

 **THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF ISRAEL**

**Department of Management and Economics**

**SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

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The following individuals cooperated in the preparation of this report: All the senior faculty members in the Department of Management and Economics, the academic teaching staff, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the individual responsible for dealing with quality evaluation at the Open University, as well as colleagues in the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, the Dean of Students, the Academic Development Administration, the President's Office, the Human Resources Department, the Computer Center, the Teaching Services System, the Evaluation Department, and other Open University departments.

**The Open University of Israel**  
**Department of Management and Economics**

**SELF-EVALUATION**  
**Executive Summary**

The Department of Management and Economics is the OUI's largest and has been offering academic degrees in management and economics since 1993. Since 2003, the department has offered a Master's degree in Business Administration. Additionally, in conjunction with other OUI departments, the department offers dual-disciplinary and interdisciplinary degrees. The department also offers a B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering and a B.A. in Accounting.

Consonant with the OUI's credo, the department strives continuously for excellence focusing on high quality developmental, scholarly and scientific activities. The department maintains study programs, promotes research, and develops and disseminates tertiary education through the development of learning materials, high level teaching and research. We endeavor to increase access to higher education by employing a sophisticated distance teaching system. Hence, we outreach all those willing and capable of meeting our academic standards irrespective of age, origin, prior education or geographic location. Senior staff is engaged in initiation, development and maintenance of courses and in research while junior staff caters to frontal and long-distance tutorship of groups and individuals.

Supported by the OUI's uniquely structured organization of long-distance teaching facilities, the department's administrative staff of five administrators maintains direct contact with the students (over 20,000 graduate & undergraduate) and performs all other administrative chores. The department has four areas of specialization: management, economics, accounting and industrial engineering. Much like in other universities, senior staff engages in scientific research but in lieu of teaching they develop courses, while teaching or tutorship is undertaken by junior staff. Members of the senior staff are academically responsible for several courses within their scholarly domains. Academic responsibility entails the development of study materials (textbooks and study guides) and overseeing other academic aspects of courses.

Each course has a course coordinator whose task is to oversee tutors, write assignments and exams and maintain the course website. Course coordinators have MA or MSc degrees in the undergraduate and PhDs in the MBA program. OUI courses differ markedly from courses in conventional universities as they are first and foremost a printed scholarly-scientific work specifically suited for self-study. They include the course book as the major source of self-study. Books are written either by the department's senior staff or by scholars from other universities. In some courses, materials include readers of articles and case studies. Study guides are provided whenever a course is based on a textbook not written specifically for the OUI. These study guides contain self-study tools characteristic of OUI course books and are written by senior staff.

Each course has group tutorials conducted in a classroom or via video conference. Attendance at tutorials is not mandatory and many students opt for their home as a private campus supported by the OUI distance teaching method, notably via internet.

The department maintains rigorous academic standards with respect to courses developed by its staff. We maintain an ongoing quality assurance and control system whereby courses undergo periodic assessment concerning adequacy, relevance and scientific rigor. Aside from the conventional merits of the degrees offered by the department, graduates gain value added in the form of a high degree of self-discipline deemed crucial for managers, stemming from the OUI's unique learning methods.

Arie Nachmias, Head  
Department of Management and Economics

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## Specific Questions for Business Administration

### Dept. of Management & Economics, Open University of Israel

#### 1. **Articulate the vision, mission and values of your business school.**

The goals of the Open University (hereafter OUI) and the Dept. of Management & Economics stem from the constant striving for excellence through high scholastic and scientific standards. The department's objectives can be summarized as follows:

- (i) To offer programs of study, to promote scientific research, to develop and disseminate higher education through research and development of didactic and learning frameworks.
- (ii) To facilitate access to higher education by enabling admission to wider populations with the view of conferring academic degrees to those willing and capable of meeting the OUI's academic standards. The OUI offers well-defined programs of study that do not require presence on a single campus and thereby enable academic studies for such various and unique populations as high school pupils, defense forces personnel, pensioners, full-time employees and prisoners.
- (iii) To provide a second chance to people who could not complete their formal studies in a full-time regular framework. The department offers undergraduate programs and an MBA degree for prospective candidates who, for a variety of reasons (family, career path and sustenance), cannot study towards an academic degree in the conventional university framework. The department therefore contributes to increasing the scope of potential students though it does not compete with existing universities on the same target population. In addition, undergraduate studies are open to all without the need for a high school diploma or matriculation grade.
- (iv) The department advances R&D of study materials and innovative teaching and learning methods. The OUI operates study centers across the country and employs efficient teaching systems that include group supervision and tutoring as well as distance teaching systems using innovative technologies such as internet, cable TV and satellite communication. These means enable geographically spread populations to be fully integrated in the courses at any time of the day, subject to personal schedules.

#### 2. **Describe your apportionment of school resources to mastery of basic business disciplines versus leadership training. Likewise, skills versus analytical training.**

Generally all apportionments of the department's resources are aligned with the OUI unique teaching methods and techniques. As such, the OUI does not differentiate between the various classes, disciplines or the thematic content of courses. Unlike traditional universities, the OUI does not emphasize face-to-face contact with students. This holds true for both undergraduate and graduate students. With the exception of two compulsory research seminars towards the end of the program, in which attendance is mandatory, students do not have to attend supervised classes. These are deemed supplementary as the course package sent the students includes all necessary didactic materials (textbook, study guide, assignment booklet, web access codes, etc.). However, the OUI does place differential emphases on courses, subject to their nature and content. Hence, courses focusing on analytical skills underscore pertinent teaching aids whereas those addressing leadership skills stress other didactic aids. These aids are integrated within our unique study materials, e.g., mainly study guides, appropriate case studies and specifically tailored assignments. Some of these are available online and others are sent to students. To sum up, the OUI makes no



distinction between resources devoted to basic business disciplines as opposed to leadership training.

**3. How do you teach values, and especially integrity?**

The OUI's underlying principles are inculcated throughout the socialization period prior to and following the students' registration. The students are made aware of the substantial differences between the OUI and most other universities with respect to independent study, self-discipline, reliance on one's own scholastic abilities, and other aspects of distance learning.

In a learning environment based on distance learning, integrity plays a major role. The OUI is institutionally very strict, and demanding pertaining to students' integrity. As to teaching business integrity, we are currently developing an MBA elective in Business Ethics with the view of developing a course in corporate social responsibility. Given that the MBA program was launched in 2003, we are still developing electives and the business ethics, organizational citizenship and social responsibility courses are all slated to form a specific cluster.

**4. How do the needs of your community, and especially employers, gain expression in the evolution of your programs, both teaching and research?**

From the outset, the programs offered by the Dept. of Management and Economics were designed to cater to the specific needs of sizeable groups in the Israeli population. In practice, the department offers some 50 separate study programs on both undergraduate and graduate levels (MBA). This rich choice caters to almost any possible request and combination of courses. As most Israelis commence their higher education following compulsory service in the IDF, they start off three to four years later than their counterparts in Europe, Asia or North America. Being almost invariably older, Israeli students have on average a much tighter agenda during the period slated for university studies. Unlike their younger counterparts overseas, Israeli students need to get themselves organized in terms of sustenance, marriage and career paths in more stressful circumstances. The OUI enables students to undertake their studies in a way that suits their unique schedules. In addition, the OUI caters both to far younger students (high school) and to far older ones (pensioners). As such, the university fulfills critical principles of social responsibility in that it caters to the widest and most varied communities.

The MBA program provides in-house corporate sponsored courses. We are currently holding our first such program with the view of offering additional in-house programs at other Israeli corporations. The department holds periodic thematic conferences for the Israeli business community. These conferences offer a measured mix of hands-on (top) managers' presentations and scholarly lectures. They are held twice annually and attract a large audience, mostly from the business community. We have hosted many of Israel's top businesspeople including the Treasury Director General, bank presidents & CEOs, the Labor Federation's Secretary General, cabinet ministers, etc. The MBA Program also publishes a business quarterly in Hebrew intended for Israel's business community.

**5. Describe the way you balance the claims of your undergraduate, graduate and executive clientele.**

We occasionally hold feedback sessions with both graduate and undergraduate students. The information gleaned from these sessions constitutes, to an extent, input for decision-making pertaining to a variety of issues including course relevance and quality, availability of courses at different (mostly distant) OUI study centers, developing new courses, supervision problems, accessibility to the OUI website, etc.

As a whole, we focus primarily on graduate students' claims and ensure ongoing access to academic consultants and course coordinators with the view of resolving potential problems. Members of the department's senior staff hold meetings twice annually with MBA students in Haifa, Beer Sheva and Jerusalem. These meetings are aimed at discussing problems arising from existing courses. Solutions are solicited and we report these grievances to the senior staff plenum and to course coordinators with the view of providing adequate solutions, improvements and even shelving (elective) courses deemed redundant. We currently have no executive clientele, as the OUI does not run an executive MBA. However, we do, as mentioned above, maintain contact with top management teams through conferences, the department periodical, and in-house MBA Programs.

**6. Describe the leadership structure in your school. How does your school prepare for decanal leadership succession?**

The department's leadership structure reflects the OUI's departmental configuration. Academically, the OUI is a highly centralized organization. Department heads are nominated by the President, subject to academic merit and managerial competence. These nominations are the President's sole prerogative, though the President is open to suggestions, comments and overall impressions. The head of the department enjoys overarching authority both academically and organizationally. That said, the head of the department institutionalized an open door policy whereby both senior and junior staff enjoy uninterrupted access with respect to academic, personal and organizational matters.

**7. Describe the roles of tenure/tenure track versus other (adjunct) faculty in your programs, governance, claims to resources. What fraction of courses in each program is taught by the two faculty groupings and what is the desired balance you seek?**

The OUI has a different system where faculty members have no tenure per-se; rather, employment is based on renewed contracts. The OUI employs three types of faculty.

- Academics on a common promotion track, e.g., lecturer to full professorship
- Academics on a non-promotion track
- Consultants on a contractual basis

The above faculty types assume academic responsibility over several courses or course clusters. In order to cater to specific or major disciplines within the Dept. of Management & Economics, faculty members serve as area heads in Information Systems, Organizational Behavior, Finance, Accounting, Strategy, Int'l Management, as well as Economics, Industrial Engineering and Accounting. The teaching staff at the OUI includes course coordinators and tutors. Course coordinators are in charge of planning all teaching and administrative aspects of academic course implementation and control. They are also responsible for writing exams, supervising seminar papers, maintaining the course website, etc. The tutors who meet with students in tutorial sessions are usually external employees.

Since faculty do not teach at the OUI, the second part of the question is irrelevant.

**8. How is the quality of teaching and research measured and evaluated? Would you wish to do it otherwise?**

The department conducts three teaching surveys each year in the fall, spring and summer semesters. Students answer a multiple-choice questionnaire and are free to add comments. The results are analyzed and sent to all concerned, including the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the department head, senior staff, course coordinators and tutors. As the OUI is heavily dependent on student satisfaction, it maintains a low

tolerance policy in terms of straying from the highest teaching/tutoring quality and appropriate and swift measures are taken when necessary. The President and Vice President for Academic Affairs closely follow faculty research output. Each faculty member reports recent publications on an annual basis. Research has become more pronounced over the past two years and faculty members are well aware of the need to continuously engage in research and to publish. Lists of faculty publications and participation in scholarly conferences are published annually in the President's Report.

**9. Does your school have an entrepreneurship mission? If so, please describe the mission and your implementation program.**

Over the past four years, the department has initiated a variety of ventures:

- The MBA Economic Forum - held twice annually in different venues with the aim of advancing and highlighting practical aspects of economics by inviting keynote speakers to address MBA students and the business community at large. Amongst our guest speakers were the Minister of Finance, the Director General of the Ministry of Finance, The Histadrut Labour Federation Secretary General, bank and corporate CEO's, university professors, influential reporters and others. The event is publicized in the media and is well attended, notably by business people.
- In-House Corporate Seminars - In conjunction with the OUI Continuing Studies Center, we have initiated tailor-made seminars to suit the specific needs of Israeli corporations in pertinent areas including economics, finance, strategic management, HRM and others.
- In-House MBA Studies - We offer MBA studies to Israeli corporations capable of enlisting at least 40 managerial promotion-tracked mid-level managers. Studies are identical and pedagogically equivalent to those offered at other OU study centers and supervision is by the same coordinators who supervise courses offered in those centers.
- The Department of Management and Economics Magazine - A quarterly magazine for managers that covers a variety of business related topics, mainly contributed by the members of the department. The magazine is distributed free of charge to the business community.

**10. To what extent have you deployed modern information and communications technologies in your program? Does your school have distance learning capabilities? How are these used?**

As a university based on distance learning, the OUI uses a wide variety of information and communication technologies.

**Course websites:** These websites operate in an internet-based learning environment called Opus, which was planned and developed at the OUI. Teaching and learning patterns in the OUI courses are based on teleprocessing that integrates newly developed, technologically-based systems into 'traditional' distance systems. The mix between the two systems varies from course to course according to the needs of the students and the topic, the availability of technological facilities and the skills required of both students and staff.

- **The Administrative Communication Channel:** Each website contains all administrative details pertaining to the course; description, schedules, staff and students' details divided into study groups.
- **The Academic Communication Channel:** This enables continuous asynchronous contact with the staff. Each website contains a 'notice board' with information regarding study materials, clarifications and administrative messages. Each website

includes a discussion forum that enables interactive asynchronous multi-stage, multi-purpose discourse. The dialog is predicated on the exchange of texts where all participants are engaged in symmetric cooperation amongst the students and between students and staff. The entire correspondence is stored, sorted & arranged according to topics by the course coordinator. Students can download any message at any time, ask questions and discuss assignments. These virtual classrooms enable uninterrupted interaction that considerably facilitates and enhances existing means of communication (telephone calls, letters, ordinary e-mail messaging, etc.). The system enables active participation of students domiciled overseas, those situated in far-flung locations or those unwilling to attend tutorial sessions held at the OUI study centers. In addition, each departmental website features a 'chat room' accessible to all students and tutors. These chat rooms enable synchronous group communication by way of messaging.

- **The Ofek Live Broadcasting System:** This system broadcasts live lectures via broadband communication from the OUI studio in Raanana. Broadcasts are received at the OUI study centers throughout Israel and concurrently can be viewed by internet users all over the world. The studio is equipped with the latest audio-visual aides that enable lecturers to tap on every possible material deemed applicable and necessary. Communication with the lecturers is thru specifically programmed telephones and by way of internet messaging. All broadcasts are archived and can be accessed by students at any time.
- **The Interwise System:** Enables internet-based transmission of live lectures directly from the lecturer's pc, and allows students to simultaneously watch, listen and actively take part and receive feedback.
- **Videoconferencing:** Tutorial sessions given by tutors or guest lecturers are transmitted from a centrally located studio in Raanana to classes all over Israel and to the course website. These classes are recorded and can be accessed and viewed by logging in to the course website. Videoconferencing facilitates classes, work meetings and shared pc applications. Four specifically designed videoconferencing classrooms operate in the OUI study centers in Beer Sheva, Haifa, Jerusalem and Ra'anana. The system also can be connected to any VC system in Israel and overseas. The system also includes a SmartBoard that enables writing, deleting or editing from any connected classroom.
- **The Online Assignment System:** A key and integrative component of studies at the OUI are the assignments students have to hand in during the semester. Students can use the system to submit their assignments through the internet.

The above facilities offer a variety of learning materials: enrichment to courses, exercises and self-test exams, sample exams, briefings, feedback on assignments, video and recorded classes, presentations, students' work, links to databases and to useful internet websites. Some websites also include glossaries and surveys. The environment contains a 'Student's Personal Diary' that enables users to file selected items and add personal comments. This diary accompanies students throughout their academic studies at the OUI.

#### **11. How do your programs accommodate the educational and cultural diversity of your potential clientele? What do your programs do to promote the social integration of students?**

The OUI endeavors to outreach clientele that is as varied as possible and that includes all segments of Israeli society. In this vein, one of the OUI's underlying principles is to facilitate access to tertiary education to any societal segment, individual or group. We reach out to every individual irrespective of citizenry, social, political or economic status. We allow prisoners of all types to gain access to academic studies; we

encourage retired citizens, single parents and high school pupils to become part-time students. While academic standards and requirements remain the same for all students, the very fact that the University maintains study centers across the nation facilitates our endeavor to reach out to as many people as possible. Access to higher education is regrettably not self-evident in Israel and the OUI, through its unique organizational and pedagogic systems, facilitates this access noticeably. We trust that owing to the uniqueness of our educational system we contribute, albeit indirectly, to social integration by according equal opportunity to all.

**12. Do you see management education as a potential export and promoter of international trade? If so, what are you doing to develop this potential?**

To an extent, our management education contributes to the quality of int'l trade via highly qualified, skilled and experienced graduates, some of whom occupy key positions in Israel's business arena. For those of our students who elect to focus on int'l management and trade, we offer a cluster of specifically designed courses within the wider domains of culture, finance and economics as well as other relevant courses in strategy. Other than this aspect of our curriculum, we do not intend, at this stage, to 'export' our program, other than perhaps to Israelis residing abroad.

**13. Discuss the role of the business school within your university. What should it be?**

Our department is by far the largest and the most influential in terms of resource mobilization, impact on academic development procedures, and development of innovative and creative teaching methods. The noticeable upsurge in the demand for business studies is benefiting our department to the extent that over the past decade we have seen the highest number of enrollments in courses offered by the department. At the end of 2005, we had in excess of 5,500 students registered in our MBA program and 17,500 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses offered by our department. These figures, and the continuous increase in the demand for both undergraduate and graduate business studies, places heavy responsibility on the university at large and on the department staff in particular. Despite the temporary suspension of new course development during fiscal 2004 and 2005, the Dept. of Management and Economics was partly exempt from this ruling so as to cater to the growing demand and ensure a gradual increase in courses. Consonant with the increasing demand, the department is gradually mobilizing additional faculty, both senior and junior, with the view of developing supplementary areas in economics and management alike. There are, however, areas that are in need of greater presence (marketing, accounting, entrepreneurship). With the demand for business education continuing unabated, the department maintains ongoing pressure on university management to allocate additional resources for course development and hiring new staff.

**14. What study abroad opportunities do you provide for your students?**

The Open University is Israel's only institution of higher learning that enables students overseas to study through the use of sophisticated and ultra modern distance learning facilities. Aside from the obvious limitation of the lack of a personal touch, the university maintains a system that enables overseas students to study much like students residing in Israel with the exception of P2P and group tutorials.

**15. Describe the changes of the past seven years in your curricula: review areas of study, new courses, pedagogic innovations, et al.**

As the Management programs are relatively new, all the relevant courses were recently launched and are thus invariably up-to-date. New courses are continually being developed in all management domains. New programs and combinations of disciplines are being added. The recent changes are presented below.

• **Pedagogic Innovations**

- 2004 Online Assignment System
- 2005 Internet-based transmissions of live lectures
- 2006 Videoconferencing

• **New Courses**

- 2004 Econometric Applications for Management; Strategic Management; Operations & Production Management; Info Systems: Design & Analysis; Manpower Economics (Seminar); Electronic Markets (Seminar)
- 2005 Economics of Info Products; Project Management for Business Administration; Money Market, Financial brokerage & Israel's Financial System; Plans for Workers participation & Workplace Democracy; The Informative Value of Financial Reports (Seminar); Behavioural Economics & Finance (Seminar); The Methodology of Developing Info Systems (Seminar); Knowledge Management (Seminar); The Impact of Globalization on the Economy (Seminar)
- 2006 Multinational Business Finance; Global Strategic Alliances; Labour Relations in the Era of Globalization; Advanced Managerial Accounting; Business Entrepreneurship

• **Divisions of Studies in Other Areas**

- Social Sciences B.A. in Management with Divisions of Studies in Sociology, Political Science, Communication, Psychology
- Humanities B.A. in Management with Divisions of Studies in Literature, Music, History, Philosophy, Judaic Studies, and the Arts
- Education B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Education
- Economics B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Economics  
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Logistics

• **Dual-disciplinary Degrees**

- Education B.A. in Management and Education
- Social Sciences B.A. in Management and Political Science, Sociology, Psychology
- Life Sciences B.A. in Life Sciences and Management  
B.A. in Chemistry and Management
- Industrial Engineering B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering and Management
- Accounting B.A. in Accounting with a Division of Studies in Economics

**16. Describe interdisciplinary cooperation within the business school and without. How successful have you been? What are your plans for the future?**

Intradepartmental cooperation has several dimensions. The first pertains to the cohabitation of two major disciplines within one department, management and economics, each of which has its own pedagogic and research agendas. Owing to the institutionally conjoined nature of the department, faculty from both disciplines cooperate on a daily basis chiefly in the broader pedagogic-developmental interface. The second domain is the highly varied nature of the management domain. Areas in the management domain include finance, marketing, business ethics, HRM, OB, strategic management, int'l management, MIS, labor relations and corporate, business

and labor law. In addition, the department hosts the areas of Industrial Engineering and Accounting, with the latter more closely linked to the wider domain of economics.

Most interdisciplinary cooperation or shared work is administrative in nature. Faculty representing all disciplinary areas officiate at various departmental committees (Subcommittee on Course Development, MBA Committee, etc.).

The most conspicuous interface is mutuality in terms of peer review of course proposals. In this vein, economists review management-related proposals and vice-versa.

Interdisciplinary research is an area requiring more emphasis. Even though there have been several joint research ventures and a number of co-authorships of scholarly publications, the department acknowledges the scarcity of those and intends to promote more interdisciplinary partnerships.

**17. Describe public and private sector funding trends, particularly as they affect your programs. How do you expect these trends to impact you in the future?**

Currently there is no private or public sector funding. In general, departments within the OUI do not raise funds independently, although the OUI does raise funds from domestic and overseas sources. Faculty members apply and receive research funding from various external sources.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Institution – The Open University of Israel**



## 1.1 About the Open University of Israel

**The Open University of Israel (OUI)** is a distance education university designed to offer academic studies to students throughout Israel and abroad. Its study method allows students all over the country to pursue higher education, whenever and wherever convenient, without interfering with their other personal and vocational obligations. Established in 1974 by the Ministry of Education, with the support of the Rothschild Foundation, the University began operating in 1976. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) authorized the University to confer Bachelor's Degrees (BA) in 1980, and in 1996 the University was authorized by the CHE to teach programs leading to a Master's degree. At this time the OUI does not offer studies towards a doctoral degree.

**Open Admissions:** The OUI is open to all who wish to undertake studies toward a Bachelor's degree, without preconditions or admission requirements. Enrollment is open to all interested individuals and does not require a matriculation certificate or a psychometric test grade.

**Distance Teaching:** The OUI specializes in distance teaching. Textbooks, written by preeminent specialists in Israel and abroad are the primary component of the OUI method of instruction. Every course also offers tutorial sessions held at study centers throughout the country; however, participation is not mandatory. Together with its textbooks, the OUI also incorporates innovative and advanced technologies into its teaching: Internet, interactive instruction through broadband communication, multimedia, etc. Students submit assignments during the semester and take a final exam in every course.

**Flexibility in Time, Place and Pace of Studies:** Within the framework of an academic semester, OUI students can study from any location in Israel and the world, at a time of their choice. Students can adjust their rate of progress to their needs and lifestyle. Undergraduate students enroll in a course, not a specific program of studies or faculty. The OUI does not require them to complete a structured and uniform program of studies during a specific academic year. Students determine their own pace of study based on the time at their disposal, taking into consideration family and professional obligations, as well as their determination and diligence. Students can also choose to follow a structured program based on the accepted pace at other universities. The University opens study centers throughout the country wherever there is a large enough group of students to justify this, and holds regular tutorial sessions at these centers. Students who choose to participate in the tutorials can usually do so, on days convenient to them, in one of two ways: regular or intensive. Regular tutorials meet once every two or three weeks; the intensive tutorials usually take place weekly.

**Disciplinary Flexibility:** In creating an individual program of study, students can select courses from a diverse array of disciplines or a focused disciplinary format. Students who choose to expand their horizons and to enhance their knowledge and understanding in a variety of disciplines in pursuit of a degree can enroll in courses in diverse fields, while students who choose a more focused approach can select one of the structured programs of study towards a degree offered by the University. In either case, students are bound by rules that limit the multi-disciplinary flexibility of their personal program of study, so that their course list – which is the basis of their degree – has both internal logic and academic justification accepted in the general university community. The OUI offers 66 structured undergraduate programs of study in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, 11 in the Sciences, 11 interdisciplinary programs, and one Engineering program. In addition, there are five graduate programs (to which candidates are accepted only after fulfilling strict admission requirements, as is customary in all other Israeli universities): Master of Business Administration (MBA); M.A. in Democracy Studies (Interdisciplinary); M.A. in Education – Learning Technologies and Learning Systems; M.A. in Biological Thought; and M.Sc. in

Computer Science. The University also offers programs toward high school teaching certificates in six areas as well as certificate studies in Computer Science.

**Study Centers:** In addition to the central campus in Raanana, the OUI operates study centers throughout the country. In the 2004-2005 academic year, 4,778 student groups took part in tutorial sessions held in 52 study centers. Most of the study centers provide registration, academic counseling and some library services in addition to classroom facilities.

**Number of Students:** Students at the Open University are not required to enroll in a department as is customary at other universities, but rather register for specific courses. A student's program of study may include a variety of courses offered by more than one department. Consequently, numbers of students at the Open University are difficult to present according to academic departments. In the 2004-2005 academic year, 37,046 students were enrolled in undergraduate courses (and 2,912 students enrolled in graduate programs). While we have a large student body, we have relatively fewer graduates than other universities because of our open admissions policy: some students are simply not suited to academic studies. In addition, there are students (such as soldiers and high school students) who begin their studies at the OUI and continue in other universities, and there are those who take individual courses for personal enrichment only.

**Bridges to other universities:** With the encouragement of the Council for Higher Education, the Open University established transfer tracks from the OUI to all other Israeli universities for second year studies in various departments. After examining the OUI curriculum, these departments found significant congruence in content and academic level between first year studies in their departments and specific course clusters at the OUI. Accordingly, these departments committed to accept to second year studies in their institutions every student who completes the necessary cluster of courses at the OUI as defined jointly by the academic institutions.

## 1.2 The Organizational Structure of the Open University

Key academic and administrative officeholders:

**Chancellor** – The Rt. Hon. the Lord Woolf. The Chancellor is the head of the University and Chairman of the Council.

**Deputy Chancellor** – The Rt. Hon. the Lord Rothschild. Replaces the Chancellor in his absence.

**Vice-Chancellor** – Prof. Abraham Ginzburg. Replaces the Chancellor and the Deputy Chancellor in their absence.

**Chairman of the Executive Committee** – Mr. Zeev Abeles.

**President of the Open University** – Prof. Gershon Ben-Shakhar. The academic and administrative head of the University; Chairman of the Academic Committee, Chairman of the Faculty Council.

**Vice President for Academic Affairs** – Prof. Ora Limor. Responsible for all the academic aspects of the activities of the University; replaces the President in his absence.

**Director General** – Mr. David Klibanski. Responsible for the administrative and financial affairs of the University.

**Academic Departments:** Seven academic departments (History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies; Literature, Language and the Arts; Management and Economics; Sociology, Political Science and Communication; Education and Psychology; Mathematics and Computer Science; Natural Sciences) and a unit responsible for teaching English as a Foreign Language function within the OUI. The departments are autonomous units, which deal with all professional matters related to the disciplines within each department. The members of the departments – senior faculty, teaching staff and tutors – are involved in research, course development and teaching.

According to the OUI organizational structure, the President is the academic and administrative head of the University, with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director General reporting to him. All OUI units, except the Resource and Public Relations Unit and the Research Authority, report to the Director General or to the Vice President who oversee the activities of the units.

**Senior Faculty, Academic Teaching Staff and Administrative Staff – Personnel and Positions (December 2005):**

Department	Senior faculty		Visiting faculty, academic teaching staff and administrative staff		Total staff	
	Personnel	Positions	Personnel	Positions*	Personnel	Positions*
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science:						
Mathematics Division	2	2	17	11.4	19	13.4
Computer Science Division	7	7	33	21.9	40	28.9
Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication	7	7	42	27.7	49	34.7
Department of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies	10	10	38	23.2	48	33.2
Department of Literature, Language and the Arts	4	4	27	18.1	31	22.1
Department of Education and Psychology	8	8	38	24.9	46	32.9
In-Service Teacher Training Unit**	-	-	5	3.6	5	3.6
Department of Management and Economics	6	6	72	44.9	78	50.9
Department of Natural Sciences	8	8	33	23.5	42	32.5
The English Unit	-	-	18	13.6	18	13.6
The Center for Information Technology in Distance Education - <i>Shoham</i>	1	1	37	31.8	38	32.8
The Chais Research Center	1	1	2	1	3	2
Supporting Units: Academic Development Administration; Office of the Dean of Academic Studies; Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center; Research Authority; Library; Dean of Students; President's Office	2	2	126	96.7	127	97.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>342.3*</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>398.3*</b>

\* The number of positions is smaller than the number of personnel because some of the academic teaching staff and administrative staff do not hold full-time positions.

\*\* The unit functions within the framework of the department of Education and Psychology.

The table does not include tutors who are hired per semester in accordance with enrollment figures, nor does it include all the university's administrative units, such as the Computer Center, Planning and Finance Administration, Human Resources Administration, etc. It also does not include staff in the School of Technology and the Continuing Studies Center.

The major Open University bodies are:

The **University Council** is the supreme authority of the University. The Council, headed by the Chancellor, determines University policy, supervises the implementation of its decisions and administers the affairs and assets of the University.

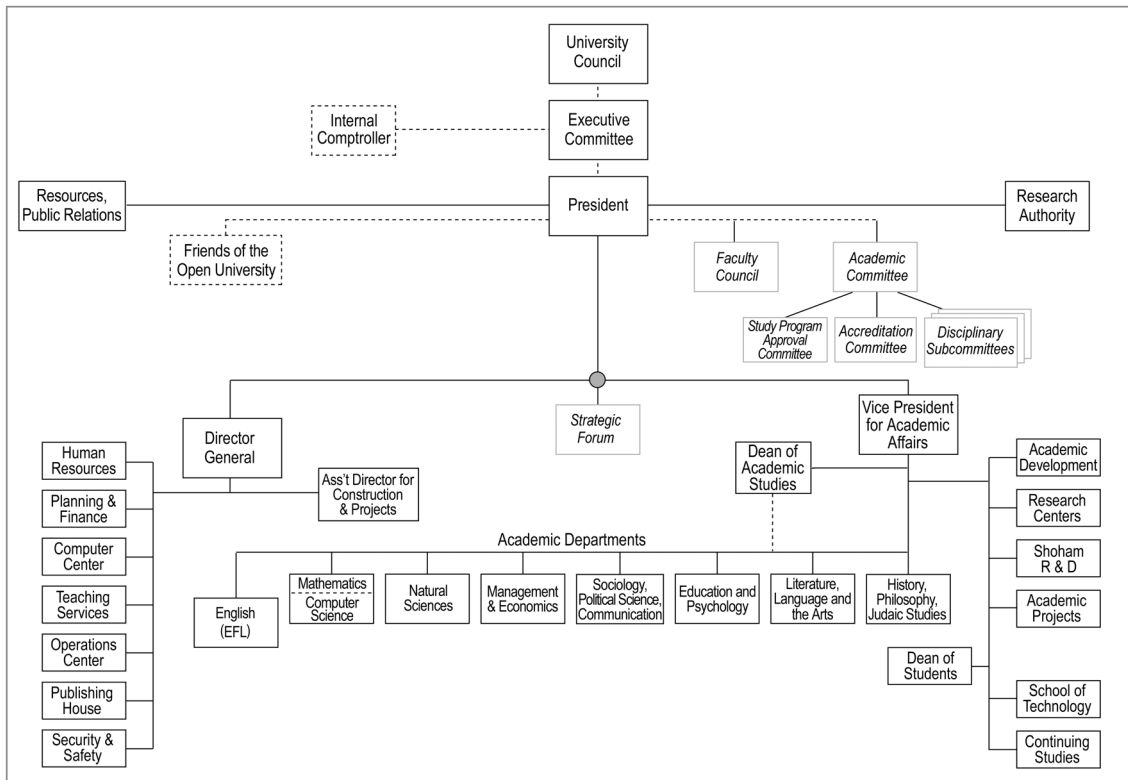
The **Executive Committee** is appointed by the Council and is responsible for ongoing planning, implementation, direction, and supervision.

The **Academic Committee**, headed by the President of the University, consists of professors from universities throughout Israel and Open University faculty. It is the academic authority of the University and is responsible for designing academic programs and maintaining the University's high standards of academic activity. The Accreditation Committee and the Study Programs Approval Committee operate within the framework of the Academic Committee.

**Disciplinary subcommittees** operate within the framework of the Academic Committee in various disciplines: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics and computer science, and engineering. They approve new programs of study and the development of new courses.

The **Faculty Council** is composed of all appointed senior faculty as well as representatives of the academic teaching staff. The Faculty Council examines and discusses academic issues and affairs of the University.

The Open University underwent an organizational change last year with the aim of increasing organizational efficiency in accordance with the recommendations of an internal committee. The committee's recommendations were based on two principles: the academic endeavor stands at the core of the University's activities, including all concomitant aspects – research, development and teaching; and the role of the administration is to support and serve this endeavor. The diagram below describes the new organizational structure.



The Organizational Structure of The Open University, 2005

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Department of Management and Economics**

## 2.1 Organizational Structure

2.1.1 The programs of study assessed here are offered by the **Department of Management and Economics**. The University offered the first courses in Management and Economics in its first year of operation in 1976. The course offering in these fields has increased over the last three decades and the Department of Management and Economics has become the department whose courses are in highest demand by OUI students. Graduates of the department can be found in the business community well as in advanced degree programs in academic institutions in Israel and abroad.

The rationale for offering undergraduate programs of study in Management and Economics stemmed from the increased demand for graduates in these fields together with the desire to expand access to these fields to individuals unable to pursue their studies at other institutions of higher education due to heightened demand. The OUI offers these programs while maintaining strict academic standards regarding both courses and degrees conferred by the University (undergraduate and graduate). This rationale is founded on a unique approach that guides the Open University and combines striving for superior academic quality and scientific excellence together with organizational flexibility, innovative teaching methods and maximum accessibility to all those who wish to pursue academic studies. As an academic institution characterized by flexibility and accessibility, studies at the OUI are equally suitable for those wishing to pursue an academic degree in a systematic and orderly fashion in a structured study framework as well as for those seeking to expand their horizons and enhance their knowledge, not necessarily within a formal framework.

### Historical Milestones

- 1993** – The Open University was authorized by the Council for Higher Education to offer a Bachelor's degree in Management and Economics.
- 2001** – The Open University was authorized by the Council for Higher Education to offer its first Engineering program – a B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering and Management.
- 2002** – The Open University was authorized by the Council for Higher Education to offer a Bachelor's degree in Management with a division of studies in an additional field.
- 2002** – The Open University was authorized by the Council for Higher Education to offer a Bachelor's degree in Economics with a division of studies in an additional field.
- 2003** – The Open University was authorized by the Council for Higher Education to offer a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA).

The founding group responsible for the development of Management courses at the OUI included Dr. Aviad Bar Haim, Dr. Arie Nachmias and Prof. Yaakov Hornik (who has since left), Dr. Aviva Geva, who later joined the group and Dr. Nitzza Geri, who joined last year. A large number of junior teaching staff members joined the department over the years – some holding PhDs as well as doctoral candidates, accountants and lawyers, who, together with senior faculty members, are involved in developing and operating the courses offered by the department.

The Department of Management and Economics offers over 50 programs of study (listed in section 2.1.2 below) and tens of courses in Economics, Management, Accounting and Industrial Engineering. The courses were developed by OUI faculty and leading scholars in their fields affiliated with other universities. The textbooks they wrote are in great demand by faculty and students at other Israeli universities.

### 2.1.2 **Programs of study**

The following is a list of the undergraduate programs of study offered by the department:

- B.A. in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management
- B.A. in Economics
- B.A. in Management

#### **Degrees with a division of studies in an additional field**

B.A. in Economics with a Division of Studies in Management, Accounting, Sociology, Communication, Political Science, Education, Psychology, the Arts, Music, Social Sciences, Literature, Judaic Studies, History, Philosophy, and Mathematics

B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Economics, Logistics, Sociology, Communication, Political Science, Education, Psychology, the Arts, Music, Literature, Judaic Studies, History, and Philosophy

#### **Dual-disciplinary degrees**

- B.A. in Economics and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)
- B.A. in Economics and History
- B.A. in Economics and Political Science
- B.A. in Economics and Sociology
- B.A. in Management and Economics
- B.A. in Management and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)
- B.A. in Management and History
- B.A. in Management and Political Science
- B.A. in Management and Sociology
- B.A. in Psychology and Economics
- B.A. in Psychology and Management

#### **Interdisciplinary degrees**

- B.A. in Economics and Computer Science - Systems and Applications
- B.A. in Economics and Mathematics
- B.A. in Life Sciences and Economics
- B.A. in Life Sciences and Management
- B.A. in Management and Computer Science - Systems and Applications
- B.A. in Chemistry and Economics
- B.A. in Chemistry and Management

B.Sc. in Industrial Engineering and Management

B.A. in Accounting with a Division of Studies in Economics

Teaching certificate in Social Sciences

**Transfer options** (see “Bridges to other universities” in Chapter 1) between the Department of Management and Economics and other universities are currently available to the following departments:

- Transfer option in Management to the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- Transfer option in Economics to the School of Economics at Tel Aviv University
- Transfer option in Economics to the Department of Economics at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- Transfer option in Economics to the Department of Economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Transfer option in Economics to the Department of Economics at Bar-Ilan University
- Transfer option in Economics to the Department of Economics at the University of Haifa



### Master of Business Administration – MBA

The program of study towards an MBA (Master of Business Administration) aims to qualify students for management positions at various levels in the business and public sector.

The program imparts professional knowledge, skills and qualifications in the major areas of management and business administration, enabling its students to specialize in functional areas including business policy and strategic management, marketing, accounting, finance, operations management, human resource management, international management, industrial and business economics, ethics and law, behavioral management, decision-making, quantitative methods for management and managing information systems. Students gain experience in methods for diagnosing managerial phenomena and acquire decision-making and problem-solving skills. The tools gained in various areas are applied in analyzing and planning systems and in projects from an integrated managerial perspective.

The program is offered only in a non-thesis track.

#### 2.1.3 Number of students

The number of enrollments in undergraduate Management and Economics courses has grown over the years, reaching 29,730 in the past academic year, which represents close to 30% of all undergraduate course enrollments in the OUI. As noted in section 1.1 above, students at the Open University are not required to enroll in a department, but register for specific courses. Enrollment in the MBA program is different, as prospective students must comply with admission requirements in order to enter the program. As a result, the data below relate only to graduate students.

The MBA program was first offered in 2003. Enrollment data are as follows:

Year	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
<b>Number of students</b>	1,362	1,806	1,961

#### 2.1.4 Graduates

	Undergraduate programs *	MBA
<b>2000-2001</b>	522	Not offered
<b>2001-2002</b>	537	Not offered
<b>2002-2003</b>	563	Program first offered
<b>2003-2004</b>	579	29
<b>2004-2005</b>	611	63

\* In various programs in Management offered by the OUI. Until 2002, dual-disciplinary programs were offered in Management and Economics, Management and Political Science, Management and Sociology, Management and Psychology and an inter-disciplinary program in Management and Computer Science. In addition, since 2002, a single-discipline program in Management as well as a single-discipline program in Management with a division of studies in another field is offered. For a list of all programs, see Section 2.1.2.

#### 2.1.5 Broad organizational framework

The Department of Management and Economics is one of seven academic departments at the Open University. It has complete autonomy over research issues and is free to initiate the development of new courses, to refresh and update the contents of existing courses, to update study materials and learning aids or to remove courses from the course offering. Every proposed change is submitted for discussion and approval to the department academic subcommittee and then to the Academic

Committee. The department has full authority to seek and select, but not appoint, candidates for senior faculty positions; and recruits (and dismisses) teaching staff. The department is free to function within the framework of the budget determined in collaboration with University management (specifically, the Vice President for Academic Affairs).

The department works in close coordination with the following University bodies:

#### **The Research Authority**

The Research Authority encourages research among faculty members by helping them find external sources of funding and submitting applications to these funds. The Authority collects and disseminates information on sources of funding, and is responsible for financial and administrative monitoring of research proposals submitted via the Authority that received funding. In addition, the Authority supports faculty research through grants, scholarships and enrichment courses from the internal research fund.

The Steering Committee of the Research Authority, chaired by the Head of the Authority, is composed of five senior faculty members appointed by the President. The Steering Committee is responsible for the Authority's academic activities and the allocation of funds.

#### **The Academic Development Administration**

The Academic Development Administration coordinates all activities related to writing, monitoring, and producing academic courses and programs of study, including, among others, receiving the professional opinion of consultants with regard to proposed courses and study materials; drafting contracts with course writers and translators of books, and managing payment to all involved; coordinating schedules; updating databases on courses; coordinating the activities of the disciplinary subcommittees. In addition, it is responsible for editing the study materials, coordination with the Open University publishing house, and handling copyright issues.

#### **The Office of the Dean of Academic Studies**

The department acts within the guidelines formulated by the Dean of Academic Studies. The Office of the Dean of Academic Studies is responsible for university-wide and inter-departmental issues related to studies and teaching at the Open University, including the following:

- Formulating ongoing teaching policy which all departments must follow
- Formulating guidelines, rules and regulations which students must observe
- Monitoring and regulation of teaching
- Training of teaching staff
- Coordinating academic counseling and study guidance activities
- Managing the central Open University library and the libraries in study centers and colleges
- Formulating guidelines for collaborating with colleges and institutions in which OUI courses are taught and maintaining ongoing contact with these institutions
- Supervising all Open University study centers

The Academic Counseling and Study Guidance Center in the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies supports students throughout their studies by providing general and field-specific counseling, and imparting learning skills through workshops or individual guidance. The academic support system functions on the main OUI campus in Raanana and in study centers throughout the country.

The Academic Training department in the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies focuses on three areas:

- **Developing training programs** for different groups with the aim of providing them with the resources they need to function effectively in line with OUI goals. To this

end, the department identifies (among others, through the evaluation process) resources required by the teaching staff. Training programs are based on an analysis of the professional profile of the position-holders, and intended to bridge the gap between the knowledge, skills and values that the tutors or course coordinators bring with them and the professional performance level expected by the OUI. Training programs are developed and implemented to foster and reinforce resources needed by the teaching staff. For example, a comprehensive program was developed for tutors that included orientation and basic skills for new tutors as well as a variety of workshops for veteran tutors aimed at strengthening basic skills, imparting skills and reinforcing the tutor's outlook in line with the spirit of the OUI.

- **Guidance and training for managers** in the academic sector – ongoing guidance is offered to academic managers (course coordinators and department heads). A specific program was also developed for course coordinators to enhance management skills, reinforce a managerial outlook, strengthen communication between coordinators in different academic fields and foster and fortify organizational values.
- **Accompanying organization-wide projects** in which the behavioral aspect of employees is vital for success (for example, employee assessment).

The department interacts with a number of non-academic bodies, including the Center for Information Technology in Distance Education (*Shoham*), the Teaching Services System, the Evaluation Department and the Publishing House. This interaction is described in section 2.1.7, below.

### **Evaluation**

The overall structure described above is efficient, since it allows freedom of action in the framework of the rules, which ensure a high academic level while functioning within budget constraints. One of the difficulties that stems from the procedures is the cumbersome development process, since any proposal for a new course or change to an existing course requires review and approval by numerous bodies and especially by external consultants from other universities. While this precludes speedy and immediate action, it is essential for the assurance of high quality courses.

#### **2.1.6 Internal organizational structure**

The Department of Management and Economics is organized as follows:

- Head of the department appointed by the President
- Senior academic faculty
- Academic teaching staff
- Administrative staff

The Department of Management and Economics has the authority to seek and select candidates for senior faculty positions. The appointment process is detailed in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 1 (in Hebrew).

The academic teaching staff includes course coordinators and tutors. Course coordinators are responsible for planning all teaching aspects of an academic course and for implementing and monitoring these aspects. They are also responsible for the administrative aspects of the teaching.

The scope of the positions of course coordinators is determined by University regulations based on the number of students enrolled in each course. Tutors are employed under contract and are not faculty members of the department. They are hired each semester based on a contract drawn up according to the number of students registered in the course.

In collaboration with the Dean of Academic Studies and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the department recruits (and dismisses) teaching staff (course coordinators or tutors) who have the requisite academic degree as determined by the Dean of Academic Studies, who is also responsible for evaluating their performance. With respect to the teaching process, the level and weight of assignments, the number of tutorial hours, etc., the department is autonomous subject to University regulations as specified in the procedures of the Dean of Academic Studies.

The department's administrative staff provides administrative services to the head of the department, faculty members, teaching staff and students. The administrative staff includes:

- The department secretary
- The secretary for Economics courses and student inquiries
- The secretary for Management courses and development
- The secretary for the MBA program
- The secretary for the program in Industrial Engineering and Management
- The secretary for the program in Accounting

The secretaries are responsible for the following aspects of the courses, including:

- Typing the course booklet
- Responding to student inquiries by phone, handling the inquiries or referring them to the appropriate entity
- Handling correspondence of course coordinators and students via mail, fax and e-mail
- Receiving and disseminating correspondence regarding the course
- Providing administrative assistance to course coordinators
- Administration of seminar papers
- Providing administrative support in preparing study materials

The Graduate Degree program committee, composed of MBA faculty members, is a permanent committee that operates within the department. The President appoints the head of the graduate program and the latter appoints the head of the committee and its members.

The following permanent forums also operate within the department: The Economics forum, the Management forum, the Accounting forum and the Industrial Engineering and Management forum. All senior faculty and teaching staff, by discipline, are members of these forums. The forums initiate new courses and discuss updating existing courses, updating study materials and learning aids, and decisions to discontinue courses. Changes recommended by a forum are submitted to the Subcommittee for Management and Economics for approval and then to the Academic Committee.

Periodic meetings are also held by the department to discuss issues pertaining to all department disciplines. All members of the department are invited to attend these meetings – senior faculty, teaching staff and administrative personnel.

This structure is compatible with the overall OUI organizational structure.

#### **2.1.7 Non-academic bodies**

The following non-academic OUI bodies interact with the academic and/or administrative activities of the Department of Management and Economics. The ways in which they interact with the department are described below.

**Shoham** (The Center for Technology in Distance Education)

*Shoham* was established in April 1995 as a professional organization focusing on the informed integration of information technologies into the Open University teaching paradigm. The Center deals with the development, evaluation, research and integration of technology-based integrative pedagogical solutions to meet the various needs of academic courses offered by the University, enabling it to provide a higher quality and more effective and enjoyable learning experience to its varied and dispersed student body. To this end, *Shoham* is involved in the following areas:

- The development of an Internet-based learning environment, 'Opus', that serves as the infrastructure for the University's course websites. The websites enable virtual teaching and learning processes, access to study materials and communication between students and tutors and among the students themselves
- Locating, examining and testing new technologies and their integration into the teaching and learning system
- The development of alternative distance learning methodologies and models and the assessment of the use of technological and pedagogical alternatives for tutorial sessions
- The development and production of a variety of study materials rich in images, sound and motion to supplement the written study materials
- Training and support of teaching staff who integrate technology in their teaching

*Shoham's* staff includes pedagogical experts, multimedia and video specialists, and computer and technology professionals involved in the specification and analysis of teaching needs as well as the development, study and evaluation of infrastructures, systems, applications and methodologies aimed at improved teaching.

The Center works in close cooperation with the academic departments on pedagogical issues and with the administrative units in the areas of logistics, administration, communication and computers.

**Teaching Services System**

The Teaching Services System is responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating and implementing all the teaching services of the Open University. It is also in charge of information and registration, distributing study materials, loaning of teaching aids, organizing and coordinating activity in all study centers, administration of assignments and final exams, recording information on student achievement, follow-up on students and handling their questions and requests with regard to the administrative aspects of teaching services.

The Administrative Center for Teaching Services, which is part of the Teaching Services System, provides administrative services to the academic departments and gives telephone information to students via the Information Center. It is responsible for guiding the administrators of the academic departments and coordinating the work of the academic departments with the Teaching Services System. The Center is responsible for printing and distributing final examination questionnaires for all courses, drawing up contracts with tutors, payment to tutors, and printing supplementary written materials for courses.

The Department for the Organization of Examinations organizes and administers all OUI examinations in Israel and abroad: locates facilities to use as examination centers and confirms their availability; recruits, trains and allocates proctors and supervisors for each center; assigns specific examination locations in the various examination centers; finds solutions for testing students with special needs, prisoner students, and students abroad; supervises the examinations throughout the country by employing recruited teams; manages an examination hot-line.

The Information Center provides information via telephone to students in the following areas: registration, grades, tutorial sessions, assignment to study groups, loaning learning aids, referral to academic counseling, shipment of study materials, services of the Dean of Students, computer support, and referring students to relevant entities in other matters

### **The Evaluation Department**

The Evaluation Department is responsible for developing and conducting studies and surveys with the aim of assessing OUI academic activities and providing information to decision-makers. In addition to ongoing surveys of the teaching process, the department also evaluates programs of study, courses and pilot projects in order to improve existing activities and processes and provide input for setting policy. The Evaluation Department investigates and evaluates issues on the level of the system, the department, and specific courses. The initiative to conduct an evaluation may come from OUI management, a specific department, faculty members, or the departmental assessment team. The work of the department takes two major directions:

1. Evaluation and examination of system-wide issues and projects
  - Integration of technology in teaching
  - Evaluation of organizational aspects
  - OUI students: Perseverance in studies and drop-outs
2. Evaluation within the academic departments in accordance with the unique characteristics of the various disciplines

### **The Publishing House**

The publishing house is responsible for the design and production of all Open University textbooks. In addition, the publishing house designs multimedia products, computer presentations and Internet sites for teaching and administrative staff.

### ***Tafnit* - Continuing Education for Managers**

*Tafnit*, which is part of the Open University's Continuing Studies Center, is well-known as a leading school for managers, which aims to provide managers with up-to-date tools for successfully dealing with the challenges of the Israeli and the global market, and providing the skills and knowledge they need. *Tafnit* offers studies that do not lead to a degree, both to individuals and to organizations. Courses for individuals are based on the demands of the business environment and enable learners to advance in their jobs while acquiring practical training and professional knowledge. Programs for organizations are tailored to the needs, characteristics, and resources of each organization. Each course has an academic advisor who develops the training program, and lecturers who are leading professionals in their fields, and combine academic knowledge with practical experience.

## **2.2 Rationale, Aims and Goals**

### **2.2.1 The rationale, the mission and the goals**

The rationale and goals of the Department of Management and Economics stem from the University's continuous striving for excellence and its focus on high quality scholarly and scientific activities. These goals are:

1. To maintain study programs, promote scientific research, and develop and disseminate excellent academic education.
2. To increase access to higher education by enabling a broad range of groups in the general public to pursue studies towards academic degrees and, among other things, to offer distinct programs of study that do not require ongoing attendance at the academic institution, thus enabling diverse and unique populations such as

individuals with family responsibilities, military personnel, high school students and prisoners, to pursue academic degrees.

3. To offer a second chance to individuals who did not have the opportunity to pursue their studies in an uninterrupted manner or to devote all their time to completing them. In offering a “second chance” to prospective graduate students, the department approaches individuals holding a Bachelor’s degree who require a specialization in management and who for familial, work or career reasons are unable to allocate time for graduate studies in the customary format at regular universities. Thus, the Open University contributes to expanding the population of potential students and does not compete with the other universities for the same target audience.
4. To advance research and the development of learning materials and of innovative teaching methods, including the development of methods for individual tutoring using face-to-face meetings as well as varied communication options: computer-mediated communication, cable television and satellite communication. These technological means enable geographically dispersed populations to take part in studies at any time of day in accordance with their personal schedule.

The goal of the **undergraduate programs** is to qualify graduates in Management and Economics, in Accounting and in Industrial Engineering and Management and to provide them with a broad and in-depth background in both theoretical and applied aspects. The department strives to produce graduates with the ability to study independently, armed with the qualifications to pursue advanced degrees in any academic institution in Israel or abroad, and who will be able to find employment in the field.

The aim of the **graduate program** in Business Administration is to qualify students for middle and senior management positions in business, service and industrial organizations as well as in public sector and government institutions. The MBA program aims to impart professional knowledge, skills and qualifications in key areas of management and business administration, enabling its students to specialize in functional areas including business policy and strategic management, marketing, accounting, finance, operations management, human resource management, international management, industrial and business economics, ethics and law, behavioral management, decision-making, quantitative methods for management and managing information systems. The Open University offers an integrative program that underscores regional and international aspects with implications for the Israeli economy. The program is based on the conception that managers in the 21st century operate in a dynamic environment in which the emphasis on the interface between management, information systems and production technologies will play a key role in increasing the success of the organizations they manage.

This unique program provides a response to the increased demand for graduate studies in management, a field whose importance is mounting in institutions of higher education in Israel. Graduate programs in business are offered by all Israeli universities today, however they do not meet the growing needs of the economy nor the increased demand of potential students. Our program offers an opportunity to the many applicants who, due to lack of space or not having taken the GMAT (for financial or other reasons), are not accepted by existing Management faculties, in spite of the fact that their qualifications and undergraduate GPA are suitable.

### 2.2.2 Deciding upon the rationale, the mission and the goals

The rationale, goals and objectives of the programs of study are determined by the senior faculty of the department and they are reviewed and approved by the

Management and Economics subcommittee, by the Faculty Council, and the Academic Committee (in that order). Each new course also undergoes an approval process.

The goals and objectives are discussed at regular meetings conducted by these bodies, in department meetings, ad-hoc meetings convened for a specific purpose and in informal conversations. The goals and objectives are discussed on an ongoing basis, examined and, if necessary, modified. From time to time, the department also holds special meetings (for example, meetings of seminar paper advisors and meetings of academic advisors).

Numerous changes have been implemented as a result of the discussions, meetings and feedback described above. A partial list of these changes:

- Changes in programs of study (for example, the program in Accounting underwent a comprehensive review last year)
- New and updated programs of study (various divisions of study; for example, the divisions of study in History, in Literature and in the Arts, and in Logistics)
- Updating existing courses and developing new courses
- Recruiting senior academic faculty for new courses
- Improving the teaching staff
- Over the past year disciplinary forums were established as described in Section 2.1.6, above

The goals, objectives and changes are communicated via the President's Report, in protocols of meetings, the newsletter and the department website, and are also announced at meetings of the various entities mentioned above.

### **2.2.3 What is quality?**

Quality means educating toward values, openness, developing independent and critical thought, nurturing originality and creativity, and expanding knowledge.

The Open University and the Department of Management and Economics invest continuous efforts to foster quality in development, teaching and research. For this purpose the department examines, updates and develops courses on an ongoing basis, designs new and updated programs of study and continuously monitors changes taking place in leading universities in Israel and abroad. Department faculty members participate in scientific conferences in the fields of management, economics, accounting and industrial engineering and management. In addition, the department supervises all aspects of instruction and study material: teaching surveys are conducted on a regular basis; every examination questionnaire in every course is approved by a senior faculty member; faculty members observe tutorial sessions without advance notification and check tutor assignments; course websites are reviewed regularly, etc. In addition, tutors answer feedback questionnaires to learn about problems they encounter in their work.

As a distance education institution, the Open University attaches particular importance to the process of developing course textbooks and study materials for students. OUI books have maintained high academic standards and methodological clarity for many years and are widely-used by students at other universities.

To ensure uncompromising quality, the course development process at the OUI is a drawn-out process, subject to rigorous monitoring at all times. This process, from initiation until approval or rejection by the President, is described in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 2 (in Hebrew). Responsibility for development of a specific course is always in the hands of a senior faculty member from the Open University or from one of the other Israeli universities. The course proposal is submitted to at least three reviewers who are faculty members at other universities in Israel. The proposal is submitted for approval to the disciplinary subcommittee and then to the President and to the Academic Committee. Course books produced by the OUI undergo a strict style



and language editing process to ensure clarity and accuracy of language. Accompanying study guides are sent to faculty members at other universities in Israel for examination and review.

This process was developed with the aim of maintaining the OUI's high academic standards in all courses, through constant updating of study materials to reflect the state-of-the-art in the field, and ensuring clarity of content and presentation. This meticulous approach to each textbook produces optimal results for OUI students who need to deal with the material through independent self-study.

To ensure quality in research, the department recruits senior faculty members with proven research capabilities and defined research plans. The promotion of senior faculty members is mainly determined by the quality of their research, as is common in all universities. It should be noted that the small number of senior faculty members in the department makes it difficult to build a critical mass vital for creating a dynamic research environment, and some faculty members are forced to work alone or with co-researchers in other academic institutions. The very limited number of senior faculty members is one of the most significant problems of the Department of Management and Economics.

#### 2.2.4 Success in achieving the mission and goals

We feel that the Department of Management and Economics has achieved the goals delineated in Section 2.2.1.

Department faculty members strive continuously to develop high-level academic programs of study and courses. The Department has developed many undergraduate programs of study, an MBA program AND more than 90 courses on which the programs of study are based. The various programs and courses offered by the department meet the diverse and varied needs of students and provide for flexibility in designing individual study programs suited to the varied needs of students and their academic inclinations. When designing new programs of study, careful consideration is given to the course offering mix with the aim of qualifying graduates who will have broad and in-depth knowledge of both theory and applications in a variety of disciplines. This is particularly emphasized in the MBA program in which students are required to choose elective courses from among at least three clusters of courses to ensure they acquire knowledge in diverse areas.

The department, in collaboration with *Shoham* (The Center for Technology in Distance Education), is involved in integrating advanced learning technologies into course websites and in developing technological learning aids (for example, courseware for the Finance course). The MBA program in particular is a technology-based program and therefore MBA course websites include abundant content and applications that support distance learning.

The department invests efforts in promoting research in the fields it teaches. A monthly departmental colloquium is held to discuss varied topics.

The Open University also encourages the teaching staff to pursue and complete their doctoral degrees and, to this end, enables staff members to take days off for their studies and participates in tuition payments.

#### 2.2.5 Lines of future development

The planned directions of future development, as determined at departmental meetings and meetings of other University bodies, include:

- Developing and offering an MBA program with a thesis track (assuming an increase in the number of senior faculty members in the department)
- Developing a Master's degree program for honors students

In the more distant future, the department plans to design graduate degree specialization tracks and to develop additional programs of study; for example, a graduate program in Public Policy, as well as programs of study in Health System Management and in Financial System Management.

**Chapter 3**  
**The Evaluated Programs of Study**

### 3.1 The Programs of Study - Contents, Structure and Scope

3.1.1 All programs of study at the OUI are based on distance learning and therefore the University, as opposed to other academic institutions, does not require that students come to a central campus. Studies take place in various study centers dispersed throughout the country. Study groups in a specific course are opened each semester based on the number of students enrolled in the course in a given geographical area.

The undergraduate programs in Management:

<b>Name of program</b>	<b>Date first offered</b>
B.A. in Management	2003-2004
Degrees in Management with a division of studies in an additional field	
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Economics	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Political Science	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Communication	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Sociology	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Education	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Psychology	2003-2004
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Judaic Studies	2004-2005
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in History	2005-2006
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Philosophy	2005-2006
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in the Arts	2005-2006
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Literature	2005-2006
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Music	2005-2006
B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Logistics	2005-2006
Dual-disciplinary degrees	
B.A. in Management and Economics	1995-1996
B.A. in Management and History	2006-2007
B.A. in Management and Political Science	1995-1996
B.A. in Management and Sociology	1995-1996
B.A. in Psychology and Management	2000-2001
B.A. in Management and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)	2003-2004
Interdisciplinary degrees	
B.A. in Management and Computer Science - Systems and Applications	1995-1996
B.A. in Life Sciences and Management	2002-2003
B.A. in Chemistry and Management	2005-2006

In addition, students can choose a program leading to a Bachelor's degree in the Social Sciences and concentrate their studies in Management. The requirements for these programs are more general and described below.

<b>Name of program</b>	<b>Date first offered</b>
B.A. in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management	2004-2005
B.A. in Social Sciences: Focus on Management (until 2003-2004)	1997-1998
B.A. in Social Sciences: Focus on Management and Communication	1997-1998

#### Graduate program in Management

MBA (Master of Business Administration)	2002-2003
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3.1.2 Courses at the OUI are fundamentally different from courses in conventional universities. An OUI course is first and foremost a printed scholarly scientific work. A package is mailed to the student's home containing all study materials required for the

course. The study materials include textbooks, an assignment booklet, a study guide, a reader of articles, and additional materials such as audiotapes, videotapes, multimedia courseware, etc. Each course has a coordinator who administers the teaching of the course and supervises the tutors who meet with students. Course uniformity applies to all students, regardless of the study centers in which tutorial sessions take place.

### 3.1.3 **Description and evaluation of the contents, scope and structure of the study programs**

**Description of the MBA program:** The program imparts professional knowledge, skills and capabilities in key areas of management and business administration and enables students to specialize in functional areas, including business policy and strategic management, marketing, accounting, finance, operations management, human resource management, international management, industrial and business economics, ethics and law, behavioral sciences in management, decision making, quantitative methods for management and information systems. Students gain experience in diagnosing management phenomena and acquire decision-making and problem-solving tools. The tools acquired in the various fields are applied to diagnosing and planning systems and projects from an integrated managerial perspective. The program is offered in a **non-thesis** track.

**Master's degree requirements:** To complete the MBA program requirements students must accumulate 45 credits in required, elective and seminar courses. Students lacking the prerequisite scholastic background are required to complete supplementary studies in basic courses that do not grant credits towards a Master's degree. Mandatory courses include core courses in management fields as well as an advanced integrative course studied after students complete the core courses. The multi-disciplinary nature of the MBA program, along with the requirement for qualifying, required, advanced required, advanced elective and seminar courses enable students to plan a curriculum based on the variety and diversity of courses in the program. MBA students are required to demonstrate their ability to apply the study material to practical management problems, to management cases in their work and organizations and to managerial issues in the Israeli and world economy.

**Structure of the MBA program:** See the separate booklet, "Programs of Study – Management" for the structure of the program and list of graduate courses.

The Graduate Degree Program Committee examines the individual study program of every student in the MBA program. Students wishing to change their study program may submit a request to the Committee to do so. Approved individual study programs are valid for three years. If prerequisites of a course included in an approved study program change during the student's studies, the student will be required to change his/her program in accordance with the course requirements valid when s/he enrolls in the course. Furthermore, if the University discontinues a course included in the student's program, s/he will be required to select an alternate course.

**Degree eligibility:** To be eligible for an MBA degree, students must fulfill all the following conditions:

- Successfully complete all qualifying courses (if required)
- Successfully complete all courses in the approved individual study program.
- Successfully complete the two seminar courses and submit a final paper in each course.

**Duration of studies:** Students set their own pace of studies and their progress is measured according to the number of courses they accumulate rather than in units of time. This means that the OUI does not require students to complete a uniform and defined study program in a given academic year. Students decide on their own

individual rate of progress, which may change over the course of their studies. The only given time framework that the students must take into consideration is the semester. Every course spans one semester and students are required to fulfill all course requirements within the semester during which they take a course. The Registrar's Office monitors the timeframe of each student. Graduate courses are usually offered in each of three semesters over the academic year.

Along with the flexibility in individual study rate, students must complete their Master's degree studies within 5 years. The aim of this requirement is to ensure that graduates of the program have up-to-date knowledge in the field. Students who decide to discontinue their studies for a period exceeding two years must submit a request to renew their studies to the Graduate Degree Program Committee.

**Description of undergraduate programs:** In planning and designing the programs of study, a comprehensive comparison with other programs offered in Israel was conducted. Following this examination, a Bachelor's degree program in Management was designed that includes two options (in addition to the degree in Social Sciences mentioned above): a single-disciplinary track in Management, and a degree in Management with a division of studies in an additional field. A large selection of courses in Management was offered with the aim of giving students a broad and in-depth background in the area.

The programs offered by the Management and Economics Department at the OUI are similar in content to those offered by other academic institutions, enabling students who wish to do so, to transfer to other universities after beginning their studies at the OUI. The department is engaged in developing new courses offered to students each semester. At the same time, it is important to note that new course development at the OUI involves a more complex process than at other universities, because the latter offer courses based on the availability of a suitable faculty member, while the OUI must develop a course suited to distance learning – in other words, write the course. Course development is demanding in terms of time and financial resources and ultimately, even if the OUI course offering is extensive, we will not always be able to open study groups for all courses due to the dispersion of small groups of students in too many courses throughout the country. Consequently, we are developing elective courses that will deal with the key and primary fields of management and business administration within the framework of reasonable budget management. Moreover, most OUI management courses are 6-credit courses (equivalent to 2-3 corresponding courses at other universities), thus the number of courses required for a degree is smaller.

**B.A. in Management:** The contents of the program correspond to single-disciplinary undergraduate programs in Management at other universities in Israel and throughout the world. The program has several levels. The first level lays a broad and in-depth foundation in Mathematics, Statistics and Economics required in the management field. The second level includes theoretical required topics that comprise the core courses in Management. The third level consists of a variety of theoretical and applied elective courses. See separate booklet, "Programs of Study – Management" for a list of courses required to complete a B.A. in Management.

**B.A. in Management with a division in an additional field of studies:** The program includes a variety of courses and is similar to the B.A. in Management program, particularly with respect to the basic and required courses; however, it enables students to enrich their knowledge by selecting courses outside of the department. The program offers flexibility in the choice of courses from among a wide range of fields, such as Psychology, Communication, Education, Philosophy and History (for additional divisions see Section 3.1.1). See separate booklet, "Programs of Study – Management" for a list of programs and courses.

**Dual-disciplinary programs in Management and a discipline in the Social Sciences:** The following combinations are offered within this framework: Management and Economics, Management and Political Science, Management and Sociology, Management and Education, Psychology and Management, in addition to a new program in Management and History, which was recently approved. Each combination includes a wide range of courses in Management and in an additional discipline, enabling graduates to pursue advanced degrees in each of the disciplines. See separate booklet, “Programs of Study – Management” for a list of programs and courses.

**Inter-disciplinary programs:** These programs combine Management studies with a discipline not in the social sciences. The programs include a foundation suitable for both disciplines, required core courses in each discipline, and intermediate and advanced elective courses in each discipline. Graduates of these programs can pursue an MBA. The combined programs offered are: Chemistry and Management, Management and Computer Science and Life Sciences and Management. See separate booklet, “Programs of Study – Management” for a list of programs and courses.

**B.A. in Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management:** The program of study in the Social Sciences with an emphasis on Management is an individually constructed program not bound by the strict limitations of a dual-disciplinary or single-disciplinary B.A. in Management. The program enables students to acquire the foundations of management alongside other knowledge fields, not necessarily in the social sciences. As part of the program students are free to accumulate 37 credits from the OUI course offering. The program also meets the needs of groups who received accreditation for prior studies; for example, technical engineers in various fields, graduates of teaching certificate programs and students who studied at other universities. See separate booklet, “Programs of Study – Management” for a list of courses in this program.

**B.A. in Social Sciences with a focus on Management and Communication:** This program enables students to combine studies in two fields, Management and Communication. The program grants equal weight to both fields. See separate booklet, “Programs of Study – Management” for a list of courses in this study track.

**Duration of studies:** Students can spread their studies according to their individual needs, but every undergraduate program also has an “accelerated” track, enabling students to complete their degree in three years. Most students complete the degree within 4-5 years, as specified in the following table, which is a summary of the data on the duration of studies (in years) of graduates of the programs above.

**Duration of studies** (Students who completed their studies between 2000 and 2005)

<b>Level</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Years ⇒</b>	<b>Fewer than 3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8 - 10</b>	<b>11+</b>	<b>Total</b>	
<b>B.A.</b>	Management		4	38	175	152	119	81	67	24	660	
	Management and Economics			34	383	411	208	112	135	30	1,313	
	Management and Political Science			24	42	43	24	17	14	3	167	
	Management and Sociology			21	87	94	50	31	26	4	313	
	Management and Computer Science - Systems and Applications			7	49	105	84	68	93	20	426	
	Psychology and Management			2	20	12	3	1	3		41	
	Management and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)					3	1	1			5	
	Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management		1	9	36	51	41	27	30	10	205	
	Social Sciences: Focus on Management and Communication			9	58	28	15	3	1	2	116	
	Management with a Division of Studies in Psychology						1				1	
	Management with a Division of Studies in Communication					1					1	
	Management with a Division of Studies in Education									1	1	
	Total B.A.			5	144	854	898	545	340	370	93	3,249
	<b>MBA</b>	Business Administration		32	27							59
<b>Total</b>			37	172	854	898	545	340	370	93	3,308	
<b>%</b>			1.1%	5.1%	25.8%	27.1%	16.4%	10.3%	11.1%	2.8%		



The table shows that only few students (less than 3%) extended their studies over an exceptionally long period. These students enrolled in courses a long time ago with the aim of expanding their horizons and after many years decided to complete a degree.

### 3.1.4 How the various programs reflect the departmental goals

**Evaluation of the MBA program:** The MBA program is unique in that it is offered through distance learning and utilizes technologies that support distance learning. It is also flexible: students may enroll in courses according to their personal schedule constraints. The majority of students in the program work full time during their studies. This reflects the goals of the department and the University.

The teaching model includes the following components: a web-based learning environment; study materials that include a study guide, textbooks, digital articles, and assignments; up to six tutorial sessions; and a final examination. The teaching method has numerous **advantages**:

- It is based on distance learning and thus does not require participation in tutorial sessions.
- The study materials are based on written materials expressly developed by the OUI for distance learning: textbooks, articles, videotapes and multimedia courseware.
- Every MBA course has a website that enables continuous asynchronous communication between students and the teaching staff and among the students themselves. The website contains most of the study materials.
- The program is new and constantly updated, and is adapted to the needs of the economy in general and to continuing studies in particular.

The **disadvantage** of the program is the limited face-to-face interaction between students and faculty. Efforts are invested in creating interaction frameworks by offering study groups and seminars on the Raanana campus. Students must actively participate in two seminars that meet every two weeks. A seminar group includes no more than 20 students and combines face-to-face meetings with distant learning technology. Students are also encouraged to participate in various activities such as symposia and the MBA program Economic Forum.

**Evaluation of the undergraduate programs:** The various programs were designed to meet the goals of the department as specified in Section 2.2.1 above, and realize the following goals:

- Expand access to higher education and provide a second chance to varied populations. This is made possible through open admissions and a flexible and individual study pace that meets the individual constraints of different students.
- Qualifying graduates for both management positions and continued studies in pursuit of advanced degrees in institutions of higher learning in Israel and abroad. This is reflected in the wide course offering in the different programs and fields, the attention to academic quality, and ongoing updating of the study materials.
- Developing students' independent study and research ability, self-discipline and personal responsibility. This is achieved by way of the OUI's unique teaching method that requires students to contend with the study materials on their own. Students are exposed to broad and in-depth knowledge through a wide range of elective courses. Thus they receive a broad perspective of the field along with more focused and in-depth study of selected areas.
- Study materials developed by the most prominent experts in the field, used not only by students at the OUI but also by all universities and institutions of higher education in Israel. Books developed by the OUI are used as textbooks in many courses in academic institutions in Israel.

### 3.1.5 How the programs comply with the decisions of the Council of Higher Education

CHE decisions	OUI position
1. Credits for studies in non-academic institutions	Studies in OUI extra-academic frameworks, accreditation based on CHE approval (Israel Securities Authority, assessors, etc.), accreditation on an individual basis. With respect to these, students may submit a request to the Committee for the Accreditation of Prior Studies. The Committee considers requests on a case by case basis taking into account the study field, institution of learning, courses studied and grades received.
2. Accept students above age 30 without matriculation certificates	As the OUI has open admissions, this decision is irrelevant in our case.
3. Expand access to higher education , accreditation of courses studied at non-academic post-high school institutions	Prospective students with prior knowledge from institutions such as Ort and the College of Administration (13th-14th grades) can submit a request to the Committee for the Accreditation of Prior Studies. The Committee considers requests on a case by case basis taking into account the study field, institution, courses studied and grades received. Thus for example, technical engineers are granted up to 24 credits, technicians up to 6 credits.
4. Second degree studies in institutions of higher education	The MBA program was approved by the CHE after the Council examined the program and confirmed that it fulfilled all the requirements. The program has been offered since semester 2003A
5. Defining a full-workload in non-budgeted institutions	Irrelevant
6. Special study programs for defined population sectors	Irrelevant
7. The feasibility of offering a first degree study program based on one day per week	Courses at the OUI are available at the various study centers at different times and afford students flexibility in designing their individual study program and course schedule.

### 3.1.6 Changes and updates to the study programs

#### Design of study programs

New programs of study at the OUI are usually developed by OUI faculty members in consultation with scholars from other universities and consultants who submit written evaluations of the programs. New programs are initiated by the department head or by a senior faculty member in the department. In most cases the initiator also heads the program and is responsible for its operation. Program changes or updates are initiated by senior faculty members. Every program and every change (including changes in required and elective courses, and the development of new courses) undergoes the following stages before it is approved (for the detailed procedure, see Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 3, in Hebrew):

1. The program is submitted to experts in other universities for evaluation.
2. The Management and Economics subcommittee discusses the program.
3. The Faculty Council discusses the program.
4. The Academic Committee discusses the program and decides whether to approve it.
5. The program (if approved) is submitted to the Council for Higher Education.

In addition, there is an evaluation mechanism for courses that have not been updated for several years: every such course is submitted to the responsible academic unit for evaluation. Courses are updated on an ongoing basis; teaching of outdated courses is discontinued and new courses are developed. Such updates are usually conducted following a direct initiative of the department. The department operates a periodic evaluation process (once every five years) for all study programs that includes a comparison with programs offered by other universities and program updating.

**Updating courses:** Courses are updated and replaced on an ongoing basis in accordance with developments in the field and changes in study programs in Israel and abroad. For example:

- Some of the study units in the courses “Financial Theory,” “Organizational Behavior,” “Labor Relations” and “Introduction to Economics” were replaced and updated.
- Courses that are outdated or do not fit into the program are discontinued. For example the course “Social Responsibility in Management” was discontinued and replaced by the course “Business Ethics”.
- The course “Introduction to Macroeconomics” was rewritten.

Most Management courses are based on material written specifically for the course as well as textbooks in Hebrew and English accompanied by a study guide. Courses are updated on a regular basis in accordance with new editions of the books. Accordingly, students receive the most updated books and study guides. In addition to updates resulting from new editions, study guides are updated regularly (for example, by including new and advanced contents from the forefront of research in the field that is not in the textbooks). Course credits are updated and adjusted to both the updated contents and the study program.

### **Changes in the study programs over the past five years**

**The MBA program:** This is a new program first offered in Fall 2002. All the courses were developed in the past five years (for a description of the MBA program, see separate booklet, “Programs of Study – Management”), therefore changes have not been introduced in the program itself, but new courses, that had been planned in advance and were in various stages of development, have been added.

**Updates to the Bachelor’s degree program:** In June 2001 a proposal for a B.A. in Management, based on a comprehensive examination of other programs in Israel, was submitted, replacing the B.A. in Social Sciences with a focus on Management. The program was approved by the CHE, and has been offered since 2004 in two tracks: a single-disciplinary degree in Management and a degree in Management with a division of studies in an additional field.

**Development of new courses in Management:** At the present time, the following courses are in various stages of development:

**Graduate courses:** Financial Reporting I and II, Investment Theory, Business Entrepreneurship, Game Theory: Management Applications, Public Policy: Theory to Practice, Industrial Organization, Principles of Income Tax.

**Undergraduate courses:** Risk Management, Quality and Productivity Management, Advanced Financial Accounting, Principles of Business Law, Securities Regulation, Project Management.

In addition to development of these courses, extensive resources have been invested in recent years in computer-mediated communication and in integrating technology into undergraduate and graduate courses.

### 3.1.7 The highest academic authority and study program evaluation

The Academic Committee is the highest academic authority with respect to study programs. Its members include all OUI professors, seven of the OUI's senior lecturers, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, professors from other universities in Israel representing a broad range of scientific fields, and it is chaired by the President of the OUI.

The Committee considers the recommendations of the Faculty Council concerning academic issues (approving new study programs, changes to existing programs, approval and development of new courses, etc.). Though the Academic Committee approves most of the Faculty Council recommendations, the Committee does not automatically give its stamp of approval. If one Committee member opposes a decision or maintains that it was not sufficiently substantiated (for example, if individuals recognized as leading experts in the relevant field in Israel were not involved in the decision), the recommendation is returned to the relevant academic department.

Members of the department in the field of management, who design the programs and initiate and edit updates to them, are those involved in evaluating the programs (the Academic Committee only considers recommendations submitted to the Committee and does not initiate changes in study programs). The department continuously compares them to corresponding programs at other universities, and evaluates and updates the programs as needed.

The Evaluation Department conducts routine feedback surveys in every course at the end of each semester, in which students answer questions pertaining to the courses they took during the semester (detailed in section 3.3.2, Quality of Teaching). Survey results are submitted to the course coordinator and the department head. 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. In addition, a survey is conducted every few years among alumni in order to learn how they evaluate their studies at the OUI after pursuing advanced studies or joining the workforce. Such surveys were conducted in 1987, 1993, 1997 and 2001. The most recent survey included all those who received a degree between 1982 and 2000, a total of 7,850 graduates of whom 1,775 answered the questionnaire. A new survey is currently being designed. For questionnaires administered to undergraduate and graduate students who completed their studies, see Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 1.

### 3.1.8 Examining course contents

OUI courses are approved in accordance with the procedure specified above. Senior academic faculty members routinely evaluate course contents and courses are rewritten or updated as necessary, as described in Section 3.1.6. Examinations and assignments are written by the course coordinators and submitted for evaluation and approval to the senior academic faculty member responsible for the academic aspects of the course.

One of the important tools for evaluating and examining teaching quality is the teaching survey mentioned above (see also section 3.3.2).

### **3.1.9 Study programs leading to a degree of a professional character**

Various study programs offer courses granting students exemption from exams required by the following authorities:

- Israel Securities Authority (within framework of investment advisors and portfolio management licensing process).
- The Israel Certified Public Accountant Council (as part of the CPA qualification process).
- Israel Appraisers' Association (as part of the appraiser qualification process).
- Israel Tax Advisors' Association (within framework of tax advisor licensing).

### **3.1.10 Method of examinations**

#### **3.1.10.1 Method of examinations, their character and organization**

Written final examinations are conducted at the end of all courses offered by the department with the exception of graduate seminar courses, in which the final grade is based on a seminar paper and/or a short paper and an oral presentation submitted at the end of the semester. 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.

Undergraduate students are entitled to take each exam twice. Graduate students who fail an exam or want to improve their exam grade have to re-enroll in the course and fulfill all course requirements (including assignments). The OUI usually holds three exam dates in every semester for every course: two exam dates and one repeat exam date. Exam questionnaires are different on every exam date. The exam is three hours long. A time extension is often approved for students for a variety of reasons (primarily students with physical or learning disabilities). Students may not take an oral exam, a take-home exam or write a paper in lieu of a written exam.

During the exam, the course coordinators (who wrote the exams) are available at the telephone center on the OUI campus to answer students' questions referred to them. Tutors are not present at the examination centers during the examination.

The department conducts three types of examinations:

1. Examinations with only open-ended questions
2. Examinations with only multiple-choice questions
3. Examinations that combine open-ended and multiple-choice questions

Most exams are of the first type (open-ended questions). In 25% of the courses, the examinations include multiple-choice questions which comprise up to half of the exam. In only one course does the exam consist solely of multiple-choice questions. In about half the courses, there is some choice on the exam (for example, 4 out of 5, or 5 out of 6 questions).

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.

The relative weight of an examination in the student's final grade varies in accordance with the number of assignments submitted during the semester. In most courses, the examination accounts for 70%-85% of the final grade, with the remainder determined by assignment grades. A detailed breakdown of weights in course grades can be found in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 2.

In about 50% of the courses, students are permitted to use any study material during the examination (open-book exams). In some courses students are only allowed to use course materials (course textbook + study guide), in some students can refer to a defined number of sheets of paper (between 1 and 4 sheets of paper, size A4) that they are allowed to prepare in advance and bring to the examination, while in some courses, no material is allowed.

### **The examination process at the OUI**

The examination process at the OUI, which is a complex logistical process, 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 in the semester that they studied or in the consecutive semester after coordinating such in advance.

All exams are 3 hours long. 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 with learning disabilities who have been diagnosed as such or students with physical difficulties are also entitled to an extension of between 30 to 90 minutes.

#### **2. Geographical distribution**

Exams are held simultaneously at dozens of centers throughout the country. The Examination Department tries to enable all students to take the exams as close to their residence as possible.

#### **3. Exam questionnaires**

All the questionnaires are prepared by the course teaching staff 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.

During the examination, the students ask questions, which are transmitted to the course coordinators via the proctors. The course coordinators, who are at the control center at the OUI campus in Raanana, respond to the questions by phone.

At the end of the examination, the examination notebooks are transferred to the campus in Raanana and sent to the course coordinator for checking.

#### **3.1.10.2 Evaluation of the various examination methods**

We believe that the examination method should fit the specific course based on the judgment of the course coordinator and the senior faculty member responsible for the academic aspects of the course. For the most part, we advocate open-ended questions in theoretical courses, whereas in quantitative courses it is important to combine open-ended and multiple-choice questions.

#### **3.1.10.3 Grading**

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

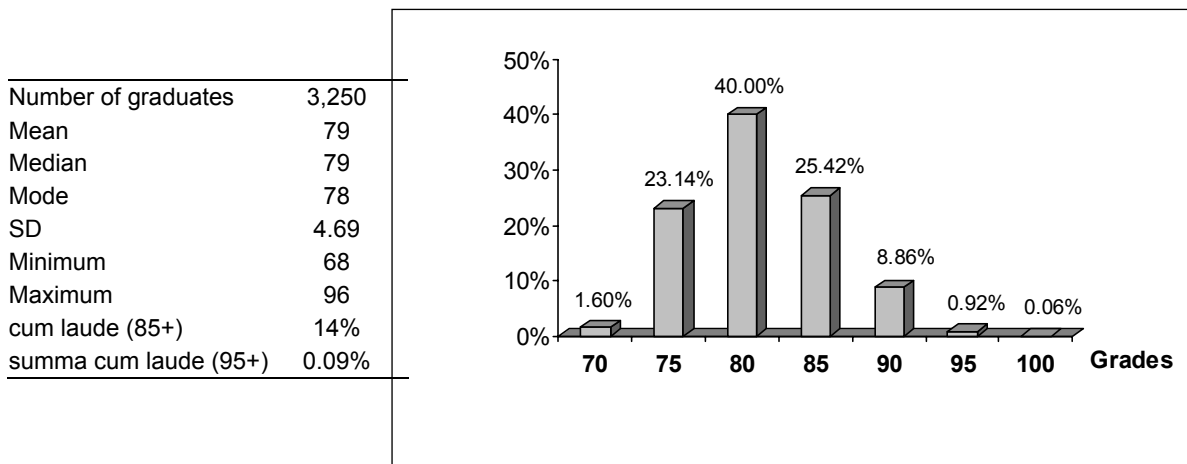
#### **3.1.10.4 Average grades of graduates**

The following table shows average grades of graduates over the past five years with respect to the various undergraduate and graduate programs. N refers to the number of students.

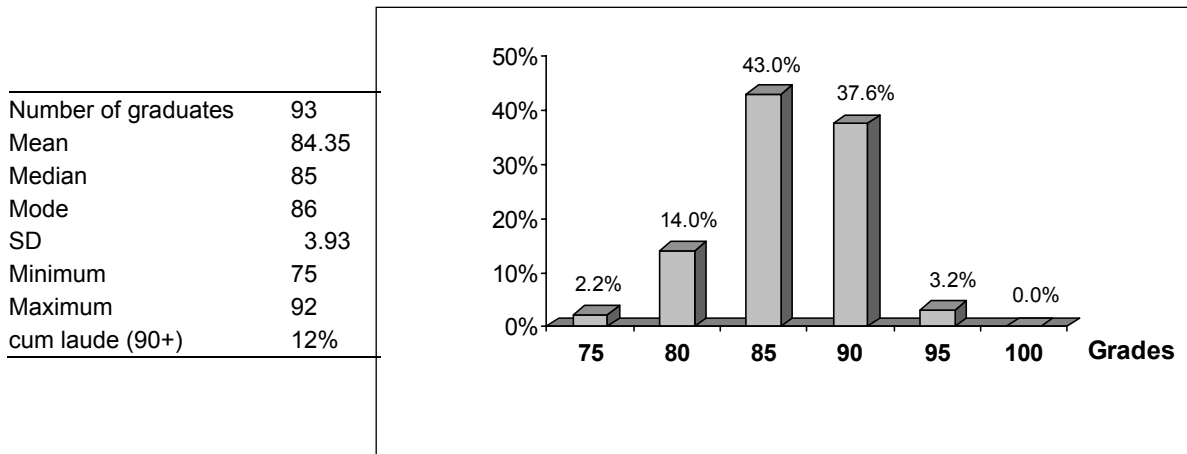
Degree	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
	N	Mean grade	N	Mean grade	N	Mean grade	N	Mean grade	N	Mean grade	N	Mean grade
Management							4	79.5	15	79.6	41	79.8
Management and Economics	259	79.5	252	79.5	239	79.5	213	78.9	199	80.0	152	79.0
Management and Political Science	31	77.8	24	77.3	26	77.7	27	79.3	30	78.2	29	78.9
Management and Sociology	59	79.7	64	78.5	60	77.8	53	78.7	31	78.5	46	79.5
Management and Computer Science - Systems and Applications	20	82.0	64	80.1	77	80.6	95	79.8	78	79.9	92	79.9
Psychology and Management	1	76.0	2	45	3	76.0	5	78.6	11	80.4	19	80.9
Management and Education (Curriculum & Instruction Studies)									4	82.5	1	88.0
Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management									15	78.5	190	78.0
Social Sciences: Emphasis on Management	53	77.9	116	77.3	123	77.6	147	77.7	160	77.6	1	83.0
Social Sciences: Focus on Management and Communication					9	79.4	19	81.2	51	79.6	37	79.1
Social Sciences: Emphasis on Managing Educational Systems					2	78.5	2	76.0				
Management with a Division of Studies in Psychology											1	78.0
Management with a Division of Studies in Communication											1	79.0
Management with a Division of Studies in Education											1	82.0
Master of Business Administration	not offered		not offered		not offered						59	84.4

To receive a B.A. in the various study programs students must pass about 23 courses, and to be eligible for an M.B.A. they must pass 15 courses, not including qualifying courses. The final grade in a single course may not accurately reflect the student's knowledge in management, however in the case of 23 courses, any discrepancies would offset one another and therefore the final grade average serves as a reliable estimate of the student's academic level. Moreover, the OUI's open admissions policy combined with its high academic requirements results in a relatively high dropout rate in the student's first courses at the OUI. Students who are able to graduate are usually highly motivated and have high intellectual abilities so that we would expect them to complete their studies with a high overall grade average.

Final grade distribution of graduates (BA, 2000 through 2005):



Final grade distribution of graduates (MBA, 2000 through 2005):



### 3.1.11 Papers, projects, theses, dissertations

#### 3.1.11.1 Number of papers and projects required, their contents and scope

**Assignments:** Written assignments are a vital component of teaching and learning that aim to help students assimilate the material, underscore important course contents, provide feedback to students and, through the students' answers, provide feedback to the teaching staff on how well students understood the study material or what



difficulties they encountered. Assignments are submitted during the semester on pre-determined dates by mail or through the Internet and often serve as the only means of communication between students and tutors. The assignments constitute 20%-30% of the final grade.

**Papers and projects:** In undergraduate programs, students are required to write two seminar papers based on knowledge they acquired in advanced courses they took in the program. As part of their course requirements students must also submit pre-seminar papers or projects. Students must successfully complete an advanced course prior to registering for writing a seminar paper.

**Undergraduate and graduate seminars:** Students taking undergraduate seminars are assigned individual seminar paper advisors who are faculty members at other universities. Seminar papers are based on up-to-date articles from academic journals. The nature of seminar papers varies; some are theoretical and include a detailed summary and an analysis of current research and references, while others are empirical. Some of the seminar papers also address applied aspects of theory. Students are required to add their personal perspective of the topic; for example, comparisons, additional examples and critical assessment.

Students pursuing a Master's degree must actively participate in two seminars of their choice, subject to the approval of an academic advisor. Seminars have no more than 20 students and use distance learning technologies (websites, satellite-transmitted lectures). All seminar courses grant 3 credits. Group meetings are held with the seminar coordinator.

The seminar coordinator prepares up-to-date literature to assist students in choosing a seminar topic, monitors the process of researching and writing the paper within the framework of the group meetings, allocates time for consultation in addition to the meetings as is customary at the Open University and evaluates the paper.

Seminar papers vary in scope and level. These depend on the student and to a certain degree also on the advisor. Some seminar papers are more in-depth than others. Some are based on few articles and others on a large number of articles. In terms of length, seminar papers range from 25 to 100 pages.

#### 3.1.11.2 **Criteria for assigning advisors**

Undergraduate and graduate seminar advisors have a PhD in Management or in a related field and are usually senior lecturers or above and supervise students on topics in their field of expertise. Some of the advisors are OUI faculty members and others are external advisors (faculty members at other universities). In exceptional cases where the advisor does not hold a PhD (for example in law courses such as "Labor Laws in Israel" and "Equal Opportunity and Non-Discriminatory Employment," in which the advisors are serving judges), the academic responsibility for the field lies with a faculty member with a PhD who is involved in monitoring the process and grading the paper. Advisors may only supervise a limited number of students in a given semester.

Advisors meet with students at least twice. At the first meeting, the student presents the preliminary research proposal and receives feedback. The second meeting takes place after the advisor has read the final draft, prior to assigning the final grade. Advisors also approve the outline of the paper which are sent them before the students begin to write the paper. Additional meetings may take place at the student's initiative or at the advisor's request.

The **advantages** of this system of supervision: By participating in a supervised seminar, students benefit from exposure to current scientific material, guidance in understanding the seminar topic and learning from original scientific sources, training in writing a scientific/academic paper (and in presenting the topic in the case of graduate

seminars). Seminar advisors expose students to a range of issues in different knowledge fields enabling them to select a seminar paper topic on their own. The advisor assesses the topic in terms of content, level and relevance. Students write seminar papers and referats on their own. As part of the individual tutorial process, advisors supervise students through progress reports submitted by the students, face-to-face meetings and telephone and e-mail consultations.

The **weaknesses** of this system of supervision: It is difficult to recruit suitable seminar advisors in certain fields. The level of advisors is not uniform. The only guideline pertains to the minimal number of meetings required between student and advisor: to meet with the student at the beginning of the process and to conduct a final meeting at the end of the process. Supervision can only be monitored through reports submitted by students and advisors. The time required by some advisors to evaluate seminar papers is inordinately long. An examination of the quality of supervision conducted by the department showed that the University incurs high costs in referring each student separately to an advisor and that the process is not always efficient. Some advisors do not devote sufficient attention to students, or are inaccessible; we have to rely on one external advisor with specific expertise to supervise many students. We recommend a fundamental change in the existing practice, from individual supervision to a group tutorial process like that customary at other universities. This model is used in the MBA program and is planned to be implemented in the undergraduate Accounting program as well.

#### 3.1.11.3 Evaluation of papers and projects

**Evaluation of undergraduate seminar papers:** Seminar papers are evaluated by the advisor who reads the first draft and provides feedback. The student then revises the paper accordingly. In some cases, the student is asked to submit additional drafts. The advisor reads and evaluates the final corrected version. The student is summoned to a meeting with the advisor to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency on the topic. Following this meeting, the advisor writes an evaluation report and the evaluated paper along with the seminar paper evaluation form (Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 3) is sent to the course coordinator.

The course coordinator examines the evaluated paper to assess the evaluation procedure and the grade and approves the evaluation form. The seminar paper is then submitted to the department head for approval. Should the department head find incongruence between the grade and evaluation of the seminar paper on one hand, and the comments in the paper and on the evaluation form, s/he will examine the matter with the course coordinator and the advisor.

**Evaluation of graduate seminar papers:** Following approval of the paper by the advisor the student presents the paper and is asked clarifying questions in order to gain an understanding of the student's level of comprehension of and proficiency in the seminar paper topic.

The seminar grade is based on the following criteria: the academic significance of the topic, clarity of presentation, description of theoretical background, literature review, the relation of the theoretical background to the topic, accuracy and updatedness, logical structure, discussion of conclusions, writing ability and correct use of scientific reporting procedures. The oral presentation is assessed on the basis of the student's mastery of the topic and the logical structure of the lecture. For average grades and the components of final grades in graduate seminar courses, see Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 4.

The evaluation, assessment and feedback level are satisfactory in most cases (also in comparison to examinations). Students receive feedback at various stages of writing the seminar paper and after submitting the final version of the paper and the oral presentation.

#### **3.1.11.4 Grade average of graduate theses**

Since a thesis track is not offered at this time, this section is not relevant.

#### **3.1.12 Congruence between published information and actual operation**

Information provided to the public in the annual University catalog and on the website is fully congruent with the study programs. Updates are published twice a year – before the spring semester and before the summer semester. The updates contain all changes introduced after the catalog was published. All updates are also published on the department website. Important updates are sent by e-mail, SMS or mail to all students for whom the change is relevant.

#### **3.1.13 Summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the study program**

The department is satisfied with the results of its many years of effort and activities reflected in the development of many and varied study programs expressing the spirit of the period in the form of new study tracks that combine management studies with disciplines such as philosophy and life sciences, as well as the MBA program that is very successful. The strengths and weaknesses of the programs are specified below:

##### **Strengths**

- All study programs offered by the department are specifically designed for the target population that is composed mainly of individuals holding jobs who require maximum flexibility in managing their time during their studies.
- Within a short period of time the MBA program achieved its goal of qualifying graduate students in the field of management. The quantity and variety of courses is extensive and the number of students enrolled is high.
- Both undergraduate and graduate programs correspond to the goals of the department as specified in Section 2.2.1.
- Teaching is continuously and independently monitored (by an entity external to the department – The Evaluation Department).
- High quality of learning materials as a result of the OUI's course development process and from the pedagogical model in which the textbook serves as the expert and the quality and quantity of the materials do not depend on the skills of a specific lecturer.
- Scholars from all academic institutions in Israel and abroad contribute to course development. This is an advantage because development of new courses and study programs does not depend on the areas of specialization of a faculty member, but rather on the requirements of the various content fields.
- Uniform examinations given throughout the country are written before each semester and exam questions relate only to the written materials of the course, irrespective of what was covered by tutors in individual tutorial sessions.
- The uniform examination system makes personal biases on the part of students toward specific tutors irrelevant.

##### **Weaknesses**

- The number of senior faculty members in the area of Business Administration is relatively small. The problem is particularly acute with respect to seminar paper advisors and the responsibility of the faculty in monitoring the academic quality of ongoing activities.
- The OUI examination system does not provide for flexibility in examination duration – the length of examinations is uniform for all subjects, irrespective of the characteristics of the specific course.

- It takes a long time for grades to be posted and for students to receive clarifications concerning their exam papers.
- Individual seminar paper supervision is inefficient in terms of cost/benefit.

**Proposed changes**

- Expand the senior academic faculty to correspond with its responsibilities with respect to course development and mainly to teaching and supervising seminar papers.
- Establish a departmental master plan and long-term work plans that derive from it.
- Conduct more group seminars and symposia that will enable students to meet more frequently and provide for better acquaintance with faculty members.

## 3.2 Teaching Staff

### 3.2.1 Profile of the teaching staff

#### Description

There are four categories of faculty members in the Management programs:

Three **senior faculty members**: One lecturer and two senior lecturers (see details in Table 1a). Senior faculty members are employed under personal contracts (identical to corresponding employment terms at other universities, except for tenure) for a period of 3-10 years.

**Academic teaching staff** in the Management programs (not including other department programs – Economics, Accounting, Industrial Engineering and Management) include 39 **course coordinators** (most of whom are also tutors): one professor, 11 with PhDs and twenty-seven with Master's degrees. Some are pursuing advanced degrees. About 25% are employed full-time (or almost full-time), with the remainder holding part-time positions ranging between 17%-86% of a full-time position (see details in Table 1b). Course coordinators are employed under contracts that change every semester based on the number of students enrolled in the courses they coordinate. Most of the course coordinators have been employed for many years. Their specialties cover the full spectrum of the Management Sciences.

There are approximately 210 **tutors** in the Management programs (the exact number changes seasonally based on the number of study groups opened). Most tutors hold a Master's degree (92%), some a PhD (4%), and some have a Bachelor's degree (4% - for the most part lawyers and accountants). Tutors in the MBA program have an MA or a PhD. Their expertise spans the entire spectrum of the Management Sciences. Tutors are employed under personal contracts for one semester.

The department does not employ research assistants. In addition to the teaching staff, the department occasionally employs academic faculty from other universities as **consultants** for development of a specific course.

Data concerning senior faculty are presented in Table 1a, in the Appendix to this section. The legend and explanations regarding the table are as follows:

1. The original table included the columns "Part of full time job in Institution" and "Part of full time job in Program". At the OUI the distinction between the two is irrelevant. The "Part of full time job" column in Table 1a indicates the percentage of the position in the department (part-time position in terms of hrs/week is irrelevant at the OUI).
2. The column "Planned Courses" in the original table is irrelevant for senior OUI faculty members, as they engage in course development and not in ongoing teaching.
3. 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.
4. The "No. of Students Receiving Guidance" column is irrelevant because at present the OUI does not offer a thesis track or a doctorate.

Data about the academic teaching staff are presented in Table 1b, in the Appendix to this section. The legend and explanations regarding the table are as follows:

1. "Part of full time job in Institution" and "Part of full time job in Program". At the OUI the distinction between the two is irrelevant. The "Part of full time job" column in Table 1b 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 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. At the OUI the employment status of all course coordinators is non-tenured junior faculty.

**Tutors** represent the external teaching staff at the OUI. 523 tutors, with seniority of between 1 and 31 semesters, taught 7,089 groups in the last five years. The average number of groups taught by a tutor each semester was 1.57. The largest number of groups taught by a single tutor (with 16 semesters' seniority) was 159, an average of about 10 groups each semester.

54 first-time tutors taught only one group in their first semester; 7 taught 2 groups. Only experienced tutors (with seniority of at least 16 semesters), averaged more than 2 groups per semester.

Data on the number of tutors and study groups between 2000 and 2005, are in Table 1c in the Appendix to this section. A list of tutors who worked in 2005-2006 is in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, Part 5.

### 3.2.2 Specializations and skills

**Evaluation:** The range of specializations of senior faculty 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.

The range of specializations of academic teaching staff who coordinate teaching in practice is relatively broad, allowing for flexibility and adaptability of the study programs. Nonetheless, it is not always easy to integrate this flexibility into the study program. In many cases course coordinators specialize in the narrow field of the courses they coordinate. Only few are pursuing a PhD, and the temporary employment contracts and lack of promotion opportunities do not motivate them to invest the effort required in further studies.

The solution to this problem involves stabilizing the academic teaching staff's employment contracts, determining an advancement track that is also based on continuing education (primarily on pursuing a PhD) and a course coordination rotation policy. OUI management is currently examining a change in the junior faculty employment structure with respect to the first two suggestions and to this end a special committee headed by the OUI President was established that has proposed recommendations for change. The department was asked to formulate a faculty advancement program and a coordination rotation procedure.

#### **Specializations required of the teaching staff:**

**Senior faculty** members are expected to invest their efforts, first and foremost, in scientific research. The OUI does not have a formal definition of a full-time position for senior faculty. Senior faculty members generally have academic responsibility for certain courses, develop them and oversee the teaching staff. Their additional activities differ slightly from those of senior faculty members at other institutions. OUI faculty members are usually not involved in face-to-face teaching, but rather in course development, in other words, writing textbooks for OUI courses. Accordingly, prospective and employed faculty members are assessed based on their methodical abilities (especially writing skills) as well as on their research abilities. Section 3.2.4 below describes the process of recruiting senior faculty members.

It goes without saying that faculty members develop courses and advise students in their field of expertise and research. As the OUI recruits the assistance of faculty members from other universities for course development and advising students, neither the course offering nor seminar paper topics are limited to the specialization areas of OUI faculty members.

OUI faculty members are also expected to be involved in university-wide management roles. Due to the small number of senior faculty members at the University, they carry a heavy managerial load and most faculty members have a management role at the OUI.

With respect to **senior faculty**, on one hand we prefer to recruit candidates with fields of expertise that are not represented in the department in order to increase the variety and offering of topics for students and research. On the other hand, there is a desire to reinforce existing fields of knowledge in order to create a critical mass of researchers in a specific field that will enable collaboration between faculty members. Above all, however, the critical consideration in selecting new senior faculty members is their academic excellence and their ability to participate in and contribute to developing study materials.

**Faculty members' research areas and the study programs:** Faculty members' research fields for the most part do not affect undergraduate courses since undergraduate courses at the OUI, like in any institution of higher learning, are basic and general. Moreover, as noted above, the OUI in general, and the Department of Management and Economics in particular, are assisted by experts and faculty from other universities in developing new courses.

Several graduate courses reflect the fields of specialization of faculty members. Additional advanced courses are planned in the future that will reflect the research areas of current faculty members and of faculty who will join the department in the near future. Nonetheless, faculty members' research areas do not play a dominant role in the graduate program course offering because, as indicated above, faculty members from other universities assist the OUI in course development and teaching.

**Course coordinators** carry the primary load of distance teaching. As such, they must demonstrate the following skills:

- Expertise in the topic of the course. Course coordinators write the assignments and the examinations, help tutors prepare lesson plans and help students who have difficulties with the materials and come to them for guidance.
- Good interpersonal skills – coordinators work with both students and tutors and must occasionally handle student complaints about tutors or vice versa.
- Computer skills – course coordinators are responsible for maintaining the course website that is in most cases a dynamic site enabling students to ask questions, receive answers, conduct discussions, get answers to exercises, view lesson plans, etc.
- Management skills – this is particularly important in large courses with many study groups and tutors throughout the country. Coordinators handle all logistical issues concerning classrooms, equipment, study materials, etc.

Until recently, the OUI did not have a formal definition of a full-time position for course coordinators. A course coordinator's position was determined for each course as a function of the number of students enrolled in the course:

- Undergraduate course – up to 20 students:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a full-time position
- Undergraduate course – 21-200 students:  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a full-time position
- Undergraduate course – 201-500 students:  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a full-time position
- Undergraduate course – 501-800 students:  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a full-time position
- Undergraduate course – 801-1,000 students: full-time position.
- Graduate courses: 48% of a full-time position

Role description of the **course coordinator**: The course coordinators are central to the teaching process and are required to be experts in the contents of the courses they coordinate. The position of course coordinator at the OUI is a professional position. It is unique to the OUI and is difficult to compare to positions at other universities. It has two main components, academic and administrative. Course coordinators acquire their academic education prior to their appointment. Managerial skills are, for the most part, acquired during their training and on the job. Even in cases where course coordinators

have prior managerial experience, they also need on the job training due to the uniqueness of the course coordinator position at the OUI. The components of the course coordinators job are detailed below.

Three points need to be clear regarding course coordinators:

- A. There are tasks that are particularly relevant in certain courses and less so in other courses. Moreover, there are tasks that are more intensive in some courses compared to others. It is important to note that this variance stems primarily from the number of students in the different courses.
- B. Many course coordinators have additional tasks beyond the designated tasks of the course for which they are responsible. These tasks are on the department or university level.
- C. In practice, some tasks include both components and an attempt to separate them is artificial. Nonetheless, the distinction is vital in order to understand the essence of the position.

**Academic component:** This component includes, among others, the following tasks:

- Write examinations and assignments
- Formulate criteria for assessment of examinations and assignments
- Prepare learning aids (written or on the course website)
- Write the course booklet
- Approve seminar paper topics and refer students to a supervisor
- Monitor seminar papers
- Check a sample of the assignments corrected by tutors and seminar papers evaluated by supervisors and assess the quality of the evaluation
- Check examinations
- Check appeals concerning examination and seminar paper grades
- Recruit and train new tutors
- Recruit and advise seminar paper supervisors
- Carry out continuing training of veteran tutors
- Monitor tutors (visit tutorial sessions; sample assignment evaluations, exercises, etc.)
- Supervise tutors (for example, if problems arise in a study group)
- Provide feedback to tutors (for example, in the website forum) and clarifications to their questions
- Handle academic issues pertaining to students (answer their questions, identify difficulties, etc.)
- Develop the contents on the course website
- Set up a timetable for studying units and submitting assignments
- Provide individual academic counseling to students

**Managerial component**

- Manage the tutors: recruitment policy (how many, from where), training, assignment to study groups, supervision, monitoring, assessment, problem-solving, etc.
- Manage interaction with OUI entities and study centers (for example, colleges)
- Handle student inquiries: special requests pertaining to examinations, submitting different/additional assignments, changing study groups, participation in tutorial sessions, etc.
- Handle administrative aspects of seminar papers



**Tutors** are the OUI position holders who meet with students face-to-face in tutorial sessions. They must hold a Master's degree. Some are doctoral students and PhDs. Tutors must be proficient in the relevant knowledge area and must demonstrate appropriate teaching abilities. They are required to have received pedagogic training prior to their employment at the OUI.

In addition to their teaching skills, tutors are also selected on the basis of geographic constraints. In general, the OUI employs tutors that live in the area in which they tutor.

### 3.2.3 **Credentials required of the head of the department**

The head of the department, in most cases a senior faculty member at the OUI, is also responsible for the departmental study programs. The department head is responsible for the following:

1. Preparing the annual work plan and its approval by OUI management.
2. Development:
  - Monitors the entire process of new course development: contacts writers, sets timetables, submits the course proposal for departmental review and to the subcommittee for discussion, transmits written material to reviewers for feedback, submits the material to the Faculty Council and the Academic Committee for approval. To this end, Academic Development Administration staff assist the department head.
  - Monitors course revision and initiates updating of outdated courses. The latter is similar to the new course development process.
  - Initiates the development of study programs.
3. Teaching:
  - Assigns course coordinators to courses and determines their position scope (according to number of students).
  - Approves attributes of special assignments
  - Ensures that assignments and exams are returned to students within a reasonable time
  - Prepares annual evaluation reports on the performance of course coordinators.
4. Department personnel:
  - Recruits new faculty members
  - Performs annual evaluations and participates in salary discussions with the Human Resources department.
5. Participates in various forums:
  - Undergraduate Teaching Committee
  - Graduate Studies Teaching Committee (if s/he serves as head of the graduate program).
  - Disciplinary Subcommittee
  - Faculty Council
  - Academic Committee
  - Meetings of department heads with the Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Department meetings
6. On-going matters:
  - Rooms to staff members
  - Updates, additions and corrections to the printed Catalog
  - Computer equipment and software, laboratories
  - Assistance in recruiting tutors

- Handling student inquiries
- Approving special conditions for students

#### 7. Departmental appointments:

- Staff members responsible for the various study programs (MBA, Industrial Engineering and Management, Accounting, Economics, Management)
- Staff member responsible for student inquiries
- Staff member responsible for computer-mediated communication and department website
- Staff member who coordinates student counseling

Accordingly, the department head serves as both the academic and the administrative head of the department and requires managerial abilities, outstanding interpersonal skills, in-depth understanding of the structure of the institution and the department as well as the accepted modes of action in the institution, a comprehensive and broad perspective of the varied needs of the institution, department, faculty members and students. Department heads carry a heavy load that leaves them little if any time for research activities. This heavy load stems primarily from the small number of senior faculty members in the department who can only give them a limited amount of assistance.

#### 3.2.4 Rules, criteria, and procedures for appointments

**Department head:** The President appoints department heads. The appointment is (usually) for three years. Criteria: Ability, seniority and rank.

**Appointment procedures:** The President, in collaboration and consultation with the VP for Academic Affairs, the serving department head and additional entities select, in most cases, one of the senior faculty members to serve as department head. The candidate is invited to a personal meeting with the President who asks him/her to fill the position. Past experience shows that the response is in most cases positive.

**Senior faculty:** The appointment procedure of senior faculty members and their advancement in rank is attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 1 (in Hebrew).

**Academic teaching staff (course coordinators):** The department head appoints the teaching staff with the approval of the Dean of Academic Studies. Until recently, their employment conditions were determined within the framework of overall University limitations and changed every semester based on the number of students enrolled in their courses. They did not have an advancement track and their employment terms were negotiated in collaboration with the department head, the Dean of Academic Studies and the HR department. A committee, headed by the President, was established to examine the status of the course coordinators. One of the conclusions was the need to define clear criteria for employing and promoting course coordinators so that their employment terms will not be subject to negotiation.

**Tutors:** Tutors are employed based on a short-term (semester) contract and their specific responsibilities (checking exercises, etc.). There is no advancement track for tutors.

#### Evaluation

**Promotion of senior faculty members:** The advancement procedure for senior faculty is similar to that at other universities. The research element is crucial in the promotion of faculty members. The length of time that a faculty member holds a rank is longer than in other universities, among other things due to the heavy administrative load carried by faculty members.

### 3.2.5 **Thesis and dissertation advisers**

Senior faculty members serve as seminar paper advisers. Theses and dissertations are not relevant to the OUI.

### 3.2.6 **Recruiting and absorbing teaching staff**

**Senior faculty:** Planned future recruitment and absorption of senior faculty members is discussed in the President's five-year plan. At present, we expect to recruit two senior faculty members within the next two years.

**Academic teaching staff:** Academic teaching staff is recruited according to teaching needs in the various courses. They are appointed by the department head with the approval of the Dean of Academic Studies. The scope of their position is based on the number of courses they coordinate and the number of students in each course. The process is problematic as it creates situations in which junior faculty are recruited in small and temporary part-time positions. The process does not allow for long-term personnel planning. The process can be improved by recruiting junior faculty in a specific area for a full-time position, rather than a specific course.

### 3.2.7 **Summary – Strengths and weaknesses of the setup of the teaching staff**

In general, the faculty believe in the university as a unique institution with a social mission, which is the main motivating factor underlying their work, despite the difficulties and problems indicated above and summarized below. OUI coordinators and tutors are very good and experienced teachers who view teaching as a mission. Course coordinators are also excellent managers who know how to successfully manage a course, even one with many tutors, study groups and students. Senior faculty members also have very good management abilities that are reflected in the collegial atmosphere in the department.

The main weakness is that the small number of senior faculty members hinders ongoing work and research.

### 3.3 Teaching and Learning

#### 3.3.1 Teaching and learning methods

##### Description

The distance teaching and self-study method developed by the Open University enables individuals with work, family and military service constraints to organize their studies according to their personal needs. This method is not time or place dependent; it is not based on a central campus with teachers and students or on a fixed and uniform class schedule. The OUI's teaching and study conception combines distance teaching with components of face-to-face teaching (blended learning). The emphasis is on active self-study that enables students to choose the tutorial framework most suited to their needs (see details in section 3.3.5 below).

OUI courses are fundamentally different from courses at other universities. An OUI course is first and foremost a scholarly or scientific work in print: one or more volumes written and produced expressly for OUI students. The written courses are specifically suited for self-study: they are usually divided into study units, each unit dealing in a defined topic and designed to be studied within a set period of time; the study material is explained with the utmost clarity and combined with guiding questions, answers to questions or exercises, and in many cases also self-assessment questions. The latter enable students to assess their progress vis à vis the study material and to examine the extent to which they understood the study material up to that point and whether they need to review any of the material.

**The course book:** The course book is the main source of self-study. Many Management courses are based on course books written and produced by the OUI (for details about the course development process, see Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 2), and are used by students in corresponding courses in most academic institutions in Israel. Several courses are based on textbooks that were translated into Hebrew. Some MBA courses are based on texts in English.

**Readers:** Some courses have readers that include articles or case studies on the course topics or that expand knowledge about key topics in the course.

**Study guide:** When the course is not based on a textbook written especially for the OUI, or includes a reader in addition to the textbook, the course is accompanied by a detailed study guide that contains the self-study tools characteristic of OUI course books. The study guide is intended to guide students and to facilitate their learning. It directs students to specific topics when reading the textbook or reader and also includes review questions, exercises and activities used to illustrate the material, sample questions and answers, references to articles and relevant websites and explanations aimed at facilitating the understanding of particularly difficult topics.

**Tutorial sessions at the study centers:** Every course has a group tutorial component conducted in a classroom or via video conference; however, this component is not the core of the course and in most cases is not mandatory. Students who wish to make their home a private campus can do so successfully based on the OUI distance teaching method. The aim of the tutorial is to guide and support the study process. In MBA courses, no more than six tutorials are conducted.

**Distance learning technologies:** To improve distance teaching, the OUI integrates advanced technologies that enable ongoing communication with the teaching staff and with other students in the course. Every course has a website that contains, among other things, supplementary information, links to databases and websites related to the course material, and multimedia materials. In several courses online tutoring replaces some of the tutorial sessions (see section 3.3.5 for details). Materials in some courses include videoclips, courseware and multimedia titles that enrich the course with interactive audio-visual material. It is important to note that these technologies do not

replace the written study materials that are the backbone of teaching at the OUI, but rather expand and enrich them, and are fully adapted to the written study materials (for additional details see section 3.3.4).

**Assignments:** Students are required to submit assignments during the semester on pre-determined dates by mail or through the Internet. The assignments are graded and the grade is a component of the final course grade, constituting 20%-30% of the course grade (see also section 3.1.11). In addition to the grade, students receive written feedback on their assignments from the tutor.

**Seminar papers:** Undergraduate students are required to write two seminar papers in their program of studies. In most advanced Management courses students write a pre-seminar paper aimed at preparing students for writing a seminar paper. This preparation includes acquaintance with databases and use of library resources, critical analysis of academic material and a focus on specific topics relevant to the contents of the course. Graduate students must take two seminar courses in which, in addition to the written paper, they submit additional assignments such as presenting their topic to the group.

**Examinations:** Every course (except MBA seminar courses) has a final examination. Examinations are held at OUI study 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. In seminar courses, the only times that students have to come to one of the study centers are for the examination and the presentation of the seminar paper.

**Assignment booklet:** Printed course materials are mailed to students' homes, accompanied by an assignment booklet that describes in detail the course format and process. The booklet includes the course topics, assignment questions and timetable (dates of tutorial sessions and topics of discussion, as well as deadlines for submitting assignments). The booklet also includes sample final exams from previous semesters that serve as an additional learning aid in the course and help students prepare for the final exam.

The number of students in Management courses ranges from a minimum of about ten students to hundreds or more each semester; for example, about 1,000 students in the course Marketing Management. The number of students in a study group ranges from ten to forty in undergraduate courses and ten to thirty in graduate courses. Registration data for each of the undergraduate and graduate Management courses can be found in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 6.

## **Evaluation**

The aim of the distance teaching method developed by the OUI, and all its varied aspects, combined with the University's open admissions policy is to open the world of higher education to all individuals, irrespective of their place of residence, occupation, age or sex, and to enable all to realize their academic potential. The method is congruent with the OUI's goals (section 2.2.1) and the goals of the academic Management programs. The independent study that characterizes the method prepares students for continuing self-study that is vital for all individuals in managerial positions in the dynamic business environment.

The learning materials and the course development process aim to provide graduates with academic knowledge that will enable them to pursue advanced degrees. The nature of studies at the OUI requires students to invest considerable effort in their studies and assignments and demand a large degree of self-discipline, so students who succeed and receive a degree are qualified to continue their studies.

The OUI method is based on individual study. Though advantageous in its flexibility and in developing students' independence, the method does not enable students to

enjoy group study and to experience teamwork that characterizes many workplaces today. Consequently, in recent years the OUI has encouraged group study, mainly using distance learning technologies and the course website as a tool for communication among students. Nonetheless, most course assignments are individual assignments. To encourage group study in Management courses, it is essential to increase awareness of its importance and to address and provide solutions to issues relating to assessing and grading group assignments.

### 3.3.2 The importance of quality in teaching and learning

#### **Description**

Teaching at the Open University is based on two fundamental elements: course development and tutoring. The unique structure of the University distinguishes between course development and teaching, and each will be dealt with separately.

#### **Course development**

Courses are developed by senior faculty members from the OUI and other academic institutions, often in cooperation with junior teaching staff. Academic course development is performed through a system that includes monitoring by external evaluators who are leading experts in their field, and scrutiny by various internal academic committees. Every new course proposal is approved by the disciplinary subcommittee and then by the Academic Committee. The course proposal and study units are sent to external reviewers and their comments and suggestions are taken into consideration during the development process. These steps relate to courses developed by OUI faculty, as well as those developed by external experts. The course development process is delineated in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 2, in Hebrew.

#### **Teaching**

Teaching tasks are divided between tutors and course coordinators. The course coordinators are members of the junior teaching staff, and have Master's degrees or PhDs. See section 3.2.2 for the descriptions of the positions of tutors and course coordinators.

#### **Training the teaching staff**

The OUI's unique study method requires a system for training all personnel involved in teaching, despite the fact that in most cases they have prior teaching experience from other frameworks. The Training Department in the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies is responsible for training the teaching staff and provides training activities for course coordinators and tutors. Furthermore, course coordinators train the tutors in the courses they coordinate.

**Course coordinator training:** Course coordinators are responsible for the planning and implementation of teaching in the course. Every course coordinator hired by the OUI is required to participate in a four-day training workshop, in which they learn to plan a good exam or assignment, to adapt exam items to the structure of the exam and the target audience, to formulate criteria for grading, and to analyze exam results in order to improve and revise the exam. The workshop also deals with formulating clear and understandable questions, and ensuring that students' responses are evaluated based on their understanding of the material without biases that can affect exam validity. The workshop focuses on evaluating exams and assignments based on the degree to which they meet reliability and validity standards. Experienced course coordinators can participate in a management development program, offered once a year.

**Tutor training:** New tutors at the OUI are required to participate in a three-day training program, offered twice a year, that deals in the nature of the position, the first tutorial session, checking assignments and examinations, and tutoring skills. Correcting

assignments is one of the main components of the tutor's job. Therefore, the training process emphasizes the development of skills for formulating grading criteria, as well as improving reliability and providing effective feedback to students. New tutors also receive individual training from the course coordinator. A wide variety of workshops are also offered to veteran tutors to improve their skills. The University also conducts symposia and training for all tutors in a department or for tutors of a specific course.

### **The training program for new tutors**

**Session 1** (about 5 hours): Acquaintance with the OUI and preparing for the first tutorial session

During the first part of this training session tutors are acquainted with the OUI, its values and work style (known as "the OUI spirit") and with the University's employment terms. Group workshops are conducted in the second part of the session (15-20 tutors in every group, 3-5 groups) addressing the first tutorial session – acquaintance, clarifying goals, etc.

**Session 2** (about 5.5 hours): Assignments as a means of two-way communication – checking assignments and providing feedback

Assignments play a key role in the OUI teaching process and feedback on assignments is first and foremost for learning purposes. In this session tutors practice checking assignments and providing effective feedback. Tutors learn how students perceive their message as transmitted in the assignment feedback and how the dialog between tutor and student reinforces learning. The session also deals in grading dilemmas and in preparing students for writing assignments. The topics discussed in the session are determined by the subject of the courses.

**Session 3** (about 5 hours): Tutoring skills

In this small group workshop, tutors learn and practice the use of a wide range of tutoring skills (even if they have prior didactic experience) through simulations and constructive feedback from colleagues and experienced tutors. Tutors also have the opportunity to practice a short tutorial session. Session activities are accompanied by a closed-circuit television.

### **New tutor training by course coordinators**

Every course coordinator is responsible for training new tutors on the course topics and study units. The training is conducted by various means:

A. In all courses, at least one meeting is held between the new tutor and the course coordinator to:

- Explain the course goals and the means of study
- Review the study topics and various emphases (for example, topics in which students encounter difficulty), as well as the tutorial schedule (if relevant to the course)
- Explain the importance of assignments in general and in the course, in particular
- Provide exercises that the tutors can, or must, use

In some courses, these guidelines are given to the tutor in writing.

B. Ongoing contact throughout the semester between the course coordinator and the new tutor.

C. The course coordinator observes tutorial sessions and provides written and/or verbal feedback to the tutor.

D. The course coordinator samples assignments checked by the tutor and provides feedback.

E. In some courses, the new tutor is asked to observe tutorial sessions conducted by a veteran tutor, and in some cases, the course coordinator appoints the tutor a coach from among the veteran tutors.

#### **Training and activities for veteran tutors**

A. **Workshop – The online assignment system** (3.5 hours): A tool for submitting assignments and feedback through the Internet between students and tutors.

B. **Workshop – Tutors as leaders of study groups** (8 hours): To help tutors develop tutorial skills that increase student involvement and commitment. The workshop is conducted within the framework of the Leadership and Management Development Center and takes place at Neot Kedumim (learning and training activities in an experiential and unique setting based on the “outdoor training” method are held on this site).

C. **Workshop – Feedback and Criticism** (8 hours): The aim of the workshop is to enhance tutors’ skills in giving and receiving feedback. The workshop examines the nature of criticism and attempts to understand its positive and negative power, the feelings it engenders, and behavioral reactions.

D. **Workshop – Pygmalion Tutoring** (7 hours): The workshop aims to teach tutors how to improve students’ achievements by raising their expectations about themselves. The workshop presents theory and research, focusing on an applied model that is easy for tutors to implement in order to influence student learning behavior and achievements.

E. **Workshop –Tutors Together** (4 sessions, 1 hour each): Tutors from different disciplines contend with similar dilemmas and professional and organizational issues. They examine their extensive, relevant and valuable knowledge and experience concerning these dilemmas and issues. The aim of the workshop is to share this knowledge and to create new knowledge.

F. **University-wide activities**, including symposia, lectures, guided concerts, exhibitions, tours and workshops on a variety of topics.

Demand is high for most of the activities offered. As the number of participants per activity is limited, in quite a few cases tutors’ requests to participate cannot be met. In 2004-2005, 30 tutors and course coordinators in the department participated in activities and workshops for veteran tutors.

#### **Course and departmental symposia and meetings**

Meetings of tutors are held when a course has more than two tutors. In most courses these meetings are held every semester, usually before the beginning of the semester or after the semester ends, and in a few courses – once a year.

The main issues discussed are:

- Summary of the preceding semester as well as notifications (usually administrative), guidelines and updates concerning preparations for the upcoming semester
- A discussion of various topics concerning course contents
- Sharing information about study and drilling methods for different topics
- Enrichment and in-depth examination of various topics related to course contents and to study and tutoring issues

The meetings also have an important social function in consolidating the group, heightening involvement and reinforcing tutors’ feelings that they are not working on their own.



### **Course websites**

Every course offered by the Department of Management and Economics has a course website. Every course with more than four tutors has a forum for tutors (and the course coordinator). In the forum, tutors discuss and consult each other about issues relating to topics, assignments, tutoring methods, recommendations for tutorial exercises, etc.

### **Evaluation of teaching**

**Evaluation of teaching activities and tutors:** Course coordinators continuously monitor the quality of the tutors' work by conducting frequent visits to study centers throughout the country, observing lessons and talking with students. After conducting the observation the course coordinator summarizes his/her conclusions in a report that also addresses the quality of the tutor's feedback on assignments. The report is submitted to the department head and used by the course coordinator to track changes in tutoring quality. A sample of this report is presented in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 7.

Course coordinators also sample assignments checked by tutors and provide feedback on the quality of the assessment. At the beginning of the semester the coordinator decides which tutors will be sampled, how many assignments and which assignments. The sampled assignments are photocopied and sent to the course coordinator. Assignments checked by new tutors are sampled more often than those checked by veteran tutors.

Exams are also sampled and coordinators are required to check a number of exams in each exam sitting in order to get a sense of the students' responses. Course coordinators maintain ongoing contact with tutors during the semester and help them as needed with tutoring issues. Students can contact course coordinators directly during their telephone office hours or by e-mail, regular mail and messages in the course website – enabling coordinators to identify issues that need to be addressed or improved.

### **Teaching survey**

One of the important tools for evaluating and examining teaching quality is the survey of teaching conducted in every course each semester, through which course coordinators and faculty members responsible for the course receive feedback from students about various aspects of teaching and learning in the course. The survey helps course coordinators monitor tutors' performance and the efficacy of the variety of teaching tools and methods used in the course. The survey is conducted by the Evaluation Department through questionnaires administered to students at one of the tutorial sessions towards the end of the semester (the questionnaire can be found in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 8).

Students are asked to evaluate the course with respect to:

- Overall satisfaction
- Assignments
- The tutor and tutorial sessions
- The course website
- General questions (difficulty of course and expected grade) and background questions (credits accumulated, participation in tutorials)

A summary of the results is sent to the head of the department, the course coordinator and the tutors.

The continued employment of tutors, hired for one semester, is based on the quality of their work as evaluated by the course coordinator through observations of tutorial sessions, sampling assignments and exams and the teaching survey results. However, in the event that the number of registrations to a specific course or study group does not justify the opening of a group, the tutors' employment is discontinued even if their work was outstanding. In certain cases these tutors can be employed in the following

semesters, or in other courses, however the temporary nature of their work, that also does not reward tutors for performance or seniority, does not encourage them to continue their employment at the OUI.

#### **Evaluation of course coordinators**

The OUI conducts periodic evaluations of course coordinators to examine various components of their performance. The evaluation is conducted by a faculty member and by the department head. Course coordinators who do not meet the requirements are replaced. Due to the abilities and quality of those selected to act as course coordinators, and the ongoing training and accompaniment by the senior faculty, these cases are rare.

#### **3.3.3 Professional and academic updating of faculty**

The electronic databases to which the OUI library subscribes provide all faculty members with direct and convenient access to updated academic publications. In addition, faculty members visit websites of similar courses in Israel and throughout the world, and collect information from many other sources such as websites of leading researchers in a specific field. Some publishers send us new books or new editions of textbooks, and faculty members also initiate the acquisition of new books in their field, in order to remain updated about new study materials. Participation in seminars and conferences in Israel and abroad is another way to stay abreast of research developments.

The limited number of faculty members in each field hinders departmental activities in a specific field on a regular basis, but despite this limitation, these activities enrich the participants in all Management fields and are suited to the interdisciplinary nature of the program.

#### **3.3.4 Use of information technology in teaching and learning**

The Open University uses information technology to support its teaching and learning that includes three components:

1. An Internet learning environment that includes the Open University website, the department websites (including websites for the MBA program and for alumni), and individual course websites.
2. An online assignment system
3. *Sheilta* - Interactive services to students (see section 3.4.4 below).

#### **Course websites**

Every course offered by the department has a website that enables the department to improve service to students, enhance teaching quality, address varied target groups, bridge geographic distance and supply easy communication and continuous availability. The websites provide two types of communication channels – an administrative channel and an academic channel.

#### **Administrative channel**

All administrative details pertaining to the course are found in the website, for example: course description, course schedule, information about the teaching team and list of students in the course by study group.

#### **Academic channel**

**Message board:** Every website has a message board with notices posted by the course coordinator throughout the semester about the study material (clarifications, emphases, guidance, etc.) and about administrative issues (schedule changes, tutorial session changes, etc.).

**Discussion forum:** Every website has a discussion forum that is one of the key components of an online course. Forums provide a unique collaborative learning environment through a-synchronous discussion among members of the group (students and teaching staff) who are geographically distant from each other. Through the forum students can ask questions about the study material, request clarifications, discuss assignment questions and receive help from their fellow students and from the teaching staff. Thus the forum becomes a virtual classroom and enables ongoing interaction. For many students who do not attend tutorials (for example students living abroad), the course website enables them to maintain contact with the teaching staff and with their fellow students, to more easily keep up with the appropriate study rate and to feel a part of a large study group, thus reducing feelings of isolation that can arise when studies are based exclusively on books and regular mail.

Some courses also offer a separate forum for course tutors (access is denied to students) in which they can discuss problems that arise in the tutorial sessions, discuss questions posed by students in the study groups that may interest all course tutors and share relevant interesting material.

**Personal journal:** This tool for organizing the information on the website enables students to gather and organize selected information from course websites and to add their personal comments. This personal tool accompanies students throughout their studies at the OUI in all courses.

**Chat room:** Every website has a chat room that the students and tutors are authorized to enter with a personal password. The chat enables synchronous group communication using text messages. The chat serves as a social and learning meeting place for students, for seminar paper tutoring for a small group of students, to converse with students abroad or with tutors, to answer questions in preparing for an exam, etc.

**Online tutorial sessions:** In some courses, tutorial sessions are conducted through advanced technologies:

- The **Ofek** system enables the broadcast of live lectures (in real time) from a studio on the Raanana campus to all receiving classes dispersed throughout the country and simultaneously on the Internet to personal computers at home. The system is based on broadband video communication.
- The **Interwise** system enables transmission of live lessons on an Internet platform to students' homes from the lecturer's computer, so that students hear the lecturer's voice while viewing the study material: demonstration of a presentation or a website, using a design table, shared applications and interactive exams.
- The **Video Conference** system, in which a tutorial is conducted by the course coordinator or a visiting lecturer and broadcast from a main studio to classrooms throughout the country as well as to the course website. The system was used for the first time by the Department of Management and Economics in the course "Price Theory" in Spring 2005.

**Online assignment system:** The online assignment system is offered through the course websites. During the semester, students must submit a number of assignments that include exercises or various tasks. Whereas in the past assignments were submitted by mail, assignments in most courses can now be submitted through the Internet-based online assignment system.

**Enrichment:** Various types of learning materials are integrated into course websites: supplementary information on study units, exercises and exams for self-evaluation, sample exams, weekly briefings, feedback on assignments, videotapes and recorded lectures, demonstrations, presentations, students' papers, references to current topics, links to databases and websites, etc.

All technological teaching tools are assessed and monitored, and feedback is provided by students and tutors.

**The department website** ([www.openu.ac.il/academic/economics](http://www.openu.ac.il/academic/economics))

The website of the Department of Management and Economics consolidates a great deal of information – administrative and academic – pertaining to the department:

- **About:** A description of the department, history of the department, study programs offered by the department, information about the teaching faculty.
- **Statistics consulting services:** The Department of Management and Economics offers consulting services for statistics computer applications that focuses primarily on training in the use of statistics software products and on statistical inference based on computerized processing of statistical data.
- **Seminar papers:** This section of the website provides information about writing seminar papers, and includes FAQs on seminar papers, selected sample seminar papers and a link to a guide for writing a seminar paper.
- **Academic counseling:** The Department of Management and Economics enables students to receive academic counseling from a team of departmental academic advisors, faculty members and course coordinators who are familiar with the department's study programs and courses. This section offers information about the academic counseling services provided by the department, for example: FAQs and a list of departmental academic advisors.
- **Kivunim:** A departmental online magazine in which senior faculty members, junior teaching staff, tutors and students publish articles on various topics. The aim of this section is to expose students to current issues in a variety of relevant scientific disciplines and application areas and to create a platform to strengthen the relationship between students and the department.
- **Contact:** Contact information of the department administrative staff, including names of the secretaries and their responsibility areas, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- **Message board:** Notices about departmental activities and greetings at the beginning of a semester or on holidays are posted on the message board.

**MBA website** ([www.telem.openu.ac.il/mba](http://www.telem.openu.ac.il/mba))

The MBA website serves as a virtual campus and provides extensive information – administrative and academic – pertaining to the program. It includes the structure of the MBA program and the study method (types of courses, list of courses and links to course descriptions); names of the program director, administrative coordinator, course coordinators, academic advisors and their office hours; a message board including the schedule, descriptions of new courses, messages about activities; links to recordings of meetings of the economic forums conducted as part of the MBA program; a forum for all MBA students; links to relevant websites and databases, etc.

**The MBA alumni club website** ([www.telem.openu.ac.il/mba-club/](http://www.telem.openu.ac.il/mba-club/))

The OUI MBA alumni club was established as a joint initiative of a group of alumni of the first MBA class and the MBA faculty in the Department of Management and Economics, to address alumni's academic and professional interests. The aim of the club website is to help graduates, and to develop close relations between the alumni and the OUI, among alumni, and between alumni and the economic and industrial sectors. The club also acts to strengthen relations with the community as a means of contributing to society.

The club website includes a description of the club; a list of alumni by class; an alumni forum; alumni initiatives and ideas; information on projects for contributing to the community, meetings and events, employment opportunities, benefits, issues relevant to alumni, publications.

### **Computerization data and trends**

The scope of computerization and the use of course websites in general at the Open University and in Department courses has expanded significantly. Detailed data regarding computerization can be found in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 9.

The data show that the activity in course website forums examined in the report increased over the years for students, course coordinators and tutors. The most prominent trend is the enormous growth in the number of messages posted by students in course forums. This indicates that students realize that it is an important and effective means of interacting with the teaching staff. The increased volume of forum activity among students also points to a growing tendency among students to help each other rather than relying only on the course coordinator or the tutors.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of Computerization**

#### **Strengths**

From the students' perspective, computerization has significant advantages. A course website provides ongoing synchronous and asynchronous contact with the teaching staff throughout the semester and provides them, without time and place limitations, with a wide-range of materials for expanding, clarifying and enriching the study material. In particular, the course website forum is an excellent means of interaction between students and the teaching staff and among students, for asking questions and sharing information related to the study material, and as such is used extensively. The ability to maintain ongoing contact with the faculty is especially important in the MBA program in which at most six tutorial sessions are held during the semester in each course.

From the course coordinators' perspective, the website is an effective means of expanding and supplementing the course material beyond the tutorial sessions and study units, as well as for various types of exercises. The new Opus version gives the website manager almost complete autonomy with respect to all parts of the website, in most cases through an easy and user-friendly interface. The ability to add exercises and to supplement the study material or expand on certain topics through the website is particularly important in MBA courses, as the limited number of tutorial sessions does not enable tutors to address all topics that are important and/or difficult to understand. Furthermore, the website in general and the forum in particular are effective means of enriching students in varied ways about topics relevant to the course (for example: virtual real-time meetings through the forum with guest lecturers).

#### **Weaknesses**

- The extensive activities in the course website place a heavy workload on the course coordinators who devote a significant amount of time answering students' queries in the forum. There is concern that the time they invest in this work, important as it is, in certain cases may be at the expense of other professional/academic activities.
- Due to the large volume of materials published on the websites there is concern that students will have a hard time navigating the websites and that the effort required will exceed the benefit.
- It appears that for some students, course websites are a substitute for independent studying. The availability of coordinators in the forums to answer students' questions encourages students to choose the easy way and to ask about anything they do not understand instead of delving into the literature and contending with the study material on their own.
- The abundant material available on the websites may reduce the attractiveness of tutorial sessions that, while not mandatory, have added value.
- Technically, despite significant improvements in the new Opus version, there are still time-consuming bugs that cause problems for the coordinators.

### 3.3.5 Student participation in tutorial sessions

#### Description

The OUI study method does not require students to participate in tutorial sessions in the traditional format customary in universities. In our system, the study material is all found in textbooks and study guides, and the interaction between students and the teaching staff is intended to clarify and discuss problems encountered by students during their self-study, as well as for enrichment and in-depth examination of the study material. Students are offered several tutorial formats and choose the most suitable to them from among the following:

- **Regular tutorials:** A 2-3-hour session once every 2-3 weeks, about 7-8 tutorial sessions in undergraduate courses and 6 sessions at most in graduate courses.
- **Intensive tutorials:** Usually about 14 tutorials a semester conducted almost weekly. This tutorial format is only offered in undergraduate courses.
- **Online tutorials:** The Management faculty use a variety of tools and methods for virtual tutorials conducted through course websites (see section 3.3.4 above).
- **Telephone tutorials:** All course coordinators and tutors have weekly telephone tutorial hours during which students can call them to discuss academic and administrative issues.
- **Tutoring via e-mail:** In addition to telephone tutoring that is usually limited to specific hours during the week (although there are tutors that agree to answer calls outside their formal tutoring hours), students can send an e-mail to the teaching staff at any time and receive a speedy response. With respect to topics relevant to all the students in the course, the course team makes an effort to offer tutoring within the framework of the course website forum.

#### Evaluation

In the OUI study method, students do not participate in tutorial sessions because attendance is mandatory, but rather because they assume that participation in these sessions will benefit their studies. The same holds true for the other tutorial options described above. There are students who are unable to attend tutorial sessions, and for whom studies at the OUI are the only option available for pursuing academic studies, for example, soldiers, students abroad, residents from the periphery, prisoners and individuals who are sick or have limited mobility. These students are supported by distant tutoring options: course websites, telephone and e-mail.

Students enjoy the flexibility and the ability to take advantage of the various tutoring options based on changing circumstances, for example intensive tutoring in a difficult course and regular tutoring in other courses, or distance study of a course, without attending face-to-face tutorials due to work or family constraints such as living abroad for a period of time. Students also have flexibility within the course itself: they often choose not to attend tutorials that deal in study material they believe they can manage on their own. Consequently, tutorial sessions are effective, and because they are voluntary, there is an atmosphere of study that is reinforced by students' desire to gain from their participation in the tutorial.

### 3.3.6 Methods for measuring student achievements

#### Description

The aim of evaluating student achievements is to examine the knowledge they acquired during the course and their entitlement to academic credits. The OUI has open admissions in undergraduate courses of study and does not have information about students' prior scholastic achievements. In this context it is important to underscore that the principle of open admissions does not contradict upholding standards of excellence with respect to the academic level of OUI courses or the

methods used to evaluate students' academic achievements. The overall course success rate is about 74%.

The success rate of students in MBA courses is about 85%. Graduate students are entitled to take an exam only once. Students who fail or wish to improve their grade must re-enroll in the course and meet all course requirements. We assume that the overall success rate of MBA students corresponds to their initial qualifications.

### **Methods of evaluating student achievements**

Student achievements at the OUI are evaluated through assignments and exams. During the semester students are required to submit several assignments. Assignments are checked, graded and corrected and returned to students. Assignment grades are weighted into the final grade of the course. There are two main types of assignments: tutor assignments and computer assignments.

- A **tutor assignment** is composed of open questions, enabling students to answer freely and demonstrate their writing, analysis and synthesis skills with respect to the topics studied. There are usually 5-6 assignments in a course, making up 20%-30% of the course grade. In most courses students must submit at least four assignments.
- A **computer assignment** is a multiple-choice questionnaire which students answer using the course website or a computer form. The process of checking and calculating the grade is entirely computerized.

**Exams:** In all courses, except for graduate seminar courses, there is a final exam at the end of the semester. The exam is written by the course coordinator and is approved by a senior faculty member or a member of the teaching staff with a PhD. Exams taken by students are checked by the course coordinator and the tutors, based on criteria set by the former. Exams with atypical grades are re-checked by an additional individual before assigning the final grade. Appeals are handled by an individual who did not initially check the exam and the decision pertaining to the appeal rests with the course coordinator.

**Pre-seminar paper:** In advanced courses it is also customary to submit a pre-seminar assignment intended to prepare students for writing a seminar paper. Students must receive a grade of 70 or above on the pre-seminar assignment as a prerequisite for writing a seminar paper in the course.

**Undergraduate seminar papers:** Students must write two seminar papers. After successfully completing an advanced course, students are entitled to choose to write a seminar paper in the course. The paper topic is approved by the course coordinator and the student is referred to a supervisor, holding at least a PhD degree, who meets with the student prior to writing the paper and once again after its completion in order to provide feedback and to evaluate the paper. During the evaluation meeting the student is required to present the paper and to answer the supervisor's questions. After this meeting the advisor sends a copy of the paper, with his/her comments, as well as a detailed evaluation form and the final grade to the University (the supervisor does not inform the student of the seminar paper grade). The evaluation form is attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 3. The paper is also subject to supervision processes by the course coordinator and the department head.

**Graduate seminar papers:** Students must complete two seminar courses that are conducted in small groups of about 20 students. In addition to writing the seminar paper, course assignments may include analysis of articles and their presentation to the group.

**Calculating the final grade:** The final grade in the course is calculated as a weighted average of the assignments submitted and of the exam. A student who fails the final exam cannot pass the course even if the weighted grade (thanks to high grades on

assignments) is a pass. For details on weights of course grades, see Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 2.

### **Validity and reliability of measuring achievement**

The validity and reliability of evaluation processes are also related to the design of evaluation tools (exams and assignments in this context) as well as the application of these tools (for example checking and assessing students' answers). The assignments and exams prepared by the course coordinators each semester are checked by faculty members or teaching staff with a PhD whose academic field includes the course topics.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the student evaluation processes, the Evaluation and Training Departments use several methods:

- The teaching staff is trained in writing exams and assignments and checking and grading exams and assignments. See section 3.3.2.
- Statistical reports are generated in order to analyze and learn from the results of the tools: item analyses for all assignments and exams are consolidated in a general OUI database from which reports are generated and used by course coordinators to track students' achievements:
  - Students' achievements – for every student in the course, the report shows the student's assignments grades, the final exam grade and the final course grade.
  - Consolidated results of MC questions – the difficulty level, item discrimination, the proportion of students who chose each of the distractors, the correlation between each of the distractors and the overall exam grade.
  - Consolidation of grades of open-ended questions – the average grade for every item, the SD and the percentage of examinees who chose to answer the question. The report also shows the distribution of the exam grades.
  - Statistical data (averages and standard deviations) on the assignment grades, the final exam grade and the correlation between the assignment grades and the exam grade, reliability coefficients.

These reports can be generated very easily after the items are entered into the OUI database. The reports present information about the difficulty level of the items (the percentage of students who answered multiple-choice items correctly, the average and standard deviation for open questions), item discrimination (correlation between each item and the total exam grade), an analysis of the distractors (for multiple-choice items), the percentage of examinees who chose each question (when they can choose to answer certain questions and not others), and the distribution of exam grades.

These data can contribute to the validity and reliability of the exams. They enable course coordinators to identify 'bad' items that could have affected students' success on the exam and to remove them from the grade calculation, and to improve future exams.

The statistical data enable course coordinators to oversee several aspects pertaining to teaching the course and evaluating students' achievements:

- Comparing the assignment and exam grades in the various study groups can show the level of students in the group and the quality the tutor's grading of assignments.
- Comparing assignment grades to the final exam grade and checking the correlation between the two indicators can, in combination with additional information, show the degree to which the assignments prepare students for the final grade.

In summary – the OUI maintains an organized and structured system for examining ways to evaluate student achievements. Hundreds of students are enrolled each semester in some Management courses, and the statistical tools described above enable course coordinators to independently evaluate the quality of the assignments and exams they wrote and also to oversee tutoring quality (in addition to the



mechanisms for overseeing the tutors' work, described in section 3.3.2). The detailed information also helps course coordinators to identify difficult topics in the course contents and examine whether the measures they took to help students deal with these difficulties (for example: preparing a video explaining the topic that students can view through the course website, additional exercises, answers to questions, etc.) achieved their goal.

### **3.3.7 Summary – Strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning**

The strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in Management programs are similar to those in the OUI in general, as the pedagogic model is identical. Nonetheless, several characteristics that are unique to the Management programs and are not necessarily evident in other disciplines affect the strengths and weaknesses:

- Management programs do not require the use of laboratories or fieldtrips and as such facilitate distance teaching and learning.
- There is high demand for Management courses and for the MBA program and thousands of students are enrolled in the Department of Management and Economics.

#### **Strengths**

The high quality study material of the OUI is a result of the University's unique course development process that combines collaboration with leading external scholars in their field in writing courses, evaluation and as consultants.

The organized and structured evaluation and training system ensures the high quality of teaching and learning, providing the feedback to the teaching staff that enables them to continuously improve the process.

Accumulated institutional experience over 30 years of distance teaching enables the OUI to effectively take advantage of learning technologies that in recent years are accessible to most students, and indeed the OUI is a leader in the development and implementation of technological tools for distance teaching and learning.

The OUI offers students a broad range of elective courses that do not depend on the availability of senior faculty members, and does not limit the number of students that can enroll in a course. All individuals who meet the graduate admission requirements are accepted to the MBA program, enabling them to realize their intellectual abilities. The OUI teaching approach is characterized by flexibility and accessibility while ensuring academic quality and excellence.

Finally, self-study that characterizes all studies at the OUI, and especially the MBA program, qualifies students for a continued self-study process that is vital for all those dealing in management in the modern business environment.

#### **Weaknesses and measures to improve them**

Self-study demands a high level of self-discipline from students who perceive this component as more difficult than group study through face-to-face lectures. Moreover, most of the assignments are prepared alone and not through teamwork. Students find it difficult to contend with these elements and they often cause them to discontinue their studies. Educational technologies are the primary tool for dealing with these difficulties. Course websites offer students a variety of ways to interact with their fellow students for collaborative study. Course coordinators invest considerable thought and effort in activities on the course website to encourage teamwork and create a classroom atmosphere.

The extensive options available to students, beginning with the choice of a study program among more than 50 undergraduate programs, through a varied course offering, and enabling students to choose their preferred learning mode and tutoring method, offers students maximum flexibility. Nonetheless, not all students choose the option most suitable for them. The OUI aims to help students in this process by closely

accompanying them from their initial interest in studies at the OUI and until they receive their degree. The OUI Academic Counseling and Study Guidance System, within the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, accompanies students throughout their studies at the OUI through academic counseling, cultivating learning skills and personal tutoring. In addition to general counseling, specific academic counseling services are offered to students by Department advisors. The department attributes great importance to academic counseling services provided to students by junior and senior faculty members who respond during their weekly telephone office hours to inquiries of prospective students and to students who need help in choosing a study track.

### 3.4 Students

#### 3.4.1 Selection and admission procedures

##### 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. However, to earn their degree, students must fulfill all the course requirements in the program in which they are enrolled. The Open University does not have an affirmative action policy.

Demographic data concerning undergraduate Management students are in the table below. Undergraduate Management students are defined as students who successfully completed three Management courses – Organizational Behavior, Financial Theory, and Marketing Management. Since students may be enrolled in more than one course, the tables present both the number of students, and the number of courses they took.

##### 1. Distribution by gender

		Female	Male
1999-2000	Students	2,269	2,074
	Course enrollments	9,516	8,926
2000-2001	Students	2,290	2,164
	Course enrollments	9,331	9,300
2001-2002	Students	2,231	2,106
	Course enrollments	9,143	9,155
2002-2003	Students	2,025	1,874
	Course enrollments	8,381	8,058
2003-2004	Students	1,688	1,688
	Course enrollments	6,572	6,572
2004-2005	Students	1,198	1,351
	Course enrollments	4,264	4,717

##### 2. Distribution by age

		To 18	19-20	21-25	26-35	36-45	46+	Unknown
1999-2000	Students	27	46	1,565	2,326	295	63	21
	Course enrollments	115	139	7,597	9,426	900	167	98
2000-2001	Students	22	62	1,528	2,443	315	67	17
	Course enrollments	89	213	7,415	9,715	960	171	68
2001-2002	Students	14	56	1,371	2,475	338	72	11
	Course enrollments	73	248	6,957	9,768	996	208	48
2002-2003	Students	5	25	1,086	2,406	285	83	9
	Course enrollments	29	112	5,838	9,319	868	243	30
2003-2004	Students	2	8	661	2,176	293	78	4
	Course enrollments	15	30	3,629	8,158	784	239	13
2004-2005	Students	2	327	1,880	270	70	2	
	Course enrollments	7	1,655	6,444	691	184	7	

## 3. Distribution according to prior education

Highest degree awarded	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
None	37	40	40	33	24	24	198
High school diploma	197	220	214	188	162	124	1,105
Vocational high school diploma	112	114	110	97	79	62	574
Matriculation certificate	2,663	2,750	2,676	2,399	1,958	1,540	13,986
Technician's certificate	327	327	308	293	245	196	1,696
Electronics certificate	419	457	495	483	443	369	2,666
Teaching certificate	18	19	20	18	17	14	106
First degree	172	140	108	68	36	19	543
Second degree	11	11	12	8	7	6	55
Ph.D.	3	5	3	2			13
Other certificate	154	153	154	143	129	101	834
Unknown	230	218	197	167	122	94	1,028
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,343</b>	<b>4,454</b>	<b>4,337</b>	<b>3,899</b>	<b>3,222</b>	<b>2,549</b>	<b>22,804</b>

**Graduate Students****MBA program admission requirements**

MBA program admission requirements were set in order to ensure the academic excellence of the program graduates while at the same time offering an additional opportunity to applicants that demonstrated knowledge and abilities in their undergraduate studies at various universities but did not take the GMAT as required by MBA programs at other universities and which is not a requirement at the Open University.

The requirements are:

- A bachelor's degree in **Management** from an institution accredited by the Council for Higher Education or from a reputable institution of higher education abroad, with a grade point average of at least 80 and after completing all necessary qualifying courses.
- A bachelor's degree in **a field other than Management** from an institution accredited by the Council for Higher Education in Israel with a grade point average of at least 80 and after completing all necessary qualifying courses.
- Students who completed their studies as specified above with a lower grade point average can submit their application to the program. In special cases the program admissions committee may decide to invite the applicant to an interview. Managerial experience of at least three years is considered an advantage.

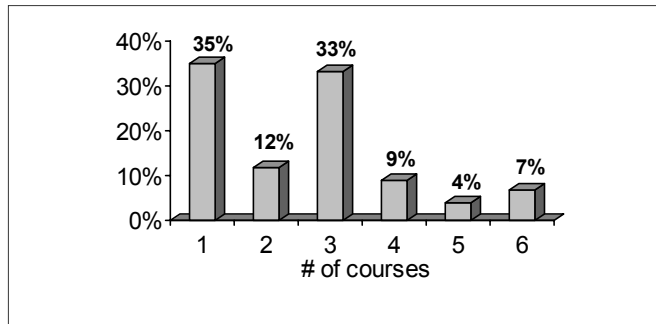
**Admission process**

The application form and the accompanying documents are examined by the departmental graduate studies committee. The committee considers the request and, if necessary, requests additional information and/or invites the applicant to an interview. The committee may make one of the following recommendations:

1. Accept the applicant as a degree candidate in the MBA program.
2. Accept the applicant as a degree candidate in the MBA program and require qualifying courses. This usually applies to candidates with a bachelor's degree in Management/Economics from an institution of higher education in Israel or from a reputable institution of higher education abroad with a grade point average of 80 and above, who did not take one or more of the qualifying courses in an academic

framework. The credits for qualifying courses are not included in the count of credits required for completing the MBA program.

The figure shows the number of qualifying courses taken by students accepted to the MBA program.



- Accept the applicant to the MBA program with probationary status, specifying conditions required for transition to degree candidate status. This applies to candidates who are students in the last semester of studies towards a bachelor's degree in Management/Economics in an institution of higher education as stated above, with a grade point average of 80 and above. As a condition for admission to the program, applicants with this status must complete the bachelor's degree with a grade point average of 80 and above.
- Reject the applicant. This applies to candidates who do not meet the admission requirements.

Admission decisions 1-3 are valid for two years from the date of notification. Students who do not enroll in the MBA program within this period will be required to resubmit their application.

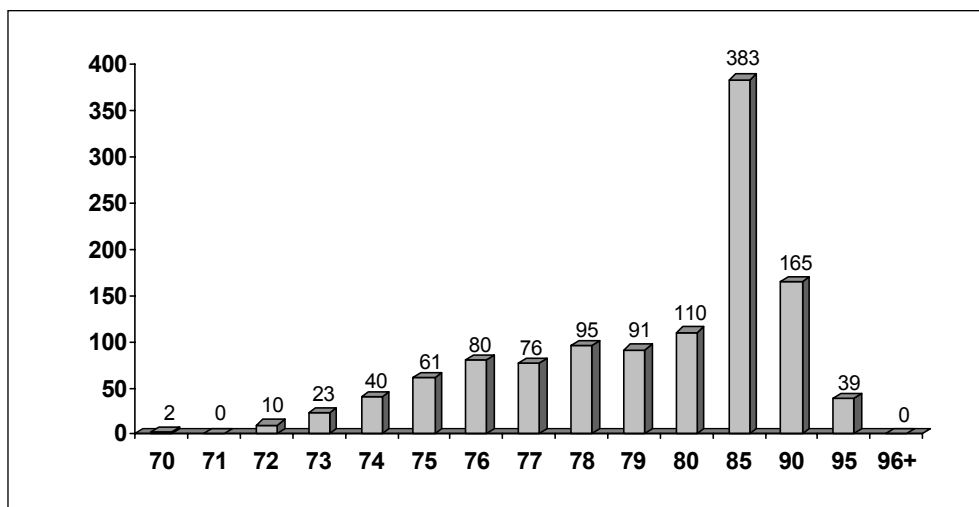
The Open University does not have an affirmative action policy in admission to its MBA program.

The following figures describe students studying in the MBA program.

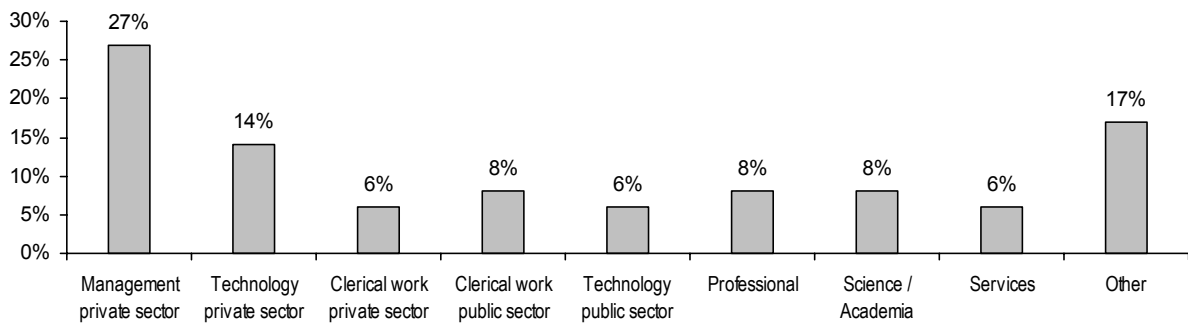
**Candidates accepted for MBA studies**

**1. Grades**

Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
81	80.5	80	70	96



## 2. Professional background of MBA students



Additional demographic variables of MBA students are shown below. MBA students are defined as students who are taking graduate courses or enrolled in qualifying courses towards studies in the MBA program.

## 3. Distribution by gender and age

	2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Students	Course enrollments	Students	Course enrollments	Students	Course enrollments
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	665	1,790	853	2,480	934	2,723
Male	695	1,948	953	2,820	1,027	3,115
<b>Age</b>						
To 18	1	6	1	3	1	5
19-20					1	2
21-25	67	189	78	233	59	145
26-35	1,004	2,799	1,346	3,979	1,476	4,455
36-45	177	480	259	769	330	982
46+	56	145	79	217	80	225
Unknown	57	121	43	99	14	24

## 4. Distribution according to prior education

Highest degree awarded	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
None				2	2	3	7
High school diploma				7	10	15	32
Vocational high school diploma				4	4	7	15
Matriculation certificate				110	108	116	334
Technician's certificate				6	7	10	23
Electronics certificate				15	27	30	72
Teaching certificate				10	8	7	25
First degree				1,038	1,427	1,546	4,013
Second degree				30	52	60	142
Ph.D.				5	8	6	19
Other certificate				10	17	14	41
Unknown				125	136	147	408
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,362</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>1,961</b>	<b>5,131</b>

## 5. Distribution by institution that granted first degree

<b>Institution of Higher Learning</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>
Ben Gurion University of the Negev	20	109
Bar-Ilan University	18	86
University of Haifa	30	56
Tel Aviv University	39	76
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem	25	64
The Open University	83	177
Technion - Israel Institute of Technology	22	58
The Weizmann Institute of Science	1	
The Jerusalem College of Technology - Machon Lev	2	5
Bezalel Academy of Art and Design - Jerusalem	1	
Holon Academic Institute of Technology	5	6
Hadassah College Jerusalem	1	7
The College of Judea & Samaria	9	13
Ort Braude Technical College	8	38
The Jerusalem College of Technology		1
Negev Academic College of Engineering	9	15
Tel Aviv Engineering College	1	3
The Academic College of Law, Ramat Gan		1
Netanya Academic College	4	17
Sapir Academic College	8	20
Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel	5	18
Academic College of Tel-Aviv-Yafo	12	27
Tel Hai Academic College	4	4
Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya	1	8
College of Management, Academic Studies Division	11	48
Rupin Institute	8	13
Ono Academic College, Kiryat Ono		1
Shenkar College of Engineering and Design	3	5
Sha'arey Mishpat College of Law	1	2
Oranim Academic College of Education	1	1
Technology Teaching College, Tel Aviv	1	
Wingate College of Physical Education	2	2
David Yellin College of Education		3
Ohalo Teachers College	1	
Beit Berl College		3
Jerusalem College		2
Levinsky College of Education		4
Kibbutzim College of Education		2
Ashkelon Academic College		3
Jordan Valley College	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>958</b>

**Accreditation of prior studies**

Students who took graduate level courses relevant to the program at another institution of higher education may submit a request for accreditation of prior studies. To receive an exemption of up to 18 credits for graduate studies at another accredited academic institution students must submit a written request along with the relevant documents to the Graduate Studies office in the Registrar's Office. The request will be considered and students will be informed in writing of the decision. Accreditation of prior studies is only granted following successful completion of at least one graduate level course.

### **MBA degree eligibility requirements**

To complete the MBA degree requirements, students must accumulate 45 credits in required courses, elective courses and seminars. Students without the necessary background are required to complete supplementary studies in basic courses, which do not grant graduate level credits. Required courses include core courses in Management as well as an advanced integrative course to be taken after the core courses. The multi-disciplinary character of graduate studies in business administration, as well as the diverse supplementary, mandatory, elective and seminar courses, enables students to plan a program of studies based on a wide variety of courses offered by the OUI. MBA students are required to demonstrate their ability to apply their studies to practical managerial problems and case studies in their own fields and organizations and to other cases in Israel and abroad. Students receive an MBA following completion of all the courses in their approved program of study. The final degree grade is the weighted average of all course grades.

### **Deliberations requiring admission requirements**

To be admitted to the MBA program, students must demonstrate mastery of academic knowledge relevant to the study program, hence the justification for supplementary courses in cases in which the student lacks the necessary background.

In this context, the program heads are debating the following two issues:

- Is it justified to set a minimum average grade of 75 in supplementary courses as a condition for admission to the program, or perhaps a “pass” grade is sufficient as an indication that the student acquired the basic knowledge required.
- Should the department implement an affirmative action policy with respect to students who completed their undergraduate studies in relevant study programs in high level academic institutions, but did not receive the required minimum grade, in preference to students who meet the minimum grade requirement in fields that are not relevant to the OUI MBA program and at institutions that are less demanding.

## **3.4.2 Procedures – Termination of studies, discipline, exams, appeals, tuition and financial assistance**

### **Termination of studies towards a degree**

The University reserves the right to deny students the right to study toward a degree in a discipline or a field of study in which they have failed four courses.

### **Suspension procedure**

The Dean of Academic Studies is authorized to decide on suspension of degree studies under the circumstances specified above.

The Dean of Academic Studies will make the decision after consulting with the relevant faculty members and course coordinators, and after meeting with the student to discuss the issue. The student can appeal to the President of the University; the President's decision is final.

The Dean of Academic Studies will inform the student and the Admissions Office of the suspension.

It is important to note that the suspension procedure is quite liberal as it pertains to specific degree studies, and enables students to continue their studies in other fields. In light of the University's ideology with respect to open admissions to all, without prerequisites, the procedure is applied very rarely and only in severe cases.

The OUI is also entitled to suspend a student's studies for one or more semesters (and even permanently) due to disciplinary offences (see below).



The MBA departmental committee is authorized to decide on suspending a student who failed three required courses or a student with serious disciplinary offences, in accordance with Open University regulations.

Students who discontinue their studies at their own initiative for a period exceeding two years must submit a request to resume their studies to the departmental MBA committee. The committee will consider the request based on the students' scholastic achievements and additional information submitted to the committee.

### **Disciplinary measures**

Disciplinary measures are taken in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, which is published in the annual Admissions and Registration Guide, on the University website (in Hebrew [<http://www.openu.ac.il/General/ethics.html>] and English [<http://www-e.openu.ac.il/academic/23609.html>]) and attached here in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 4, in Hebrew.

The Disciplinary Committee and the Appeals Board handle complaints lodged against students who committed a disciplinary offence listed in Section 3 of the Student Code of Conduct.

The Disciplinary Committee is composed of three members – the Discipline Officer and two deputies. The President of the University appoints the members of the Disciplinary Committee for a period of two years and is entitled to appoint a replacement if one of the three cannot fill the position. A Discipline Officer is entitled to use his authority as he sees fit, or in consultation with the deputies.

The Disciplinary Committee is the first instance that deliberates the case of a student against whom a complaint was lodged. The Committee members will decide on the nature of the punishment within ten days after the hearing and will notify the student of the decision in writing. The student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing specifying the grounds of the appeal with respect to the severity of the punishment, within 10 days after receiving the decision in writing.

Every appeal is transferred to a second instance – the Appeals Board. The members of the Appeals Board consider the student's grounds for appeal and examine whether the punishment imposed by the Disciplinary Committee is reasonable with respect to the offence, should be mitigated, or, in rare cases, increased.

After receiving the written decision of the Appeals Board, the student is entitled to submit a request in writing to the President of the University for a pardon. The President receives all the material related to the complaint, reviews the material and decides whether to pardon the student, to reduce the punishment or to leave the punishment as is. The President's decision is final and cannot be appealed. There is no time limitation for submitting a pardon request.

In addition to the members of the disciplinary authorities, there is also an OUI petitioner. The petitioner's role is to present the complaint and the findings to the Disciplinary Committee (and in the case of an appeal also to the Appeals Board).

### **Exam and exam appeal procedures**

Students can take exams on the exam dates of the semester in which they were enrolled in the course as well as in the following semester (on the method of examinations, their character and organization, see section 3.1.10). The aim of the policy is to enable students to take exams at a time convenient to them. This does not reflect academic leniency as the procedure does not entitle students to sit for an exam three times, except in exceptional cases.

In cases in which students who do not sit for an exam in the two semesters in which they are entitled to take the exam, the teaching coordinators will usually permit them to defer the exam by an additional semester.

**Appealing a final examination grade:** A substantiated appeal can be submitted to the Registrar's Office up to five weeks after notification of the examination grade is received. The individual checking the exam as part of the appeal process will not be the same person who initially checked the exam. This provides for mutual control and maintains objective criteria in the exam checking process.

After appealing an examination grade, the grade may change in both directions. The new grade may be higher or lower than the previous grade. The new grade is considered the final grade.

### **Tuition**

Tuition at the Open University is determined according to the regulations of the Council for Higher Education, and tuition is paid for each course separately. The tuition for a complete degree is similar to the tuition paid at other Israeli universities.

Tuition details are published in the annual Registration Guide and on the University website.

### **Financial assistance**

Students in need of tuition assistance who completed at least one OUI course successfully and are registered in a course in a subsequent semester are entitled to apply for a scholarship. All students who meet this criterion are entitled to apply at least once a year. Students enrolled in six or more courses a year are entitled to apply twice a year.

After examining all the applications, tuition scholarships are allocated based on the student's socio-economic score compared to all other applications and the scholarship donations received in the specific year. The scholarships are granted as tuition coupons for upcoming semesters. The University also grants special assistance scholarships to students who are not able to pay even for their first course at the OUI.

For additional information on scholarships and grants for OUI students, see the Admissions and Registration Guide 2006, page 42.

For information on loans to students pursuing an undergraduate degree, see the Admissions and Registration Guide 2006, pages 119-120.

### **3.4.3 Code of Ethics**

#### **The OUI Ethics Committee**

The OUI appointed an Ethics Committee to formulate a code of ethics. The Committee deals with the following issues:

- A. Determining a timetable for distributing questionnaires in classes, by mail or e-mail for both research and administrative purposes (such that students will not be inundated by questionnaires).
- B. In the case of empirical studies conducted by OUI faculty and students, examining the research plan or format, examining and approving questionnaires or unique experiment processes. The Committee is authorized to request changes even if the research population is from outside the OUI.
- C. Approving in advance all laboratory experiments that involve animals or that reveal students' personal information (for example, through blood samples).
- D. Examining all the University's registration questionnaires to ensure that they do not request irrelevant or unnecessary information.

#### **Preventing sexual harassment**

The OUI appointed individuals responsible for handling sexual harassment complaints. These individuals act by virtue of the Sexual Harassment Prevention Law, legislated in

September 1998. The guidelines are attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 5 (in Hebrew).

#### 3.4.4 Publishing information about courses

The OUI course catalog, provided free of charge to all interested individuals and students, contains very detailed information about all teaching components, including detailed course descriptions. The information can also be found in Hebrew and English on the OUI website. Students also have access to the *Sheilta* system through which they can receive electronically all information about the courses in which they are enrolled. OUI academic advisors and representatives of the department teaching staff are available at all OUI study centers to provide updated information. Students can also contact the OUI telephone inquiry center that refers callers to authorized personnel to answer their inquiries.

#### **The *Sheilta* system** (Interactive services to students)

*Sheilta* is a computerized system developed by the Open University to offer students on-line administrative services via the Internet and other advanced electronic channels of communication. *Sheilta* enables students to receive services and up-to-date information on three levels: general information, information on courses in which they are enrolled, including tutorial session dates, grades and more, and personal information. The range of information and services offered by the system is continuously being expanded.

#### 3.4.5 The drop-out rate

The term “drop-out” at the OUI differs from that at other universities. Students register for individual courses, not for an academic year. Students can discontinue their studies for a certain period of time and resume them after one or two years, or even more, so that discontinuation of studies for one year does not necessarily indicate what is usually considered “dropping out”. There is no statute of limitations on credits accumulated at the OUI, thus students who discontinue their studies are entitled to return to the University to complete their studies at any time. Some “drop-outs” declare that the break is only temporary, and some do resume their studies and graduate from the Open University.

The University’s open admissions policy enables students to enroll in OUI courses even if they are not capable of university studies. The first course or courses they take therefore serve as a self-test. The OUI recommends certain courses as “first courses” to provide a “soft landing” for new students, however, some students are unable to continue due to lack of suitability.

Furthermore, we encourage soldiers, high school students, and others to enroll in one or several courses, not necessarily in the aim of pursuing a degree, but to enrich their knowledge, to create an additional challenge in their ongoing activities or to keep abreast of their profession while continuing their work. Some students are referred to the OUI by other universities in order to complete certain course requirements prior to their acceptance to graduate studies at these institutions. After completing several courses, these students discontinue their studies at the OUI. They are considered “dropouts” although they completed exactly what they set out to accomplish.

We almost “encourage” students to drop out (while maintaining our goal of expanding access to higher education), as we invite students to take courses at the OUI that are the equivalent of one academic year and then, if they wish, to transfer to another university. Students choosing to do so are considered OUI “drop-outs” although they continued their studies at another university.

The following table pertains to students who enrolled in Management courses for the first time between 2000-2005 (undergraduate and graduate courses). As students can enroll in courses associated with different academic departments, we defined Management students as those who successfully completed three required courses: Marketing Management, Financial Theory, and Organizational Behavior. An undergraduate drop-out is defined as a student who successfully completed these three courses but did not earn a Bachelor's degree and did not complete an academic course in the years 2000-2005.

Drop-outs – Undergraduates in Management among students who took at least 3 courses

Year	Students who took one course per year and completed 3 Management courses up to this year	Received a degree the year after completing the courses or in the same year	Active students – took an academic course toward the degree in the following two years	Took a course in the following two years	Wrote a seminar paper in the following two years	Took an academic course toward the degree after a two year break	Took a course after a two year break	Wrote a seminar paper after two or more years	Drop-outs
1999-2000	1,973	1,324 67%	502 25%	5 0%	43 2%	18 1%	3 0%	1 0%	77 4%
2000-2001	2,122	1,299 61%	628 30%	4 0%	51 2%	33 2%	3 0%		104 5%
2001-2002	2,245	1,150 51%	887 40%	5 0%	62 3%	24 1%		2 0%	115 5%
2002-2003	2,402	852 35%	1,251 52%	11 0%	118 5%	16 1%	1 0%	1 0%	152 6%
2003-2004	2,532	433 17%	1,648 65%	8 0%	222 9%	6 0%			215 8%

The first students in the MBA program began their studies in 2002-2003, a period that is too short to track the program drop-out rate. Therefore, the table below presents the distribution of students and those who graduated by year of study, and students who did not graduate based on the number of years in the MBA program.

Year	No. of students who began studying	Students who completed degree	Students who took an additional course...			
			this year	this year + 1 year	this year + 2 years	this year + 3 years
2002-2003	772	86 11%	156 20%	93 12%	72 9%	365 47%
2003-2004	573	5 1%	141 25%	92 16%	335 58%	
2004-2005	487		114 23%	373 77%		
2005-2006*	308		308 100%			

\* data for 2005-2006 only refer to the Fall 2005 semester.

From the table we can learn about students who dropped out of the MBA program. For example, in 2002-2003, 772 were enrolled for the first time in an MBA course. Of these, 86 have completed the program to date, 156 took an additional course in the MBA program and after that (to date) did not enroll in additional courses in the program, 93 students completed MBA courses up to two years after they first enrolled and since then have not enrolled in an additional course, and so on.

To understand the reasons for student dropout, and to try to reduce the rate as much as possible, the Evaluation Department conducts a survey every two years (on average) among all students who dropped out. The questionnaire (attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 10) is mailed prior to the registration period for the next semester, along with registration forms. The students are asked if they would be interested in receiving academic counseling in preparation for their possible return to studies.

### 3.4.6 Students with special needs

The OUI does not have criteria for accepting students with special needs. The policy is to accept all students. Students who for medical, physical or other reasons require special study conditions contact the Dean of Students for assistance. Requests are handled individually and discretely. Some assistance is provided through other institutions and involves a fee. The OUI provides all students with access to studies according to their specific needs: audio tapes for the visually impaired, audio recordings of exams, a larger exam form, an exam in a separate room with a designated monitor, rewriting of an exam, reading the exam aloud, etc.

OUI study materials and facilities throughout the country are accessible to disabled individuals. At exam centers without elevators, the OUI ensures that disabled students are assigned to a room on the ground floor along with an accompanying individual. The OUI offers tens of different exam conditions, and the major ones are specified in the table below. Students confined to their homes are entitled to a personal tutor that comes to their home. Visually impaired students do not pay tuition.

The following table shows the distribution of students in the Department of Management and Economics who received approval for special exam conditions.

<b>Special exam conditions</b>	<b>Number of examinees</b>	<b>% of entire population</b>
Additional time	737	65.4%
Learning aids	120	10.6%
Assistance in the classroom	95	8.4%
Special location	86	7.6%
Foreign language	37	3.3%
Assistance from monitor	33	2.9%
Writing on computer	17	1.5%
Special exam	2	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data relate to exam sittings in the 2005 Spring and Summer semesters. It is possible that the same students are enrolled in several courses.

### 3.4.7 Access to facilities and equipment on the main campus

OUI teaching activities are conducted at the study centers throughout the country. Students are not required, in most cases, to come to the main campus in Raanana. Facilities and equipment are accessible for those coming to the main campus to take care of bureaucratic and/or academic matters (meet with a faculty member, use the library or a laboratory, buy books in the bookstore, etc.), or for tutorial sessions (for graduate students). At this stage public transportation to the campus still poses difficulties.

### 3.4.8 Student participation in research conducted by faculty

Faculty members serve as advisors to students writing seminar papers as part of the advanced courses they take. The topics of these papers are often related to the research fields of the faculty members and as such seminar papers contribute indirectly to the latter's scientific research.

This is not relevant to the MBA program since a thesis track is not offered in the program.

### 3.4.9 Counseling systems

#### 3.4.9.1 Counseling to students before and during their studies

The OUI Academic Counseling and Study Guidance center supplements the teaching system and accompanies students throughout their studies. Academic counseling is provided by Open University faculty and departmental advisors (**field-specific counseling**), and by general advisors (**general counseling**) at the Open University campus in Raanana and at the Open University's study centers throughout the country.

#### **General counseling**

General counseling mainly provides information about study tracks and the OUI method of study as well as individual counseling and guidance in choosing a study program.

#### **Field-specific counseling in Management**

Academic counseling for Management courses is provided by teaching staff and senior faculty members as well as by a limited number of general academic advisors with the appropriate background who were trained to provide counseling in the field. Academic counseling includes:

- Guidance in choosing a study track
- Counseling for receipt of accreditation for previous studies and referral to the Committee for the Accreditation of Prior studies
- Choosing the first courses in the selected study track
- Transferring from one study track to another
- Selecting courses during the course of studies
- Designing a study program to be submitted to the study program approval committee

A counseling coordinator in the Department of Management and Economics coordinates counseling offered by the department, updates and guides the department advisors and the general advisors on an ongoing basis. Once a year, towards the publication of the new Course Catalog, a meeting is held with all advisors to inform them about updates appearing in the new Catalog such as new courses, updated courses, new study programs, updated procedures, etc.

Several advisors from the department visit the large OUI study centers in Jerusalem, Beer Sheba and Haifa on a regular basis and conduct field-specific counseling meetings for the various management programs and the MBA program.

#### **Study guidance**

Acquiring appropriate learning skills at the outset of university studies enables students to cope with the academic requirements of the Open University. The Study Guidance Unit offers training in improving learning skills. The training contributes to the ability to getting 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 an exam. Learning skills training along with help in the resolution of personal problems relating to learning are available to all OUI students, and are offered in workshops and individually at most study centers. The Unit also offers guidance in writing seminar papers. The Academic Counseling and Study Guidance center also offers information get-togethers for prospective students.

#### **Assistance to special needs students**

Special services are provided to students with special needs by the Dean of Students and by the Academic Counseling and Study Guidance center. Students with special needs, with physical disabilities or with diagnosed learning disabilities receive guidance with respect to studies, additional drilling of the study material individually or in small groups, special exam conditions and guidance for reducing exam anxiety.

### **Accreditation of prior studies**

The Committee for the Accreditation of Prior Studies is an inter-disciplinary committee composed of representatives of the fields of study available at the OUI. The Committee includes a member of the Department of Management and Economics.

Students who previously studied at an institution of higher education in Israel or abroad are entitled to request accreditation of these studies at the Open University before commencing their studies at the University. The Accreditation Committee considers the request and informs the student of its decision.

Students cannot accumulate credits toward a degree in Open University courses whose content is similar to that of courses in other universities for which they received credit. The Accreditation Committee informs the student which courses will not be recognized for credit among the courses offered by the Open University at the time the decision is made.

A request for accreditation of courses that were completed many years earlier may be denied by the Committee due to the outdated nature of the studies. The Committee considers the merits of each request.

### **Approval of programs of study**

An inter-disciplinary committee, the Study Programs Approval Committee, reviews each student's record of studies to determine whether degree requirements have been met. After accumulating 48 credits, students propose a program for completing their studies, in accordance with the degree requirements. The Committee examines the program and returns it with comments and guidelines, or approves it as a program of study leading to a degree.

All students pursuing a degree should consult with the academic advisors at an early stage of their studies, and certainly before submitting a proposal. Advance counseling may prevent difficulties which might otherwise be encountered by students at the end of their studies.

Approval of a study program is valid for a period of five years from the approval date. Students continuing their studies for a period exceeding five years after the program is approved, during which time changes are instituted in the degree requirements, will be required to reapply to the Committee for approval of their study program.

The Study Programs Approval Committee is authorized to enforce additional limitations on programs of students who have been granted more than 36 credits on the basis of prior studies, as well as on inter-disciplinary programs, which include combinations of courses different from the distribution described in the degree requirements. These programs may deviate from the minimum number of credits required for a degree.

#### **3.4.9.2 Counseling and guidance in choosing future career paths**

The Guidance and Placement Unit in the office of the Dean of Students, also known as *Opjob*, serves as a coordinating body between Open University 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 Open University campus and at the study centers. The Career Guidance and Placement Unit offers the following services:

**Guidance** – provides counseling and guidance services to students undecided as to their choice of career path and/or academic field through:

- Individual counseling which includes tests and/or counseling sessions
- Workshops to help students select a career path and an academic field of study. The workshop offers a partially guided experiential group session in which the

participants examine the major factors involved in career decisions – professional inclinations, abilities, style of working with others and career goals

- Use of databases including a library with descriptions of academic disciplines, application criteria and study opportunities
- Use of software packages for planning a personal career path

**Placement** – assistance to students in finding employment through:

- Relations with external employment agencies
- Job search workshops addressing topics such as writing a resume, contacting potential employers and preparing for a job interview, taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the Open University student
- Employment fairs - employment fairs are held on the Open University campus with the participation of employers and placement agencies offering employment opportunities in various fields. Students and graduates may apply to the various companies.
- Employment offers at the Open University and those received directly from employers are posted on the *Opjob* website

Information published by the Guidance and Placement Unit can be found:

- on the Dean of Students website
- on bulletin boards at the study centers
- in special leaflets accompanying study materials

Counseling in choosing future career paths are also provided through:

1. A career choice workshop – a workshop for OUI students led by the staff of the counseling services of Tel Aviv University. Students are informed of the workshop by e-mail, posters at the learning institutions and leaflets distributed at study centers. Students pay NIS 350 for a workshop of 5 three-hour meetings. The workshop is limited to ten participants.
2. Individual counseling – 3 sessions provided by Tel-Aviv University at a discount for OUI students.

The assistance described above is sufficient to offer students as easy a transition as possible from studies to work.

#### 3.4.10 Interaction between teaching staff and students

In addition to ongoing contact between students and the teaching staff through the course websites, by telephone and email, as well as in group and individual tutorials, contact is maintained through visits of teaching staff at tutorial sessions. As part of these visits, students can provide feedback on the course and its administration, and the course coordinator can explain course requirements. These meetings help match expectations and facilitate adaptation required on both sides. In addition, students participate in departmental symposia and seminars.

#### 3.4.11 Student inquiries and complaints

The Department of Management and Economics, like all OUI academic departments, appointed an individual responsible for handling student inquiries and complaints. Most inquiries pertain to the following matters:

- Requests to take an exam after the entitlement date
- Requests to take an exam for the third time
- Requests to submit a course assignment after the specified date
- Requests to enroll in a course for the third time



- Complaints about tutoring
- Complaints about the exam

The advantage of appointing a departmental representative to coordinate all inquiries is that the representative can adopt a broad organizational perspective that addresses all courses and study programs. Considerations applied in making decisions are identical and therefore do not discriminate between students. In addition, students have one contact person in the department.

Students who wish to appeal the decisions of the student inquiry representative can approach 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, and his decision may take into consideration financial and personal aspects.

#### 3.4.12 Identifying and rewarding 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 their candidacy). Certificates on two levels are awarded:

**President's list** (magna cum laude) - weighted grade average of 95 and above and **Dean's list** (cum laude) - weighted grade average of 90-94. On both levels, students receive a certificate with a list of the courses for which they were awarded the certificate. President's list students receive a scholarship for the amount of tuition for one course which can be used for studies at the Open University.

Taking into account the nature of studies at the OUI, criteria were also defined for outstanding young students, for soldiers and for students who study at a slow rate (two-year outstanding students) and students in these groups are also awarded certificates.

#### 3.4.13 Maintaining contact with graduates and employers

##### **Maintaining contact with OUI graduates**

The OUI has more than 20,000 graduates. The OUI Alumni Association publishes a newsletter for graduates twice a year and conducts monthly activities including trips, lectures, plays, musical evening, performances, etc. The Association also has an Economics club that holds varied activities and whose members participate in events held by the OUI MBA program. An alumni club was established for graduates of the MBA program. The OUI Alumni Association contributes scholarships to students every year.

##### **Maintaining contact with employers and the employment market**

The OUI invests extensive efforts and funds to maintain ongoing contact with employers. *Opjob*, the OUI Guidance and Placement Unit, links the University with the professional job market, publishes employment openings in the OUI website and at study centers and liaises between students and graduates on one hand and employers offering jobs on the other (see section 3.4.9.2 above). Dozens of employers maintain contact with *Opjob* and offer employment opportunities to students and graduates. Students are informed of particularly attractive employment opportunities by e-mail.

The OUI also produces a magazine for managers, mailed to employers throughout the country. The magazine, produced in collaboration with the OUI MBA program, contains interesting studies in management and business as well as information about successful OUI graduates, study tracks and OUI books in management and economics.

It is important to note that most OUI students combine their studies with employment, so that after gaining practical experience, they enter the job market with professional experience.

#### **Studies towards advanced degrees**

The OUI does not have accurate data, however to the best of our knowledge about 30%-40% of the graduates pursue a Master's degree at the OUI or other universities.

#### **3.4.14 Summary – Strengths and weaknesses**

The goal of the OUI is to expand access to higher education to all individuals who have suitable intellectual abilities. To ensure that this goal does not remain only on paper, the OUI places the student at the center of its endeavor. Therefore, the distance education method is supported extensively 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 by helping graduates find employment after completing their studies.

The Open University contends with the “weakness” of open admissions by strictly maintaining a high academic level of studies. The study material and assignments are prepared in advance and based only on academic considerations. Examinations are also based only on academic criteria. They are not written by the tutors who meet with the students, but by course coordinators and approved by senior faculty to ensure that they take into account the knowledge students must demonstrate and not only what the students have covered at tutorial sessions. Furthermore, the OUI strictly enforces discipline measures during exams. In addition, to maintain students' dignity, the OUI established committees and mechanisms to ensure full confidentiality.

### **3.5 Research and Other Activity**

#### **3.5.1 Research activity of the teaching staff**

##### **Description**

As customary and expected, senior faculty members and some of the teaching staff are involved in research activities. Their studies are published in professional journals and at leading international conferences. The faculty is supported through grants from the internal fund, awarded by the OUI Research Authority, as well as grants from external sources. Research activities conducted in the last five years are listed in the Appendix to this section.

##### **Evaluation**

The academic level of research conducted at the OUI is high, as is customary at other academic institutions. The senior faculty in the department enjoy full academic freedom with respect to research, however due to the limited number of faculty members most of their time is devoted to management and course development.

The academic teaching staff is employed in positions whose scope is determined by the number of students in the courses they coordinate. This scope is often unstable, the definition of their position does not include research and they do not have a formal career path. Due to these factors, only few intra-institutional research groups were formed. It is also important to note that course development often has a research component, and when taken into consideration in measuring the volume of research activities, the research volume of the academic teaching staff is only slightly below that which is customary at other academic institutions. OUI policy with respect to the employment of academic teaching staff is currently being changed with the aim of increasing research activities.

Academic advancement of senior faculty members is based on their research activities. Furthermore, there is a monetary reward mechanism in place for certain activities, some managerial and teaching and others in research activities, that are translated at the end of each year into a financial reward in addition to the regular salary.

#### **3.5.2 Research activities in the Department of Management and Economics**

##### **Description**

Research activity in the department is more limited than is customary at other universities due to the wide range of activities in which the senior and junior faculty of the department are involved compared to the relatively small number of faculty members. This situation will improve as new faculty members join the department.

Research activities include undergraduate and graduate student seminar papers. All students must write two seminar papers in their BA studies and two towards their Master's degree. There are also seminars conducted by department faculty members, however not on a regular basis. The department recently established a departmental colloquium with the participation of all teaching faculty and an MBA Economics Club which meets from time to time. Topics of recent colloquia are listed in the Appendix to this section. Periodically, the department also publishes a magazine for managers.

One of our faculty members is also a member of the Chais Research Center. The Chais Research Center for the Integration of Technology in Education was established in the aim of enhancing and deepening theoretical and practical research in teaching technologies and their assimilation at the Open University. The Center serves as a framework for collaboration between researchers from the OUI and from outside the University that focus on the study of technologies in education.

### 3.5.3 Research cooperation with other institutions

Among the faculty, some of the researchers collaborate with colleagues and institutions in Israel and abroad (see the Appendix to this section). In addition, in response to a request by the Council for Higher Education, the Open University and Tel Aviv University cooperated in the development of a unique course in marketing which utilizes advanced learning technologies to enhance learning. In a joint effort, teams from both universities developed an online course, compatible with the criteria determined by the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC – *Vatat*) “to advance the implementation of learning technologies in higher education in Israel”.

The basic principles which guided the construction of the site are: flexibility to meet teaching needs in large courses, suitability of the method to distance learning, assuring a high level of computer communication using Internet-based technological components, and modular construction of study units.

The course has 12 modules. Each module includes background material, references to relevant chapters in the textbook, links to written materials such as scientific papers and newspaper articles, events, selected sites that enable application and assimilation of the material studied, online exercises, and more. All the modules also include visual materials such as illustrations, slides, ads, commercials, and taped interviews with senior managers in the field.

### 3.5.4 Faculty involvement in public institutions and academic committees

Several of the senior faculty members sit on professional academic committees, boards of professional journals and international conferences (as specified in the Appendix to this section). Some of them as well as some of the junior faculty are regular reviewers of papers submitted for international conferences.

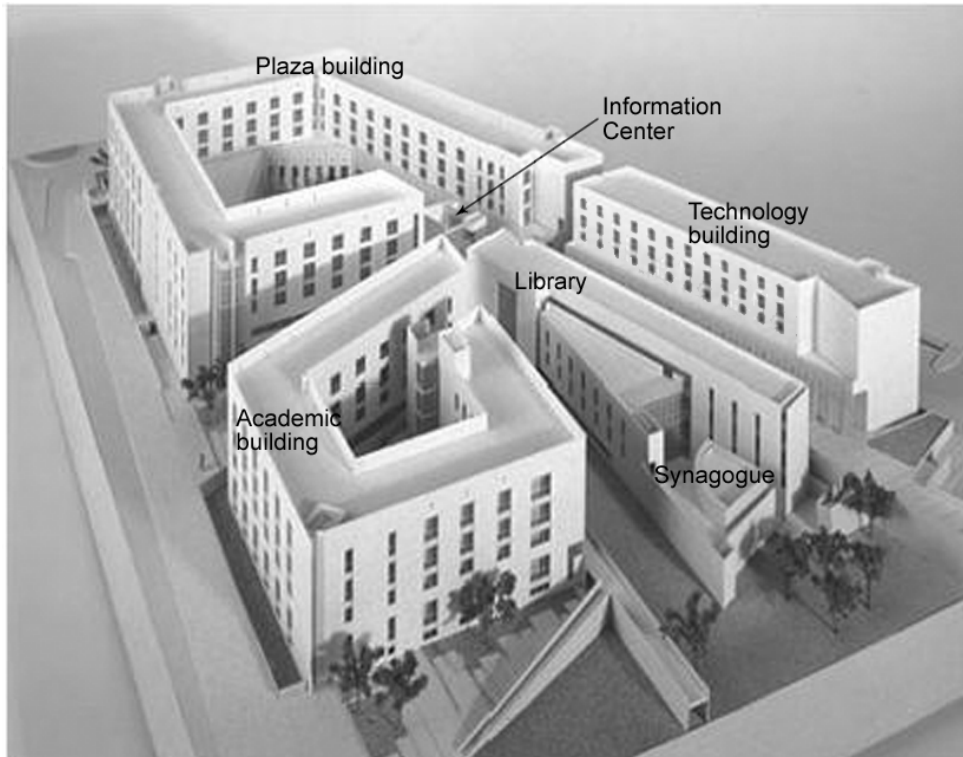
### 3.6 Physical Infrastructure

#### 3.6.1 Location of offices and classrooms

##### Description

The Department of Management and Economics is located in some 40 offices on the 3rd and 4th floors of the Technologies Building on the Raanana Campus (see illustration below). Faculty members who live in Jerusalem and its vicinity were allocated several rooms at the OUI's center in Givat Ram in Jerusalem and additional rooms were allocated in the Haifa center.

#### The Open University Campus, Raanana



Face-to-face study activities (tutorial sessions) in Management and Economics courses are held in study centers throughout the country (see tables and map below). A limited number of study activities take place in ten classrooms on the Raanana campus (mainly seminars and graduate courses). Note: 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.

#### Distribution of students by study centers

Study Center	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
			1				1
Special	8	8	6	7	2	4	35
Country-wide	34	50	44	49	61	57	295
Abroad	94	139	105	103	68	53	562
Jerusalem, Haohalim campus	1	1					2
Jerusalem, Jerusalem College	564						564
Jerusalem, Haredi College					1		1
Jerusalem, Mitchell College	29						29
Jerusalem, Technological Garden	419	860	946	874	745	504	4,348
Ma'ale Edumim			2	2	2		6
Mivaseret, Harel High School					1		1

Study Center	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Beit Shemesh				2			2
Katzrin, Katzrin Academic Center		3	10	16	9	1	39
Kiryat Shmona, Workers' Council	24	5					29
Tiberias, Yad Shitrit	4						4
Tiberias, Open University	1	11	7	7	8	4	38
Yarka		1					1
Afula, Open University	45	46	46	27	10	4	178
Western Galilee, Western Galilee College	48	50	48	28	20	12	206
Zur Lavon Ltd.	41						41
Carmiel, Carmiel College	26	27					53
Carmiel, Open University		17	59	57	37	21	191
Abu Snan, Al-Hoda College						1	1
Nazareth, Nazareth Study Center	3	1					4
Nazareth Elite, Workers' Council		7					7
Nazareth Elite College			1	12	2		15
Kiryat Haim, Amal Kiryat Haim	63	73	59	55	49	3	302
Kiryat Haim, Eshkol Payis						4	4
Haifa, Beit Biram	1,027	1,057	1,055	954	707	536	5,336
Haifa, The College of Management		4					4
Tira, Eshkol Payis				1			1
Givat Haviva, Wadi Ara	3	2	1	4	1	1	12
Hadera, Givat Olga High School					2	2	4
Hadera, Matnas Givat Olga	3	8	15	29	27	11	93
Netanya, Municipality				3	1		4
Netanya, Hermelin College	97	92	103	58	53	26	429
Beit Berl, Beit Berl College		1					1
Rosh HaEyin College	10	14	4				28
Rosh HaEyin, Partner Communications			7	4			11
Petah Tiqva College, Gissin		9	408	504	484	402	1,807
Petah Tiqva College, Haporzim, morning			45	76	50	13	184
Petah Tiqva, Amal College	28	10					38
Kiryat Ono, Workers' Council	5	5					10
Modi'in, Multidisciplinary Center			2	9	12	11	34
Maccabim-Reut Center	7	7	6				20
Raanana, The Open University Campus, Raanana						2	2
Raanana, Raanana College	1,496	1,773	1,564	1,220	857	428	7,338
Raanana, Raanana College (Metro-West)	224						224
Ramat Hasharon, Hakfar Hayarok, morning studies			147	264	372	333	1,116
Ramat Hasharon, Hakfar Hayarok, evening studies	12	9	229	285	198	158	891
Ramat Hasharon, Hakfar Hayarok, high school students						1	1
Ramat Hasharon, Hakfar Hayarok, School of Tourism		4					4
Tel-Aviv Area			1				1
Tel Aviv, Municipal Training Center, Tel Aviv Municipality (municipal employees)			1				1
Tel Aviv, Chess Center		189	119				308
Tel Aviv, Herzeliya High School	336	201	117		311		965
Tel Aviv, Tichon Hadash	1,230	1,421	1,243	722	513	512	5,641

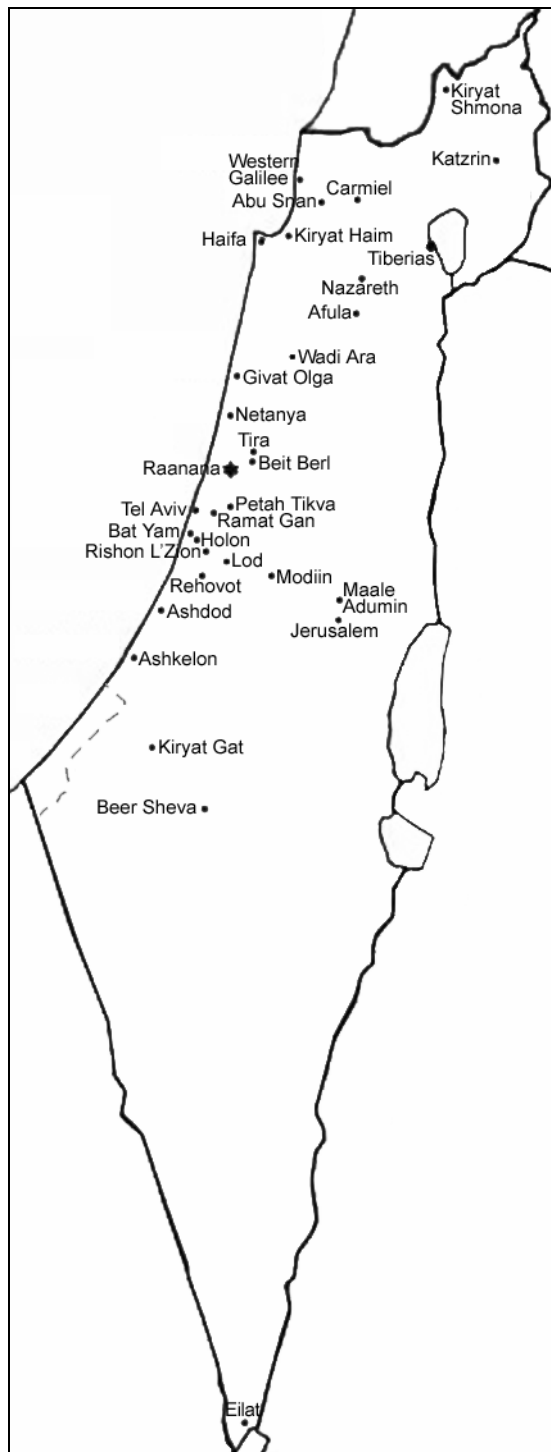
<b>Study Center</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tel Aviv, Bnei Dan School of Tourism	18	9					27
Tel Aviv, Herzeliya High School (high school students)	22	9					31
Tel Aviv, Seminar Hakibutzim	892	717	763	637	426	302	3,737
Tel Aviv, The Open University, Ramat Aviv campus	15	83	46	3	7		154
Tel Aviv, Koteret School of Journalism and Communication						1	1
Tel Aviv, Alliance High School	2,077	2,177	2,055	2,479	2,123	1,994	12,905
Tel Aviv, DiAlog, School of Languages	4						4
Ramat Gan, Ramat Gan College, "Elimelech"	553	121					681
Ramat Gan, Ramat Gan College	5,511	6,047	5,763	5,011	3,431	1,955	27,718
Bat Yam, Bat Yam College	1,322	1,128	1,011	846	633	397	5,337
Rehovot, Rehovot College	260	358	387	290	247	154	1,696
Nes Ziona	92	40	73	64	42	25	336
Rishon Le'Zion, Avrutzky College	223	204	215	178	97	17	934
Lod Regional College	52	64	49	55	21	7	248
Ashdod, Ashdod College	308	311	215	255	209	128	1,426
Kiryat Gat, Eshkol Payis		3	2				5
Kiryat Gat, Tichon Hadash				1	2	1	4
Kiryat Gat, Matnas Neviim		1	6	1			8
Beer Sheva, Beit Yatziv	451	403	358	282	208	131	1,833
Dimona, Dimona Center			1				1
Eilat, Open University Eilat	6	7	10	9	10	9	51
Ofek			1				1
Ofek, Katzrin					3	1	4
Ofek, Kiryat Shmona	2	7	3				12
Ofek, Haifa	38	67	99	97	76	75	452
Ofek, Afula					11	2	13
Ofek, Nazareth Elite			3	3			6
Ofek, Givat Haviva, Wadi Ara				1	2		3
Ofek, Netanya, Hermelin College	9	9	14	18	3		53
Ofek, Raanana	115	90	110	115	88	89	607
Ofek, Tel Aviv, Tichon Hadash					31	122	153
Ofek, Tel Aviv, HaArbaa St.	131	123	179	130	47		610
Ofek, Ramat Gan	235	281	287	294	284	232	1,613
Ofek, Holon College	25						25
Ofek, Bat Yam	58	93	58	77	77	78	441
Ofek, Rishon Le'Zion, Avrutzky College	39	38	52	68	56	21	274
Ofek, Jerusalem	28	74	54	78	49	50	333
Ofek, Jerusalem (not active)	39						39
Ofek, Lod	3	1	10	13	12	2	41
Ofek, Ashdod, Ashdod College	17	21	33	27	16	22	136
Ofek, Beer Sheva	8	18	17	16	17	20	96
Ofek, Eilat, Open University Eilat	2	3			1	1	7
Internet + tutorials		12	18		1		31
E-mail groups	5		5	19	35	41	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,442</b>	<b>18,631</b>	<b>18,298</b>	<b>16,439</b>	<b>12,868</b>	<b>8,981</b>	<b>93,659</b>

**Study centers in which the Open University functions**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Location and Name</b>
North	Haifa, Beit Biram Givat Haviva, Wadi Ara Carmiel, Open University Carmiel Nazareth, Nazareth Study Center Tamra Kiryat Haim, Kiryat Haim - Eshkol Payis Tiberias, Open University Tiberias Haifa, The College of Management – Haifa and the North Afula, Technological College Hadera, Matnas Givat Olga Afula, Open University Afula Katzrin, Katzrin Academic Center Kaukhab el Higa, Kaukhab Center Sachnin, Mahat Technological Training College Abu Snan, Al-Hoda College Haifa, Practical Engineering School
Jerusalem	Jerusalem, "Technological Garden" Jerusalem, Haredi College Jerusalem, Hadassah College Jerusalem, Haohalim Ma'ale Edumim, Ma'ale Edumim Regional College
Sharon Area	Raanana, The Open University Campus – Raanana Raanana, Raanana College Netanya, Hermelin College Beit Berl, Beit Berl College Tira
Central	Ramat Gan College, Armonim Bat Yam College Petah Tiqva College
Tel Aviv Area	Tel Aviv, Alliance High School Tel Aviv, Tichon Hadash Tel Aviv, Seminar Hakibutzim Tel Aviv, Ramat Aviv Tel Aviv, Municipal Training Center, Tel Aviv Municipality Tel Aviv, Avni Institute Tel Aviv, Meimad school Tel Aviv, Koteret School of Journalism and Communication Ramat Hasharon, Hakfar Hayarok
Coastal Plain	Lod Regional College Modi'in Rishon Le'Zion –Avrutzky College Rehovot College Nes Ziona Rishon Le'Zion – Science College
South	Beer Sheva, Beit Yatziv Beer Sheva, Mahat Technological Training College Ashdod College Ashdod, Mahat Management College Kiryat Gat, Tichon Hadash Ofakim Mitspe Ramon, Pisga Center Eilat, Open University Eilat



### Dispersion of study centers throughout the country



### Evaluation

The wide dispersion of study centers makes it possible to realize the goal of the Open University to enable flexible learning throughout the country.

### 3.6.2 The department office

#### Description

The department office is located on the 3rd floor of the Technologies Building, room 310. The office of the head of the department is in room 311, close to the department office and the offices of other faculty members.

#### Evaluation

The proximity of the department office and the department head's office to the other offices enables ongoing communication with the administrative staff.

### 3.6.3 Academic faculty offices

#### Description

Faculty member offices are allocated as follows: senior faculty members have their own offices, junior faculty members share offices (one office for two full-time staff members or for three part-time staff members). The standard furniture in every office includes a desk, wall cabinets, bookshelves and a computer. 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.

### 3.6.4 Classrooms, seats and equipment

#### Description

There are classrooms in all OUI study centers throughout the country (see map). The number of classrooms is flexible and changes from one semester to another according to the number of study groups opened in a center (a study group is opened provided there is a minimum number of registrants). In most cases, the classrooms are furnished with desks for two and sometimes chair-desks, 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 national dispersion of students at the OUI.

#### Evaluation

Central planning of classroom allocation provides for maximum allocation flexibility according to need and significant savings on rental expenses. The quality of classrooms and equipment varies. If required, the OUI also provides access to computer rooms with Internet access for students. The University continuously examines new technologies and seeks ways to integrate them into teaching. If there is a demand for the use of laptop computers and a wireless Internet connection, the OUI organizes accordingly.

### 3.6.5 Computer classrooms, computer stations, hardware, software and institutional computer-based communication that serves OUI study programs

#### The computer-based communication system for students

Students in the Department of Management and Economics use personal computers. The OUI provides software to students according to the requirements of the various courses, for example, Eviews, Jump and MS Project. The software programs are licensed and downloaded from the Internet. The teaching staff provides support on content issues. The OUI Support Department provides general computer support. The Department of Management and Economics has a statistics advisor who advises students and faculty on statistics software and statistical processing.

### **The institutional computer system**

**Communication:** A three-layer Local-Area-Network (LAN) (backbone bandwidth rates of 2-4 giga bits/second) spread over the buildings on the campus: edge switches (at layer II) on the users' floors, aggregation switches (at layer III) at the building level and core switches (also at layer III) at the campus level. Fast Ethernet links (100 megabits/second) connect end-users' workstations. A Wide-Area-Network (WAN) (1/4-2 megabits/second) to the area activity centers (e.g. Givat Ram in Jerusalem or Beit Biram in Haifa). The OUI is connected to the Israel Academic Network (ILAN) and through this network to the Internet via two 34 Mbps lines. The OUI provides remote access secure private communication (VPN – virtual private network) to all employees that need such communication. The OUI is in the process of installing a local wireless network (WLAN) that will provide authorized users access to specific computer services through a personal computer with a wireless adapter. The wireless coverage is limited and focuses on public areas such as the library, classrooms, laboratories and lecture halls.

**Security:** The network is secured using several layers of firewalls and similar security devices.

**Computer services:** Intra-organizational e-mail, online schedule management and shared activities, based on MS-Exchange servers; Internet e-mail; access to Internet sites and 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 all the OUI information system services.

**Support:** A professional support center that provides support services for all computer problems between 8 am and 7 pm. Technical support for hardware is provided between 8 am and 5 pm. Training on computer applications and training material: face-to-face and virtual training on applications used by the faculty, training booklets, and the website of Computer Center that has extensive information on varied computer topics.

**Purchase:** Purchasing hardware and software is based on needs and demands.

### **Evaluation**

The institutional computer system services meet the needs of the department on the professional level and in terms of response speed. In general, OUI computerization services are excellent and the support provided to the faculty is ongoing, immediate and high-level.

#### **3.6.6 Laboratories**

This is irrelevant for the Management field, however laboratories are being built for the Department's undergraduate program in Industrial Engineering and Management.

#### **3.6.7 The Library**

##### **Description**

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

**Library location:** The library is located in a four-storey building on the OUI campus in Raanana, spanning with 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:** The library offers training in the use of all library components, especially conducting searches in catalogs and electronic databases. Training for students is mandatory for all students before taking advanced courses. It is offered in two formats – face-to-face training (at the OUI campus and at large study centers throughout the country) and training at home through courseware developed by the library. The courseware includes tests on the material and calculates the student's grade and updates the student's record for purposes of tracking and recording student participation.

**Assistance:** Librarians offer advisory services and assistance in searching for information using electronic resources to students and faculty during all library hours. Distance services (online and telephone) that support students and faculty in searching for information are provided 45 hours a week.

**Access:** Information databases are accessible to students and faculty who have a password, from any computer connected to the Internet.

**Acquisitions policy:** Acquisition of material can be initiated by an academic faculty 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 teaching fields.

The library and faculty members are updated about new books and periodicals through bibliographic publications and tools for critiquing and selecting books, as well as through publishers and suppliers.

Updated information about information databases is received 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 members examine their quality and suitability to the unique needs of the OUI. They are acquired only if the librarians and faculty members recommend them.

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

The library has 23 bibliographic databases, 26 full-text databases, 26,219 electronic journals and 10 digital collections (about 380 academic titles). Books, videotapes and cassettes are also available at the large study centers.

### **Evaluation**

The library is located in a modern building and provides search, reference and reading services in a comfortable and convenient setting. The acquisition policy is coordinated with the department. Due to the location of the library in the center of the country, searching for information in the library is less convenient for students that are not from this area. To a certain extent, the online service offsets this problem. The offering of research literature is limited, and students rely on online services and agreements that give OUI students access to other University libraries for reference and loan services, agreements, which are usually satisfactory, with the exception of the Tel Aviv University libraries.

### **3.6.8 Additional space for conferences, research centers, meeting rooms and seminars**

#### **Description**

The OUI campus has two lecture halls (70-150 seats), one large auditorium (350 seats) and 26 conference rooms (seating 12-20) allocated to the department as needed. The conference rooms (for the use of committees, seminars, demonstrations, etc.) have an infrastructure for audio-visual equipment and for a connection to the internet, as well as a coffee corner. Rooms must be reserved in advance and equipment for each activity must be specified ahead of time. There are also facilities for different types of meetings at the large OUI study centers in Haifa, Jerusalem, Beer Sheba, and Givat Haviva. Furthermore, when the OUI needs additional meeting places, for example for departmental symposia, it rents them according to the purpose and demand.

#### **Evaluation**

The rooms are modern, roomy and well-equipped.

### **3.6.9 Summary: Strengths and weaknesses of the physical infrastructure**

#### **Strengths**

The Open University's central control over study centers and computer services provides operation flexibility and the ability to offer tutorial sessions (throughout the country) and computer services, based on need – with significant financial savings. All rooms on campus are large – with new furniture and modern equipment. OUI computer services meet the needs. Library services are very convenient and meet (though not entirely) the requirements of the academic faculty.

**Chapter 4**  
**The Self-Evaluation Process**

#### 4.1 Routine Self-Evaluation at the Open University

Evaluation is routinely conducted by the Open University on several levels:

- A. Student satisfaction
- B. Quality of teaching materials
- C. Evaluation of course coordinators
- D. Quality of new study programs, new course proposals and updates of existing courses
- E. New and veteran tutor and course coordinator training

##### **Evaluation of student satisfaction**

As described in section 3.3.2, the Open University Evaluation Department conducts an ongoing teaching survey among students at the end of every semester. The survey, attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 5, part 8, is conducted during one of the last tutorial sessions during the semester. It includes questions about all teaching components of the course (study material, assignments, the tutor, tutoring, the course website and all other course activities). Students can also add comments as they see fit. The Evaluation Department submits the results of the teaching survey to the course coordinators and the department heads. Survey data analyses provide information on each course as well as a comparison of department and University mean scores on each aspect surveyed.

As participation in tutorials is not mandatory, the University decided to administer the questionnaire through course websites in order to receive feedback from a larger number of students, not only from those who attend the tutorial in which it was distributed towards the end of the semester.

While the course coordinators' evaluation of tutors focuses mainly on each group's teaching survey, and on observations of tutorial sessions, the department heads, who receive a consolidated report, per course, focus on findings from the survey with respect to assignments, study material and any unusual findings. The survey results may lead to changes in the structure of assignments, serve as the basis for feedback discussions with tutors, and sometimes even lead to discontinuing employment of tutors who received unsatisfactory evaluations. In addition to the ongoing teaching survey, the University also conducts surveys among students on an ad-hoc basis to examine specific components of the teaching process or study materials.

Along with the surveys among active students the University also conducts feedback surveys among new graduates - Bachelor's or Master's degree, among veteran graduates (as described in section 3.1.7) and among drop-outs (as described in section 3.4.5).

##### **Evaluation of the quality of teaching materials that change from semester to semester (assignments, exams, course website contents)**

Towards the beginning of every semester, the course coordinators write the assignments that students submit during the course. They also write three versions of the course final exams (two for the first exam sitting and one for the second exam sitting), and update the course website.

A senior faculty member, or a junior faculty member with a PhD, examines and approves exam questionnaires and assignments every semester, even when the course coordinator has a PhD. Thus, every OUI exam is examined by an expert in the field who did not write the exam. This is a unique quality control procedure compared to other universities. The assignments and other course contents are also examined once a year by the department head or by a senior faculty member.

In addition to the advance review of assignments and exams, these materials are also examined after the fact on the basis of responses to the teaching survey and the item analysis performed on all assignments and exams. The average grades of assignments and exams, from the item level to the study group level are analyzed each semester (see section 3.3.6). The main parameters examined in this analysis are unusually high or low grades on specific items, large differences between the mean exam grades and the mean assignment grades, and unexplained variation in grades among the different study groups. The course coordinator and the department head receive results of the analysis.

The course website contents are updated continuously by the course coordinators, and routinely evaluated as part of the teaching survey. Student comments in the discussion forums are another source of changes and additions to the site that contribute to students' learning.

### **Annual evaluation of course coordinators**

All course coordinators are evaluated once a year by the department head and the senior faculty member responsible for the field. The evaluation relates to several parameters: quality of assignments written by the course coordinator in the past year, the course website, student satisfaction as reflected in the teaching survey, and the distribution of grades on assignments and exams over the past year. The evaluation also touches on the course coordinator's administrative functioning and contribution to the department.

### **Quality of new study programs, new course proposals and updates of existing courses**

Every new study program, new course proposal, course update or revision (irrespective of whether it is part of a new or existing study program) is initially sent to senior academics in relevant fields for external review. After receiving their comments and the response of the initiator of the program or course, the issue is discussed by the appropriate subcommittee. Following approval of the subcommittee, discussions are held in two additional OUI forums (the Faculty Council and the Academic Committee). Only after approval by the Academic Committee are new study programs submitted to the Council for Higher Education.

Approved course proposals are submitted to the OUI President who authorizes the development of the course. Every unit written is sent to senior faculty members at the OUI and at other universities for evaluation. The study program approval procedure is attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 3; course development is described in section 3.3.2 and attached in Chapter 5, Appendix 2, part 2. This exacting process ensures the high level of programs of study and written course materials. Accordingly, quality control at the OUI with respect to course contents and materials is stricter than quality control customary at other universities.

### **Training new and veteran tutors and course coordinators**

To ensure high-quality teaching and efficient functioning of tutors and course coordinators at the OUI, as described in section 3.3.2, the OUI Training Department develops and conducts workshops that impart, consolidate and develop various teaching skills. All new tutors must participate in workshops qualifying them for the position. Continuing workshops are also conducted for veteran tutors on course materials and general didactic issues. New course coordinators also participate in workshops that qualify them for their position. Continuing workshops are also offered to



veteran course coordinators. Section 3.2.2 describes additional tools used by the Department of Management and Economics in screening tutor candidates.

#### **4.2 The Staff Member in Charge of Self-evaluation at the Open University**

With the announcement by the Council of Higher Education of its intent to implement a process of quality self-evaluation in institutions of higher education, the President of the OUI, on the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Prof. Ora Limor) appointed Dr. Sonia Roccas as the individual responsible for dealing with quality evaluation at the Open University. Dr. Roccas is a senior faculty member in the Department of Education and Psychology.

As the individual responsible for quality self-evaluation, Dr. Roccas's role includes:

- Collecting information pertaining to the quality self-evaluation process (participating in symposia organized by the CHE) and transmitting the information to relevant OUI entities (Vice President for Academic Affairs and the head of the department under evaluation).
- Activating the evaluation process, participating in the work meetings of the evaluation team and providing feedback to the department concerning the team's work methods.
- Sharing information with the Vice President for Academic Affairs about the evaluation process and on all matters pertaining to information about processes that relate to OUI policy to be included in the quality self-evaluation report.
- Formulating ways (in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs) for the various academic departments to prepare for the quality self-evaluation process they will undergo in the future in order to facilitate, when the time comes, information collection and writing the report. Furthermore, institutionalization of the preparation process with respect to teamwork of the evaluation team will serve as a catalyst for strategic thinking and critical evaluation of the routine activities of OUI academic departments.

In our opinion, the fact that a senior faculty member is responsible for quality evaluation in the University is vital to ensure that the information and experience gathered during the work of the self-evaluation teams is accumulated and consolidated in a way that will enable OUI management to implement and internalize the conclusions of the evaluation teams. Furthermore, the knowledge accumulated will serve all the academic departments that will undergo the quality self-evaluation process in the future. In addition, it is vital that the evaluation team include an individual external to the evaluated field who can provide feedback and observe the evaluation process from an independent perspective.

#### **The self-evaluation process on the departmental level**

Upon receipt of the guidelines from the Council of Higher Education for performing the self-evaluation, a meeting was convened in the office of the head of the department with the participation of the faculty members. The work processes required for conducting the quality self-evaluation were formulated at this meeting. In order to create departmental involvement in the process, the different evaluation topics were assigned to work teams. Every team, composed of 2-3 members, was responsible for writing about a topic or sub-topic in the report. Every team was asked to prepare a list of relevant data it would require to answer the different sections of the relevant chapter.

The process itself was monitored by a team of three members: The department head, Dr. Arie Nachmias, was the chairperson, and his deputies were Dafna Bar-On and Mosi Rosenboim – both veteran junior faculty members knowledgeable in all aspects of the department's activities. This team (called the A-D-M team) was responsible for

collecting data from various OUI departments, coordinating the work of the teams and for writing and final editing of the report.

After the departmental meeting, a coordination meeting was conducted with all those involved in the quality self-evaluation process: the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Prof. Ora Limor; members of the teaching staff of the Department of Management and Economics; and the individual responsible for quality evaluation at the OUI, Dr. Sonia Roccas. A work process was formulated for the teams assigned to the different evaluation topics. In addition to determining the data collection requirements, the work of every team included discussing issues relevant to the section in the report, writing the section as well as reading and reviewing the parts written by the other teams. The A-D-M team monitored the teamwork and coordinated between the various teams.

The teams received the Guidelines for Quality Self-Evaluation produced by the Council for Higher Education, as well as a draft of the quality self-evaluation report prepared by the Computer Science Division last year.

About one week after the sections were assigned to the work teams, the A-D-M team received the data requirements from the various teams and forwarded them to the Computer Center that would produce the statistical data. The A-D-M team also asked other departments (such as the Evaluation Department) for additional data required.

After about a month, during which meetings were held between the A-D-M team and the Computer Center to coordinate and clarify the data requirements, the data were received and provided to the teams for preparing their part of the report.

During the quality self-evaluation process, meetings were held between members of the various teams and members of the A-D-M team in order to clarify unclear requirements or to provide data processing and writing assistance.

After all teams completed the evaluation process, a draft of the evaluations was submitted to the A-D-M team for reading and feedback. The sections, along with the comments, were returned to the work teams for corrections. After making the necessary corrections, the teams returned their part to the A-D-M team for a second and more comprehensive review of the quality of the analysis, the material attached and uniformity of the report. Following corrections and a second round of feedback, the chapter was submitted to a different team to receive its perspective. Concomitantly, the report was sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, to Dr. Roccas and to the faculty members for review and additional comments in preparation for its final approval. Finally, after receiving the comments, the A-D-M team made the final corrections to the report and submitted it for language editing and for translation into English. The English version of the final report was submitted to the President, the Vice President, and Dr. Roccas for approval.

#### **4.3 Conclusions of the University and the Department of Management and Economics Concerning the Self-evaluation**

Most of the strengths and weaknesses of the Department of Management and Economics and the Open University were known to the Department and to OUI management. The OUI in general, and the Department of Management and Economics in particular, evaluate their activities on a regular basis. The Department's study programs and courses are examined frequently and updated continuously as explained above. Teaching is also evaluated by different means and reviewed continuously.

Nonetheless, the evaluation process helped identify, formulate and define problems in a more focused manner and created a mechanism for discussion as well as a mechanism for identifying and handling problems. For example, MBA admission requirements, student drop-out from undergraduate and graduate studies, and the issue of undergraduate students who are "OUI students" and not students of the

Department (on this issue there is a discrepancy between the current situation and the fact that many undergraduate students view themselves as students of a specific study program and department).

The Department maintains that the appointment of a senior faculty member as the individual responsible for evaluating the quality of the institution is necessary. Maintaining contact with the Council of Higher Education and with the various OUI departments can be the responsibility of this senior faculty member.

To ensure that the knowledge and experience gathered through the work of the self-evaluation teams is accumulated and organized in a way that will enable OUI management to implement and internalize the conclusions emerging from the work of the various teams, a permanent quality self-evaluation team should be appointed. The team should include members of the Evaluation Department, the Computer Center and the Dean of Academic Studies. The team can be accompanied on an ongoing basis by the individual appointed by the department as responsible for the quality self-evaluation. Such a team, along with members of the department under evaluation at the time, will provide direction to the department under evaluation and will be able to implement the recommendations of the report within the overall OUI framework. This team should report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

This conclusion is further substantiated in light of the fact that the Council for Higher Education intends to continue quality self-evaluation in the various academic departments.

#### **4.4 Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses**

The Open University is a unique institution in the landscape of higher education in Israel. The University was established in 1973 with the aim of providing access to higher education to all walks of Israeli society throughout the country, without admission requirements, while maintaining academic excellence and developing unique teaching methods integrated with advanced and innovative technologies. The characteristics of the University are the distance education method, open admissions and flexibility in terms of time and location of studies, study pace, the study program, etc.

Lecturers and students at all academic institutions in Israel use study materials developed by the OUI. This attests to the academic quality and high standards of OUI textbooks. In fact, a course developed by the OUI constitutes an academic “milestone” in most institutions of higher learning in Israel. Thus, it can be concluded that every Shekel invested by the OUI in course development yields a much higher return, above and beyond the return for OUI students.

#### **Programs of Study in Management**

The rationale for offering an undergraduate program in Management stemmed from the desire to provide a response to the demand for management studies and to expand access to this field to individuals who cannot study at other institutions of higher education (for example, those who cannot attend classes on a regular basis), while maintaining high academic standards.

The varied Management programs impart knowledge, skills and qualifications in the main areas of Management and Business Administration. There are also programs that combine management studies with other fields in the social sciences and in other disciplines. These programs consist of core studies in both disciplines enabling program graduates to find employment or continue to advanced studies in each of the disciplines studied.

The department is satisfied with the results of its academic endeavor as reflected in good quality, rich and varied study programs congruent with the programs' goals to enable graduates to find their place in both the labor market and the academic world.

The programs offered by the department also meet the needs of its target audiences, primarily employed individuals who require flexibility in their studies in order to integrate their studies with additional demands on their time.

Study materials developed in accordance with strict rules and procedures along with rigorous academic quality control, from the course proposal stage to the final product, enable the department to produce outstanding materials, widely used by other universities, and to qualify independent learners.

The OUI's unique pedagogic model that is based to a large extent on self-study, helps promote intellectual ambition and to develop strong will, perseverance, responsibility and self-discipline. These qualities and abilities equip graduates of the department and of the OUI in general with a relative advantage in the employment market and advanced studies.

The Open University and the Department of Management and Economics conduct ongoing evaluation of all teaching components each semester. The contents of courses are examined continuously and compared with the contents studied at other institutions, and faculty members are updated in many ways, in both subject matter and pedagogic aspects.

The fact that experts from academic institutions in Israel and abroad contribute to course development is an advantage, since the development of courses and study programs is not biased towards the fields that interest a specific faculty member, but rather are based on the needs dictated by new programs of study and the goals of the department.

We also acknowledge the weaknesses:

- The senior faculty carry a heavy load due to fact that, in addition to research demands and university administrative tasks, the few faculty members need to closely monitor ongoing teaching activities.
- Because of the necessity to administer examinations concurrently in tens of locations, all subjects and courses have uniform exam time irrespective of course characteristics.
- The individual (one-on-one) advisory process for seminar papers is inefficient in terms of cost/benefit, and it is difficult to find advisors.
- The fact that undergraduate students are not associated with a specific department/study programs hinders long-term planning of the course offering.

### **Teaching faculty**

The Open University does not offer tenure, even to senior faculty members, however the main problem pertains to the employment contracts of the course coordinators who are in effect the backbone of the teaching organization. Their employment contracts depended, for the most part, on the number of students enrolled in the courses they coordinate. They also did not have a personal advancement path. These two factors caused dissatisfaction among the course coordinators and prompted the OUI to establish a committee headed by the President to deal with the status of the teaching staff. The committee's recommendations addressed the instability in the scope of course coordinators' employment and the lack of an advancement path.

It is important to note that the academic faculty believe in the OUI as a unique institution with a social mission, and this belief serves as the main motivating factor for their work despite the difficulties and problems specified. Coordinators and tutors at the OUI are excellent and highly experienced teachers that view their teaching work as a mission rather than as a constraint. The course coordinators are also excellent

managers able to manage a course successfully, even a course with many tutors, study groups and students. Senior faculty members also have high management abilities reflected in the friendly and family-like atmosphere in the department.

### Teaching and learning

The OUI pedagogic model combines distance teaching with face-to-face components. The method is used in all OUI courses, including those in the programs offered by the Department of Management and Economics. The components of the method include:

A **course book** that is the primary source of knowledge for self-study and preparing assignments; a **study guide** in courses based on existing textbooks; **tutorial sessions** at the study centers intended to provide guidance and support; **assignments or projects** submitted during the semester; **seminars** and **exams** conducted at OUI study centers throughout the country, and integrated with **distant learning technologies**.

The OUI offers students a wide and varied range of elective courses that are not dependent on the availability of senior faculty members. Furthermore, the number of students in a course is not limited. All candidates who meet the graduate degree admission requirements are accepted to the MBA program and can realize their intellectual abilities.

The OUI study method is congruent with the goals of the University and shaped accordingly: it enables individuals unable to study in a regular framework to complete an academic degree in their free time and at their own pace. This approach enables individuals who work, have a family, are serving in the army, or discontinued their studies in the past, to pursue academic studies.

This approach corresponds to the Department's goals: self-study qualifies our students to continue their studies independently, as required in a continuously developing field such as Management; textbooks and assignments are selected in order to impart advanced academic knowledge, enabling graduates to pursue advanced degrees.

More than thirty years of accumulated institutional experience in distance education enables the OUI to effectively take advantage of learning technologies that have become accessible to most students in recent years, and indeed the OUI is a leader in the development and application of technological tools to distance teaching and learning.

Finally, self-study that characterizes all studies at the OUI, and particularly the MBA program, qualifies students for a continued process of self-study that is vital for individuals holding managerial positions in the modern business environment.

The strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in the Department of Management and Economics are similar to those of the OUI teaching method in general. For most students, self-study is more difficult than group study through lectures. We are investing efforts to integrate technologies aimed at facilitating distance learning, without foregoing tutorial sessions. Surveys indicate that students are satisfied with the online systems, feel that they significantly contribute to courses and help them understand the course material and prepare assignments, and they actively participate in asynchronous discussions. However, they are divided with respect to whether the online systems are a suitable alternative to classroom learning, and are usually unwilling to forego face-to-face tutorial sessions.

The OUI allocated significant resources to overcome the difficulties stemming from the distance teaching method. The University devotes the utmost attention to students and accompanies them from their initial interest in studies at the OUI through receipt of their degree. In their feedback, students for the most part praise the OUI's personal and warm attitude towards students, as well as the level of teaching, study materials and learning technologies.

In summary, the teaching approach is congruent with the goals of the OUI (learning flexibility) and of the department. This approach enables the University to expand access to higher education to all interested individuals, and offers an opportunity to pursue academic studies to those working for their livelihood, raising a family or involved in other pursuits that prevent them from studying at other academic institutions despite their intellectual abilities.

#### **4.5 Mechanism for Continued Monitoring of the Handling of Problematic Issues**

The issues identified as problematic will be handled as follows:

- A team from the department will prepare a document describing the approaches to handling problematic issues. These approaches will address the short and long-term. The department head, in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, will ensure that the proposed approaches for handling problems will be integrated into annual work plans so that the required resources will be allocated.
- The department will monitor handling of the problems on an ongoing basis in accordance with the measures taken. Monitoring will be documented in a report that will be submitted at time intervals commensurate with problem type (semester, annual or five-year basis).

#### **4.6 Additional Initiatives to Improve Internal Quality**

The Open University and the Department of Management and Economics engage in internal quality control on an ongoing basis. In cases in which weaknesses requiring change are identified, actions are taken to rectify them. These include:

1. A committee for examining the status of course coordinators.
2. A committee for examining procedures concerning the OUI's academic activities.
3. OUI management recently decided to establish a mechanism for ongoing monitoring of the need to rewrite courses studied in all study programs. We estimate that such a mechanism will significantly improve the rate of course updating.
4. With respect to encouraging research activities:
  - The Research Authority funds travel of course coordinators (who do not have a research fund) to conferences. Funded proposals undergo academic screening and evaluation by members of the Research Authority steering committee.
  - Research Authority seminar – with the aim of helping researchers submit research proposals, the Research Authority recently initiated meetings addressing issues pertaining to submitting research proposals to external funds.

#### **4.7 Are the Evaluation Findings Available and Accessible to the Staff?**

An electronic copy of the report will be posted on the University intranet site, and will be accessible to all OUI staff. Printed copies of the report will be available in the Library and in the Department office for review by faculty, administrative staff and students.