relevant Academic Subcommittees (one or more), then by the Faculty Council and then by the Academic Committee. The final version is prepared for submission to the CHE by the university management. Major changes in existing programs require a similar procedure; minor changes are approved by the Academic Subcommittees.

Other than the approval of several new dual-disciplinary programs that combine political science with another existing or recently approved track, there have been no major changes in the political science program in the past 5 years. Several new courses were added but the thrust of the development endeavor was devoted to maintenance – preparation of new courses to replace older ones, revision and renewal of others, consolidation of course websites, diversification and improvement of technological support systems, etc. Further information is provided in sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.4. A single-disciplinary undergraduate program in Political Science & International Relations has been submitted to the CHE for approval. In addition, a new area of specialization in Government and Public Policy has been added to the MA program in Democracy Studies. The Cultural Studies program (developed in cooperation with the Department of Literature, Language and the Arts) was offered for the first time in 2008.

Through the Faculty Council, the entire senior faculty of the University takes part in the deliberations concerning new study programs or major changes in existing ones and has access to the protocols of the Academic Subcommittees. Information regarding new directions or policies is transmitted to the academic teaching staff at department meetings of senior faculty and course coordinators, and at periodical large meetings that include tutors as well. Changes in programs of study are publicized in the official OUI catalog and website; special care is taken to bring them to the personal attention of students who may be affected, and to provide reasonable transition periods.

Chapter 3 – The Evaluated Study Program
Political Science

3.1 Goals and Structure of the Study Program

3.1 The Goals and Structure of the Study Program

Political science is an old-new discipline, which deals with structures, processes, concepts and values that constituted the core of the political unit and explained its behavior in ordinary times, as in times of crisis. In our study programs, we also include interstate (or international) relations. Although some view these as a separate discipline, all are aware of the link between a state's internal and external behavior. In some programs offered by the department, international relations are viewed as a branch of political science and integrated within one program; in others, the two branches are separated. Students are free to integrate the two fields or to concentrate only on one.

3.1.1 The Evolution of the Program in Political Science

3.1.1 The name of the study program, a brief summary describing its development since its establishment.

Political science at the OUI began as part of a trend that characterized the University in its first years: to offer a broad academic education in different disciplines. Thus at the outset, most efforts were invested in developing a variety of courses in many disciplines, with each discipline represented by a small number of courses. The first course in political science was offered in 1980: "The Emergence of the New States in Africa," followed by "Introduction to International Relations."

Political science was initially studied in the framework of broad programs of study leading to a degree in Social Sciences or in Social Sciences and Humanities. The programs offered in 2008 are described in the attached booklet, *Programs of Study: Political Science & International Relations*. A general program leading to a BA in Social Sciences with a focus on political science and international relations, which had been offered since 2000, was replaced in 2008 as two separate programs: **BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations** and **BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Political Science**. The general program leading to a BA in Social Sciences with a focus on political science and communication (offered since 2004) was replaced in 2007 by a dual-disciplinary **BA in Political Science & International Relations and Communication**. In 2010, another program will be offered: A **BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Administration and Public Policy**.

With the development of required courses in political science and international relations, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) authorized the OUI to offer programs in political science and international relations as part of dual-disciplinary programs. The dual-disciplinary programs offered until 2008 are described in the attached booklet, and include combinations with the following fields: history, history of the Middle East and its cultures, philosophy, management, economics, sociology, communication, education (curriculum & instruction studies) and psychology. A new dual-disciplinary program, with computer science – systems & applications, was offered this year. As of 2009, all dual-disciplinary programs that include political science and international relations require that students take a structured program that includes methodology courses and at least 51 credits in courses in the field.

The table below lists all the courses included in the various programs in political science, by the year in which they were first offered. Over the years, many of these courses were modified and updated or replaced with new courses.

Development of Courses in Political Science & International Relations

Course	Level	Year
The Emergence of New States in Africa	intermediate	1980
Introduction to International Relations	intermediate	1981
Selected Topics in Israeli Foreign Policy	advanced	1982
Democracies and Dictatorships in the 20th Century (replaced by 3 courses: Democracies and Dictatorships: Ideas, Contexts, Regimes was added in 2005; Democratic Regimes and Dictatorships in the 20th Century were added in 2007)	intermediate	1984
Sub-Saharan Africa in International Relations	advanced	1984
Government and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa	advanced	1985
Religion, State and Politics	advanced	1986
Individual Liberties and Constitutional Structure in a Federal Democracy: Continuity and Change in United States Government	advanced	1988
Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union/Russia: From the Communist Era to the 21st Century	intermediate	1991
Government and Politics in Israel (A Russian-language version of the course was offered in 1998; an Arabic version is in preparation)	intermediate	1991
Political Sociology (replaced by State and Society: The Sociology of Politics in 2006)	intermediate	1992
Approaches to the Study of Politics	advanced	1993
Issues in the Study of Nationalism	advanced	1993
Introduction to Political Philosophy (replaced by Introduction to Political Thought in 1998)	intermediate	1994
War and Strategy	advanced	1994
Social Movements and Political Protest	intermediate	1996
Diplomatic History of the 20th Century: 1900-1945	intermediate	1997
Introduction to Public Administration	intermediate	1997
National Security and Democracy in Israel	advanced	1997
Social Movements and Political Protest in Israel	advanced	1998
Israel: The First Decade (A Russian-language version of the course was offered in 2002)	intermediate	2000
Public Opinion, Propaganda and Democracy (replaced by Communication and Public Opinion in 2005)	intermediate	2001
Democracy and Education: The Ideological Dimension	intermediate	2001
Modern Political Ideologies	advanced	2001
Introduction to Local Government	intermediate	2003
Introduction to Political Science (replaced by Introduction to Theories and Methods in Political Science in 2005)	intermediate	2004
Introduction to the Social Sciences	introductory	2005
The Nationality Question in the USSR/Russia 1917-1991	advanced	2005
Genocide	intermediate	2006
The United States in the International Arena Since 1945	intermediate	2006
Selected Topics in Modern Democracy	advanced	2006
The Arab Community in Israel (An Arabic-language version of the course is in preparation)	intermediate	2007
Introduction to Gender Studies	intermediate	2007
Citizenship: Theory and Politics	advanced	2007
Human Rights in International Relations	advanced	2007
Jewish Identities in an Era of Multiple Modernities	advanced	2007
The Political Economy of Israel	advanced	2008
Public Policy	intermediate	2009
European Colonialism: Theory, Praxis and Resistance	advanced	2009

Development of the first graduate courses was completed in 2000; since then, 28 courses have been developed, revised or replaced, and updated.

In recent years, the main thrust of our efforts has been devoted to developing a single-disciplinary program in Political Science & International Relations by adding methodology courses and updating and revising existing required courses and electives.

The academic faculty involved in developing the programs in political science & international relations has also grown over the years. The first senior faculty member in political science, Prof. Benyamin Neuberger, was recruited in 1978. Additional senior faculty members later joined the department: Prof. Tamar Hermann in 1991, Prof. Yair Auron in 2001, Dr. Denis Charbit in 2002, and Prof. Yagil Levy in 2008. The academic teaching staff has grown in accordance with the number of new courses developed. Senior faculty members in political science and international relations from all universities in Israel accompanied program development and contributed as consultants to course development, writing study materials and performing quality control – a practice that continues today.

3.1.2 The Mission and Goals of the Program

3.1.2 Mission statement of the study program, its aims and goals

The various programs of study in Political Science & International Relations have the following aims:

- To promote the goals of the University as specified in chapter 1 and the goals of the department as specified in chapter 2.
- To qualify graduates in Political Science & International Relations who have the following characteristics:
 1. Understand the historical, sociological and philosophical context in which political science and international relations were established and operate
 2. Have a broad and deep knowledge of the different areas of political science and international relations
 3. View Political Science & International Relations as a scientific discipline
 4. Have a deep understanding of methodology that enables:
 - a. Critical reading of scientific and popular material
 - b. Critical analysis of theories and approaches in political science and international relations
 - c. The ability to translate general research questions into a research procedure
 5. Have the skills necessary for searching for material in libraries and databases
 6. Have the ability to express themselves orally and in writing
 7. Are capable of independent study
 8. Are able to read scholarly texts and cope with material in English
 9. Have basic experience in research
 10. Have a perspective of Political Science & International Relations that enables them to make an informed decision as to the area in which they prefer to continue their studies.

A graduate with these characteristics will also have the qualities necessary to pursue Master's degree studies in political science and international relations.

Goals of the MA program: The MA in Democracy Studies is an interdisciplinary program whose aim is to cover the topic of democracy from as wide a perspective as possible. The program is based on the concept that views democracy as a political

philosophy, a political and social system, a way of life, and an educational outlook. The program consists of studies in various fields, including political science, history, law, sociology, economics, philosophy, psychology, education and theater.

The program is intended for position holders in the public, private and government sectors, for teachers and for social activists. One of the major goals of the program is to contribute to deepening education toward democracy throughout the public sector, and in the educational system in particular. The program also provides professional training for those who plan to teach civics. Individuals with a teaching certificate who complete the program will be licensed to teach high school civics, as will those who complete teaching certificate studies after completing their master's studies.

3.1.3 The Organizational Structure

3.1.3 Description and chart of the academic and administrative organizational structure of the study program (including relevant committees)

In keeping with the OUI organizational structure, there are several types of key academic positions in the program: Senior faculty, academic teaching staff (course coordinators), and tutors. In addition, senior faculty in departments of political science and international relations at other universities are involved as program and course consultants, course developers and seminar paper supervisors. The administrative positions include the head of the department, the heads of the sections (Political Science, International Relations, Public Policy), and the departmental administrative staff.

In addition to the Sociology, Political Science and Communication Subcommittee (see section 2.3), the Accreditation Committee and the Study Program Approval Committee, ad-hoc committees are set up to deal with specific issues that arise.

3.1.4 Senior Academics and Position Holders

3.1.4 Names of holders of senior academic and administrative positions.

Senior faculty, Political Science & International Relations

Prof. Yair Auron, Dr. Denis Charbit (Head of Department), Prof. Tamar Hermann (Head of Section: International Relations), Prof. Yagil Levy (Head of Section: Public Policy), Prof. Benyamin Neuberger (Head of Section: Political Science; Head of MA program)

Administrative positions

Department secretary for political science courses: Nira Gutman
 Secretary for sociology and communication courses: Iris Gedalia
 Administrator of undergraduate seminar papers: Ety Ben Ephraim
 Administrator of undergraduate student inquiries: Ronit Grossman
 Referent of the Evaluation Department: Adi Kliffer

Chairs of the main committees related to the study program

Chair, Sociology, Political Science and Communication Subcommittee: Dr. Zeev Rosenhek

Chair, Accreditation Committee: Dr. Aviad Bar-Haim

Chair, Study Program Approval Committee: Prof. Eli Levin; Dr. Zippy Erlich (until 9/2009)

3.2 The Study Programs: Contents, Structure and Scope

3.2 The Study Program – Contents, Structure and Scope

3.2.1 The Evaluated Study Programs

3.2.1 *The name of the study program, specializations/tracks within the program, the campus where it is taught (if the institution operates on a number of campuses), date of opening the program. If the study program is offered on more than one campus, is the level of the program uniform on different campuses, and what measures are taken in order to ensure this?*

Undergraduate programs in Political Science	Date first offered
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and Sociology	1993
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and Communication	2007
B.A. in Management and Political Science & International Relations	1993
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)	2002
B.A. in Economics and Political Science & International Relations	2002
B.A. in Psychology and Political Science & International Relations	2005
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and Computer Science – Systems & Applications	2007
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and History	2007
B.A. in Political Science & International Relations and History of the Middle East and its Cultures	2007
B.A. in Philosophy and Political Science & International Relations	2009
B.A. in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations	2008
Programs with departmental divisions of study	
B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2001
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2001
B.A. in Psychology with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2005
B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in International Relations	2007
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in International Relations	2007
Focused program	
B.A. in Social Sciences and Humanities: Focus on Political Science & International Relations	2000
Graduate program	
M.A. in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary)	1999

In addition to the programs listed above, we also offer **divisions of study** in Political Science and in International Relations that can be added to various single-disciplinary programs (described in the attached booklet, *Programs of Study: Political Science & International Relations*).

OUI students are dispersed throughout Israel and abroad and they learn at a distance. The same standards apply to all. The amount of support provided may differ from course to course and from student to student, but the measurable requirements (homework assignments and exams) are identical for all.

3.2.2 The Content, Scope and Structure of the Study Programs

3.2.2 *The study program and the specializations it offers, its content, scope and structure (years of study, semesters, hours per year and credits) and the distribution of the studies throughout the academic year. Please submit this information in Table 1 (page 14). Does the study program supply courses to other units within the institution?*

A large selection of courses in Political Science & International Relations is offered with the aim of giving students a broad and in-depth background in the area. In planning and designing the programs of study, a comprehensive comparison with other programs offered in Israel was conducted and the programs offered are similar in content to those offered by other academic institutions. This ensures smooth transfer to advanced degrees for capable graduates, and transfer to other universities after beginning studies at the OUI, for students who wish to do so. Because most OUI Political Science & International Relations courses are 6-credit courses (equivalent to two corresponding courses at other universities), the number of courses required for a degree is smaller.

Programs in Political Science & International Relations include the following:

- Required methodology courses that impart a broad foundation in statistics and research methods (**Introduction to Statistics I and II; Research Methods in the Social Sciences** – We are currently in the final stages of developing a course on qualitative research methods, designed specifically for our department) – 10 credits
- Required courses providing an introduction to different fields of knowledge in political science and international relations: **Introduction to Theories and Methods in Political Science, Introduction to International Relations, Government and Politics in Israel, Introduction to Political Thought, Democracies and Dictatorships: Ideas, Contexts, Regimes** and either **Democratic Regimes** or **Dictatorships in the 20th Century** (comparative politics) – 33 credits
- Intermediate and advanced elective courses (students must take at least two advanced courses)
- Two seminar papers
- All students are required to take non-credit courses in computer applications and in English language (or provide proof of English language proficiency)

Dual-disciplinary programs: The OUI offers study programs that combine Political Science & International Relations with another discipline in the Social Sciences. Each combination includes the three groups of courses in Political Science & International Relations specified above, as well as courses in the second discipline, enabling graduates to pursue advanced degrees in each of the disciplines.

B.A. in Social Sciences and Humanities: This is a general program of study with a focus on Political Science & International Relations. It includes courses in various fields in the Social Sciences and Humanities (minimum 18 credits), together with required courses in Political Science & International Relations.

B.A. in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations or on Political Science: In addition to the courses required in all Political Science & International Relations programs, this program of study includes courses in other fields of social sciences.

OUI graduates accepted into Master's degree programs in Political Science and International Relations at other universities are usually not required to take qualifying courses.

Students set their own pace of studies and their progress is measured according to the credits they accumulate rather than in units of time. The OUI does not require students to complete a uniform and defined study program in a given academic year. The only timeframe that students must take into consideration is the semester. Almost all courses span one semester and students are required to fulfill all course requirements within the semester in which they take a course.

The Registrar's Office monitors each student's timeframe. Students can spread out their studies according to their individual needs, but every undergraduate program also has a recommended "accelerated" track, enabling students to complete their degree in three years.

MA in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary): The MA program of study has two study tracks: a research track (with thesis, for outstanding students) and a non-research track. It has five areas of specialization:

- Society and Politics (sociology, political science)
- Education and Citizenship
- History of Democracy
- Communication and Culture (communication, philosophy, theater, literature)
- Government and Public Policy

Students in the non-research track must take at least 11 courses (37-45 credits). Students in the research track must take at least 10 courses (34-37 credits + a thesis). The list of courses (required and elective) for each specialization can be found in the attached booklet, *Programs of Study – Political Science & International Relations*. In both tracks, students must submit two seminar papers, of which at least one is on a topic from an elective course in the area of specialization.

Attendance at tutorial sessions in the MA program is mandatory. Sessions include student presentations and take place several (5-6) times a semester in the late afternoon.

After completing six courses (not including qualifying courses), submitting at least one seminar paper, having a grade point average of 85 or above and having received the required grade in the **Methodological Seminar for Democracy Studies**, students may apply for the research track. Students who are accepted gain the status of "research track candidate" after their thesis proposal is approved by their supervisor and the departmental Master's committee. The thesis is written under the supervision of a senior faculty member at the Open University or another university. Two years are allocated for writing the thesis after the proposal is approved.

As of Fall 2007, students in the non-research track are required to take a final exam. Students may take the exam after accumulating at least 37 credits.

Students in both tracks are required to complete their studies within 7 years of being accepted as a degree candidate.

Teaching Certificates in Civics: Students who completed a BA in Political Science & International Relations or an MA in Democracy Studies may choose to continue their studies toward a teaching certificate in Civics that includes 5 courses in Political Science and 3 courses in Education, as well a workshop and practical training. (As this is a post-graduate program, it is not discussed further in this report.)

3.2.3 Are the Goals Properly Reflected in the Programs?

3.2.3 To what extent do the structure, scope and contents properly reflect the main goals of the study program?

The first two goals of the programs are the goals of the university and of the department. They are achieved in Political Science & International Relations programs in the following ways:

Open admissions, distance learning and addressing the needs of special population groups contribute to achieving the goal of **increased access to higher education**. Despite the fact that there are many higher education institutions currently offering programs in political science and international relations, many students choose to pursue a degree at the OUI. Many special groups in the population also take our undergraduate degree programs: the working population, students from the periphery, Arabic-speaking students, ultra-orthodox students, soldiers, and prison inmates. The learning and teaching methods, materials, study aids and flexibility in time, place and pace of studies enable those with a potential for academic studies to realize their potential. Programs of study at the OUI are based on distance learning and therefore the university does not require that students come to a central campus. Studies take place in various study centers dispersed throughout the country. Study groups in each course are opened based on the number of students enrolled in the course in a given semester and in a specific geographical area.

The goals that relate to **study material development** and **research** are realized through the special integrative learning materials that have been, and continue to be, developed for courses in political science and international relations, materials that serve all higher education institutions in Israel. Research conducted by faculty members in various fields is published in prestigious journals in the field (see chapter 4). The department is engaged in developing technological learning aids that serve OUI students as well as students in other institutions. These aids enable students with different learning styles and needs to experience effective and enjoyable studies.

The specific goals regarding the characteristics we hope to see in our graduates, as listed in section 3.1.2, are examined below:

Understanding the historical, sociological and philosophical context in which the field was established and operates, and having a broad and deep knowledge of its different areas: The program exposes students to all the major areas in political science and international relations. In all courses, introductory, intermediate and advanced, emphasis is placed on teaching the contexts in which political science and international relations operate: historical, sociological and philosophical.

Viewing the field as a scientific discipline: The program includes many courses that expose students to various aspects of the field.

Having a deep understanding of methodology to enable critical reading and critical analysis and the ability to translate general research questions into a research procedure: In required courses, students are exposed to key theories and various approaches. In various, mainly advanced, courses, students read research articles and examine complex research issues. In advanced courses, students analyze studies that contrast and challenge different theories and approaches. Students gain experience in the different stages of the research process.

Having the skills necessary to search for material: All students must fulfill bibliographical training in the library (see section 3.6.4). In advanced courses and in writing seminar papers, students must locate, read and summarize scientific material in their areas of research.

Having the ability to express themselves orally and in writing: Students are required to submit assignments in all courses and receive written feedback. This activity aims to develop students' writing abilities. In several advanced courses, students are required to present an article or articles orally at a tutorial session. This enables students to gain experience in oral presentation of scientific ideas.

Being capable of independent study: The unique OUI study method includes independent reading of materials, dealing with assignments individually and participation in discussion groups on course websites. Students gain experience in independent study through these activities.

Being able to read scholarly texts and cope with material in English: In general, students are required to reach a high level of English proficiency, and must show evidence of such proficiency prior to enrollment in advanced courses, in which most of the material is in English.

Having a perspective of the field that enables them to make an informed decision as to the area in which they prefer to continue their studies: The programs provide graduates with training in theory and applications in different areas of political science and international relations, thereby giving them the opportunity to examine important aspects of these fields of research. This increases their chances of making an informed decision when selecting a desired track when pursuing an advanced degree.

With regard to the **MA program**, although all candidates need a BA degree with a minimum grade of 80, admission is flexible in a different way: since the program is interdisciplinary, graduates from various disciplines (e.g. political science, history, economics, law, literature, and even mathematics) are accepted. It is a high-level program in that study materials are not Hebrew-language textbooks, but original, English-language scientific books and articles. In keeping with its goals, the program offers high-level education in Democracy Studies to teachers, police officers, state and municipal functionaries, and so forth; as such, it fulfills a unique social role. In addition to these target groups, the program is open to anyone who is interested and capable of taking part in this unique program.

3.2.4 Planning and Managing the Study Programs

3.2.4 Specify what bodies are responsible for the planning and managing of the study program. What are the mechanisms responsible for introducing changes and updating the study program, and how do they operate. If fundamental changes have been introduced into the study program during the last five years, please specify what they are.

The procedure for proposing, designing and approving a new study program, as well as that required for introducing changes into an existing program were described in section 2.7. We shall therefore focus here on the design and development of individual courses.

The need to develop a new course, or replace an existing one, is referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs by the head of the department or of the field, who explains the rationale. If deemed justified, permission is granted to proceed. The intended head of the development team (either an internal senior faculty member, or an external scholar who is a senior lecturer or professor at another university)

submits a proposal. It has to state the rationale, define the scope (in terms of credits) and the prior knowledge assumed, and describe the content in detail. New authors, who have not previously written OUI study materials, are asked to submit a writing sample (15-30 pages of the proposed course). At least three expert referees (usually more) review each course proposal and comment in writing. They are asked to address content, structure and quality, and the feasibility of covering the content within the scope proposed. The referees are also asked to compare the proposed course with parallel or similar courses in other institutions, if such courses exist. If the course is based on an existing textbook, the referees receive the book for inspection; in the case of revision of an existing course, they receive the original with the proposal. The head of the development team may suggest referees, but the final list of reviewers is decided upon by the chair of the Sociology, Political Science and Communication Subcommittee, in order to enable referees to remain anonymous if they wish. The referees' comments are answered in writing by the proposer of the course. When the reviews have been collected and responded to, all the information is presented to the Academic Subcommittee, and discussed at a meeting in the presence of the proposer. The proposal is either rejected or approved, with or without changes. Following approval by the Subcommittee, proposals need to be approved by the Academic Committee and by the President before development begins. When a first draft of the study materials is available, it is reviewed by readers (usually not anonymous at this stage) and, at the author's discretion, corrected according to their remarks. The next steps include editing, improvement of pedagogical aspects, graphic design, proofreading, and finally publishing. The entire procedure may last a year or longer in simple cases (e.g. preparing a study guide for an existing text, without translation), to over 3 years for writing from scratch or translating plus a study guide. Sometimes approved proposals do not materialize into courses, often because external writers tend to vastly underestimate the amount of work involved.

Localized updates, editorial changes in existing textbooks, corrections, and other types of visual or pedagogical improvements that do not affect the general structure, content or scope of a course, do not require formal procedures. Senior faculty members are expected to detect the need for such changes and execute them or supervise their implementation.

Updating courses: Outdated courses are renewed and updated. Such updates are usually conducted following a direct initiative of the department (e.g., the course "Democracies and Dictatorships in the 20th Century" was discontinued and replaced by a combination of three new and updated courses, which are equivalent to comparative politics). In other courses, some units are replaced by new ones and updating is performed continuously (e.g., "The Emergence of the New States in Africa") and in other courses, a special unit that includes all updated material is added to the course (e.g., "State and Society: The Sociology of Politics"). Some courses are based on a translated textbook and a study guide. In those cases, we update the course by translating new editions of the textbook and revising the study guide accordingly (e.g., "Introduction to International Relations"). Course credits are updated and adjusted to both the updated contents and the study programs.

Changes in study programs over the past five years: The undergraduate programs in political science have undergone many changes over the past five years. New dual-disciplinary degrees were offered in Political Science & International Relations combined with Psychology, Communication, Computer Science – Systems & Applications, History, History of the Middle East and its Cultures, and Philosophy.

Also offered is a BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on International Relations, and this year a new BA in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Political Science was offered. In the MA program, a new specialization was added: Government and Public Policy.

Changes in advanced courses: In the past five years, we have significantly developed and expanded the selection of advanced courses in Political Science & International Relations.

- 13 new courses were added to the program, of which 7 are advanced courses
- 6 advanced courses were rewritten and thoroughly revised: “National Security and Democracy in Israel,” “Government and Politics in Black Africa,” “Sub-Saharan Africa in the International Relations,” “Selected Topics in Israeli Foreign Policy,” “Religion, State and Politics,” and “Selected Topics in Modern Democracy”

3.2.5 Are We Teaching What We Intend to Teach?

3.2.5 Describe the mechanism for coordinating and examining the contents that are, in fact, being taught, if such a mechanism exists.

What we teach is the content of the written texts of our courses. The books are mailed to the students before the beginning of the semester, together with the course booklet, which contains all the elements that change from one semester to the next – homework assignments, timetable, etc. Optional parts of the text (if any) are clearly specified in the booklet. The assignments reflect the level students are expected to achieve. After the date of submission, detailed solutions of assignments are often posted on the website (and mailed to students who request hard copies), to enable self-assessment, in addition to the grades and feedback on individual papers, provided by the tutors through the online assignment system (see section 3.3.3). Final exams are prepared during the first weeks of the semester. They are reviewed and modified by senior faculty, who relate only to the correspondence between the exam and the study materials and assignments, while having no direct contact with the students (see section 3.3.5.1). Exams are kept in strict confidence from students and tutors alike; hence, it is impossible for tutors to focus (knowingly or unconsciously) on preparing their students for specific exam questions. The students must meet the pre-set requirements in order to pass, regardless of quality, content or frequency of tutorials. Final exams are centrally and anonymously graded. As a matter of principle, grade distributions are never normalized. In (rare) cases, when the grade distribution of an exam is very different from the typical pattern in a given course, or if, while grading the exam papers, we realize that the wording of a problem may have been ambiguous (a situation we try very hard to avoid by thoroughly reviewing exams before they are administered), the question may be discounted for all the exam papers, or students may be given an additional opportunity to take the exam.

All the components of our teaching system are constantly under scrutiny in our endeavor to improve students’ outcomes. Study programs are monitored in two general areas: in program development and teaching, and in the student’s programs of study.

Monitoring program and course development and teaching: OUI courses are approved in accordance with the procedure specified above. Senior faculty members routinely evaluate course contents and courses are rewritten or updated as necessary, as described above. Examinations and assignments are written by the course coordinators and evaluated by the senior faculty member responsible for the academic aspects of the course.

The Evaluation Department conducts routine teaching surveys on every course at the end of each semester, in which students answer questions pertaining to the courses they took. Survey results are submitted to the tutors, course coordinator, senior faculty, the department head and the Dean of Academic Studies. Measures are taken to implement improvements based on the survey findings. The department also initiates feedback surveys asking students to express their opinion about their studies, including course-specific issues. Additional feedback surveys are conducted among all those who completed their degree studies in order to learn how their studies prepared them for work in the field or for continued academic studies, and whether their studies had an effect on their life or outlook. Feedback results are used to examine study program contents and adapt them to student needs.

Monitoring the students' programs of study: Studies at the OUI in general and in our study programs in particular are characterized by a high degree of flexibility. All students are entitled to complete their study program at the rate suitable for them and, in many cases, also in the sequence convenient for them (except when courses have specific prerequisites). Study flexibility at the OUI is also reflected in the fact that students are not required to complete the study program that they began. They can change the program at any time. For example, they may begin a focused program (such as a single-disciplinary bachelor's degree) and then decide to change to a dual-disciplinary program, and finally choose a general degree in the Social Sciences. In such cases, they often need to take specific courses in order to fulfill the program requirements, thus it is crucial to monitor every student's individual study program. This monitoring is performed through **academic counseling** and the **approval of study programs**.

Academic counseling: Upon commencing their studies, students are invited for academic counseling to help them design a study program suited to their needs. At any time during their studies, students can seek counseling from department faculty members or from the Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center. Counseling is offered by phone, face-to-face or online.

Approving a study program: An interdisciplinary committee, the Study Program Approval Committee, examines and approves all students' programs of studies. Students who have accumulated 48 credits are asked to submit a program for completing their studies, in accordance with requirements specified in the academic catalog. The Committee reviews the program and returns it with comments and guidelines, or with written confirmation that the program was approved toward a degree. Upon completion of their studies, the students' programs are reexamined to ensure entitlement to the degree. A degree cannot be conferred without the Committee's approval.

3.2.6 Achievement of Goals, Strengths and Weaknesses

3.2.6 In summary, to what extent has the program achieved its mission and goals? What are its strengths and weakness?

For the most part, the programs achieve their goals. The advantages of the programs are the high-level studies together with considerable flexibility in pace and learning methods.

Undergraduate programs - Strengths

- In line with the program objectives, studies expose students to the myriad topics in Political Science & International Relations and to the philosophical, historical and

social contexts in which the field operates. The study programs provide experience in theoretical and research areas.

- The independent nature of studies in the program develops self-discipline and the ability for self-criticism in its graduates, and prepares them for the type of learning required in advanced studies.
- Open admissions and the distance learning nature of studies offer an opportunity to various population groups, unable or unwilling to study in traditional institutions, to take advantage of high-level academic studies.
- The high quality of learning material (developed by scholars from the OUI and other academic institutions) serves OUI students and students in other institutions.
- The high academic level of the programs in general and of the courses in particular is recognized by Political Science and International Relations departments in other Israeli universities, and enables capable graduates to continue toward advanced degrees or to transfer credits to other universities.

Undergraduate programs – Weaknesses

- Despite substantial efforts to continually update courses, this is a difficult task, mainly due to the small number of senior faculty members in the department. OUI development and instruction methods require monitoring, control and evaluation mechanisms that take up a large share of the senior faculty's time. Despite their good intentions, they cannot keep up with the updating demands. Nonetheless, much has been achieved in this area in recent years, and course websites facilitate this endeavor.
- Most courses in the various programs in Political Science & International Relations are semester-long. Most 6-credit courses cover very large amounts of material, which in other universities is usually spread over multiple courses. Therefore, students are expected to study and internalize large quantities of material in a short period. Students can naturally enroll in fewer courses in order to devote more time to such heavy-load courses.
- Most introductory and intermediate courses are based on textbooks written specifically for OUI students. In advanced courses, on the other hand, students must contend with original sources written in English. This transition from material specifically prepared for the students in Hebrew, to material that, for the most part, is not processed and in English, is often very abrupt, and the skills required to make this transition are not acquired as gradually as necessary. In order to surmount this problem, we established an ad-hoc committee that is currently formulating recommendations for a more gradual transition from courses based on OUI books written in Hebrew, to advanced courses based entirely on articles in English (for example, by adding articles in English in intermediate courses).
- Due to the nature of distance learning, there is a gap between the demanding requirements of writing seminar papers and the level of support and guidance provided students in the writing process. Although seminar paper supervisors provide extensive support (multiple meetings, phone and e-mail contacts), many students have great difficulty writing papers on a high level. This problem is particularly acute probably because some students in the program come from a weaker educational background and as a result require greater support. In recent years, attempts have been made to implement a different framework for writing seminar papers and, in light of this experience, we are currently formulating recommendations, some of which have already been implemented.

- In the last five years, we have added many advanced courses. The diversity of topics is a blessing for the students who can choose to study topics that attract them. However, it results in competition between courses to attract students.

The MA program – Strengths

- The MA program is unique on the Israeli academic scene and successfully achieves its aims in Israeli society. It enables the target groups (e.g. teachers in informal and formal education, state employees, police officers, and so forth), who usually work full time, to study for a degree, and contributes directly and indirectly to the democratization of their work environment and to the growth of a democratic culture in Israel.
- Students in the program take courses in political science, history, law, sociology, education, and theater. They are exposed to high-level academic materials, so that their studies prepare outstanding students for further PhD studies. And, indeed, some of our MA graduates have written or are in the process of writing doctoral dissertations, both in Israeli and in foreign universities (e.g. the Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv University, Notre Dame).
- Updating courses in the MA program is much easier than in BA courses because they are based on original books and readers, and not on textbooks written by OUI faculty. Advising and supervising students who write seminar papers is also easier because the number of students is much smaller and the faculty-student relationship is more informal.

The MA program – Weaknesses

- Because the bulk of the material is in English, students experience some difficulties. Nevertheless, MA students have better language skills than undergraduates, which helps them cope with the English texts.
- The main problem of the program is finding a suitable supervisor at the OUI for those gifted students who opt to write a thesis, i.e. a supervisor whose field of study is related to the topic about which they want to write. Given the small faculty at the university, we have to rely on supervisors from other universities. This is obviously not an ideal solution – despite the fact that it also has its advantages, since it stimulates a lively interchange between our students (and faculty) and faculty members at other universities.

3.2.7 Involvement of Non-Academic Bodies

3.2.7 Are additional non-academic bodies involved in the running and the activities of the parent unit and study program? If so, what are these bodies and what is the mutual relationship between them and the leadership of the parent unit (for instance, the mutual relationship between Business School and Manufacturers' Association or Industrial Factories)?

No non-academic bodies are involved in running the department's activities, beyond those described in section 1.3.2.

Department involvement in the activities of other bodies: Several members of the department are involved in programs offered by the In-Service Teacher Training Unit (headed by Zippora Jacob). They give lectures as part of continuing education programs offered to teachers employed by the Ministry of Education. Department faculty members participate in extra-academic studies offered by the OUI through lectures open to the public.

Community involvement initiatives: The department actively participates in public discourse and contributes to it by organizing conferences, and offering

academic lectures to the wider public. The department has also initiated special community involvement projects. For example, faculty members designed and taught a course on democracy for refugees who came from Darfur, Sudan. In addition, members of the department are frequently interviewed in the media in Israel and abroad on current events related to their areas of expertise, thus contributing to an open public discussion of these issues.

3.2.8 Directions for Future Development

3.2.8 What are the future development plans of the evaluated study program, and how were they decided upon?

We are currently developing a single-disciplinary BA program in Political Science & International Relations, which we hope to submit to the CHE for approval shortly.

Updating existing programs in Political Science & International Relations: Maintaining the high academic level of BA programs requires ongoing monitoring of courses. This will be reflected in updating and rewriting parts of some courses, and others in their entirety.

Recruitment of additional senior faculty: We are in the process of recruiting a new faculty member specializing in Law, who will be responsible for developing a new study program that focuses on Law and Political Science & International Relations.

With regard to the **MA program**, future targets include increasing the scope of the program, furthering the diversity of the courses (e.g. courses in literature, music, economics), and developing the added field of Government and Public Policy, which could make a significant contribution to Israeli society.

3.3 Teaching, Learning and Learning Outcomes

3.3.1 Teaching and Learning Methods

3.3.1 Specify what teaching and learning methods are applied in the program: frontal lectures, self-study, distance learning, laboratories, seminars and pro-seminars, practical training, group exercises, role playing and simulations, organized tours, conferences and other methods. To what extent are these methods applied (% of the overall number of teaching hours, % of the overall number of credits).

BA programs: Our teaching method involves independent self-study of written texts. The texts, together with the support and supervision system, are the components of what we refer to as the OUI distance teaching method.

MA program: The teaching and learning method combines independent study with 5 or 6 mandatory face-to-face, 3-hour seminar sessions per semester and an individual meeting with the course coordinator.

3.3.1.1 Learning materials

BA programs: Most courses are based on textbooks in Hebrew, written especially for OUI students. Some are existing textbooks translated into Hebrew. The texts are divided into study units of reasonable size, which deal with defined topics to be covered within set periods. The material is didactic in nature and accompanied by guided questions. Most of the books include a list of concepts. The texts are accompanied by a study guide. The study guide explains how to deal with the material and clarifies the connection between the various materials. It presents the rationale of the course and the goals of each unit, highlights complex issues, raises thought provoking questions stemming from the material (some of the guides provide answers or clues to answers), and refers students to additional academic material, relevant to the subject of study. Some of the intermediate level courses and all the advanced courses include a collection of articles, most in English. New articles are added to the course booklet and the course website as part of the process of updating the courses.

MA program: Each course is based on a reader containing 30-35 academic articles, of which between 28 and 30 are studied each semester. Readers are prepared from digital copies of the articles, making it relatively easy to update them. Every reader is accompanied by a study guide that explains the concept of the course, summarizes the articles, and includes comprehension questions.

Homework assignments: The purpose of the assignments is fourfold: (a) to motivate learning; (b) to set the pace (each is related to a clearly marked portion of the text and has a submission deadline); (c) to define the expected proficiency (d) to enable supervised practice and feedback. Further information about assignments appears in section 3.3.5.2, below.

Final examination: All courses have written final examinations. Examinations are held at OUI examination centers throughout the country and students abroad take them at Israeli embassies or consulates. For details, see section 3.3.5.1, below.

Technology-based learning materials: It is becoming easier to reach our students via the internet; accordingly, the course websites are assuming an increasingly prominent role in distant teaching and learning, and the versatility of study materials transmitted through them is growing. Detailed information is provided in section 3.3.3, below.

3.3.1.2 Tutorial sessions

BA program: Tutorial sessions, which represent the face-to-face component of the teaching method, are very meaningful for most students, for practical and psychological reasons. The live interaction with their peers and with a tutor has a social as well as a didactic purpose. Tutorial sessions (groups of up to 40 students at study centers throughout the country) are not intended to teach the subject matter. They do not – and cannot – replace the written materials. Tutorial sessions enable students to ask questions and discuss the learning material with the tutor and their peers. The aim of these sessions is to emphasize central themes, to clarify complex issues, to explain assignments (what is required before handing in the assignment, and once it has been returned, to discuss the answers and any difficulties that arose). All undergraduate courses offer tutorial sessions and students are **never** required to attend.

MA program: There are five or six mandatory 3-hour sessions each semester for groups of up to 15 students. The first session takes place at the beginning of the semester and the remaining sessions begin a month later and take place at 2-week intervals. Between the first and second session, the students have a personal meeting with the tutor (who, in most courses, is also the course coordinator) and then prepare their papers. In about half the courses, students present their papers orally.

Tutorial formats

Students may choose the most suitable of several tutorial formats, from among the following:

- **Regular tutorials** – a 2-3-hour session once every 2-3 weeks, 21-24 hours per semester
- **Intensive tutorials** – weekly 2-3 hour sessions, 35-45 hours per semester
- **“Reduced”** tutorial format – a single tutorial per semester

Ofek video tutorials, conducted by experienced course coordinators or tutors, are transmitted live via the internet to students’ home computers and, until recently, to classrooms throughout the country. The system enables dialogue between the tutor and the students. *Ofek* tutorials are recorded, indexed and made available on the course websites for the benefit of students who missed the synchronous sessions. Some courses also offer virtual tutorials via **InterWise**.

Video-conferencing: Tutorials via video-conferencing allow students to participate and communicate with the tutor from any video-conferencing classroom in the country. The video conferences are also transmitted via the internet, enabling students at home to participate and communicate with the tutor via chat. The taped video conference is later accessible from the course website, allowing students to watch it at any time. Tutorials via video-conferencing will be offered in several MA courses in 2009, for about half of the tutorial sessions.

Telephone and e-mail tutoring: All course coordinators and tutors have weekly telephone tutoring hours during which students can call and discuss academic or administrative issues. While telephone tutoring is usually limited to specific hours, the e-mail alternative is always available; students can e-mail the teaching team and receive speedy responses.

3.3.2 Evaluating and Improving Teaching

3.3.2 What steps are taken in order to evaluate teaching and improving teaching? How are the results of these activities used, specifically, the negative findings about staff members' teaching? Does the unit act in order to locate and encourage excellent teachers? Does the unit or the institution offer the teaching staff regular and systematic activity, including courses/in-service training/instruction and guidance programs in order to improve the quality of teaching? Do new staff members receive special support?

Written course materials are thoroughly evaluated during their development, as explained in section 3.2.4. Materials of all courses being taught are regularly reviewed by course coordinators and tutors who use them to prepare relevant assignments, exams and tutorials, and by the senior faculty members who monitor the work of the teaching staff. The students are an invaluable source of information on the didactic quality. Additional feedback on course materials is sometimes provided by experts from other universities, when they examine materials in connection with their own course preparation, or when they deal with accreditation of OUI courses previously taken by their students, or with the establishment of official transfer channels (see section 1.1). We use the accumulated information to improve the written texts, either by rewriting or replacing them, or by adding supplementary material, transmitted to the students in hard copy or through the websites.

The teaching survey: Students are encouraged to respond to a teaching survey conducted at the end of each semester by the Evaluation Department via the course websites. On a standard questionnaire (see Extras, "Teaching survey"), students are asked to evaluate the course with respect to (a) overall satisfaction; (b) assignments; (c) the tutor and tutorial sessions; (d) the course website; (e) general (degree of difficulty, smoothness of running) and background questions (such as frequency of participation in tutorials). A summary of the results for all courses is sent to the head of the department and the Dean of Academic Studies, and, for graduate courses, to the head of the Democracy Studies program; the results for individual courses are sent to the course coordinator and the tutors, together with the statistics of their students' performance on assignments and the exam.

To maintain or improve the quality of the additional components of the teaching method, we do our best to recruit excellent teaching staff, provide good training, and critically evaluate their work.

Course coordinator recruitment and training: New course coordinators are recruited by the senior faculty. Coordinators of undergraduate courses must have an MA, and of graduate courses, a PhD. They begin their employment two months before the beginning of the semester. The office of the Dean of Academic Studies accompanies them through guided visits to various OUI units (human resources, library, computer center, etc.). The department head introduces them to veteran course coordinators, and finds volunteers to mentor newcomers throughout their apprenticeship. In addition, new course coordinators participate in workshops conducted by the Training Department that include:

- **Orientation** (5 hours): Participants learn about the OUI – its nature and key values (the so-called 'OUI spirit'); they study and discuss the essence of their multifaceted position and its many challenges. They meet with a panel of OUI position holders who answer questions and address dilemmas.
- **Assignment and exam preparation** (two days, 14 hours): The workshop provides theoretical knowledge as well as practice. It introduces tools for mapping a course, so as to write comprehensive, exhaustive, valid and reliable

assignments, and imparts skills for preparing exam items on varied levels, for formulating questions correctly, for wording instructions properly, and for defining accurate grading guidelines. The coordinators learn how to critically analyze their own exams and assignments. Participants are acquainted with the process of producing and managing exams, learn about the complexity of holding exams at the OUI, and visit an exam center during an exam.

- **Oracle software proficiency** (3.5 hours): Oracle is the OUI database software. Some of the information that the system can produce is critical for ongoing academic and administrative course management.
- **Website management**: A half-day workshop given by *Shoham* – the Center for Technology in Distance Education, acquaints newcomers with the infrastructure of course websites, and instructs them on technical and didactical aspects of managing course sites.

Experienced course coordinators may (but do not have to) participate in an extensive managerial skills workshop offered once a year (8 sessions), and in various short workshops related to different aspects of their responsibilities. In many cases, workshops on pressing issues are developed upon request.

Course coordinator evaluation: The overall performance of course coordinators is periodically evaluated by the senior faculty member academically responsible for the course. Outcomes of the teaching surveys of the past year are studied (to identify problems that arose, and what was done about them). The senior faculty member also checks the variety and quality of website contents and the coordinators' promptness and accuracy in responding to students, as well as information regarding students' performance (grade distribution comparisons are often a reliable means to uncover problems). Standard computer reports reflect the adherence of each coordinator to university regulations, such as grading exams within the specified period (10 days), monitoring tutorials, etc. After reviewing these aspects, the faculty member provides feedback in writing. The coordinators themselves fill out a self-assessment form, guided by over 150 questions to remind them of points that they may wish to address (they do not have to answer all the questions). The process culminates in a 1-2 hour-long evaluation talk between the head of the department or the head of the MA program with each of the coordinators, in which both parties relate to the findings and set goals for the following year.

Tutor recruitment and training: Tutors are recruited by the course coordinators. Candidates are usually interviewed by a panel of course coordinators, sometimes in the presence of senior faculty. The tutors chosen are briefed by the course coordinator on the subject matter and the requirements; they are provided with the course materials with which they are expected to be thoroughly familiar before the beginning of the semester. The course coordinators maintain continuous contact with new tutors throughout the semester, accompanying them and monitoring their integration into the tutoring framework. New tutors must participate in a 4-day tutor-training workshop during the 1st and 2nd semesters of their employment, as follows:

- **Session 1 – Acquaintance with the OUI** (about 5 hours): Tutors are acquainted with the 'OUI spirit' – the institution's mission, values and work style; they are also prepared for their first encounter with students.
- **Session 2 – Assignments** as a means of two-way communication (about 5.5 hours): On grading assignments and providing effective feedback.

- Session 3 –**Tutoring skills** (about 7 hours): Tutors learn and practice tutoring skills through microteaching simulations, recorded on closed circuit TV, and receive constructive feedback from colleagues and experienced tutors.
- Session 4 – **Learning skills** (about 5 hours): This session is intended for tutors in their second semester; it focuses on the learning strategies and skills that students at the OUI need to develop to become independent learners; the tutors meet representatives of the Study Guidance Center and learn their methods of imparting learning skills.

Veteran tutors are invited to participate in a variety of additional workshops such as:

- The online assignment-system (3.5 hours)
- Effective feedback (8 hours)
- Pygmalion tutoring (7 hours): improving students' achievements by raising their personal expectations
- Tutoring in heterogeneous classrooms (5 hours)
- Tutors together (4 x 4 hours): common dilemmas and professional issues

All the tutors are welcome to attend a variety of cultural events at the university – lectures, concerts, exhibitions, tours, etc. Smaller meetings of tutors with their course coordinator occur on a more regular basis. All the above activities serve the important function of consolidating the group, thus increasing the tutors' involvement and their commitment to the common cause.

Tutor evaluation is based on the following input:

- **Tutorial observations:** Course coordinators monitor the quality of the tutors' work by visiting study centers throughout the country, observing tutorial sessions and talking with students. They discuss their impressions with the tutor, and submit a written report to the head of the department. Senior faculty also visit study centers, but less frequently.
- **Assignment sampling:** Course coordinators sample a few graded assignments during the semester and provide feedback to the tutors. They usually sample more from new tutors than from veteran ones. In the online assignment system, course coordinators can view corrected assignments on screen; they can also receive statistics on grades and information on the time each tutor took to return graded assignments to students. Assignments graded by the course coordinators themselves are sampled by the senior faculty. Assignment sampling enables monitoring of quality and assists in preserving the uniformity of the grading process.

3.3.3 The Use of Information Technology

3.3.3 Describe the use of information technology in teaching and learning: methods, scope, types of course etc.

The information technology used at the OUI includes several components:

Sheilta – Interactive services for students: *Sheilta* is a computerized system developed by the OUI to offer students online administrative services. It enables students to enroll online and receive up-to-date information through various channels of communication (telephone, e-mail, SMS) on three levels: general information, information on courses in which they are enrolled (such as tutorial session schedules), and personal information (grades, payments, etc.). The range of services provided is continuously being expanded.

Course websites: Every course (undergraduate and graduate) has a website that provides administrative information as well as enrichment materials and links to

databases and websites pertinent to the subject matter of the course. The site explains concepts, directs students to recent research not included in the texts, presents topics taught in wider and more up to date contexts, and provides guidance on writing assignments. The site also allows for virtual group study by enabling students to participate in discussion groups with the course coordinator or tutor. The course sites can be accessed at any time, from any computer in the world. All websites include:

- A bulletin board for current administrative notices (e.g. that the submission date of an assignment has been postponed) and messages concerning the subject matter (e.g. that new materials, or assignment solutions have been posted)
- All the information concerning the course requirements, and all the assignments.
- A forum through which students, tutors, and the coordinator, who are geographically distant from each other, can hold asynchronous discussions. Students can ask questions, request clarifications, discuss assignments and receive help from their fellow students and from the teaching team. The forum is particularly important for learners who cannot attend tutorial sessions.
- Explanations of material in submitted assignments
- Samples of past exams

Graduate course websites may also include an introductory lecture, seminar presentations from previous years and newly published articles.

Virtual tutorial meetings: Tutors can post PowerPoint presentations they use during tutorials on the course website, enabling students who could not attend to access the material presented by the tutor at these sessions.

Wiki: A tool that enables students to perform collaborative work. Wiki may be used for creating a lexicon of course terms or for group preparation of assignments in graduate courses.

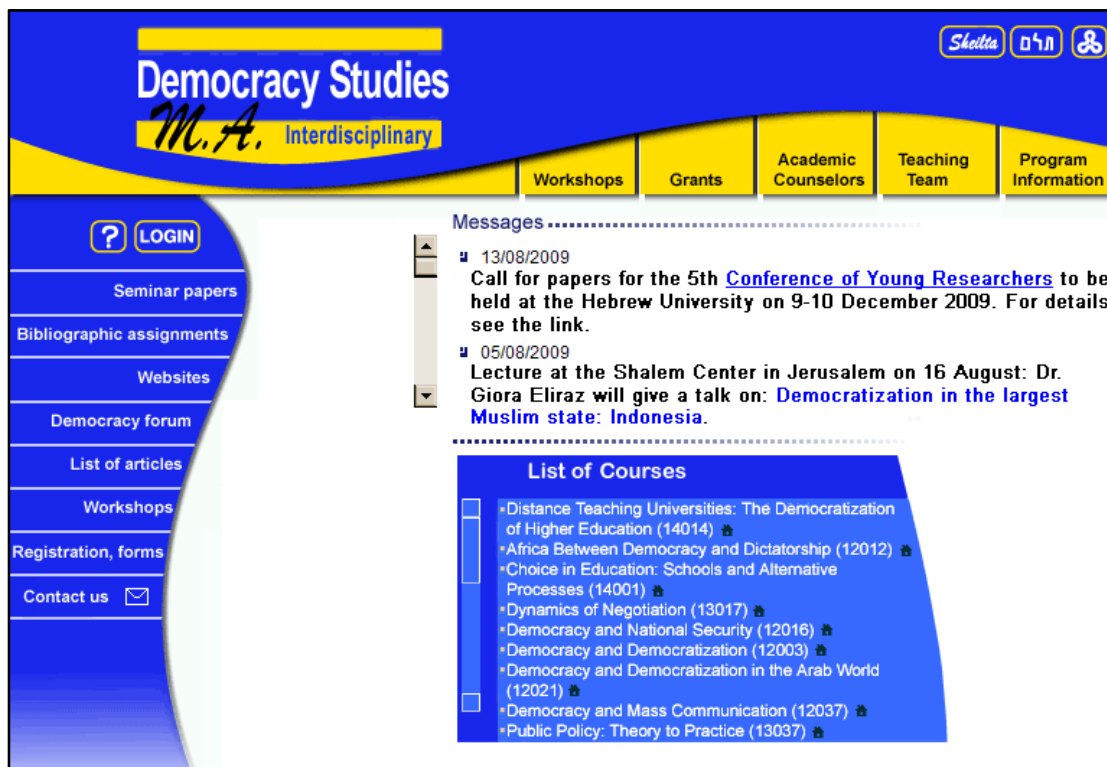
A typical homepage (translated) of a course website is shown below.

The screenshot shows a course website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Mapa, Library, Sheila, Support, Help, Display preferences, Personal notebook, Pe'er, and social media icons. The main header reads "The United States in the International Arena Since 1945 - 10717". Below this, there is a section for "Fall 2007" with a "Discussion group" link. The central content area displays "Course Coordinator: Dr. Arie Geronik" and "Website Coordinator: Yuval Lebel". A "Messages" section contains two entries: one dated 01/02/2008 stating the semester is ending and another dated 09/01/2008 about a teaching survey. A right-hand sidebar contains a "Department website" section with links for Course description, Description of website, Teaching team, List of students, and Update personal details, along with a "LOGIN" button. At the bottom, there is a footer for "Telent - Online distance learning" and "The Open University of Israel" with a copyright notice.

The Democracy Studies website: The website serves as a gateway to the program and provides links to various administrative and academic information as well as links to the course sites. Parts of the website are open to the general public (excluding items involving copyright material and student privacy). The **Democracy forum** serves to extend seminar meetings, allowing students and staff to continue discussing matters that were brought up at face-to-face sessions. The forum is also used for other structured discussions initiated by the staff or by the students

themselves. A special area is available for the students for “chatting” on topics that are not directly related to course materials. The **message board** is where notices can be posted throughout the semester by the course coordinators regarding study materials (e.g., clarifications, emphases, guidance), administrative issues, and professional events of interest to students.

The homepage (translated) of the Democracy Studies website is shown below.



The **Department website** includes descriptions of all programs and courses offered, a list of faculty members, a list of course coordinators and academic counselors and the contact information for all department staff. It also has links to the OUI library, to the Academic Counseling Center and to various student services.

The online assignment system: The system enables students to submit assignments and receive feedback online. The procedure is efficient and permits tutors to grade assignments on their computers. It allows students, tutors and the course coordinator to know exactly where each assignment is at any moment. This easy to use, friendly system helps overcome the technical obstacle of delays in regular mail service.

Video-conferencing: See section 3.3.1.2.

The grade site: This user-friendly site enables the academic staff to extract diverse statistical data on students' performance in assignments and exams, and compare the scores of assignments and exam sittings from different semesters or parallel study groups. It is an important evaluation tool, widely used to detect and correct flaws in the presentation of the subject matter, or in the wording of assignment and exam questions.

Electronic databases: The OUI library subscribes to electronic databases (some that present articles in full text), that provide direct and convenient access to updated academic publications to faculty and students (see section 3.6.5.1).

Ofek – online tutorial sessions (undergraduate courses only): See section 3.3.1.2.

The Pe'er project: Provides free access to many OUI books and learning materials on the internet (see section 1.1).

Evaluation: The use of information technologies in the learning process has many advantages. It enables continuous contact between students and the teaching team, as well as communication among the students themselves. This contact enriches and facilitates the learning process. From the course coordinator's perspective, study materials can be updated and enriched, beyond the written course materials and tutorials. Integrating technology allows for learning through different channels (integrating picture, video, and interactive activities) and can suit students' various learning styles. Nonetheless, there are limitations to the integration of technology in learning and it is not a simple endeavor. Operating the technologies demands an intensive investment of time on the part of the course coordinators, and despite its obvious importance, detracts from the time allocated to their academic work. Another problem that needs to be addressed is the tendency of a handful of students to use the websites to look for answers on course topics, rather than thinking through issues on their own. The availability of the teaching team through the course sites may encourage them to ask questions without first taking the time to work out a problem alone. Finally, reliance on technology exposes the learning process to technological problems. However, all these are minor compared to the advantages gained from the use of technologies.

3.3.4 Policy Regarding Student Attendance

3.3.4 Describe the policy of the study program/parent unit regarding lecture attendance. What steps are taken in order to implement this policy? Please describe the current state of events in your answer.

Undergraduates: There are no frontal lectures; attendance at tutorials is never obligatory. The only occasion when the students' presence on campus is absolutely necessary is at seminar sessions when they present their seminar papers in advanced courses. Of course, we meet with all students as often as they wish.

Graduate students: Tutorial sessions are mandatory (see section 3.3.1.2, above).

3.3.5 Learning Outcomes

3.3.5 Learning Outcomes

Undergraduate students: Learning outcomes are measured by assignment and final exam scores. Assignment scores are weighted into the final course grade, but only for students who pass the final exam. Table I presents the achievements of students who were enrolled in Political Science courses in the last 5 years (the total of 47 undergraduate courses includes all versions of the courses listed in the table on page 28). Note that final grades are computed only for students who passed the exam and submitted the required proportion of assignments during the semester (see section 3.3.5.2, below).

Table I: Achievements in undergraduate Political Science courses, 2004-2008

Course level	# of courses	# of enrollments	% that took the final exam	% completed the course	Final grade *	
					Mean	SD
Introductory / Intermediate	28	31,383	82.3	76.7	79.3	9.04
Advanced	19	7,128	92.8	91.8	83.7	7.49

* Only for students who submitted the required proportion of assignments during the semester and passed the final exam with a grade of 60 or above.

Table II shows the distribution of exam grades for those who took them.

Table II: Distribution of Exam Grades in Political Science courses, 2004-2008

Course level	# of courses	# of graded exams	Grade distribution (%)					Exam grade *	
			0-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100	Mean	SD
Introductory / Intermediate	28	25,819	6.0	20.8	26.8	33.6	12.9	78.2	10.20
Advanced	19	6,613	0.6	8.0	15.9	52.8	22.7	83.2	8.42

* The mean and standard deviation are for grades over 60 ('pass' grades) only.

The mean exam grades in Table II are slightly lower than the mean final grades in Table I. The difference reflects the contribution of the assignment grades to the final grade. The data also show that the achievements of students in advanced courses are higher than those of students in introductory and intermediate courses, and a much larger percentage is able to complete the courses. The reason for this is twofold: 1) though the Open University is open to all, only academically gifted students continue to advanced courses; 2) students who were weak when they began their studies were able to improve their learning skills over the course of time.

Though the assignments are prepared by students at home, average assignment grades are only slightly higher than the exam grades. This indicates that the assignments perform the role they are intended to perform, and serve as preparation for the exams. Table III compares assignment and exam grades for all students who successfully completed undergraduate courses in 2008.

Table III: Assignment and exam grades, 2008

Course level	# of courses	# students	Average grade on assignments		Average grade on examination		Final course grade	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Introductory / Intermediate	24	5,302	83.9	9.49	80.1	9.22	80.9	10.39
Advanced	17	1,572	85.4	8.41	83.5	7.82	83.9	7.08

The average degree grade of the 684 students who were awarded BA degrees in Political Science between 2004 and 2008 was 80.1 (SD = 4.82).

Graduate students: There are two course formats in the MA program: courses that include a final exam and those that require students to submit a final project or paper. The achievements of graduate students in the last 5 years are presented below.

Table IV: Achievements in graduate courses, 2004-2008

Course type	# of courses	# of enrollments	Average grade on assignments		Average grade on final exam		% completed the course	Final course grade *	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Mean	SD
With final exam	6	1,604	86.4	7.66	81.1	10.82	81.8	83.9	7.11
No final exam	22	1,663	87.0	8.10	--	--	91.9	86.8	7.98

* Only for students who passed the course.

The average degree grade of the 161 students who were awarded MA degrees in Democracy Studies between 2004 and 2008 was 85.0 (SD = 4.77).

3.3.5.1 Examinations

3.3.5.1 Examinations

Amount and character: Written final examinations are conducted at the end of all courses. Examinations take place simultaneously in examination centers throughout the country (students abroad take the exams at Israeli embassies or consulates) and students may take the exam at a center of their choice.

Students are entitled to take each exam twice; if they pass on the first try but wish to improve their grade, they have to declare in writing that they know the repeat exam grade is the one that counts. If they fail the exam twice, they have to re-enroll in the course. The OUI usually holds three exam dates in every semester for every course: two regular exam dates (sitting 1) and one repeat exam date (sitting 2). Exam questionnaires are different on every exam date. The exam is three hours long. All the exams are in Hebrew, except in two courses given in Russian, and, with the permission of the Dean of Academic Studies, special groups can be examined in Arabic. Students whose native language is not Hebrew are entitled to an extension of 30 minutes on their final exams in the first five courses in which they are tested at the Open University. Students may not take an oral exam, a take-home exam or write a paper in lieu of a written exam.

Special exam conditions are granted in some cases, primarily to students with learning disabilities or physical problems.

In most Political Science courses, exams have 2-3 parts, with the exception of two exams that have only one; only three exams also include multiple-choice questions. Exams usually include a large open-ended question (that requires integration, or an analysis of, or reference to, an excerpt from either a primary or a secondary source); shorter questions (that focus on one particular topic) and concepts, which only require definitions. Short questions require answers of a specific number of lines. All exams test the students' proficiency and knowledge of the course material, ability to apply the knowledge, and in advanced courses, to present a structured and well-justified argument. Likewise, some of the exams, mainly in advanced courses, include one part that tests students' familiarity with theories, phenomena, events and concepts that have been learned, while another tests their ability to apply the theories and concepts to a particular event or phenomenon that does not appear in the course material (e.g. recent events).

Three sets of exams are written every semester, and great effort is invested in not repeating exam questions. A computerized **question bank** is available to course coordinators, which includes questions that have appeared on assignments and previous exams, and in many cases, includes statistics on them. "Good" questions may be reused, though coordinators are required to include new questions on every

exam. Poor items are removed from the question bank. Not all course coordinators utilize the question bank.

To ensure that all students have an equal chance to succeed, the examination questions reflect only the written study materials, irrespective of what topics arise in tutorial sessions. Students are not allowed to bring any written materials with them to examinations, however in some advanced courses, students are given a list of titles of articles they were assigned, and they can refer to the list during the examination.

In most courses, the examination accounts for 70%-75% of the final grade, with the remainder determined by assignment grades.

Organizational method: The testing process at the OUI is a complex logistical process. It is organized as follows:

1. **Dates** of the final exams: Exams are held at the end of each semester. Students are entitled to take the exams at the end of the semester when they studied, or in the following semester. Students must have submitted the required number of homework assignments to be allowed to take the exam. The exception to this is the first exam sitting of the semester in which the student was enrolled, where there is always a chance that assignments submitted at the end of the semester have not yet been graded or recorded. Therefore, all students are allowed to take the first sitting of the exam, but grades are withheld until the assignment submission requirement is cleared.

2. **Geographical distribution:** Exams are held simultaneously at dozens of centers throughout the country to enable all students to take the exams as close to their place of residence as possible.

3. **Exam questionnaires:** All the questionnaires are prepared by the course coordinator and approved by a senior faculty member, undergo professional editing and proof reading, and are duplicated about one month before the date of the exam.

4. **Organization:** The “Proctor Coordinator” is responsible for the management of the examination center and works with a local team. Examinations for different courses are held in the same classroom. Seating arrangements are computerized, and no student sits next to a student taking the same course. During the exam, the course coordinators (who wrote the exams) are available at the telephone center on the OUI campus to answer the students’ questions referred to them by the exam proctor. Tutors are not present at the examination centers during the examination and do not see the exam before it is administered. At the end of the examination, the examination booklets are transferred to the campus in Raanana where the course coordinators pick them up for checking. Examination booklets are not sent by mail.

Grading: Examination booklets are anonymous – the grader sees only the number of the booklet, and not the student’s name or ID number. Exams should be graded within 10 days and, in most cases, the deadlines are met. Due to the large number of students in the required courses in Political Science, the tutors share the task of checking the exams with the coordinators, but the coordinators are required to check at least 30 exams from every sitting of an exam.

Grades in all courses are on a scale of 0-100. The passing grade is 60. To pass a course, students must meet all assignment requirements, and receive at least 60 on the final examination. Grades are not influenced by statistical considerations, in other words, they are not factored to achieve a desired grade distribution.

The distribution of exam grades is available for all courses each semester, enabling the coordinator and senior faculty member to compare the current grade distribution

to prior semesters. Experience shows that the grade distribution is usually very stable, most likely because of attention to processes applied to writing exams and extensive monitoring.

If, while checking the exams, the course coordinator finds that a problematic question misled the students, s/he may decide not to count that question in the exam grade. In such a case, all the exams are re-graded.

All OUI students receive information about their grades via *Sheilta* and can view a table of the grade distribution showing frequencies and percentages. The category of the student's grade is marked, enabling students to see their grade relative to other students. Students may request a photocopy of their exam booklet, and if they think the grading was unfair, they can submit an appeal in writing. In such cases, a new grader (not the original one) re-grades the entire exam booklet. The result may be equal to, higher, or lower than the original grade.

3.3.5.2 Written assignments

3.3.5.2 *Written assignments (projects, thesis, dissertations)*

Written assignments are an essential component of the teaching and learning process, and their aim is to help the students internalize the learning material and extract the main ideas from a text; to provide feedback to students; and to provide the course team with feedback with regard to teaching.

All the courses at the Open University require that students hand in a number of assignments. These assignments, and dates for submission, appear in the course booklet that is sent to the students together with the learning material before the beginning of the semester. Each assignment corresponds to a particular part of the learning material and appears sequentially, matching the order in which the course material is studied. All the Political Science courses recommend doing 4 to 6 assignments; in most courses, at least 3 are required. Each course specifies between 1 and 3 mandatory assignments in the course booklet. Assignments are done individually and submitted to the tutor, usually through the online assignment system (see section 3.3.3).

Assignments are written by the course coordinator for all the students in a given term, and the coordinators vary the assignments from one term to the next; they can get ideas for questions from the question bank (see above, section 3.3.5.1).

The tutors grade the assignments and return them to the students with feedback and a grade. Feedback includes correcting mistakes, highlighting missing components in the answer, commenting on wording and structure, and providing a general evaluation that may include encouragement and reinforcement. Every assignment has a relative weight that is determined by the course coordinator depending on its difficulty and complexity. Assignments in Political Science courses amount to 25%-30% of the overall grade. The course coordinator may determine that the minimum pass grade for certain assignments is 60. If the average grade on assignments is less than 60, and the exam grade is a low pass, the assignment grades may lower the course grade to below 60, and the student fails the course. Students can turn to the course coordinator to appeal an assignment grade.

Assignment content: The assignments include different tasks that serve various purposes. All assignments in Political Science courses are designed to work on the concepts, theories, events, phenomena and processes studied, as well as to test how well the students have mastered the content. The assignments are also designed to practice integrative discussion on key issues raised in the course and to

practice applying them to events, situations and phenomena that are not part of the course material. The field of Political Science demands ongoing assessment of existing insights in light of changes taking place in local and world politics. Assignments at the Open University not only require students to practice and apply the information they acquire in the course, but also provide students with immediate feedback, allowing them to correct past mistakes, to improve future assignments, and to prepare for exams. The assignment questions reflect the structure and character of the exam questions, and as such, are useful practice.

Assignments also serve a basic didactic goal in writing skills. Feedback also relates to the structure of the answer, its layout, syntactic structure, clarity, reasoning, and use of sources and examples.

In addition to questions, most of the assignments also include a mandatory special task designed to develop methodical thinking, and provide practice in writing academic papers, searching for bibliography, using academic sources, analyzing and integrating content and sources, writing a comparative paper, building an argument and logically supporting it. This prepares them for writing seminar papers, according to accepted academic criteria. At tutorial sessions, tutors provide guidelines for preparing research proposals and are available to answer students' questions by phone and email. A new format, the preparation of an interactive Wiki assignment via the course website, is being implemented in several courses.

Students are required to submit their assignments on schedule, and to deal independently with complex issues and aspects, which is unique to Open University students. A high level of self-discipline is required of the students, and because most of them do not have a campus life (ongoing presence on campus, including regular encounters with friends and researchers), the effort invested in assignments is relatively high.

3.3.5.3 Seminar papers

3.3.5.3 Other - any other methods applied to measure the achievements of the students used by the institution

To be granted an undergraduate degree, students are required to write two seminar papers (30 pages in scope), stemming from knowledge they acquired in an advanced course. After successfully completing the course, the student submits a seminar proposal to the course coordinator. The course coordinator approves the proposal and refers the student to a supervisor, based on the topic chosen. Seminar paper supervisors hold at least a PhD and most are senior faculty members at other Israeli universities. This is beneficial to Open University students because it gives them the opportunity to meet academically experienced and respected lecturers from other universities, who represent a wide range of academic approaches.

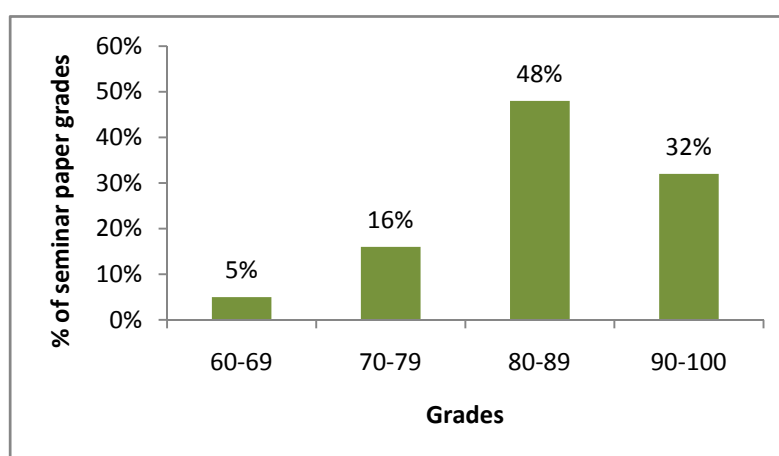
Students meet with the supervisor to consolidate their research question, methodology, table of contents and bibliography, after which they write their paper independently and are required to submit it within 6 months. While writing, they may contact their supervisor by phone or email, or arrange an additional meeting. After submitting the paper, another personal meeting is held at which the supervisor evaluates the paper. After the evaluation, the supervisor sends a copy of the paper, with his/her comments, as well as a detailed evaluation form and the final grade to the course coordinator for approval (for evaluation criteria, see Extras, "Seminar paper evaluation form"). The head of the department also reads the supervisor's report and approves the final grade. In recent years, there have been several cases

when students submitted papers that were completely or partially copied from the internet. In these cases, the matter is transferred to the Disciplinary Committee.

In Political Science, course coordinators do not suggest research topics, because consolidating a topic is part of the research process. However, they may approve a research topic that was formulated in the framework of a course assignment, provided that the proposal is suitable and achievable. Most seminar papers are theoretical papers, and are usually not based on statistical data. Students receive a detailed guidebook for writing a seminar paper in all advanced courses in Political Science (see Extras, “Seminar paper guide,” in Hebrew). The booklet is posted on the department website and on the websites of advanced courses. Seminar papers that were submitted by students in the past are available in the library and in course coordinators’ offices. Training students to write a seminar paper begins in the very first courses, when students begin submitting regular assignments, and is strengthened through special assignments, in which the task is to write a research proposal. Tutorial sessions in advanced courses emphasize analyzing articles, relating to the structure of the article, its main idea, its main argument and how it is supported, and the sources cited. This kind of analysis develops students’ critical thinking.

The pass grade of seminar papers is 60, and the grade is included as part of the overall degree grade. Over the past five years, 2,798 seminar papers were submitted by undergraduates in Political Science. The average grade was 84.1. The table below shows the grade distribution of undergraduate seminar papers.

Distribution of undergraduate seminar paper grades (last 5 years)



In graduate courses, the average grade of the 649 seminar papers submitted was 86.2 (SD = 8.87).

3.3.6 Teaching and Learning – Strengths and Weaknesses

3.3.6 In summary, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning? To what extent have the methods applied to measure the teaching and learning outcomes achieved their goals?

Thoroughness, consistency, and empathy to students’ predicaments are prominent strengths of teaching and learning at the OUI, as is the institutional culture of self-evaluation. With regard to teaching and learning, this is manifested in many ways, including the regular teaching survey administered in all courses each semester and the user-friendly computerized grade site that enables instant extraction of diverse data on performance, such as comparisons of scores of different exam sittings,

different semesters or different study groups of the same course. More complex evaluation studies are carried out by Evaluation Department.

The main weakness is the relatively high dropout rate from courses, though academically gifted and self-disciplined students manage to cope with the Open University's high academic requirements. Because the scope of courses is very large, students who want to complete their degree quickly and enroll in several courses have a heavy workload, which makes it hard for them to submit all their assignments and succeed in their exams. Finally, some students living abroad and those in jail do not always have access to learning aids, cannot participate in tutorial sessions, and in some cases, may lack access to course websites.

3.4 Students

3.4 Students

3.4.1 Entry Requirements and Student Profile

3.4.1 What are the entry requirements/criteria for the program and the actual admission data, including the "on probation" status. Please describe the selection and admission process, the criteria of advancement from year to year and for completion of the studies, including the requirements for being entitled to receive an academic degree. Is there a policy of affirmative action and standards for the admittance of candidates with special needs? In case such policy and standards have been established, please describe them. How are the admission criteria decided upon, and to what extent are the criteria and procedures for admission relate to the aims of the program? What have been the lowest admission data (psychometric score and matriculation grades) at the program?

Undergraduate programs: One of the unique aspects of the Open University is open admissions to its undergraduate programs. The University provides an opportunity for higher education to all and has no selection or admissions process. Enrollment in the Open University is not dependent on a matriculation certificate or diploma or on a psychometric exam. Nonetheless, scholastic achievements at the Open University are the key to success and to attaining a degree. The Open University does not have an affirmative action policy.

Graduate program: The department offers an interdisciplinary program of study, leading to an MA in Democracy Studies. The Open University offers most of its students an equal opportunity to complete an advanced degree. However, in order to ensure that students are suited to the high level of MA studies, a grade point average of 80% in the BA degree has been determined as a requirement for acceptance to the program. Students with a grade average between 75% and 79% may be accepted to the program, on condition that the average grade in the first three courses they take is at least 80%. Depending on students' first-degree field of study, they may be required to complete certain qualifying courses in political science.

3.4.1.1 Undergraduate students

The special character of the studies at the Open University enables students to begin their studies and to progress without committing to a defined learning track. For the purpose of this report, therefore, a "Political Science student" is defined as one who was enrolled in at least one course in political science, and in the past had completed four political science courses.

The population of political science students fluctuates from 1,500 to over 1,700 every year and is characterized by a variety of socio-demographic backgrounds. With regard to gender, there is a narrow majority of males (an average of 55.6% over the last five years). The demographic variety of students in the different BA programs in Political Science and International Relations over the last 5 years is presented below.

The age distribution (Table 1) of more than half of the population of Political Science students ranges from 26-35, with four fifths ranging from 26-45. These figures indicate that the Open University attracts people who are somewhat older than the average student population in Israel. (In comparison, 75% of students in the Social Sciences in 2006-7 were aged 22-29. *Source:* Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2008, Table 8.52, p. 430).

Table 1: Age Distribution (in percentages)

Age	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Below 18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.02
19-20	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.35	0.23	0.19
21-25	1.02	1.04	1.45	2.76	5.60	3.10
26-35	53.68	57.34	57.65	57.87	56.77	53.39
36-45	27.26	24.68	24.68	22.80	21.36	25.55
Total 26-45	80.94	82.01	82.34	80.67	78.13	78.94
Above 46	17.98	16.88	16.03	16.16	15.76	17.72
Unknown	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.02
Total # per year	1,574	1,629	1,653	1,702	1,751	4,164

The Open University offers an opportunity to those without matriculation certificates to study. (All other Israeli universities require matriculation certificates as a prerequisite for acceptance.) Table 2 shows that a fifth to a quarter of the Political Science students fall into this category.

Table 2: Educational Background – *Bagrut Entitlement (in percentages)**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Yes	75.5	74.9	72.8	70.7	68.4	70.3
No	21.3	21.8	24.3	25.4	26.6	25.5
Unknown	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.8	5.1	4.2

* *Bagrut* is the official Israeli matriculation certificate.

Table 3 shows the division of the population of students in Political Science and International Relations according to the diplomas they hold before beginning their studies at the Open University. Over the years, the same number of students (two-thirds each year) who start learning at the Open University, have completed matriculation, or hold a high school graduation certificate. About 6-7% of the students completed their high school studies at a vocational high school.

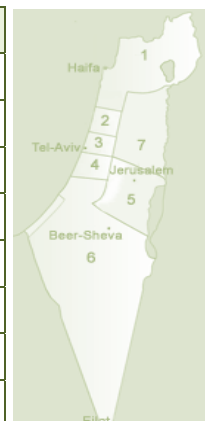
Table 3: Educational Background – Prior Studies (in percentages)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
No high school diploma	2.3	2.5	1.5	1.8	2.4	2.3
BA	5.8	5.0	3.6	2.5	1.6	3.7
MA	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
PhD	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other diploma	6.2	6.7	7.0	6.5	5.9	6.6
<i>Bagrut</i> certificate	53.4	53.0	52.9	52.8	53.4	51.6
Academic high school diploma	6.4	5.8	6.7	6.9	6.3	6.8
Vocational high school diploma	11.1	12.8	12.9	11.9	11.9	12.0
Teaching certificate	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.8
Practical engineer certificate	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.9	4.0	3.4
Technician certificate	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.3	1.9
Unknown	8.4	8.2	9.3	10.7	11.3	10.4

The Open University attracts students from all over the country and abroad, offering them studies on a high academic level without having to travel to the center of the country. Despite this, two thirds of the students live in the center of the country, (about half of these in the Tel-Aviv area), and more than half of the remaining students live in the other large cities: Haifa, Jerusalem and Beer-Sheva (Table 4).

Table 4: Geographic Distribution (in percentages)

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
North (1)	12.9	12.4	10.4	11.8	12.1
Sharon area (2)	21.9	22.6	19.3	19.1	18.6
Center (3)	30.7	29.3	31.8	30.4	29.6
Coastal area (4)	12.1	11.8	14.2	13.5	13.1
Jerusalem area & Judea (5)	14.2	15.2	16.2	16.8	17.2
South (6)	4.9	5.1	4.3	4.7	5.3
Shomron (7)	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.7	1.1
Abroad	2.2	2.6	2.7	2.9	3.0



3.4.1.2 Graduate Students

The interdisciplinary program in Democracy Studies is designed for various students. To be accepted into the program, students must be assessed by the Admissions Committee as to their suitability. In the last 5 years, most (86.2%) of the 845 students enrolled were accepted unconditionally, on the basis of their BA studies, degree and grades, or on condition that they complete their BA degree. The rest were required to pass three qualifying courses with an average grade of at least 80.

The demographic data in Master's degree students illustrates a deviation in favor of female students (close to 60% in 2004), however the gender gap seems to be closing, and tending toward gender equality (53.7% females in 2008). In general, the gender divide at the Open University is similar to that of second-degree candidates at other universities in Israel (57% female and 43% male in 2005/6; *Source*: Table 14, Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel). The average age of MA students is 42.3 years. The geographic distribution of graduate students is similar to that of undergraduates, with over 60% living in the center of the country.

3.4.2 Information about Courses and Curricular Changes

3.4.2 To what extent is the relevant information concerning the courses taught in the study program passed on to the students and available to them, e.g. syllabus (bibliography specifying required reading, exercises and assignments, components of the final grade) collection of the examination papers. How is this information brought to the attention of the students, where is it published and how are the students updated on changes that have been introduced?

Extensive information about the OUI, including course syllabi and programs of study, is available on its website. The printed course catalog and yearbook are mailed to interested individuals upon request, free of charge. Academic advisors are available by phone and in person at all study centers to provide information to prospective students.

Enrolled students have access to *Sheilta* (interactive services to students, see section 3.3.3), and can contact the OUI Information Center to receive answers to their inquiries. Messages are posted, when necessary, on course websites; in addition, they are e-mailed or delivered by SMS to all the students who provided electronic addresses or cell-phone numbers, and by mail to the rest.

Since course requirements are pre-set and clearly stated in the course booklet produced for each semester, most of the messages are administrative (for instance, during the Fall 2008 semester, when students in the south were affected by the war, they were sent announcements about special arrangements made for security reasons, such as rescheduling or relocating tutorials, providing more materials

through the internet, and allowing postponement of final exams. In the Spring 2009 semester, all methods of communication, including broadcasts to home computers, were used to update students on the measures taken to overcome the delays caused by the strike of the course coordinators and tutors).

When changes are introduced in study programs, in individual course prerequisites or in their scopes, all students known to be affected are personally notified, and the implications concerning their individual programs of study are explained. Changes in study programs are never abrupt; they do not obligate students until after they have been published in the official printed catalog, even when already posted on the website. Changes are not implemented retroactively; old requirements that were replaced are phased out gradually.

3.4.3 Dropout Rates

3.4.3 What is the yearly drop-out rate of students from the program over the last five years, and what are the reasons for their leaving (academic/ financial/ other)? Is there satisfaction with the drop-out rate? In case there is not, what steps does the unit take in order to prevent, reduce or increase drop-out?

In traditional universities and colleges, most of the students enrolled in a program are expected to graduate eventually and those who do not are apparent dropouts. At the OUI, the situation is different. One of our goals is to provide a framework for academic advancement to students who are temporarily unable to attend traditional universities. As long as students demonstrate their potential by passing some courses at the OUI, then continue with their studies and complete degree programs, that goal is achieved, regardless of whether they graduate here or elsewhere. In addition, it is difficult to measure dropouts at the OUI because there is no formal time limit on duration of studies. The average length of studies (from the first course taken to receiving the degree) of the 684 graduates in Political Science in the last five years was 6 years, twice the period of studies at traditional universities in Israel. This may be related to the fact that many of our students work full-time while studying.

3.4.3.1 Dropout rates from individual courses

Because of the lack of admission criteria, we expect to have a larger dropout rate in the first courses students take than in advanced courses, and the table below, showing dropout rates from individual courses, indicates that that is, in fact, the case.

The 'no-show' column refers to students who did not take the final exam at all; the 'failure' column refers to those who took the final exam and failed. The information was extracted from Tables I and II in section 3.3.5.

Dropout rates from undergraduate Political Science courses, 2004-2008

Course level	# of courses	# of enrollments	Dropout rates (in %)		
			No-show	Failure	Total
Introductory / Intermediate	28	31,383	17.7	6.0	23.3
Advanced	19	7,128	7.2	0.6	8.2

Generally speaking, the dropout rates decrease as the level increases. This reflects the screening through performance that replaces admission requirements at the OUI.

3.4.3.2 Dropout rates from Political Science programs

The average dropout rate in recent years from programs of study in the Social Sciences at the OUI is around 10-11%. Dropout rates from Political Science

programs are difficult to detect, since students are not enrolled in programs to begin with. The table below attempts to provide additional information on this subject.

Undergraduate students defined as “Political Science students,” who took courses in the field in each of the past five years, were divided into 3 categories, according to the number of Political Science credits they had accumulated prior to that year. The first category consists of students who had not yet accumulated any such credits. The second consists of students who had previously accumulated 6-24 credits (between 1 and 4 courses). The third category – students with 25 or more previously accumulated Political Science credits – consists of students who show persistent interest and ability. This group includes the students who completed Political Science degrees at the OUI during this period as well as most of those who will complete such programs in the near future. The percentages labeled ‘Passed’ in the second row of each year relate to students who successfully completed Political Science courses in that year. The findings confirm, as expected, that the percentages increase consistently with the number of previously accumulated Political Science credits.

Political Science students: Distribution by prior credits

Year	Total # of students	Previously accumulated Political Science credits		
		0	6-24	25 +
2004	1,574 (100%)	65 (4%)	814 (52%)	695 (44%)
	Passed:	67%	90%	94%
2005	1,629 (100%)	62 (4%)	833 (51%)	734 (45%)
	Passed:	72%	88%	95%
2006	1,652 (100%)	119 (7%)	783 (47%)	750 (45%)
	Passed:	84%	89%	92%
2007	1,702 (100%)	104 (6%)	804 (47%)	794 (47%)
	Passed:	72%	86%	92%
2008	1,752 (100%)	87 (5%)	833 (48%)	832 (47%)
	Passed:	74%	88%	93%

The findings imply that the students who drop out are those who have recently begun their studies; once students have taken a number of courses and gained experience in the field, they are more likely to pass their courses, and thus less likely to drop out.

The dropout rate of students who began the **MA program** in 2004 stands at 27%. This may be related to the high level of studies in the program. There are also many students who are accepted into the program but do not, in practice, begin their studies. In an attempt to understand this, the Evaluation Department contacted these students. The responses were twofold: too many qualifying courses were required, and financial reasons.

3.4.4 Student Participation in Research Conducted by Faculty

3.4.4 To what extent are the program's students involved in research projects of the staff members? Specify in which projects, the number of students involved and the scope of their involvement. Is there a procedure for encouraging students to carry out independent research of their own?

MA students are not involved in faculty research projects per se. Some provide research assistance to faculty members who are developing courses. MA students in the research track are naturally involved in independent research, supervised by faculty members.

3.4.5 Counseling Systems

3.4.5 Counselling systems

3.4.5.1 Counseling and assistance before and during studies

3.4.5.1 Describe the system of academic counselling for students before and during the period of study (including reference to the structuring and approval of the study curriculum). Do students with special needs receive special support? If so, please specify.

Academic counseling (undergraduates): The OUI Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center supplements the teaching system and accompanies students throughout their studies. General advisors may be contacted by phone or e-mail, or in person on the OUI campus in Raanana and at study centers throughout the country. Field-specific counseling is provided by course coordinators and experienced tutors, both during their weekly counseling hours and continuously online. Counseling includes guidance in choosing the first course, the study track, specific courses, transferring from one study track to another, designing a study program to be submitted to the Study Program Approval Committee and referral to the committee for the Accreditation of Prior Studies.

Study skills guidance: The Study Guidance Unit offers individual and group training in improving learning skills that contributes to the ability to get organized for learning, effective reading of academic material, summarizing and processing information verbally or with the help of charts and tables, analyzing questions and formulating answers, and preparing for exams. In most advanced courses, and as a preparation for writing a seminar paper, we offer additional training, mainly through a specific assignment in which students are required to write a proposal. As part of the training, the tutor dedicates some class time to going through the main components of a scientific proposal. Since this started, course coordinators have received more positive feedback from the seminar supervisors, who indicated that the students are better prepared for their seminar papers. In addition, the department offers, on a voluntary basis, a writing skills workshop.

Counseling and assistance for students with special needs: Services are provided to students with special physical or emotional needs by the Dean of Students and by the Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center. **Physical access:** In coordination with the Study Facilities Coordinator and the Center for the Organization of Exams, study and exam centers are adapted for students with motor disabilities. Those confined to their homes receive special tutoring and may take the exam at home. In previous years, the department offered individual home tutoring to several students with the financial assistance of The Center for Students with Learning Disabilities. **Access to services:** The Coordinator for Special Needs Students personally accompanies students with special needs and coordinates contact with entities within and outside the University. **Access to study material:** With advance notification, students with a legal blindness certificate or with a visual

disability can receive the study material recorded on audio cassettes (coordinated with the *Aleh* Association and libraries for the visually impaired). **Special exam conditions:** In accordance with their difficulty, students receive special conditions in taking exams, including extended time, writing the exam using a word processor, assistance from a proctor (who reads, writes, copies the exam), various aids (an enlarged or recorded exam questionnaire, using enlarging paper, Braille pages, closed circuit TV, an enlarging lens, etc.).

Counseling and assistance to students with learning disabilities: Extensive efforts are invested in students with learning disabilities. Meetings with a tutor specializing in learning strategies are conducted on an individual basis at study centers throughout the country. The individual training sessions focus on managing time, question analysis strategies, organizing answers, effective ways to summarize theoretical material, preparing for an exam and functioning during the exam. Students interested in enhancing learning processes by using computers and technology are referred to a counseling meeting at the Center for Assisting Technology to find the suitable technology, view a demonstration, train and practice using software and technological aids in their studies. The Center provides learning aids such as personal computers, a scanner, Quicktionary II, a Palm and more. The Center conducts individual training, primarily for students with difficulty processing and understanding texts in English, and in the future plans to offer workshops in small groups in study centers. New technologies are currently being studied in the aim of expanding services to students with additional needs. The University offers anxiety-reducing assistance to students suffering from exam anxiety. Assistance to students with learning disabilities is also offered through the *Perach* project. Like all other students with disabilities, students with learning disabilities receive special exam conditions.

Counseling in the MA program: Academic counseling is available to anyone interested in joining the program, and the academic staff can be reached either directly (through the program's website), or indirectly, through the academic counseling system. Students participating in the program are encouraged to approach any member of the staff, in person, for academic counseling. They are also encouraged to make use of the program website's discussion groups, which are regularly visited by staff members in order to provide guidance. Students make wide use of these options.

3.4.5.2 Counseling and guidance in choosing career paths

3.4.5.2 Are counselling and assistance provided to students with regard to possible directions for their future professional careers? If so, describe these procedures. Are there work placement services for the graduates? If so, please describe this activity.

The Guidance and Placement Unit in the office of the Dean of Students, also known as *Opjob* (<http://www.openu.ac.il/opjob/>), serves as a coordinating body between OUI students and organizations providing academic and career counseling services as well as employment placement services. The Unit coordinates these services and ensures their operation on the OUI campus and at the study centers.

Information published by *OpJob* can be found on the website of the Dean of Students, on bulletin boards at study centers and in special leaflets mailed with the study materials.

3.4.6 Student Inquiries and Complaints

3.4.6 *What are the mechanisms that deal with student complaints?*

All OUI academic departments appoint an academic teaching staff member as coordinator of student queries, requests and complaints. Most requests pertain to matters such as taking an exam after the entitlement date, enrolling in a course after the registration deadline, etc. Most complaints relate to tutorial meetings and administrative tuition fee issues. Below are a number of details regarding the character and number of queries since the computerization of the inquiry service in October 2007.

- Between October 2007 and July 2009, about 400 students submitted requests/queries related to the different courses in Political Science. About 250 of these were one-off requests regarding one particular course. The remainder related to various courses or topics. Close to 90% of the queries were submitted via email, and the remainder via regular mail or fax.
- Students put in special requests to complete assignments for courses they took a year or more ago; to take additional, unscheduled exams (in addition to the two scheduled exams they are allowed to take according to university regulations); permission to submit seminar papers after the due date; other requests concerning study programs, recognition of prior studies, and so forth.
- Most of the requests were made directly. Others were student requests that were referred to various university authorities, such as the Dean of Students or the Dean of Academic Studies.
- All requests/inquiries are answered in writing. In accordance with department policy, the student receives a reply within a week at most.
- If possible, and subject to our obligation to maintain a high academic level, we tend to approve student requests. In special cases (for example, requests concerning a number of courses, serious illness), we may transmit the request to other authorities within the university, such as the Dean of Academic Studies.

Students who wish to appeal the decisions of the coordinator of student queries can contact the head of the department and, if still not satisfied, they can turn to the Dean of Students who functions as the student ombudsman. The Dean handles complaints of students who maintain that their inquiry was handled inappropriately by the department; his decisions take into consideration financial and personal aspects.

3.4.7 Rewarding Outstanding Students and Financial Assistance

3.4.7 *Does the unit take steps to locate outstanding students (including candidates) and reward them? If so, describe these procedures. What financial assistance is provided to students with financial problems and/or to outstanding students?*

Outstanding students who meet predetermined criteria receive a certificate of academic excellence. The list of outstanding students is published once a year by the Dean of Students; students do not submit candidacy. Certificates on two levels are awarded: The President's list (*summa cum laude*) – weighted grade average of 95 and above and the Dean's list (*magna cum laude*) – weighted grade average of 90-94. President's list students receive a tuition scholarship – one course at the OUI free of charge. In 2008, the OUI awarded 290 outstanding student scholarships.

Financial assistance: Students can apply for a financial assistance scholarship, provided they have successfully completed at least one course and are registered for the semester for which their application is considered. Scholarships take the form of

vouchers for course registration. The voucher covers the basic tuition fee of one OUI course. In 2008, the OUI awarded 2,850 financial assistance scholarships.

All soldiers in active service are entitled to a standard tuition discount of 10%; for soldiers in (remote) combat units, the discount is 50%.

3.4.8 Graduates

3.4.8 Does the institution and/or the parent unit maintain contact with their alumni, employers, and with employment market. If data is available, please specify the measure of integration of alumni into the labor market (especially relevant when the study program a "professional" one): where have they found employment, what positions do they hold, how much time has elapsed between graduation and employment, and how many students continue their studies to advanced degrees or other areas (specify area of study and degree level). Please supply the data on the number of alumni who have completed their studies with distinction. Relevant survey of the unit/institution on this matter will be most appreciated.

Of the 684 students who received a degree in Political Science in the last five years, 131 graduated with distinction. In the MA program, of 161 students who graduated in the last 5 years, 27 graduated with honors (see table in section 2.6).

The OUI is interested in maintaining contact with its graduates and to learn from their experiences about the contribution of the academic degree to their personal, professional and academic lives. For this purpose, the Evaluation Department administers questionnaires to OUI graduates that deal with the contribution of the degree to these domains and the general assessment of aspects of teaching. Less than 20% of those who were awarded a BA in Political Science responded to the questionnaire. Of those, almost half continued to further studies, 26% at the Open University, and the rest at other Israeli universities (44%), colleges (16%) or abroad (14%). Of the graduates who responded, 15% have already completed their second degree, and 7% have enrolled in doctoral studies.

The OUI Alumni Association publishes a newsletter twice a year on the OUI alumni website (<http://www.openu.ac.il/bogrim/>), and conducts monthly activities including trips, lectures, plays, musical evenings, etc., for its more than 24,000 members. The Alumni Association contributes scholarships to the OUI.

3.4.9 Student-Related Issues – Strengths and Weaknesses

3.4.9 In summary, what are the strengths and weakness of the issues specified above?

The goal of the OUI is to expand access to higher education to all individuals who have suitable intellectual abilities. However, fulfilling this goal cannot be achieved without a support system to help each student deal with his or her specific needs. Thus, the distance education method is extensively enhanced by counseling and guidance for self-study as well as innovative and friendly learning technologies aimed at compensating for the distance from tutors and the other students, financial assistance through scholarships, encouraging and rewarding outstanding students, support and intensive individual assistance to individuals with disabilities, and helping graduates find employment after completing their studies. Apparently, many of the students who graduated from the Open University appreciate this support system, and when they move on and begin a career, they find their experience at the OUI rewarding.

The open admissions principle, to which the OUI is committed, bears the danger of lowering the academic standards, and encouraging the faculty not to pursue the academic requirements with rigor. However, the teaching process, from the initial preparation of a new course, which is thoroughly reviewed and approved, through the

writing of assignments and exams, is carefully monitored to ensure that the academic standards are maintained. A real weakness of the OUI remains the difficulty to ensure that students who take a specific course of study not drop out midway. To confront this, the OUI initiated a new process to identify dropouts and follow up to help these students return to their course of study. This has already yielded positive results, and we are certain that in the future this will only expand.

3.5 Human Resources

3.5.1 Teaching Staff

3.5.1.1 Profile of the teaching staff

3.5.1.1 Describe the profile of the program's teaching staff in the format of the tables 2a through 2d (pages 15-17). What are the areas of specialization of the staff versus the requirements of the study program? To what extent does the staff profile enable flexibility and dynamism within the program?

There are three main categories of teaching staff in the department: senior faculty members, academic teaching staff (course coordinators) and tutors.

The five **senior faculty** members include two full professors, two associate professors, and one senior lecturer. Senior faculty members are employed under personal contracts (identical to corresponding employment terms at other universities, except for tenure) that are renewed after a period of 3-10 years. Data concerning senior faculty are presented in Table 2A, below. The legend and explanations regarding the table are as follows:

1. The distinction between “Part of full time job in Institution” and “Part of full time job in Program” is irrelevant at the OUI. “Position at the OUI” indicates the percentage of the position in the department (part-time position in terms of hrs/week is irrelevant).
2. The part of full time job under “Additional Employment” is shown as a percentage of a full-time position or as weekly hours for each individual case.
3. The column “Courses taught by the staff member” in the original table is irrelevant for senior OUI faculty members, as they engage in course development and not in face-to-face teaching.
4. As to “Additional Tasks in Institution,” all senior faculty members are members of the Faculty Council and of the Academic Subcommittee for Sociology, Political Science and Communication.

The **academic teaching staff**: The academic teaching staff of the programs in 2008 included 30 course coordinators (most of whom are also tutors): 22 have PhDs (1 a professor), 3 doctoral candidates and the rest have master’s degrees. Eleven are employed full-time (or almost full-time), with the remainder holding part-time positions ranging between 21%-55% of a full-time position. Each is a specialist in the field of the course that s/he coordinates. Course coordinators are employed under contract (as non-tenured junior faculty) and most have been employed for many years. Their specialties cover the full spectrum of fields in political science. For details, see Table 2B, below. Explanations regarding the table are as follows:

1. “Part of full time position” indicates the percentage of the position in the department (part-time position in terms of hrs/week is irrelevant at the OUI).
2. The part of a full time job under “Additional Employment” is shown as a percentage of a full-time position or as weekly hours for each individual case.

Tutors are in direct contact with the students: They conduct tutorial sessions, provide student support by phone and e-mail, and in some courses – individual face-to-face support before or after group meetings. They are mostly hired for a semester. Over the last 5 years, 123 different tutors, with seniority of between 1 and 52 semesters, tutored 1,018 groups in political science courses. Most tutors teach two or three groups each semester. Only experienced tutors teach more than three groups per semester. Data on the number of tutors and study groups between 2004 and 2008 are in Table 2C below.

TABLE 2A: Senior Faculty

Name			Employment Status	Position at the OUI (%)	Areas of Specialization	Academic Responsibility for Courses	Administrative Positions	# of students supervised, 2004-present
Last	First	Degree						
Auron	Yair	PhD	Associate professor	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genocide studies ▪ Contemporary Jewry ▪ Identities ▪ Racism 	Genocide The Pain of Knowledge: Reflections on Holocaust and Genocide Issues in Education in Israel and Elsewhere (in Russian & MA)		2 MA 1 PhD
Charbit	Denis	PhD	Senior lecturer	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political thought ▪ Intellectual history ▪ Zionism ▪ France 	Approaches to the Study of Politics Citizenship: Theory and Politics Introduction to Political Thought Israel: The First Decade Jewish Identities in an Era of Multiple Modernities Modern Political Ideologies Christian Democracy: Parties, Thinkers, Constituency and Religion in Europe (MA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head, Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication 	1 MA
Hermann	Tamar	PhD	Full professor	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grassroots politics, social movements and political protest ▪ Public opinion and foreign policy-making ▪ Peace movements and peace activism ▪ Israeli politics ▪ Theoretical and practical aspects of conflict resolution 	Diplomatic History of the 20th Century: 1900-1945 Introduction to International Relations Introduction to Theories and Methods in Political Science Social Movements and Political Protest Social Movements and Political Protest in Israel State and Society: The Sociology of Politics The United States in the International Arena Since 1945 War and Strategy Democracy - An Interdisciplinary Approach (MA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dean of Academic Studies (until 9 / 2009) ▪ Head of section: International Relations 	3 MA 2 PhD 2 Post-doc

Name			Employment Status	Position at the OUI (%)	Areas of Specialization	Academic Responsibility for Courses	Administrative Positions	# of students supervised, 2004-present
Last	First	Degree						
Levy	Yagil	PhD	Associate professor	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public policy ▪ Armed forces 	Introduction to Local Government Introduction to Public Administration The Political Economy of Israel Public Policy Methodological Seminar for Democracy Studies (MA, also serves as course coordinator for the seminar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of section: Public Policy 	1 MA
Neuberger	Benyamin	PhD	Full professor	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ African politics ▪ Israeli politics ▪ Nationalism / Ethnic politics / Separatism ▪ Religion and politics / Church and State ▪ Comparative politics ▪ Democratic theory 	Democracies and Dictatorships: Ideas, Contexts, Regimes Democracy and Education: The Ideological Dimension Democratic Regimes Dictatorships in the 20th Century The Emergence of New States in Africa European Colonialism: Theory, Praxis and Resistance Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union/Russia Government and Politics in Black Africa Government and Politics in Israel (in Hebrew & Russian) Human Rights in International Relations Israel: The First Decade (in Russian) National Security and Democracy in Israel (in Hebrew & Russian) The Nationality Question in the USSR/Russia 1917-1991 Religion, State and Politics Selected Topics in Israeli Foreign Policy Selected Topics in Modern Democracy Sub-Saharan Africa in International Relations Africa Between Democracy and Dictatorship (MA) Democracy and Democratization (MA) Democracy and National Security (MA) Israeli Democracy - Selected Issues (MA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of field: Political Science ▪ Head, MA Program in Democracy Studies 	2 MA 1 PhD

TABLE 2B: Academic Teaching Staff

Name of Staff Member			Part of Full Time Position			Areas of Specialization	Courses coordinated
			at the OUI (%)	Additional Employer			
Last	First	Degree					
Ben-Ami	Ilan	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arts and politics ▪ Israeli society, politics and culture ▪ Political sociology ▪ Comparative politics ▪ Mass media 	Until 2009, served as Head of Academic Development
Ben-Ari	Ram	PhD	Special contract			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History and Politics in Latin America 	Dictatorship and Democracy in Latin America (MA)
Berent	Moshe	PhD	95			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ancient Greece ▪ Israeli national identity 	Contemporary Democratic Theories The Polis: Government, Succession and Revolution Religion and Politics
Bronstein	Judith	PhD	Special contract			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History of the Middle Ages 	The Formation of Parliaments in the Middle Ages
Dahan	Yossi	PhD	21	The Center of Law and Business, Ramat-Gan	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political philosophy 	Education Policy - Education for Democracy in Democratic Societies Religion and State: Philosophical Aspects
Epstein	Alek	PhD	86	Hebrew University	4 h/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Israeli history and politics ▪ Arab-Israeli conflict ▪ Intellectuals and civil society ▪ Migration and integration 	Government and Politics in Israel (in Russian) Israel: The First Decade (in Russian)
Gelblum	Amira	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modern European history ▪ Women's history ▪ German history ▪ Political thought 	Liberalism: Texts, Contexts, Critiques Selected Problems in the History of Western Democracies
Geronik	Arie	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International relations 	Introduction to International Relations Selected Topics in Israel Foreign Policy United States in the International Arena Since 1945
Gil	Idit	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European political thought ▪ Latin American studies 	Democracy: An Interdisciplinary Approach Democracy and Democratization Social Democracy in Western Europe: 1875-2000

Name of Staff Member			Part of Full Time Position			Areas of Specialization	Courses coordinated
			at the OUI (%)	Additional Employer			
Last	First	Degree					
Gross-Rophe	Ariela	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern history (culture, intellectuals, ideas) 	Diplomatic History of the 20th Century National Security and Democracy War and Strategy
Horovitz	Ariel	PhD	25			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holocaust research 	The Pain of Knowledge: Reflections on Holocaust and Genocide Issues in Education in Israel and Elsewhere (MA)
Kaufman	Ilana	PhD	50			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab-Palestinians in Israel: society and politics The Israeli political system Civil society and political participation 	
Keren	Ella	PhD	100	Tel Aviv University	4 h/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African history Collective memory Colonial and post-colonial politics in Africa Human rights 	Emergence of New States of Africa Government and Politics in Africa Human Rights in International Relations Sub-Saharan Africa in International Relations Africa Between Democracy and Dictatorship (MA)
Levy	Gal	PhD	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship and politics 	Citizenship and Politics State and Society: The Sociology of Politics Israeli Democracy: Selected Issues (MA)
Massalha	Mohammad	PhD	38	Bet-Berl Academic College	6 h/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sociology of youth and adolescence Sociology of education, frames of alternative education Civic education and non formal education Palestinian society 	The Arab Community in Israel
Modrik-Even Chen	Hilly	PhD	15	Shaarei Mishpat College of Law	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International law 	Freedom of Religion and Belief in International Law (MA)
Noema	Meir	PhD	15	Bar Ilan University	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20th century Middle Eastern history Pan-Arabic thought 	Democracy and Democratization in the Arab World (MA)
Reingold	Rony	PhD	Special contract	Achva College of Education	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multicultural education Philosophy of education Education 	Multiculturalism in Society and in School (MA)

Name of Staff Member			Part of Full Time Position			Areas of Specialization	Courses coordinated
			at the OUI (%)	Additional Employer			
Last	First	Degree					
Sarig	Eti	PhD	43	Ben-Gurion Univ. Bet-Berl College	30 6 h/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economics and management in local government 	Political Economy of Israel Introduction to Local Government
Shavit	Zeev	PhD	42	Western Galilee College	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Israeli society 	Israel: The First Decade
Tesler	Rivka	PhD	23			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil society 	Political Participation in Democratic Regimes (MA)
Urian	Dan	PhD	Special contract	Professor, Tel Aviv University	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Israeli Theater 	Israeli Theater: Processes of Democratization in Israeli Society (MA)
Alsheh	Yehonatan	PhD candidate	55			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genocide ▪ Political violence 	Genocide
Litor	Lilach	PhD candidate	15			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labor law ▪ Social rights ▪ Administrative and constitutional law 	Strikes and Lockouts in a Democratic Perspective (MA)
Shakarov	Shy	PhD candidate	55			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public administration 	Introduction to Public Administration
Arad	Thierry	MA	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political science 	Democracies and Dictatorships: Ideas, Contexts, Regimes Democratic Regimes Dictatorships in the 20th Century
Darmoni-Sharvit	Myriam	MA	25	Center for Educational Technology	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civic Studies ▪ Philosophy of Education 	Democracy and Education: The Ideological Dimension
Korenstein	Aliza	MA	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political philosophy ▪ Political theory ▪ Comparative politics 	Introduction to Political Thought Government and Politics in Israel Modern Political Ideologies
Kotzer	Sophie	MA	46	Prime Minister's office		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Russian nationalism ▪ Interrelations between Russian Orthodox Church and the state 	Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union/Russia The Nationality Question in the USSR/Russia: 1917-1991 (BA, MA)
Lebel	Yuval	MA	100			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Israeli democracy ▪ Grassroots (anti)politics 	Introduction to Theories and Methods in Political Science

Table 2C – Tutors and number of study groups between 2004 and 2008

Note: “Employment Status” and “Yearly Teaching Units” in this case are reflected in the number of groups tutored. Of the 123 tutors who tutored courses in Political Science in the last five years, 26 have PhDs, 45 have Master’s degrees (some are doctoral students), and the rest have a BA.

With the exception of tutors who are also course coordinators (academic teaching staff), the tutors have no additional tasks in the institution. Those tutors who are also course coordinators appear in Table 2B. The OUI does not have data about the tutors’ additional workplaces, if any, as they are external employees.

Tutor seniority (number of semesters)	Number of tutors	Total groups tutored	Mean number of groups per tutor per semester
1	14	18	1.29
2	11	26	2.36
3	7	22	1.69
4	3	10	1.67
5	2	7	2.33
6	9	69	2.88
7	4	34	2.62
8	5	26	2.60
10	4	12	1.71
11	2	4	1.00
12	5	22	2.44
13	3	54	4.15
14	4	41	2.56
15	8	87	2.81
17	2	17	1.70
18	3	74	6.17
19	2	9	1.80
20	6	61	2.54
21	1	19	3.80
22	3	60	4.29
23	1	15	3.00
26	1	2	2.00
27	4	29	2.42
28	4	43	3.07
29	1	19	3.80
30	1	55	11.00
31	1	26	5.2
32	1	1	1.00
34	1	4	1.33
36	2	35	3.89
37	2	20	2.22
39	1	12	2.40
41	1	20	4.00
44	1	10	2.00
46	1	16	3.20
48	1	20	4.00
52	1	19	3.8
Total	123	1,018	2.97

3.5.1.2 Specializations and skills required

3.5.1.2 What specializations and skills (including experience and training) are required of the staff members teaching in the study program, including those who teach practical courses/practical training. Are their research areas related to the study program (e.g. do the staff members teach special courses that are related to their areas of research or to areas in which they have gained a reputation)?

Senior faculty: Because of the small number of senior faculty members, the range of specializations is limited and concentrated in specific theoretical fields. This limited range does not affect course development as, to this end, we recruit the assistance of faculty members, experts in their field, from other universities. Senior faculty members have many and varied responsibilities:

Research: Senior faculty members invest about half of their time in scientific research on an internationally recognized level, demonstrated by publications in respected academic journals (see chapter 4). Maintaining a high research level is essential for high quality supervision of teaching and of seminar papers in advanced courses. Many advanced courses reflect the fields of specialization of faculty members who develop courses in their fields and are responsible for updating them.

Course development: Senior faculty members are expected to have excellent pedagogical writing skills, as required for Open University textbooks aimed at independent study. Course development includes:

- Developing study materials: writing new courses, updating and revising courses
- Academic responsibility for translations, material written by external experts, material prepared for course websites
- Initiating proposals for new courses and study programs

Teaching and monitoring teaching: Every senior faculty member is responsible for monitoring the work of several course coordinators whose courses touch upon their field of specialization. The senior faculty member approves the exams written by the course coordinator, reviews assignment feedback to students, occasionally observes tutorial sessions and monitors the course coordinator's overall performance as part of the annual course coordinator evaluation process. Beginning in 2010, senior faculty members are expected to take a more active part in frontal teaching of MA courses.

Managerial roles: OUI faculty members are involved in university-wide management roles. Due to the small number of senior faculty members at the University, each carries a heavy managerial load. For example, Tamar Hermann recently completed a 4-year term as Dean of Academic Studies.

Course coordinators (academic teaching staff): As the carriers of the primary load of distance teaching, course coordinators must demonstrate expertise in the subject matter of the courses in their charge. Managerial qualities are essential for heavily populated courses with many tutorial groups, since these require handling logistical issues concerning students, tutors, classrooms, equipment, study materials etc. Computer skills are needed to maintain and operate the websites, handle the online assignment system and efficiently use OUI databases.

Tutors are expected to be competent in the subject matter of the courses they tutor, and thoroughly familiar with their textbooks. In grading homework assignments, they have to be thorough and strict, yet supportive; they are expected to provide constructive feedback. Tutors must acquire the computer skills needed to grade online assignments and participate in discussions on the course websites. In addition to their teaching skills, tutors are also selected on the basis of geographic constraints.

3.5.1.3 Steps to ensure that staff members are updated

3.5.1.3 What steps are taken to ensure that staff members are updated, academically and professionally, with regard to the program?

Senior faculty members are updated in their area of expertise by virtue of their on-going scientific research, which involves participation in and organization of seminars and conferences in Israel and abroad, collaboration with colleagues from other universities, reading relevant new literature, publishing in refereed journals, etc. Several of the **course coordinators**, most notably those among them who are studying toward a PhD or already have a PhD, are also active in research, and are similarly updated professionally. Moreover, each course coordinator is subject to the professional supervision of one of the senior faculty members. Some course coordinators work closely with course writers and are involved in course development, revision and updating. In addition, to help course coordinators remain academically updated, the OUI encourages advanced studies by covering tuition fees and enabling time off for studies. Course coordinators holding PhDs may apply for grants offered by the Research Authority to cover travel expenses to professional conferences, and for research funds, or paid leaves of absence to advance ongoing research projects.

Course coordinators are responsible for overseeing the **tutors'** professional work and for enriching their knowledge and skills. Some coordinators conduct professional discussions on the course website tutor forum, a channel that enables discussion, support and sharing of material among tutors. The coordinators send tutors grading criteria and answers to assignments. They hold meetings with the tutors before the semester begins to discuss issues pertaining to the material and previous exam results and to address issues that arose in the previous semester. Some coordinators provide up to date articles and organize professional symposia that include lectures or workshops with experts in the field. The means to ensure the additional qualities and skills of the teaching staff are careful recruitment, proper training and serious evaluation, as described in section 3.3.2.

Each semester, a variety of workshops is offered to veteran tutors on a wide range of topics such as dealing with a heterogeneous group, effective use of presentations, learning skills, effective use of voice, dealing with professional burn-out, and so forth. A list of workshops offered is sent to tutors at the beginning of the semester, allowing them to select and participate in the workshops that interest them. Usually about 100 veteran tutors (in all the fields of study at the Open University) participate in the workshops each semester.

3.5.1.4 Rules, criteria and procedures for appointments

3.5.1.4 What are the rules, criteria and procedures for appointing the head of the study program and the staff, including tenure and promotion, the standard duration of service at each position, renewal of appointment in elected positions and dismissals? Are you satisfied with these procedures?

The **Head of the Department** is appointed by the president, usually for a three-year term. Criteria are ability, seniority and rank.

The **Head of the Program** is appointed by the president, from among the senior faculty members in political science.

The **senior faculty** recruitment procedure was described in section 2.3. Nomination and promotion procedures are similar to those at other universities, and research

output is crucial; for details, see Rules and Procedures, 'Appointments' (in Hebrew). There is no tenure at the OUI.

Course coordinators: After consultation with the head of the field and the senior faculty member responsible for the course, the department head appoints the course coordinator, subject to the approval of the Dean of Academic Studies and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Tutors are employed based on a short-term (semester) contract, though many of them have been tutors for many years. Currently, the University and representatives of the tutors are negotiating new terms aimed at improving the employment conditions of this group. Further details on the recruitment of **academic teaching staff** are in section 3.5.1.8, below.

3.5.1.5 Head of the study program – Role description and credentials

3.5.1.5 What is the definition of the position of the head of the study program? What credentials (experience and education) are required for this position?

The head of the program (Prof. Benyamin Neuberger) is a member of the senior faculty. He works in close collaboration with the department head. He is responsible for development and updating the political science program in close collaboration with the other senior faculty members. This includes initiating new study tracks, decisions concerning new course development as well as updating and revising existing courses. Together with the head of the department, the program head is responsible for recruiting senior faculty and course coordinators, and for initiatives aimed at improving the quality of teaching and services to students. He also represents the program within the University.

3.5.1.6 Definition of employment

3.5.1.6 How is full employment defined in the institution for senior and junior staff, and how many hours are they required to teach in each of the study programs?

Senior faculty members hold full-time positions. The pedagogical component of their role typically involves the writing and development of new courses, advising students on seminar papers and overseeing all teaching components, not face-to-face teaching.

Course coordinators are appointed and promoted according to clear criteria set by the university. This system of employment has four ranks, with promotion from one rank to the next depending on education, research and contribution to course development.

Tutors are employed at the Open University on a per-semester basis. This will be partially changed following the negotiations mentioned above. Their remuneration depends on the number of tutoring hours and further specific responsibilities (e.g., the number of assignments and exams that they check). While there is no advancement track for tutors, most continuing tutors do receive raises.

3.5.1.7 Seminar and thesis advisors

3.5.1.7 Are staff members obliged to serve as advisors for final projects, theses and dissertations? Are there criteria for assigning advisors to the above-mentioned papers and projects?

Senior faculty members and those among the teaching staff holding PhDs serve as undergraduate seminar advisors in their areas of expertise. Senior faculty serve as thesis supervisors for graduate students in the MA program.

3.5.1.8 Recruiting and absorbing teaching staff

3.5.1.8 What is the policy regarding recruiting and absorbing teaching staff (senior as well as junior) and what are the plans for the future recruitment to the study program? How are these plans made and by whom?

Senior faculty: Planned recruitment and absorption of senior faculty is discussed in the President's five-year plan according to future directions of teaching development.

Course coordinators are recruited by the senior faculty according to the teaching needs of the various courses. When the need to recruit a new course coordinator arises (either because someone is leaving or because a new course is offered), a search is conducted to find suitable candidates both informally (through colleagues at other universities) and by publishing ads in newspapers. Candidates must hold at least a master's degree, with a preference for doctoral students. Requirements include acquaintance with the relevant field, teaching experience, management skills, good interpersonal skills and reasonable computer and Internet skills. Course coordinator recruitment is subject to the approval of the Dean of Academic Studies.

Tutors are recruited by the course coordinators. The search procedure is similar to that of course coordinators.

3.5.2 Technical and Administrative Staff

3.5.2 Describe the technical and administrative staff, including the number of staff members and their job descriptions. What kind of support does the technical and administrative staff provide for the academic activity?

The department has three secretaries, who provide general secretarial services to the members of the department (particularly, to the head), and serve as the liaison between the central administrative units of the OUI and the course coordinators.

3.5.3 Human Resources – Strengths and Weaknesses

3.5.3 In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the human resources (teaching staff, technical and administrative staff)?

One of the major strengths is the serious attitude toward the recruitment and training processes. Effective distance teaching requires careful recruitment, training, overseeing, monitoring, feedback and evaluation processes. The University pays serious attention to these issues; as a result the academic standards are maintained, the tutoring level is high and the ongoing contact with students – extensive. The students, in turn, express general satisfaction regarding their various contacts with the academic staff.

One of the prominent weaknesses stems from the heavy burden placed on senior faculty members with regard to development, supervision, research and management that has reduced the amount of direct contact that they have with the students. The university, aware of this problem, introduced new rules during 2009 to help strengthen the bond between senior faculty and students by way of guiding students through their papers, and frontal teaching.

Within the department, the status of course coordinators is a source of ongoing tension between the coordinators and senior faculty. This tension is caused by a number of factors: lack of stable employment for all coordinators; frustration at not being included as senior faculty; job focus on teaching with few resources for research, functional work distribution, and so forth. In order to deal with these tensions, the university is developing tools that will allow the advancement of course coordinators so they can focus more on research, in addition to the current effort to increase the stability of positions and modify the employment hierarchy.

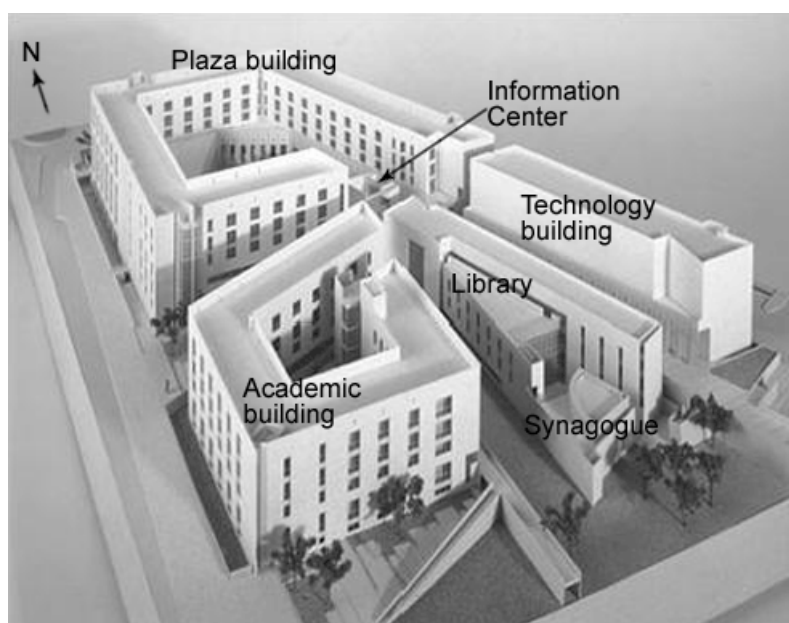
3.6 Infrastructure

3.6.1 Administration

3.6.1.1 Location

3.6.1.1 What is the physical location of the unit in the institution, in which building is it located, and where does the study program under evaluation operate? Do other study programs share the building?

The Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication is located in 31 offices on the first floor of the Academic Building on the Raanana Campus (see model below). A conference room seating about 15, always available for meetings of the staff, is located near to the department office.



Model of the Open University Campus, Raanana

3.6.1.2 The secretariat

3.6.1.2 What is the location of the secretariat/administration of the parent unit? Does the study program under evaluation have a separate secretariat?

The department office is located on the first floor of the Academic Building, room 41. The office of the head of the department is in room 21.

3.6.1.3 Academic staff offices

3.6.1.3 How many rooms serve the academic staff (senior, junior and external) and technical staff of the program, and what equipment is available in each room?

Senior faculty members have their own offices; most academic teaching staff members share offices (one office for two staff members), six have individual (smaller) rooms. Standard office furniture includes a desk, a computer for each occupant, wall cabinets and bookshelves. On every floor, there is a technical services room with a network printer, photocopier and an outgoing mailbox; and a kitchenette with a coffee machine and a sink that also serves as a shelter.

3.6.2 Classes

3.6.2.1 Classrooms and equipment

3.6.2.1 How many classrooms, seminar rooms, rooms for group activities, and auditoria serve the study program, how many seats do they have, and what is the equipment can in each room /classroom/auditorium (including reference to the possibility of using personal laptop computers on campus).

Face-to-face study activities (tutorial sessions) in political science courses are held in study centers throughout the country (see table below). A limited number of study activities take place in ten classrooms on the Raanana campus. In most cases, classrooms are furnished with desks for two and sometimes with chair-desks, most without access to electric outlets or to the Internet. All study centers have a cafeteria and restrooms. All classrooms are used for all OUI courses, allocated according to the nation-wide dispersion of students at the OUI.

Study centers: The Open University functions in 50 study centers throughout the country. Not all study centers are opened every semester; study centers are opened each semester in response to the number of students enrolled in each course in each area. In 2008, tutorial sessions in Political Science courses (for all OUI students who took them) were held at 33 study centers and abroad (see table and map below). In 2008, 5,954 undergraduate students (including 115 students living abroad) took 34 political science courses (8,746 course enrollments) and 207 students (including 9 students living abroad) took 23 graduate courses (429 enrollments) held in 9 study centers.

Study Centers and Groups, Political Science Courses, 2008

Study Center	# of Courses *	# of Groups	# of Enrollments	# of Students **
Carmiel, The Open University	1	1	5	5
Kiryat Haim, Eshkol Payis	4	4	63	50
Haifa, Beit Biram	12	16	292	229
Tiberias, The Open University	1	1	13	13
Nazareth Study Center ***	4	5	69	59
Afula, El-Mustaqbal College ***	1	1	19	19
Afula, The Open University	2	2	30	24
Givat Haviva, Wadi Ara ***	6	8	158	126
Netanya	1	1	16	16
Beit Berl College	7	32	951	857
Raanana, The Open University Campus	3	3	13	12
Ra'anana College	10	13	319	240
Hakfar Hayarok	2	2	41	41
Petah Tiqva College, Gissin	10	13	301	258
Tel Aviv, Tichon Hadash	8	8	125	121
The Open University, Ramat Aviv Campus	21	45	1,033	856
Tel Aviv, Alliance High School	32	71	1,585	1,175
Tel Aviv, Southern Railway Station (railway employees)	2	2	43	24
Ramat Gan College, Armonim	19	63	1,361	908
Bat Yam College	5	5	113	108
Rishon Le'Zion, Science College	8	9	206	150
Nes Ziona	2	2	31	31

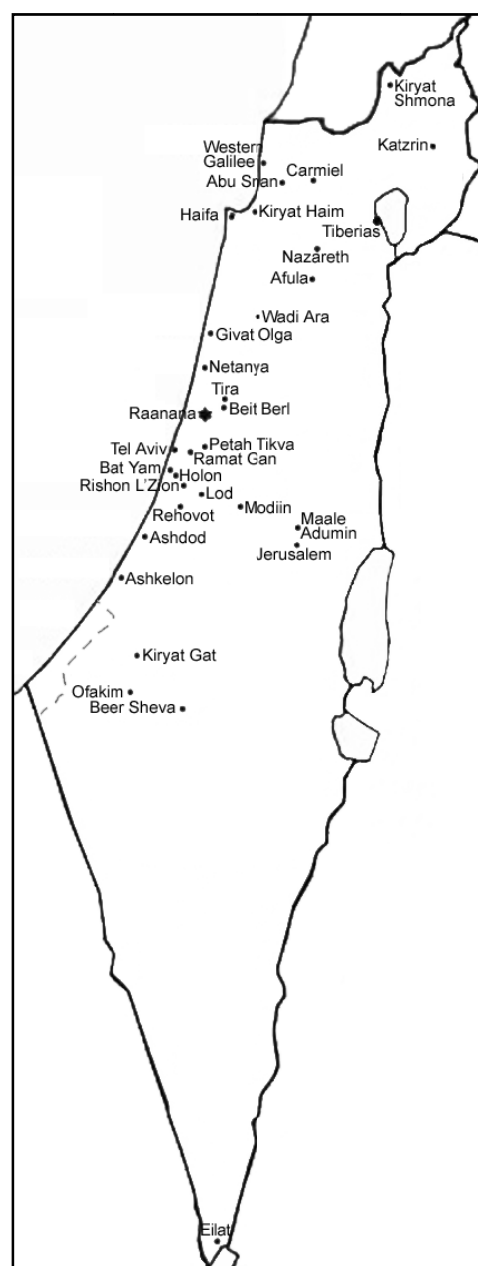
* In some study centers, more than one group is opened for a specific course.

** "Students" here are not what we defined in this report as "Political Science students," but rather all OUI students who took Political Science courses in 2008.

*** Studies are held in Arabic.

Study Center	# of Courses	# of Groups	# of Enrollments	# of Students
Rehovot College	10	12	186	124
Lod College	1	1	11	11
Ramla, The Open University	1	1	10	10
Shoham (Modi'in)	1	1	15	15
Maale Adumim Regional College	1	1	12	12
Jerusalem, Haohalim Campus	1	1	12	12
Jerusalem, "Technological Garden"	18	39	914	647
Ashdod College	7	7	81	69
Beer Sheva, Beit Yatziv	12	13	211	165
Ofek	3	3	81	80
Special	28	28	194	104
Countrywide	3	3	22	21
Abroad	29	54	210	115
Total	34	471	8,746	5,954

Over the last five years, political science studies were carried out in every one of the Open University's study centers throughout the country. In 19 of the centers, study groups in political science courses were opened in each of the last five years; in another 14 centers, study groups were opened in two to four of the last five years. The rest of the study centers opened groups in one of the last five years. These figures indicate that political science studies are accessible to students throughout the country.



Distribution of study centers

3.6.2.2 Additional facilities

3.6.2.2 Do the parent unit and study program have access to additional facilities for special purposes, e.g. conference rooms, study centres, research centres and meeting rooms? If teaching activities take place outside the campus, please specify which activities and the frameworks in which they are carried out.

The OUI campus has two lecture halls (70-150 seats), one large auditorium (350 seats) and 26 conference rooms (12-20 seats), allocated to the departments upon demand. The conference rooms (used for committees, seminars, presentations, interviews, etc.) have an infrastructure for audio-visual equipment and an Internet connection, as well as a coffee corner. Conference rooms must be reserved in advance and the equipment needed (if any) has to be specified. Facilities for different types of meetings are also available at the large OUI study centers in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Beer Sheva, and Givat Haviva.

The OUI also runs Beit Daniel, a lovely retreat on Mount Carmel near Zichron Yaakov, where it hosts conferences, workshops and seminars.

3.6.3 Computer Layout

3.6.3 Computerization

Open University students use personal computers. The OUI provides software to students according to the requirements of the various courses. The software programs are licensed and usually downloaded from the Internet. The academic teaching staff provides support on content issues. Computer classrooms located on campus and in the large study centers are available for students' use.

3.6.3.1 The institutional computer system

3.6.3.1 Please specify the institutional and unit computer lay-out, and how it serves the parent unit and the study program.

Communication: A three-layer Local-Area-Network (LAN), with backbone bandwidth of 2-4 gigabits/second, spread over the buildings on the campus: Edge switches (operating at layer II) on the users' floors, aggregation switches (operating at layer III) at the building level and core switches (also operating at layer III) at the campus level. Fast Ethernet links (100 megabits/second) or (where needed) Gigabit Ethernet links (1000 megabits/second) connect end-users' workstations to the LAN. A Wide-Area-Network (WAN) (1/4-4 megabits/second) connects the OUI regional campuses. The OUI is connected to the Israel Academic Network (ILAN) and through this network to the Internet via a 150 Mbps line, with a 34 Mbps backup line. The OUI provides secure remote access communication (VPN – virtual private network) to all employees that need such communication. Wireless networks (WLANs) are installed in Raanana and in the regional campuses that provide users access to specific computer services through a personal computer with a wireless adapter. The wireless network covers all public and students areas such as the library, classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls.

Security: The network is secured using several layers of firewalls and related security solutions.

Computer services: Intra-organizational e-mail, online schedule management and shared activities, based on the MS-Exchange system; Internet e-mail; access to Internet websites and other services; file servers for central and backed-up storage of personal and departmental documents; printing services for the variety of printers on campus; a secure system for remote access (VPN) to organizational computer services and to OUI information system services.

Computer support: The OUI Computer Center support unit provides periodic workshops on different levels on various applications, and extends personal trouble shooting support upon demand. The help desk can be reached by phone or e-mail. Its response is quick, courteous and efficient. With permission, the help desk takes control of the user's computer and solves most problems instantaneously, online. Faulty equipment is replaced in no time. Users who connect to the OUI system from their home computers receive similar support services.

3.6.3.2 Computers and computer laboratories

3.6.3.2 How many computer labs serve the students in the program, and how many computers are there in each lab? Specify the existing hardware and software, and state if it includes special hardware and/or software.

Computers connected to the internet are available in the study centers to students who do not have access from their homes. There are computer labs in the larger study centers.

3.6.4 Laboratories

3.6.4 Laboratories

Political Science students do not use the campus laboratories.

3.6.5 Library

3.6.5 Library and Information Technology (IT)

3.6.5.1 Description

3.6.5.1 Describe the library, which serves the students and the teaching staff of the study program: location, physical structure, number of titles according to subjects, journals and e-journals, computerised databases, number of obligatory books relative to the number of students, opening hours, number of seats, number of computers, the library's professional staff and their qualifications. To what extent do the students receive assistance and guidance in the library, the ability of students and teaching staff to use the databases from outside the library? Specify likewise the policy guiding the purchase of material for the library: who make the decisions with regard to the purchase of books, journals, computerised databases etc. and based on which recommendations/requirements, what are the procedures for updating the library, is there a clear and well-defined budget for the library?

The Open University's central library offers reference, loan and information services to students, faculty and administrative staff. The library collection includes all OUI publications (study units, video and audio cassettes); collections of books, journals and CDs; a digital collection of 31 bibliographic databases and 23 full-text databases, 29,627 electronic journals (unique titles), digital books, an exam database, a course reader database, a database of sample chapters from OUI course books, etc.

Location: The library occupies a four-storey building on the OUI campus in Raanana, spanning a total area of 2,000 sq. meters. The library has reading halls (54 seats and 17 computer stations), a training classroom (15 computer stations), a multimedia room, multimedia storerooms and staff offices.

Library hours: Three days a week from 09:00-16:30, twice a week from 09:00-19:30 and on Fridays from 09:00-13:00.

Library staff: 17 librarians with academic degrees in library and information studies; most also hold graduate degrees.

Training: Before the students take advanced courses, they are required to participate in bibliographic training. This training focuses on the general use of the library and on searches for material when writing seminar papers. The training includes use of all library components and emphasizes searching in catalogs and

electronic databases. It is offered in two formats – face-to-face training (at the Raanana campus and large study centers throughout the country) and home training through courseware developed by the library. The courseware includes tests on the material; it calculates the student's grade and updates the student's record for purposes of tracking student participation.

Assistance: Librarians offer advisory services and assistance to students and faculty in searching for information using electronic resources during all library hours. Distance services (online and telephone) that support students and faculty in searching for information are provided 45 hours a week. The library provides photocopying services (for a fee): book sections and articles are scanned and e-mailed to students upon request.

Acquisitions policy: Acquisitions can be initiated by an academic staff member or the library staff, subject to the approval of the relevant department head or the Dean of Academic Studies. The OUI policy for developing the library collection states that the library will purchase books, periodicals and databases that are relevant to OUI development and to the disciplines taught, taking into consideration the available inter-library loan services.

Updated information about databases arrives from publishers and suppliers through MALMAD – Israel Center for Digital Information Services (the Israeli University Libraries' Consortium). New databases are usually received for a trial period during which the librarians and faculty examine their quality and suitability to their research needs or to the unique needs of the OUI. They are acquired only if the librarians and faculty members recommend them.

The library and faculty members are updated on new books and periodicals through bibliographic publications as well as through publishers and suppliers. The library regularly informs the staff of recently acquired items.

The Library Committee, composed of the Director of the Library and senior faculty members representing the disciplines taught by the OUI, provides assistance in all issues pertaining to acquisition policy, updating the library and development of the library collection.

The collection available to political science students and faculty:

- 2,625 print books
- 93 multi-volume Open University course books in political science (maximum copies per title – 6)
- 18 print journal subscriptions (2008); 56 print journals in collection
- 17 electronic books
- 1 special political science database
- Access to 129 electronic journals in political science
- 15 multi-disciplinary databases that include material in the field of political science

Political science faculty and student use of the library facilities over the past year (searches and loans):

- Political science database: 18,819 searches
- E-books: 22 searches
- Print books: 337 books in political science were loaned
- Print journals: 176 print journals were loaned

3.6.5.2 Access

3.6.5.2 Do the institution and the study program take steps to enable the convenient access of the students with special needs to the study material and the different facilities, e.g. classrooms, laboratories, library? If part of the programs takes place on different campuses, how is equal opportunity of access to the facilities and equipment at the main campus ensured for all students?

Regional libraries at the large study centers have OUI course books and additional material – books and multimedia resources, corresponding to the courses studied in the study centers of the region. Information databases are accessible to students and faculty who have a password, from any computer connected to the Internet.

3.6.6 Physical Infrastructure – Strengths and Weaknesses

3.6.5.3 In summary, what are the points of strength and weakness of the physical infrastructure? [This is incorrectly numbered in the guidelines]

The Raanana campus is comfortable, well equipped, well maintained and fully accessible to the handicapped. The offices are spacious, well lit (both naturally and electrically) and air-conditioned. The computer equipment is modern, and the help desk outstanding. There is sufficient parking, and the gardens and recreational areas (coffee shop, restaurant, fitness center) are inviting. The conference rooms are available when needed and equipped as requested.

The Open University's central control over study centers and the extensive computer services provide operational flexibility and the ability to offer tutorial sessions throughout the country, and computer services, based on need, with significant financial savings. The library service is good; the option of connecting to a wide range of leading journals and to receive the full text of articles electronically is useful. The inter-library loan service facilitates access to articles in journals to which the OUI does not subscribe. Agreements with most other University libraries provide faculty and students with access to these libraries for reference and loan services.

Chapter 4

Research

4.1 Research in Political Science

Research in the department is carried out by the members of the senior faculty and by members of the academic teaching staff, most notably by those among them who hold a PhD. This is a small group of researchers, which nevertheless gives rise to cooperation and synergies, and produces superior output in terms of publications, grants, and organization and participation in international and national conferences as well as departmental symposia. The Open University Research Authority (see chapter 1) encourages research among faculty members by helping them find external sources of funding and submitting applications to these funds as well as providing grants, scholarships and enrichment courses from the internal research fund. The overall budget of the RA in the years 2004-2008 was NIS 7.3 m. The budget in 2009 was NIS 4m.

Areas of research: Faculty members in the field of Political Science specialize in various fields: Religion and state, African politics, nationalism (Prof. Benyamin Neuberger); social movements, anti-politics, public opinion research with an emphasis on war and peace (Prof. Tamar Hermann); genocide (Prof. Yair Auron); army and politics (Prof. Yagil Levy); intellectuals and politics, literature and politics, Zionism, Christian democracy (Dr. Denis Charbit).

The wide variety of specialized fields has generated a base of knowledge over the years, of which the common component is specialization in different aspects of the study of democracy – theoretical aspects in general, and in particular Israeli aspects. This base has made it possible to establish the MA program in Democracy Studies, one of a kind in Israeli universities. The research interests of the faculty are linked to their contribution to course development and teaching activities and especially in the repertoire of advanced and graduate courses offered by the department.

The synergy between research and teaching is expressed in a number of ways:

- Faculty members teach the MA program and serve as supervisors for most students' theses.
- Faculty members write the textbooks for some courses and head the development teams of others or supervise their development (when external experts develop the courses). The core of the learning materials was written by faculty members who combine their research knowledge with material writing.
- Faculty members prepare enrichment materials for graduate students and organize conferences and workshops (see list below).

Publications: In the past five years, members of the Political Science group have published a total of 94 publications: books, chapters, and papers in refereed journals, in English, Hebrew, French, German and Russian. Among the books published by academic publishers abroad are:

- Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (Transaction, Rutgers University Press, 2004); *A Perfect Injustice: Genocide and Theft of Armenian Wealth* (with Hrayr S. Karagueuzian) (Transaction, Rutgers University Press, 2009).
- Denis Charbit, *Qu'est-ce que le sionisme?*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2007.
- Tamar Hermann, *The Israeli Peace Movement: A Shattered Dream* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Yagil Levy, *Israel's Materialist Militarism* (Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington Books, 2007); *Israel Since 1980* (Cambridge University Press, 2008, co-authored).

Papers by faculty members appear in leading journals in the field: *Citizenship Studies*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Media, Critique internationale*, *Culture and Society*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *Public Administration Review*, *Polity*, *Review of International Political Economy*, *Security Studies*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *Theory & Society*, *XXème Siècle*.

OUI textbooks in Hebrew written or edited by faculty and staff members that serve the academic community in all Israeli universities and colleges were not included in the above count, in spite of the fact that they undergo strict peer review procedures and that they have an excellent reputation for high academic standards. Among the prominent OUI textbooks authored by members of the Political Science group are:

- Yair Auron, *The Pain of Knowledge: Reflections on the Teaching of the Holocaust and Genocide* (2003).
- Benyamin Neuberger, *Democracies* (2004); *Dictatorships* (2004); *Rwanda – Genocide in the Land of a Thousand Hills* (2005); *Fascist Italy* (2009).
- Eti Sarig, *Fundamentals of Local Government in the 21st Century* (2008).

Supervision of graduate students: In the last five years, faculty members in the department supervised, jointly with faculty members of other universities, the work of 17 MA students (13 of whom were students taking the MA in Democracy Studies), and 7 PhD students from other universities. In addition, faculty members supervised two post-doctoral students at the Open University.

4.2 Awards and Grants

Awards: Yagil Levy's book, *From the 'People's Army' to the 'Army of the Peripheries'*, was awarded the 2008 Best Book Award from the Israeli Political Science Association; and the Tshetshik Prize for Strategic Studies on Israel's Security from the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies in 2009.

Grants (last 5 years): In 2008, Dr. Denis Charbit was awarded a 2-year grant from the Israel Science Foundation (ISF), and two members of the academic teaching staff (Dr. David Mekelberg and Dr. Gal Levy) received 2-year grants: one from the ISF and one from the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace.

Faculty members at the OUI view research as an important part of their role. Their small number severely limits the overall impact of their research. However, they seek to achieve individually high research standards. Participation of senior faculty in conferences is usually financed through their International linkage funds.

Steps were taken in the past, and in more recent years to provide incentives for research and to improve the position of researchers among the academic teaching staff, including research-based promotions, and grants and sabbaticals funded by the Research Authority. In the last 5 years, the OUI Research Authority granted IS 506,000 to support research by members of the Political Science group, mainly to encourage research among the academic teaching staff by providing grants for travel to international conferences to present papers.

4.3 Service to the Professional Community

Faculty members serve on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Diasporas*, *International Journal of Jewish Education*, *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *The Open Political Science Journal*, *Perspectives*; and serve as referees of papers in peer-reviewed journals (among them: *Armed Forces & Society*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial*

Studies, International Security, Journal of Peace Research, African Studies Review, Mediterranean Historical Review, Political Psychology, Review of International Political Economy, Sociological Perspectives) and of proposals for competitive grants (ISF, the Ford Foundation (Israel), GIF, and others). They are active members of professional societies, including the Association for Israel Studies, the Israeli Political Science Association, and the Israeli Sociological Society.

Research cooperation in Israel and abroad: Faculty members collaborate on research projects with their colleagues in Israel and abroad:

Year	Faculty member and role	Project	Foundation
2005-8	Tamar Hermann (co-director)	Crossing borders program	Ford Foundation
2006-8	Tamar Hermann (co-director)	The implications of the unilateral disengagement from Gaza on Israeli democracy	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
2006	Tamar Hermann (co-director of Israeli team)	International public opinion survey	Chicago Council on Global Affairs and The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland
2007	Tamar Hermann (PI)	Israeli democracy and grassroots new (anti)politics	Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem
2006	Denis Charbit (co-director)	The disengagement from Gaza (2005) and Algeria (1962): Lessons and comparisons	Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Centre de recherche français de Jerusalem
2006-7	Yagil Levy (team member)	The symbolic meanings of relocating military bases in Israeli peripheral regions	Ben-Gurion University and Sapir College Joint Foundation for Research on Economics and Social Issues
2007-8	Yagil Levy (head of team)	Extra-institutional supervision of the Israeli army	Van Leer Jerusalem Institute
2007-8	Eti Sarig (PI)	Local authorities' partnerships with the private sector	BRM Institute of Technology and Society at Tel Aviv University

4.4 Conferences and Workshops

Senior faculty members routinely present their work at national and international meetings of bodies including the American Sociological Association, European Consortium of Political Research (EPCR), Frederick Herbert Foundation, International Political Science Association, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law.

Public events: The department holds regular symposia on topics of interest to students, academia and the public.

- Post-colonialism: The mainstream challenge to sociology (2004)
- “I am also social”: Do the 2006 elections offer a social agenda? (2006)
- The Armenian genocide – Forgetting and denying (2007)
- The benefit of violence? 20 years since the outbreak of the Intifada (2007)
- Public policy and the welfare state in Israel (2007)
- The place of commercial broadcast in current public discourse (2008)
- The Cambodian genocide 1970-1975 (2008)
- Israel in the eyes of the world (2008)

- Did Serbia instigate genocide in Bosnia? If not, what can we say happened there? (2008)
- Press, identity and culture (2008)
- Documentary film: Money and power (2009)
- Is there really no one to vote for in the 18th Knesset elections, and why? (2009)
- A nation like all nations?

In addition, the 2006 meeting of the Israeli Political Science Association was hosted by the Open University.

Departmental colloquia: Research of general interest to faculty members is presented at the monthly department forum, open to OUI faculty and scholars from other institutions. Faculty members from the OUI and from other universities present their work at these meetings.

4.5 Summary

Research plays a central role for members of the department. Specialization in advanced Democracy Studies makes it possible to create the synergy between research, teaching, and the writing of textbooks that will ultimately lead to the development of a unique field of specialization.

The challenges facing the faculty in the coming years include a number of issues:

- Freeing more time for research projects by recruiting additional senior faculty members to share in the load of managing teaching in the department
- Expanding applications to external research funds with the support of the Research Authority
- Increasing the focus of research in the field of democracy by fostering the synergy between staff members' fields of research and the fields of interest of MA students writing their theses, in accordance with university policy to define limited areas of research and develop them
- Working together with the university management to plan and set up a doctoral program at the university that integrates a core specialization in Democracy Studies
- Continuing to encourage research among the academic teaching staff

Chapter 5 – The Self-Evaluation Process
Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Routine Self-Evaluation

5.1 To what extent do the institution and the parent unit perform self-evaluation on a regular basis? (apart from the evaluation initiated by the Council for Higher Education). If self-evaluation is being performed – please describe and evaluate the way it is carried out and its frequency.

Evaluation is a way of life at the OUI. Parallel to the development of the various components of its distance teaching method, the OUI has developed elaborate quality control mechanisms of ever-increasing sophistication, for almost every product, process and function. These mechanisms enable the University to continuously examine its teaching performance and to address problems when necessary. Evaluation at the OUI is routinely conducted by two main entities: (a) the students who rate the courses, and (b) the institution, which evaluates programs of study, learning materials, student achievements, teaching processes and those involved in carrying them out, as well as special projects. The following sections summarize information provided in previous chapters.

5.1.1 Student Feedback

As described in section 3.3.2, the Evaluation Department administers a teaching survey to students at the end of every semester. The survey is transmitted through the course websites. It includes questions about all course components (study material, assignments, tutor, website, etc.) and students are also invited to add open comments. The Evaluation Department submits the results of the teaching survey on all departmental courses to the Dean of Academic studies and the department heads; the results of each course go to the course coordinator, and the results of each tutorial group – to the tutor. The head of the department shares the results with additional senior faculty involved in the quality control of academic courses. Analysis of the survey data provides information on each course and comparisons of mean scores of each department with the mean scores of the university as a whole.

The survey results are relevant to course coordinators' evaluation of tutors; they provide a basis for feedback discussions. They also draw attention to changes that need to be made in assignments, tutorial session planning, and course materials.

The University also conducts surveys among recent graduates, which identify ways that the OUI can assist them. Periodical surveys among students who did not persevere at the OUI serve to reveal causes of preventable dropout. In light of the results, attempts are made to encourage students who left because of problems that could be overcome, to return, by offering the assistance of relevant academic or administrative units.

5.1.2 Self-Evaluation

5.1.2.1 Quality control – Study programs and fixed course materials

Every new study program and every new course proposal, course update or course revision proposal is sent to senior academics in relevant fields (outside of the OUI) for external review. After receiving their comments and the response of the initiator, the issue is discussed by the appropriate Academic subcommittee/s. Following approval by the subcommittees, discussions concerning new programs are held in two additional OUI forums – the Faculty Council and the Academic Committee. After approval by the Academic Committee, new programs are submitted to the Council for Higher Education.

Approved course proposals are submitted to the President, who authorizes development. Drafts of every new unit are sent to senior faculty from the OUI and/or

other universities or research institutes for evaluation. Due to the above procedures, it is safe to claim that with respect to course contents, quality control at the OUI is by far stricter than customary at traditional institutions of higher education.

5.1.2.2 Quality control – Changing course materials

The course coordinators write the assignments that students submit during their studies, long before the beginning of each semester. The websites are updated toward the beginning of the semester and exams are written in the first few weeks. Senior faculty members (and sometimes members of the academic teaching staff holding a PhD as well) approve or modify exam questionnaires. Thus, every OUI exam is thoroughly checked by at least two competent academics before it is administered. The assignments and other course components for which the teaching staff is responsible are periodically reviewed. Websites are frequently monitored. Students' inquiries and complaints typically involve additional monitoring of course websites and assignment booklets.

The grade site provides the academic staff involved in each course with easy access to information concerning students' performance. This well organized, user-friendly site provides statistical data on assignment and exam scores. It is used to compare results by semester, by group, or by exam sitting. By identifying relatively inadequate results, we try to detect students' difficulties, spot our own oversights and improve the quality of the changing course materials.

5.1.2.3 Staff evaluation

The tutors' performance is routinely evaluated by their course coordinators and from time to time by the senior academics who monitor the courses. The course coordinators' performance is thoroughly evaluated periodically by the senior faculty, in addition to the routine monitoring of various components of their responsibilities. The evaluation methods of these two groups were described in detail in section 3.3.2. The secretaries are evaluated by the head of the department, based on input from the entire academic staff, according to general administrative evaluation criteria defined by the Evaluation Department. Senior faculty involvement in development, teaching and supervision is coordinated by the head of the department; renewal of senior faculty members' contracts (none are tenured) rests, among others, on 'good citizenship' at the OUI, which includes the above-mentioned activities.

5.2 CHE-Initiated Evaluation at the OUI

5.2 Has the institution appointed a senior staff member to deal with self-evaluation? If so, please state his name and his past and present position in the institution. State and evaluate the definition of his task as the staff member in charge of quality evaluation in the institution, including the scope of his authority and his method of operation.

With the announcement by the CHE of its intent to implement a self-evaluation process in institutions of higher education, and request a detailed report of the results, the President of the OUI, on the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, appointed a senior faculty member to coordinate the process. The coordinator's task during the first self-evaluation process was to support the departmental team that led the process and ensure that it had easy and prompt access to necessary databases and other information. Later on, the main task of the coordinator became to effectively transfer the know-how accumulated in the past, and the experiences of units that already underwent self-evaluation, to the units currently involved, so as to consolidate good practice. The coordinator also serves as a liaison between the CHE, the evaluated OUI units, and the academic management

of the University. The first coordinator was Dr. Sonia Roccas; the present one is Dr. Ronit Bogler, both from the department of Psychology and Education.

A skillful and devoted English language editor, Gila Haimovic, was put in charge of editing the self-evaluation reports. She also assists in updating the general information provided in various parts of the report. The Computer Center was asked to prioritize the provision of data related to the self-evaluation process, needed by the units evaluated. Through its referent in each department, the Evaluation Department was asked to assist by conducting special surveys, and by formulating and analyzing statistical queries relevant to the self-evaluation process.

5.3 The Self-Evaluation Process and its Outcomes

5.3 Please describe the way that the current self-evaluation process conducted, including methods used by the parent unit and the study program in its self-evaluation process. What are your conclusions with regard both to the methods/the way it performed and to its results?

In December 2008, upon learning that the CHE had decided to evaluate study programs in Political Science & International Relations, the President and Vice President for Academic affairs asked Dr. Denis Charbit, Head of the Sociology, Political Science and Communication department to orchestrate the process and record the results according to the guidelines set by the CHE. Dr. Charbit informed the senior faculty in political science and publicized the guidelines. Course coordinators were informed about the process during a general staff meeting in January 2009; they were asked to express their thoughts and views and to participate actively in the process. Tutors did not take part in the process directly, but their insights were taken into account in the sections devoted to their task. The self-evaluation process took place in the midst of a labor dispute between the University management and the course coordinators and tutors. When the dispute included the extreme measure of a strike, the course coordinators decided to suspend the self-evaluation process, except in some cases when, at the request of the head of the department, they gracefully cooperated and provided advice and feedback, and performed specifically requested tasks.

The role of a steering committee was taken by Dr. Charbit and the two veteran senior faculty members of the group, Prof. Benjamin Neuberger and Prof. Yair Auron and recently recruited senior faculty member, Prof. Yagil Levy. (Because of her role as Dean of Academic Studies, Prof. Tamar Hermann was not asked to take part in the process.) The steering committee conducted regular informal meetings to determine the nature of the investigation required in response to the questions raised in the guidelines. In mid-January 2009, the steering committee began brainstorming with our referent from the Evaluation Department, Adi Kliffer, and the assistant to the head of department, Pinchas Stern. Consequently, we decided on the data needed with regard to the various issues we were asked to address.

The self-evaluation process and the preparation of the report proceeded simultaneously; they were carried out between December 2008 and May 2009 and, after the strike, from July until November 2009.

The first drafts of section 3.5 and chapter 4 (human resources and research) were prepared by Prof. Yagil Levy; the first draft of the rest of the report by Dr. Charbit, in close collaboration with the course coordinators and the senior faculty. Chapter 1 (the OUI) is based on the parallel chapter in previous reports; it was updated and modified. For chapter 2 (the department), Dr. Charbit consulted with Dr. Zeev Rosenhek, head of the Sociology group in the department. Some of the sections of a

general nature included in chapter 3 are revised versions of previous reports. It took over 9 months to produce an almost full first draft of the report.

The entire staff of the Political Science group read parts of the draft and their comments were incorporated into the final draft. After language editing, the report was submitted for review to the President, Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron; the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Prof. Judith Gal-Ezer; and Dr. Ronit Bogler, coordinator of the self-evaluation process.

Evaluation is an integral component of almost every function performed at the OUI. It is interwoven into all our activities. Accordingly, it is hard to say that the CHE-initiated self-evaluation process disclosed totally unknown information, that it resulted in deep new insights, or that it prompted novel work procedures. On the other hand, we have never before been compelled to set aside other burning issues and invest a long uninterrupted period on intensive introspection, and we have never obtained comparable instant responses from so many units at once as during this process. The full backing and support of the University enabled an interesting process that included a multitude of deliberations, practical and philosophical, about information hidden in the databases that we can extract in order to learn more about our student body, about the present goals and our measure of success in attaining them, and about our vision for the future. To this vision, we devote the last paragraphs of this section, remarking up front that it has not yet been formally presented to the academic management or discussed by any of the academic bodies of the University.

The vision rests on significantly enlarging the senior Political Science faculty: At present, there are five members, Prof. Benjamin Neuberger (at the OUI since 1978), Prof. Tamar Hermann (since 1991), Prof. Yair Auron (since 2001), Dr. Denis Charbit (since 2002) and a new member, Prof. Yagil Levy (since September 2008). In accordance with the academic management's 2005-2010 recruitment plans, an additional member will be recruited this year, bringing the total to six. However, two veteran faculty members are in their sixties, and without further recruitment in the near future, by the end of 2012, the senior Political Science faculty will fall to 4 members. The mere replacement of the constantly overloaded veteran senior faculty members will barely suffice, in the best case, to maintain the program in its current condition.

We hereby briefly state the overall merits of increasing the senior Political Science faculty to 7-8 members within the foreseeable future:

- Several of Israel's promising outstanding young scholars could be absorbed here, thus alleviating the brain drain out of this country. From the OUI's perspective, the OUI is an ideal place for political scientists, whose research does not require extensive expensive laboratories or other equipment. From the researchers' point of view, this is a convenient position, as it enables close collaboration with colleagues elsewhere, because most teaching duties need not be performed at specific fixed hours.
- A larger group of researching political scientists would enable us to diversify our undergraduate study program by conducting courses based on written texts, augmented by televised online lectures. This would also help transform research, which is currently a totally individual activity, into an endeavor that has a team component as well.
- With a larger faculty, it would be possible to maintain and develop the Master's degree program with thesis, based on courses that require minimal development

and on individual guidance by faculty members. In fact, we might even be able to offer doctoral studies to a few candidates who could at the same time take part in our undergraduate teaching activities. The incorporation of graduate students in the group would be advantageous to all concerned.

- The presence on campus of a reasonably sized group of faculty members and graduate students would enable us to hold regular seminars/colloquia. The improved lively professional atmosphere that could be created and the synergies that would develop are bound to contribute to the professional advancement of the academic teaching staff.
- With a larger body of senior faculty, it may be possible to extend the scope of formal cooperation with other universities. As noted by the OUI's President, it is not infeasible to offer OUI studies at other institutions of higher learning. OUI courses could constitute an excellent-quality, well designed and maintained, responsible and cost effective alternative to part of their regular curriculum.

All the OUI's academic groups have expressed the need to enlarge their senior faculty; some may use, in addition to overload, very similar arguments to those mentioned above.

5.4 Consolidation of the Self-Evaluation Report

5.4 Describe the consolidation process of the self-evaluation report, including its preparation and final approval (including a description of the contributions of staff members to the process).

The information requested in this section appears in section 5.3.

5.5 Maintaining the Momentum of Self-Evaluation

5.5 If a mechanism/structure has been decided upon for the future treatment of problematic issues that were highlighted by the self-evaluation activity, specify it while referring to the functionary within the institution who would be responsible to follow up on this activity. Please refer to the question of how the institution and the parent unit intend to deal in the future with quality assessment and its implementation?

The thorough investigation performed in the past few months has unquestionable merit. However, the priority it was given pushed aside other activities; the preparation of the report postponed ongoing development projects, particularly the ones in which its editor is involved. In view of the dedication of our course coordinators, the professionalism of our Evaluation Department, the activist attitude of its head, Dr. Relly Brickner, and the competence of her referents in the academic departments, we do not think that the establishment of new mechanisms of evaluation or treatment of problematic issues is currently warranted. Periodic CHE-initiated self-evaluation is intended to be a continuing project, and its expected frequency seems sufficient in terms of overall quality control, as well as in terms of keeping us vigilant between reports. For the most part, we intend to invest in quality control roughly the same amount of time and effort as we did before.

5.6 The Accessibility of the Evaluation Findings

5.6 Are the results of the self-evaluation open, transparent and accessible to staff (academic as well as administrative) and students?

A copy of this report is posted in a share-folder on the OUI server, and the academic staff of the department was notified. An additional copy will be posted on the University intranet site, where it will be accessible to all OUI staff members. Printed copies will be available in the Library and in our secretariat for review by faculty, administrative staff and interested students.