NEW LOOK
NEW LOOK FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION

STUDENTS SUPPORTING STUDENTS
Get the best advice from those in the know

OU STUDENTSLIVE
OU student life in pictures!

EARLY BIRD OR NIGHT OWL?
New Brainwave app lets you find out once and for all what your most productive time of the day is!

NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY
Find out why over 30,000 OU students are being asked to have their say.

SOCIETIES SPECIAL
Join a society! What better way to meet other OU students and enrich your study!

Welcome to your Students Association magazine
www.open.ac.uk/ousa
SPRING 2015

STUDENT NEWS 16 PAGES
Welcome... to your OU Students Association magazine, a place to share your stories, connect with others and find out more about your Association

Hello! I’m so pleased to see this edition with the new branding - I think it looks great. We’re really pleased with what we’ve been able to achieve and we hope you are too. We’d like to say a massive thank you to everyone who helped during the process!

We’ve got some really interesting articles featured in this edition including ‘Research at the OU’ which is something we don’t hear about often enough. The new Brainwave App lets you discover how your brain performs during the day to find out if you’re a night owl or an early bird (I know I’m not a morning person!)

The ethical use of student data is an issue that concerns us all and we should all be aware of how our data is used. A link and email are provided for queries.

And, as a Jane Austen fan I was curious about the review of Northanger Abbey, only to discover it is about a book that has updated the story to modern-day Edinburgh. I might have to add it to my Kindle. Finally remember to take time off studying (not too much) to enjoy spring.

Lorraine Adams
Vice President Communications

COMING UP...

27-29 March
CEC Weekend
Where your Elected Student Team (Central Executive Committee) gets together to discuss all things OU Students Association.

10 April
Nominations open for Assembly Bye-Elections
If you fancy getting more involved locally, then this is your chance, keep an eye out for more information coming soon.

23 April
OU Charter Day
The Open University’s Royal Charter was granted on 23rd April 1969, bringing the University into official existence.

1 May
National share a story month
Your chance to get published right here in OUstudents magazine! Share your story with us for the next edition by emailing ousa-comms@open.ac.uk
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Getting the OU student voice heard

The National Student Survey 2015!

We met with Emma Thomas, OU NSS Coordinator from the Information Office to ask her a few questions about the National Students Survey and what it means to OU students...

Could you tell us a little bit about the survey and what kind of questions it asks?
The National Student Survey (NSS) is a national survey of student satisfaction which has been run every year since 2005. It asks your opinion about the teaching on your course; assessment and feedback; academic support; organisation and management; learning resources and personal development, as well as a question about your overall satisfaction with the quality of your course.

There is also a question about your Students Association (Question 23).

So, how are students chosen to complete the NSS?
The NSS is administered nationally by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). For each UK university, a sample of students is selected each year to be invited to complete the NSS. At ‘conventional’ universities, invitations are sent to students who are in their final year. For OU students, things are a little more complicated due to the nature of OU study. Broadly, you may receive an invitation to complete the NSS if you started studying with the OU at least three years ago and have completed at least 120 credits in the last three years. This year just over 30,000 OU students have been selected to take part.

Why should we complete the survey if we’re invited to?
If you have received an invitation to complete the survey – all those eligible this year should have received their invitations by now – it’s really important that you do. It’s your chance to tell us what you have liked about your time studying with The Open University, as well as things that you feel could have been improved. It’s an important way for the OU to hear your feedback and it also provides information to help future students make informed decisions about what and where to study. The more responses the OU gets, the better a representation the final results will be of student opinion.

The results are published in a way that does not identify any individual respondents, so the OU does not know which individual students have responded to the survey. Ipsos MORI publish ‘Q&As for students’ here http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/students.php and there is also information on StudentHome at http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/communications/the-2015-national-student-survey.

What happens with the results?
Results of the NSS are published in the media, on HEFCE’s website http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/ltpublicinfo/nss/ and on Unistats http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/ as part of the data available there on OU degrees and diplomas. Within the OU, results from the survey are reviewed at all levels in the University, and are used to inform the development of our modules and qualifications.

Here at the OU Students Association responses to our question will help us to understand what areas we need to improve and what we’ve been great at so we can deliver more of the same in the future.
My desk and me
A letter from a student to the desk that has been with him through it all (almost)

We haven’t been together through it all. I spent most of S104 on the living room floor of my flat! Life was tougher back then, I had a bowl of soup on my windowsill for six weeks, during a fungal experiment. Then in my 2nd year we moved to a bigger place, that’s when

The setting of Regency Bath is exchanged by McDermid for the excitement of Edinburgh at festival time, with lots of visits to book readings and comedy events. In this setting, Austen’s Catherine Morland becomes Cat, a young woman from the Piddle Valley in Dorset, a vicar’s daughter with an imagination every bit as fervent as Austen’s protagonist.

Cat is on the cusp of romance as she meets the delectable Henry Tilney, a lawyer whose manners are more in line with Austen’s Henry than some of McDermid’s other re inventions, for example the characterisations of James and Cat Morland are possibly a surprise for traditionalists, yet McDermid’s heavy invocation of text language for these and other characters is completely in keeping with a modern day rendering of this, most unusual of Austen’s six novels.

Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey was a satire on the traditional Gothic novel and it seems McDermid’s version extends this satire as the naïve Cat, an avid reader of vampire fiction, convinces herself the Tilney family could indeed be vampires and that the imposing Northanger Abbey in the Scottish borders is a home with a murderous past. Despite the Gothic subtext, this novel, as Austen’s, has at its heart a great love story, and despite its modern day creations, the story of Northanger Abbey is preserved exceptionally well.

Carys Peasgood, OU student

Northanger Abbey
by Val McDermid

This reprising of Jane Austen’s novel, Northanger Abbey is a real literary success, insofar as it retains Austen’s structure of events whilst introducing twenty-first century characteristics to her much loved characters.

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Carys Peasgood, OU student

If you enjoyed this please visit my blog: www.ou-science-student.com and follow me on Twitter@ouscistudent
New look for your Association

Over the past 12 months, here at the OU Students Association (OUSA), we’ve been involved in an exciting project to refresh our brand and we are really excited to share your new look OUstudents magazine with you...

Our vision was to create a brand which reflects the vibrancy of our student community, a brand OU students felt they could identify with that is instantly recognisable.

We think we’ve done a pretty good job but we’d love to know what you think! We’re asking for your feedback in an (extremely short) online survey found here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6LRVLHY (There will be a prize draw to win a new OU students goody bag!!!)

We appreciate everyone has different styles and tastes but hopefully you will be able to see that with your help and support we have been able to create a unique, strong look for your Association which makes us truly stand out from the crowd!

Your OUstudents magazine isn’t the only thing that’s changed; you’ll notice we’ve made changes to our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter profiles. We’ll also be working on updating our website so if you could bear with us over the next couple of months we’d really appreciate your support.

Oh, and if you spot our old logo anywhere it would be great if you could let us know by emailing ousa-comms@open.ac.uk

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘TMA deadlines are slowly turning me into the Hulk.’
Creating graduate Nurses of the future

I feel privileged as an OU student nurse to represent the OU and never tire from the questions I get asked about this unique programme

My name is Stefan Franks and I am currently a pre-registration nursing student with the OU. I work as a Nursing Assistant in General Practice and am lucky enough to be sponsored by my employer to study this exciting programme.

I have always wanted to be a nurse however, I did not have the qualifications to enter a standard university. The OU has allowed me to develop my underpinning knowledge of general health and social care alongside the clinical, practical work involved with Adult Nursing.

The OU has given many healthcare support workers the opportunity to transition from their current role into the role of student nurse. Across the UK there is countless healthcare support workers who would make fantastic nurses, but unable to commit solely to student life due to home and financial commitments. The OU has enabled me to work flexibly and to maintain my current role with my employer which means I am still able to earn a wage.

The OU pre-registration nursing programme is a recognised course from the Nursing and Midwifery Council, subsequently; students can be placed on their register upon successful completion and work as a graduate nurse.

I feel privileged as an OU student nurse to represent the OU and I never tire from the questions I get asked on a regular basis about this very unique programme. The course has given me confidence, courage and enthusiasm to learn and absorb as much information as possible. I especially enjoy the balance between practical and theory work and the reassurance of having on-site mentors and a dedicated nursing tutor. To my healthcare support worker colleagues who are excited about nursing and considering it as a career, take a leap of faith and try the OU.

Stefan Franks
Pre-registration Adult Nursing programme, First year student.

Who you gonna call?

Some of you might have noticed a slight difference between students who attend campus universities and OU students who study at a distance. If you take a look around from where you’re studying, there probably aren’t many students within view. We can’t nip to the student bar or the library and mingle with fellow students. The OU wisely realises this is a problem and has various ways of providing information, including the Help Centre and your Associate Lecturers.

There are also Student Support Teams, available for information, advice and guidance. They cover a range of topics including help with exam revision; what to study next or changing what you’d planned to study; matters relating to disability, health conditions or a specific learning difficulty and support for those with caring responsibilities. That is not an exhaustive list – if you have questions or concerns, talk to your SST. So, who you gonna call – Ghostbusters or your SST? One reason I wouldn’t call Ghostbusters is an absence of their contact details – your SST’s details are fairly easy to find through the Help Centre at this link: http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/help/#your-help-your-contacts

Alison Kingan
Vice President Student Support
Instagram, share with us!

Join the growing community of #OUstudents on Instagram

Instagram.com/oustudentslive

Instagram is a brilliant way to take, edit and share your photos on the go. The free App, available on smartphones, allows you to upload both images and video, and also has a huge range of colour-enhancing filters to make your creations even better. There is a growing community of Open University students on Instagram, so it’s a great place to find new friends.

The Students Association account, ‘oustudentslive’, has new images every day, and is now featuring the popular Best Overheard Student Comment series and pictures taken around The Open University campus in Milton Keynes. Connect with other students today by creating an Instagram account and using #oustudents in the caption!
Jed’s problem: Motivate me
“During the week, I think I’ll study at the weekend, but when the weekend arrives, I put it off again. I really need to find a way to motivate myself but I’m not in a very good place at the moment. How do others get out of a negative way of thinking once it kicks in?”

‘Try to do some work every day. If you tell yourself that you will just do half an hour there will be no pressure. You may find that you get really interested and work for longer. I think that working every day keeps the motivation going.’
– Angela

‘I call this the “Monday” syndrome as in “I’ll start my new diet/exercise whatever on Monday to get a fresh start!” But you put off and off and off instead. The best way to deal with this is set S.M.A.R.T goals. For example “I will study for 30 minutes tomorrow at 7pm. Specific: is the goal clear and precise? Measurable: is it a certain length of time or measurable in another way? Achievable: do you have the materials at hand to do it? Realistic: is it something you feel like you can do?

Timely: be specific with your time and get it done.’
– Beth

‘To a certain extent you have to treat it like a job and just allocate the time for it in your life but make sure you allocate time to doing what you enjoy. Little and often, rather than trying to do it all on a weekend.’
– Ruth

Libby’s problem: Finding time
“Does anyone else suffer from constant disruption at weekends? I don’t know how to study properly with the amount of noise going on around me. There is different music coming from different bedrooms and I’m constantly interrupted, being asked to find socks or if we’ve run out of juice. It must be so nice to shut yourself away – but unfortunately I don’t have that luxury.”

‘If it’s teenage children disturbing your study, your best weapon might be 5am study. Not many teens know about 5am!’
– Sam

‘Weekends are my days off and time with the family! I study either when kids are at school or in the evenings! I arrange a time table and set myself amount of work each day. It really works and I don’t feel at all frustrated and flustered.’
– Kimii

‘Buy a pair of really good noise cancelling headphones to block out the noise. Give the kids warning that you will be unavailable and to let you know beforehand if there’s anything they want, if not they have to wait, unless it’s urgent. Stick to your guns and good luck’
– Julie

If at all possible you could register under the SCONUL Access Scheme and register at your local University Library to study on the weekend.’
– Richard

Support for OU students
It really Does Help to Talk
Hundreds of OU students have called Nightline since the Students Association was able to offer the service late last year.
It just goes to show that none of us know what’s around the corner or when we might need a friendly listening ear or a calming kindly chat.
We understand the pressures that students face and that’s why we, as an Association, sought affiliation to this fantastic service. It means that OU students anywhere can call the hotline during the night to talk through their problems. No subject is of limits and an experienced student volunteer will listen for as long as it takes.

It really does help to talk to Nightline...
Phone: 0207 631 0101
(it might be handy to save this number on your mobile!)
Email: listening@nightline.org.uk
Instant messaging: (Skype) chat.nightline
Skype Phone: londonnightline

HELPFUL ADVICE FROM STUDENTS

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘OU student happiness is Jaffa Cakes at 2am on submission day.’
Research at the OU!

The OU is in a class of its own showing that research excellence can sit alongside open access for all

Key research achievements of OU research in music include:

- The world’s first ever listening database which has captured over 1,000 listening experiences from the public.
- The Black British Jazz project’s contributions to the British Library’s ‘Oral History of Jazz in Britain’ collection and contributions from academics to the South Bank’s major The Rest is Noise modern music festival.

We reported in the last issue of OUstudents, that the European Space Agency’s comet-chasing spacecraft, Rosetta, was about to complete touchdown of the Philae lander on comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko. Well it did and in an OpenMinds talk in February, key researchers explained what the cometary dust and images they captured tell us about the nature of comets.

The other significant event we reported on was that we were expecting the results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014. That happened too and assessed 72% of the OU research submitted as being world-leading or internationally excellent (4* or 3*).

Music was assessed as being in the top 10 for Music (8th out of 84) for its quality and 100% of its submission was assessed as 4* and 3* for both its impact and environment.

The OU’s REF submission in Education was also a high performer, ranked second in the UK for the quality and quantity of its research in the so called ‘Research Power’ ranking (based on Times Higher Education research power scores).

The OU has the largest UK-based concentration of researchers developing new forms of practical learning online which bring learning resources to millions of people worldwide.

OU research in Education conducts research into learning from early years to adulthood and is a key player in addressing how people learn. It has an impact on the lives of children, supporting them as active researchers and OU research into 21st-century reading practices led to a significant increase in children’s reading scores.

REF2014 has confirmed that the OU is in a class of its own by showing that research excellence can sit alongside open access to higher education. This year will see the launch of the new OU Research Plan which will outline the strategic direction for OU research over the coming years. This plan will build on the successes of REF, maintaining our commitment to a broad research base, and building on our existing strengths.

Interactive Research: Brainwave App

Early bird or night owl?
Free psychology app analyses brain performance

A new research-focused psychology app, from The Open University (OU) and recruitment leaders Reed, will test just how well your brain performs at different times of the day!

The free Brainwave app is now available for download to mobile and tablet devices.

By playing five games, developed from the latest psychology research, you will be able to build a picture of how your cognitive functions perform throughout the day. The outcome will ultimately answer the age-old question of whether you’re an “early bird” or “night owl”.

You’ll be encouraged to play the games at various times of the day (and you can call it research!) to see how your performance varies. Personal scores, presented as a graph or ‘Brainwave’, will show you when you’re performing at your best.

Find out more about the app and the games included: www.openuniversity.co.uk/brainwave
Ethical use of student data

OU policy addresses the ethical use of student data for learning analytics

In October The Open University published a new policy for using your data in an ethical and sound way for ‘learning analytics’. They are believed to be the first institution in the UK to produce a publically available written policy, which is available to all OU students.

Learning analytics is a term for describing data analysis the University undertakes to understand how your behaviours and contexts impact on your learning and progress.

Further extensive consultation on the policy will include your feedback from the Student Consultation Forum, to consider “informed consent” to data collection and analysis and whether any “opt out” or “opt in” will be offered to you in the future. The University considers this consultation with you vital in developing a workable and ethically sound framework for the use of learning analytics. This forms part of a larger strategic project to improve how the University uses analytics to support you.

Nicky Wiseman
Senior Project Manager
SEP Analytics Project,
Learning and Teaching Centre

Further information
For further information about the Ethics policy or if you have a specific query about the ethics discussed in this article, please email: Analytics-Ethics@open.ac.uk.

Link to ethics policy and FAQs are available from the following site (for online version): http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents/ethical-use-student-data-learning-analytics-policy

OpenTree
The Open University Library set to launch new online learning tool for students

The Open University Library is set to pilot an exciting and innovative new tool later this year called OpenTree, which will be available to all OU students.

OpenTree is a social environment where students can earn points and badges as they explore the online library and access e-resources or webpages. It will also feature a games section that will provide a fun way in which to practise important digital and information literacy skills. For each game zone completed, students can collect digital badges to show what skills they’ve learned!

OpenTree will also provide a great opportunity for you to meet other students in the OU community. For example, you’ll be able to share useful articles you’ve read and also see what other resources students have recommended from the OU Library website.

A beta version should be available later in the year, with the official launch in September. If you’d like further information, please contact Natasha.Huckle@open.ac.uk.

Contact details
You can get more updates from the Library by following them on Twitter@OU_Library and by liking them on Facebook fb.com/OULibrary

Help with your finances
OU Students and Council Tax Exemption...
We wanted to let you know that a process is now in place for dealing with OU students who are studying full time equivalent hours who wish to apply for council tax exemption.

A phone team will deal with any enquiries and will supply, as appropriate, a letter confirming your module, when you started and the expected number of study hours as well as when you are expected to complete your studies.

Tel: 0300 3035303
Email: general-enquiries@open.ac.uk

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘The 1st rule of being an OU student: tell everyone you’re an OU student.’
Join a society!

There are some fantastic societies just waiting for you to sign up!

www.open.ac.uk/ousa/get-involved/societies

Joining or starting a society is a great way to meet other OU students, have fun and enrich your OU study. We have so many diverse societies that you’ll want to join a few! And, if you can’t find one that interests you, maybe you could set-up a new one?

Some societies are linked to specific OU courses and some are based on a specific interest or hobby. All were started by small groups of enthusiasts wanting to share their passion with others. The majority of societies offer membership not just to students but also to friends and families ensuring a real cross section of members.

Some of the larger, more established societies organise regular meetings, revision weekends, conferences, outings and events; others might have modest numbers relying on newsletters in order to thrive. All societies need support from their fellow OU students.

We asked the societies themselves to let us know what they get up to and what they have planned for future events, there’s a lot going on!

If you would like to join or form a society or for further information please get in touch by emailing ousa-societies@open.ac.uk

List of Societies

Whatever your interests, there’s a Society for you...

If you would like to join or form a society or for further information please email ousa-societies@open.ac.uk or visit our website www.open.ac.uk/ousa/get-involved/societies

- Change Ringers Society
- Fusion (Physics) Society
- Entrepreneurs Society
- Development & Environment Society
- Geological Society
- History Society
- Law Society
- M500
- Mountaineering Society
- Music Society
- OU Alchemy
- Postgraduate Student Society
- Psychological Society
- OU Poets
- Regional Arts Society
- Students for Ethical Science
- Shakespeare Society
- Tadpoles Society

New and emerging societies:

- Dr Turing Society
- LGBT+
- OU Computer Club

Societies need you!

Join the LGBT+ Society

Want to make a difference? Or just keep up with the news that matters to us? We want YOU to join the OU Students Association LGBT+ Society!

We’re looking to put together social events where we can meet up, elect members to manage each region, join in national pride events or even just make friends! You’ll get a regular email newsletter keeping you updated with relevant LGBT+ and student news.

To join us, just visit bit.ly/oulgbtsoc

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Study has given me the ability to discover ‘me’ again.’
The line quoted above is from the irreverently funny Monty Python team. The line comes specifically from their somewhat controversial, film The Life of Brian. For accuracy’s sake, of course, the line should really read what have the Greeks and the Romans ever done for us? The answer, as many will be aware, is an awful lot. The list, were I to go into it, would include Democracy, Language, Engineering, Law and Literature. In essence these two cultures have had a substantial and undeniable influence on modern western society and culture.

In their wisdom the Open University has seen fit to develop a named degree studying these ancient yet modern cultures. I am, of course, referring to the new Classical Studies degree (Q85). For many years Classics was considered an elite subject. The degree used to be firmly in the realm of Oxford and Cambridge Don infested study halls. I am pleased to say that those days are over. This most valuable and useful of subjects is now more open than ever.

What can we as students do? I am glad you asked.

I think we need a Classics Society! I know we could just lump ourselves with the History Society but we should not. I should mention as an aside that by “ourselves” I do mean everyone interested in Classics. Irrespective of their degree choice.

These are exciting times. Perhaps you would like to be in on the birth of a new Open University Society. If so then we have much to do. We must formulate a constitution and we should also think about, along the lines of most of the other OU societies, organising trips. In my locale (Saltburn-by-the-Sea), for example, Hadrian’s Wall is not that far away. I should mention that I am not averse to going to the pub. In which I could possibly obtain a mineral water that looks suspiciously like cider!

There is, in the future, the possibility of trips abroad. Let’s face it Classics is rewarding intellectually but it’s also just a Hades of a lot of fun.

I do hope you feel as passionately about classics as I and get in touch. Thank you for your attention.

Peter, Fatbrain@yahoo.co.uk
(Funny email address? A combination of two nicknames from school).
The OU Mountaineering Society

A friendly crowd, who do our best to make new members feel welcome

To those who take conventional holidays, flying to Alicante means sunburn, sea and sangria. To some of us however, it means trying new routes on good rock with plenty of bolts. Alternatively, for those who prefer to keep their feet on the ground, there are miles of tracks through unspoilt countryside where you can walk for miles without encountering anyone. Well, hardly anyone.

There was a time when we went to Scotland in February but a group of us decided to try sunshine and almond blossom instead. (If you want to go scrumping though, you’ll have to make do with oranges instead of apples.) For anyone who wants an active holiday without too much discomfort, February is an ideal time to go to the Costa Blanca. For the last four years OUMS has rented a villa for a week and a hard core group of softies have sampled the delights of a Spanish winter. Mind you, after the first year, we learned the hard way. Now we ask about the heating first and the views from the balcony next. After the sun goes down it can get surprisingly chilly.

But for the last three years we have had both a log burning stove and panoramic sea views from Altea Heights. Gazing out over the Mediterranean from the mountains a few miles from Benidorm is a good cure for the post-Christmas gloom. In addition to conventional rock climbing the Spanish are also developing via ferratas.

This means that quite long mountain routes are feasible without the need to lug in a lot of protection gear. Some provide the opportunity to have a holiday snap taken wobbling across a strand of wire strung out over a lot of fresh air. And finally, if all else fails there are numerous coffee shops in the towns around the area. Spanish cake tastes particularly good after a day in the hills!

If you’re interested in joining us visit: http://www.oums.co.uk/

Spotlight on: Music Society

We are confirmed now as the oldest affiliated Society of the OU Students Association! Established over 35 years ago the society is open to students and staff, past and present, of the Open University.

Our current membership of stands at over 70 bell ringers who live in many parts of the British Isles and we try to arrange meetings to suit this scattering.

Our interests are to bring together members of the Society to bell ringing events that we organise.

Events are open to members and non-members alike and the level of ringing capability is of no significance - though we do encourage normal standards (Peals and quarter peals from Plain Hunt upwards). Associate membership is also available.

The Society is affiliated to The Open University Students Association (OUSA) and has a formal Committee and Constitution.

Our Newsletter and Website (www.opuscr.org.uk) both attempt to provide up-to-date details of forthcoming events, history and general information. They also aim to provide details of all that had gone on through the years since our formation in 1979.

Enquiries (including membership enquiries) are welcome and can be made via the website.

JOIN A SOCIETY

Celebrating 30 years!
The Music Society has been in existence for 30 years and is an affiliated OU Students Association society.

Even if you are not studying a music course and don’t play an instrument do consider joining us and other like-minded students who share a common interest in, and a love of, music.

- £5 Subscription per year
- 3 Journals yearly with articles of a musical nature
- Annual Music Day with AGM in varying OU regions
- Members’ contact list available to all members
- Open to all students

Please contact the Secretary for further details: linda.brown157@btinternet.com

The Open University Society of Change Ringers

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Our Newsletter and Website (www.opuscr.org.uk) both attempt to provide up-to-date details of forthcoming events, history and general information. They also aim to provide details of all that had gone on through the years since our formation in 1979.

Enquiries (including membership enquiries) are welcome and can be made via the website.

JOIN A SOCIETY

Celebrating 30 years!
The Music Society has been in existence for 30 years and is an affiliated OU Students Association society.

Even if you are not studying a music course and don’t play an instrument do consider joining us and other like-minded students who share a common interest in, and a love of, music.

- £5 Subscription per year
- 3 Journals yearly with articles of a musical nature
- Annual Music Day with AGM in varying OU regions
- Members’ contact list available to all members
- Open to all students

Please contact the Secretary for further details: linda.brown157@btinternet.com

The Open University Society of Change Ringers

We are confirmed now as the oldest affiliated Society of the OU Students Association! Established over 35 years ago the society is open to students and staff, past and present, of the Open University.

Our current membership of stands at over 70 bell ringers who live in many parts of the British Isles and we try to arrange meetings to suit this scattering.

Our interests are to bring together members of the Society to bell ringing events that we organise.

Events are open to members and non-members alike and the level of ringing capability is of no significance - though we do encourage normal standards (Peals and quarter peals from Plain Hunt upwards). Associate membership is also available.

The Society is affiliated to The Open University Students Association (OUSA) and has a formal Committee and Constitution.

Our Newsletter and Website (www.opuscr.org.uk) both attempt to provide up-to-date details of forthcoming events, history and general information. They also aim to provide details of all that had gone on through the years since our formation in 1979.

Enquiries (including membership enquiries) are welcome and can be made via the website.
Hello from the OU Computer Club!

Most OU students use some sort of technology. You’re probably reading this on a computer as soon as you heard the OU students magazine was out! You can send TMA’S immediately over the interweb and your phone is more powerful than the computer that put a man on the moon! Technology is fantastic, but it can also be daunting, we’re not all experts who know the best app for note-taking, and what is a ‘RAM’ anyway?

Our aim is to grow the fantastic OU Computer Club. The OU Computer Club is a place for OU students that are having tech issues, need advice on a good computer for studying and want to learn more about apps and gadgetry. Every question is a good one and since you’ll be talking to OU students, you know that you’ll get tried-and-tested tech advice! If you’ve found a great new note-taking app or have a super-duper reference manager that you want to share, we want you to let us know.

You could even pitch in and help run the group. If you want to promote the group or help moderate activity, help run a live Q&A or just have a fantastic idea that will help more OU students find out about us then just get in touch.

Contact details
Get in touch with the OU Computer Club here:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/openunicomputerclub
Ousa-computerclub@outlook.com

M500 Mathematics Revision Weekend

If you’re interested in mathematics, M500 is for you. We aim to alleviate the isolation of studying alone. The May revision weekend is a unique opportunity for OU Maths students to prepare for their exams as well as meet students on the same and other Mathematics modules and qualifications.

The event is run in Staffordshire and attracts around 300 students. The weekend provides 13-13.5 hours of tutorial support for module revision and exam preparation between Friday evening and Sunday afternoon 15th to 17th May including, in 2015, the MST124 and MST125 Level 1 modules.

For more details visit us at www.m500.org.uk/

Open University Psychological Society events in 2015!

March 13th-15th 2015 (Warwick University)
OUPS Quantitative Methods and Statistics Workshop
This weekend is a workshop format covering quantitative methods, statistics and SPSS. It will be of particular value for DD303 but also relevant to all students wanting help and more confidence in this area – places are limited book early.

May 2nd 2015 (Central London)
LOUPS Overview Days for DE100 and DD303
These overview days are aimed at students doing current presentations of these modules. The day is a series of lectures and handouts are provided.

8th-10th May 2015 (Warwick University)
OUPS DSE212, ED209 and DD307 Revision Weekend
This is a series of lectures to help students revise for their exams, building up their knowledge and confidence.

3rd-5th July 2015 (Warwick University)
OUPS Annual Conference: ‘Learning Difficulties’
This weekend event is attended by a variety of students, academics and professionals.

4th-6th September 2015 (Warwick University)
OUPS DD303 Revision Weekend
This invaluable weekend will help support your revision and give you excellent tips for revising and taking the exam, helping to build your knowledge and your confidence!

For information or to book visit www.oups.org.uk
Email info@oups.org.uk or phone 0208 315 0049
To join the LOUPS email list email: londonloups@googlemail.com
Get involved!
President’s Article

Did you know that your Elected Student Teams are all volunteers? That includes me! It’s a rewarding and tough job at times but definitely worth every minute. If representing your fellow OU students isn’t for you, not to worry, we have so many more opportunities including degree ceremony volunteers, residential school representatives and you can even volunteer to write for this magazine. It really is worth getting involved, you get to meet so many OU students who become friends, you gain key skills and it makes you truly feel involved in the university experience!

I want to say a special hello to all the new students who started their first modules in January/February of this year. It is all very overwhelming but it will get better, I promise! Just remember that all OU students have felt, or are feeling, the way you do so don’t be scared to ask for help. If you are really struggling then you can always contact Nightline (see page 9).

The other big news for us which you should have spotted by now is our rebranding. The OU Students Association has had a makeover!!! I particularly like the pictures of stripy feet on our Facebook page - I have socks just like them! We wanted to have some independence but also retain our links to the OU which we think this achieves. We hope you agree! Right, I’m off to sign-up for my next course, happy studying everyone, see you next time!

Ruth Tudor
President of the OU Students Association

Volunteer opportunity

Could you represent OU students?

We have an exciting opportunity for you to be part of the OU Students Association team of Central Representatives from September 2015 - August 2017.

We’re looking to appoint volunteer Central Representatives to sit as student members on all the OU Academic Governance Committees to ensure the ‘student voice’ is heard!

Is it for you?

- Are you interested in acting on behalf of the wider student body and ensuring that OU Students Association policy is being followed?
- Do you enjoy discussing and being consulted on the OU student teaching and learning experience?
- Are you able to attend and make a positive contribution to weekday meetings in Milton Keynes at least three times each year?

If you answered YES to all three questions, being Central Representative might be for you!

Please read the role description and A-Z of Committee information for more information to help you decide if this is the role for you. You’ll find everything you need here http://www.open.ac.uk/ousa/get-involved/volunteer

Please note: this main period of recruitment will close on Friday 1st May 2015 and will reopen later in the year.

Thank you for your interest and hope to hear from you if this is the role for you!

Josh Brumpton
Vice President Education Policy

Best Overheard #OUstudent Comment: ‘Just done a heroic hour of maths on my day off.”