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SOCIETIES
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FUN AND GAMES
Try your hand at our wordsearch or take our University Challenge Quiz!

STARTER FOR 10
#TEAMOPEN WIN!

IT’S FRESHERS TIME!
WELCOME WEEK SCHEDULE
AN ACTION-PACKED WEEK FOR ALL OU STUDENTS

MEET YOUR STUDENT LEADERS
THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE THE TEAM

PHOTO BY JANE LEIGH
Welcome to your OU Students Association magazine, a place to share your stories, connect with others and find out more about your Association.

Welcome to your OU Students mag! This is my first magazine since taking on the role of Vice President Communications for the OU Students Association and I hope that you all enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed helping the Editorial Team create and source the content.

With Freshers Week fast approaching, I’d like to welcome all of the new students to the Association, and remind you that once you enrol you are automatically a member of the Students Association!

To returning students, welcome back! For OU students new and experienced, we have 10 steps to having a fantastic Freshers Week on page 6.

We’ve got some brilliant pieces in the magazine, thank you to all of the OU students that submitted articles, stories, photos and artwork! I’ve been blown away by the creativity on display! Special congratulations to the winner of the Conference photography competition, Jane Leigh. The winning entry is our cover for this edition! Thanks, as always, to the amazing Sarah Boyt Robinson, whose cartoons have been featured on this page for the last few editions of the magazine.

This edition is bursting with lovely student led content, including an inspirational story from our very own Deputy President, articles from the Disabled Students Group and our societies.

There’s too much to list, so go get a cuppa, turn off your phone and sit down to enjoy this edition of the OU Students magazine!

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications
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By becoming an OU student, you’ve also become a member of one of the biggest students’ associations in the world! The OU Students Association, run by a small team of elected student representatives with help from a small staff team, enables you to influence how your University is run. We exist to promote your interests and ensure that the OU is not just a place of learning, it’s a student community!

We offer OU students:

A Voice

With student volunteers representing the student voice by sitting on committees throughout the university structure, we make sure that The Open University listens to what you have to say on how it is run. We represent the collective needs of the student body - if we can’t help you directly, we aim to find someone who can.

Our leadership team of student reps, known as the ‘Central Executive Committee’, are elected at our biennial Conference - every member of the Association has a vote, and it counts!

Community

With over 200 000 members, we aim to make sure that no OU student feels alone! We have active Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages, forums, and our members frequently arrange local meet-ups!

We are also proudly affiliated with over 20 student-led societies. Joining a society is a brilliant way to both meet other OU students, and to enrich your study. From Ballet and Opera to Robotics, we’re sure to have a society for you! Have a new society in mind? We can help!

SUPPORT

Studying can be tough, especially when you’re a distance learner. We have an incredible team of Peer Supporters - OU student online volunteers who are always happy to lend an ear and some friendly advice when you need it. We’re also proud to support Nightline - a listening service that you can contact at any time for some free, confidential advice.

There’s also our wonderful Disabled Students Group, that represents students with health problems and disabilities to promote their needs wherever a health problem, physical or mental, or a disability affects their day to day life as a student.
Starting your studies with the OU for the first time can be an exciting and nerve-wracking experience, but not to fear, ‘Welcome Week’ is here to help you settle in.

No doubt you’ll have plenty of questions about setting out on your studies. The great news is you’ve just joined a hugely supportive community which includes students who have lots of experience of studying with The Open University, and those who are just starting out, like yourself.

It’s also a great chance to:

• make study contacts.
• find out what support is available when times get tricky.
• and how you can share your interests with like-minded students.
• We’ll be running Facebook chats on a variety of topics throughout the week including what the OU Students Association does and how you can get involved. See the FAQs below for further details.

What’s a Facebook chat?
Ever been invited to an event on Facebook? This is just the same, except the venue is the discussion wall of the event page. Join the chat remotely. If it’s your first time, we’ve put together a list of Tips and FAQs on these online events to help you get the most out of them.

See an example of one of last year’s Facebook chats to give you a flavour: Welcome to the OU Student Community!

What is Periscope and how can I get involved?
Periscope is a Social Media tool which allows you to film and stream live video. It’s a brilliant way to experience a live event with other OU students!

Want to make sure that you can study in peace? Download our door hanger, print off onto one piece of paper (double-sided) and cut around the white lines to create a sign for your door!

We’d love to see them out in the world, so make sure to take a snap and post them on social media using the hashtag #new2OU!
Welcome Week
26/09/16 - 30/09/16

Monday 26
7-8pm Facebook chat: Welcome to the OU student community!

Tuesday 27
2.30-4pm OU Students Radio live Freshers show
7-8pm Facebook chat: Societies fair
2-2.30pm Student Hub Live Slot on Group Tuition

Wednesday 28
9am-11pm Disabled Students Group day!
3.30pm Periscope session: Your online community - Forums and Facebook
6-8pm Facebook chat: Join the Disabled Students Group
11am-1.55pm Student Hub Live (various slots)

Thursday 29
7-8pm Facebook chat: Meet OU students in your area

Friday 30
7.30-8.30pm Facebook chat: Students Supporting Students

Don’t forget...
...to get in touch on social media by including ‘#new2ou’ in your posts
...to take part in our daily Freshers challenges!
... experienced OU students are more than welcome to join in too!
... to take a deep breath before starting your studies.
... to enjoy yourself :)
10 steps to having a great Freshers week
(even if you’re not a Fresher!)

1 Explore our site
Our site is stuffed full of useful information about what the Students Association is, how we can help you, being an OU student, where to find support and contact links!

2 Find support
Make sure that you know where to find support if you need it - consider bookmarking our support page, so that if you did ever need it, you could find it easily.

3 Get social
Find us on social media! We’re very active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and are a great way to meet other OU students. Also, make sure to check out our student forums!

4 Check out our Societies
Joining a society is a great way to make friends, discover new interests and to further enrich your study. We have 23 amazing societies to choose from, all started by small groups of enthusiastic students wanting to share their passion with others. Can’t see a society for you? Why not create your own?

5 Grab your headphones
Did you know that we have special live radio events? Four times a year a small group of students come to campus and share stories, information and answer your questions. Tutors, Librarians and more guest star! Every episode is available on our podcast feed on iTunes and here. Don’t miss the show on 27 September at 2.30pm!

6 Find volunteering opportunities
The Association is run by a team of student volunteers, but the opportunities don’t end there... Check out this page to find out more!

TOP TIP
Some volunteering opportunities are open year-round, whilst some have elections - the results of which are announced at our biennial Conference!

7 Get your discounts
OU students are eligible to purchase an NUS Extra Card from the National Union of Students. It can save you money when you buy from online and highstreet stores, restaurants, bars and more accross the UK!

8 Browse our shop
We have a brand new shop website, full of lovely OU student merchandise! Whether it’s an OU hoodie or free past exam papers, the shop has something for you...

9 Find your local community
Students from all over the UK have set up regular meet-ups for OU students that live near one another. A great way to meet other OU students in person!

10 Stay in touch
Let us know how your Freshers experience is going on social media by including ‘#new2OU’ in your posts. We love hearing from you!

And of course...
Take part in as many of our Freshers events as you can!

TOP TIP
With a magazine, radio show and podcast there’s lots of ways for you to express yourself whilst gaining professional experience in writing, presenting and technical skills! Find out more at http://www.open.ac.uk/ouusa/freshers-2016/get-creative

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Should be doing TMA05. What am I doing? Painting my nails. Oops!’
Victory for #TeamOpen on University Challenge

We hope you enjoyed watching your University Challenge team steam to victory on the 23rd series of the legendary quiz show. Next year it could be you!

The OU’s squad of four keen quizzers: Mags Adamson, Sarah Banks, Dale Crawford and Rob Mitchell took on Salford University, accompanied by their lucky OU owl mascot.

Morale was high following their landslide win in their warm up match the month before, when Team Open took on OU staff members and their victory against a team of student representatives from the Association’s Central Executive Committee. The only question was could they keep it up? Our students had only met one another once before, but they bonded over their OU experience and love of Maths.

Despite the strong maths connection of our competitors (all have been studying maths, with the exception of Mags, who is studying towards an Open Degree and teaches maths!), their broad general knowledge in topics from geography to literature and the sciences did not fail to impress!

It was a nail-biting match and the Salford students were truly worthy opponents, but at three minutes to go, OU had a convincing lead of 175 points to Salford’s 105.

When the final gong rang out our team were met by a fantastic cheer of applause, and the final score saw them declare victory at 210 points to 115. If you missed the action, why not try checking BBC iPlayer – while it lasts! No doubt, they’ll be competing again soon.

Sarah Banks (Captain)

Studying: BSc in Mathematics

Lives in: The Outer Hebrides

Sarah has enjoyed watching the show for many years and was captain of the 2015 University Challenge team.

Love taking part in quizzes? Do your friends always want you on their team because of your endless general knowledge? Why not put yourself forward to represent “Team Open” on University Challenge? There is room for specialists from a whole range of subjects and those with a broad general knowledge will also be welcomed. As you know, quizzers with a quick buzzer finger will also be at an advantage!

If this sounds like you, register your interest here by 14th October. Please note - you need to be a current OU student and expect to be studying into 2017 to apply.

Robert Mitchell

Studying: MSc in Mathematics

Lives in: Leicestershire

Robert won £32,000 on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.

Dale Crawford

Studying: BSc in Mathematics

Lives in: Shropshire

One of Dale’s students tried to enter him onto The Chase. Dale didn’t follow up on it that time around, but he hasn’t ruled it out: ‘Maybe one day!’

Sarah has enjoyed watching the show for many years and was captain of the 2015 University Challenge team.

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Mags Adamson

Studying: BA Open Degree

Lives in: Gloucestershire

This isn’t Mags’ first TV appearance - she sang with the BBC national Chorus of Wales in a Prom concert which was televised in 2012.

Love taking part in quizzes? Do your friends always want you on their team because of your endless general knowledge? Why not put yourself forward to represent “Team Open” on University Challenge? There is room for specialists from a whole range of subjects and those with a broad general knowledge will also be welcomed. As you know, quizzers with a quick buzzer finger will also be at an advantage!

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Time: there are never enough hours in the day!

Rachel shares her tips for stress-free study...

Time… I never have enough of it. OU students generally don’t - whether it’s because we are at work, chasing kids, caring for others or aren’t well ourselves. Sometimes it can definitely be a struggle to find the time to study.

A year ago I wrote an article for this mag about studying and mental health. I wrote that I needed to be ahead at all times - this is still true, but at level 3 with various difficulties and commitments (two kids, work, and my Association role) it’s become harder to stay ahead. Here’s how I try to keep on track:

Make a date
I expect that most have some sort of calendar, whether it’s hanging up in the kitchen or on a smartphone, that gets the important dates popped into it. I have all my calendars (including my academic diaries, phone and tablet) synced to each other. I have reminders set for all assignments for a week before, just in case I haven’t started it.

Set the pace
As soon as the module website opens, I get the study planner printed and all of the TMA dates popped into my diary. I also create a spreadsheet with the next 40 odd weeks laid out and I will go and check what units need to be done per week. If there’s no planner for my module, I work it out myself: I find out how long I have per book and how many pages are in the book, then divide the number of pages by the number of days. For example, if I wanted to complete a book with 300 pages in a month (but with one day off a week), I’d divide 300 by 27. I’d have to do 11 pages a day. Much more achievable than attempting to read, write notes and fully absorb larger chunks at a time!

A head-start
I always start assignments at least two weeks early - sometimes more dependent on how close it is to breaks or examinable component season. There are some students that can start an assignment the day before its due and survive, but putting yourself under that extreme pressure sometimes isn’t the best idea. By almost touching the deadline there are so many things that can go wrong - hardware failure on your laptop, the internet connection dying just as you are uploading at 23:59, the list goes on…

If I write my TMAs in advance, I have the time to look them over with fresh eyes to spot spelling mistakes or errors in answering the question. There is nothing worse than thinking that you have explained what you think the question asks, but three days later you notice you have talked about something not even relevant to the assignment!

Time to revise
I always aim to leave myself about 6 weeks of revision time either for my EMA or my exam. In these 6 weeks, I can then get either my revision planned and prepped or start planning my end of module assignment. My personal revision planning is roughly the same as a module plan except I include writing flash cards, reading the material again and producing mind maps. (There are many different methods for revision, some students find different methods work for them; it’s trial and error). I use the time as a chance to work out what are my weak areas or have been the weakest areas in my module and allow extra time to work through them either by researching or utilising my tutor at the last tutorial/via email.

Everyone’s different
There is no right or wrong way to get through a module in regards to planning and time management - everyone is different! I have learnt how to plan my studies and still have a life without being extremely stressed, behind or flapping around exam periods. Every student has varying amounts of time to study - my advice to students that I speak to is to get yourself ahead when you have time (module materials permitting) to give yourself a buffer. You don’t have to follow the module planner to the T, just remember that leaving yourself to fall too far behind will cause you more stress and worry. If things do get too much, speak to your student support team, if you do need to defer don’t worry too much about it.

There is no harm in stepping back and taking some time. One of the things that OU students are praised for is our ability to balance our commitments, responsibilities, and our lives whilst studying.

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘EMA I’m comin’ to get ya’
In 2012, I had been an OU student for around 5 years. I had had a rough few years with my health, hadn’t been in regular employment and was feeling incredibly isolated at home as a distance learner.

I went to my first OU Students Association Conference that year with an appetite to meet other students and maybe the seed of an idea that I should get involved in some way. Fast forward to 2016 and I am the Deputy President of one of the largest Students Associations in Europe and count getting active with the Association as one of the best decisions I have ever made.

I didn’t imagine when I went to my first student conference four years ago that I would be Deputy President one day. Bilbo’s advice to Frodo seems fitting, ‘it is a dangerous business going out of your door, you step into the road and if you don’t keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to.’

I have organised social meet ups in my region, sold merchandise at Award/Degree ceremonies and shared student experiences at Senate, the highest authority on academic matters within the University.

Seeing people have fun, get to know one another, gain confidence and experience new things – as well as doing all of these yourself are some of the highlights of being a volunteer. Not to mention the difference volunteering makes to the collective student body, helping others feel less isolated and representing the student experience to the University really do make a difference.

For me, the opportunities the Association provided were life changing. As well as having no shortage of friends I can turn to now if I want someone who understands life as an OU Student, being involved in the Association gave me the confidence to do things outside of my comfort zone. I was empowered to want more out my life and to go after those things. Without the Association I doubt I would have had the confidence to take part in the 2015 Tall Ships Race from Northern Ireland to Norway, travel to Romania on a house building project or master putting up my tent on my own when I volunteered as a festival steward with Oxfam.

There are many ways that you can get involved with the Students Association and there is a role to suit every student. Some volunteer roles involve working from your own home while others will require you to travel to campus on Milton Keynes or to other locations around the UK. While each role requires a different skill set, you need not be the perfect student to get involved, many of us build skills along the way. For some of us volunteering is a good way to build skills for employment, others want to meet people and expand their social networks or give something back to the student community.

Volunteering opportunities are advertised on the Students Association website here and you can watch/listen to students talk about ways to get involved at our recent Students Association conference here.

I hope my term as Deputy President will continue to provide opportunities for personal development, employability skills and making new friends. If you have any questions or comments to make about student volunteering or any other aspect of our work please contact me on nicola.simpson@open.ac.uk and I will do my best to answer any questions you might have.

Nicola Simpson
Deputy President

Something for everyone...
Our Deputy President shares her story and some brilliant advice!

What goes through a student’s mind when facing a deadline?

Must get down to some studying. This deadline is starting to look serious. Put kettle on. Can’t face this without coffee....


Now, let’s review the coursework question - what exactly is it asking? Oh, hello Dog, yes come and sit by me, it will be nice to have some company while I study. So - back to the question at hand. Must focus...

(There follows 30 seconds of silent reading interrupted by loud canine grumbling.) Dog, you’re not comfortable there? No, neither am I actually, I think I’ll swap chairs...

That’s better. You can sit on my feet Dog. OK. Let’s really attack this coursework! Shall I start by making a mind-map plan of my answer? I wonder where my coloured pens are. Oh, yes, that’s right, Dog ate them. (Silently glare at Dog who is asleep and utterly oblivious.) ...

Right. I’ll make a plan without colours. That’s fine. No problem. Let me see... Oh! Got a text message. “What’s for dinner?”

Damn! It’s my turn to cook tonight! Completely forgotten. Oh, well. I’ll have to tackle this coursework tomorrow! Come on, Dog. I don’t trust you alone with my stationery any more.

Anon
What have I gained from being an OU student?

Faculty Association Representative, Cath, looks back...

I expect the freshers reading this are expecting to see a lovely list including exciting new jobs or enhanced career prospects. Actually, that’s not what I’m going to talk about. Not because an OU qualification can’t lead to those things – of course it can! For a lot of you, I expect that’s a major reason for starting it. But this article is about gaining rather different things.

**Deepening my love of my subject...**

The whole reason I started out my OU study was because I wanted to learn more about Chemistry – I’d enjoyed it at school, but not pursued it back then. Studying it in more depth really made me enjoy and appreciate it far more – the logic behind how it worked, the fun of solving a demanding problem, the links to other subjects, being able to make sense of research papers...

Studying can be wonderful like that. Make sure you give yourself time to enjoy the subject – don’t just think about the next TMA, but think about what you’re learning – ask questions – discuss it! Sure, it’ll be hard sometimes – so what? Worthwhile things usually are.

**Changing how I see the world...**

Sometimes, you’ll study something that really does seem to change how you see the world around you. For me, that was the (sadly defunct) course AT308 Cities and Technology from Babylon to Singapore. It had the same effect on a lot of people who studied it! Even though I did it back in 2009, when I see a new town or city, I almost always have that module at the back of my mind.

**Discovering I’m actually OK at something I thought I was bad at...**

I think this is probably a common experience for OU students.

Mine was essays. I avoided essay subjects at school – essays were painful, I never knew what I had to do to get better at them, or understood why one got a better mark than another.

But the lovely course mentioned above (Cities & Technology) had all its assessment as essays – so I had to do them. Now I’m not going to pretend the whole process became quick and easy. But I did find I enjoyed doing the research and putting the arguments together (even if I hated cutting it all down to the word limit). I didn’t initially have much faith in whether it would be good, though – remembering back to one of my teachers writing on my report that I was “not a literary soul”. But then my essays came back with nice comments and high marks! Obviously I wasn’t as bad at writing as I’d thought. It hasn’t turned me into an arts student, but I am definitely happier out of my maths/science/engineering comfort zone now.

**Helping others...**

You generally find OU students are a very helpful bunch, ready to offer support to their peers.

I’ve loved the opportunity to help out others on the same module whose background was different to mine, and so came to it with a different skillset (usually we’re talking mathsy things here), and also to have the opportunity to pass on knowledge and experience to others on the same pathway.

Both module forums and Facebook groups can be a great way to help support your peers.

Of course, there are plenty of opportunities to help and support others through the Students Association, but even if you don’t want to do anything that formal – chances are there will be times when you have something to offer to others, even if it’s just a supportive few words when they’re disheartened.

**Making friends...**

I feel very very grateful for the friends I’ve made through the OU. Some I see face to face quite frequently, others it’s very occasional, and some it’s been online only so far.

Some of these are from my activity with the Students Association, some from Societies – but many are just people I’ve encountered on forums, on Facebook, at face to face events, at residential, and “clicked” with.

I’m not just talking casual friendly acquaintances – these are people I’ll be keeping in touch with, people I can talk to when times are hard. Sharing the OU journey does bring you closer if you let it.

**And some miscellaneous other things...**

This is a random list of a few little things I don’t think I’d have done without the OU:

- Operated an EPOS (card) machine from the “shop”
- Made sherbet
- Designed mugs and T-Shirts
- Joined Facebook and Twitter (yes, really!)
- Used Linux
- Gone around with multicoloured hair
- Got addicted to Kipling bags
- Organised Revision Weekends
- Visited Milton Keynes(!)

Cath Brown
Faculty Association Representative for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Opening doors...

I have worked in care-homes, retail, and various other workplaces, but I have spent my life knowing I wanted to learn more. I originally joined the OU 30 years ago and did a ‘social science’ module; at the time I didn’t have the support network in place and was bringing up a young family. I deferred studying and kept putting off re-starting with the OU over the years that went by.

I was always buying books and when the internet was launched I self-taught myself how to use and fix computers. I completed various online qualifications and short courses, building up a passion for studying and learning.

I contacted the OU in October 2014 and registered for ‘TU100 My Digital life’ as I loved computers and started it in January 2015 which I passed in September 2015. I then started B100 Introduction to Business Management in October 2015 as part of a BA Open (honours) Degree; which I found a challenge as I had not previously studied Business Management before. In April I switched my qualification path to BA (Honours) Business Management and am finishing my level 1 modules now. I will start my first level 2 module in October 2016, facing a personal fear of sitting exams.

I began volunteering with the OU Students Association in March 2015 where I soon realised I enjoyed meeting and helping students. My biggest hurdle with studying has been doing so with a disability and health issues; I have recently been accepted for Disabled Students Allowance, so will have the support, software and help in place for my October module. I have found the support of other students and volunteering for the Disabled Students Group and the Students Association has made my study journey a fulfilling and rounded experience.

"Volunteering for the Students Association gave me the confidence not to just open new doors, but to step right through to the other side."

Growing Your Community...

Stephanie hopes to help bridge the gap of isolation found within distance learning by bringing the wider student community together through participation with the OU Student Association.

She is keen to hear from the student body about how you would like the Association to meet your needs within the community. To get in contact with Stephanie, email her at stephanie.stubbins@open.ac.uk with any questions, feedback or ideas.
Living with Cerebral Palsy

How one OU student overcame adversity to become an inspirational speaker and trainer...

My name is Joan Latta and I am 23 years old, studying for my Open Degree with The Open University. However things weren’t always this bright. When I was born I was starved of oxygen for 28 minutes at birth. When I had been born I was dark purple all over my body and had no heartbeat. I was rushed to intensive care straight away to be looked after by the nurses. The Doctors said that I wouldn’t survive my first 24 hours, then 2-3 days then 7 days. I was tube fed for the first six months of life. Until my mother rang her Great Aunt who was a midwife in the very old times, she told my mum what to do and how to feed me.

In my early years I had a lot of physiotherapy and occupational therapy to help me to gain strength.

When I was 10 years old my father started to train me to be a hiker and the longest path I have hiked is the South West Coastal Path which is 640 miles long in 10 weeks over the summer of 2009.

My mother started to train me to be a runner at the age of 13 and the longest run I have completed is 19 miles in less than 4 hours.

In 2014 I began work starting my own business Cerebral Palsy Alive and Kicking with which I am now a self-employed international speaker about living with Cerebral Palsy, the condition I have as a result of the problems at birth. I am also a trainer about disabilities too, the aim of my training courses is to help able bodied people understand a wider range of disabilities.

I am also an Associate Tutor with the University of East Anglia where I have the privilege of lecturing students about living with Cerebral Palsy.

I had support from the Prince’s Trust with business start-up. They took me on an Enterprise Course and taught me the basics of running a small enterprise. They gave me a mentor who has helped me with market research and business start-up. As a result of successfully going through the Enterprise programme, I got introduced to Prince Charles at the Prince’s Trust 40th Anniversary Garden Party!

To find out more about me please visit my website at: www.cerebralpalsyaliveandkicking.com

Or follow me on Facebook at: Cerebral Palsy Alive and Kicking or Twitter at: @CpAliveKicking

Joan Latta
A matter of distance...

I want to write about a topic that has affected me as a student – being with a partner in the forces and long distance studying. Studying whilst moving around the country (and in some instances the world) when your partner is in the military is difficult and it can be hard to achieve personal goals, especially when you’re not in the same location for more than twelve months!

I’ve been a student with the OU for a few years now, originally registering in 2010 for an Open Degree. Before my registration I wanted to attend university however I was worried the impact it would have on my relationship, being miles away from each other whilst I stayed in one place didn’t appeal. I started to look into long distance learning providers and the OU stood out for me, it meant I could move with my partner but also achieve my own dreams of working towards a degree. Registering with the OU was the best possible move for me, as six years on we have moved to five different locations yet I’ve always been able to carry on with studying (sometimes even reading module materials in the moving lorry!) This would have been impossible if I stayed at a brick university.

An important factor of studying with the OU is the focus it’s provided me with during tough times. My partner has been deployed overseas for many months which has been tough personally. Being able to work towards my degree whilst he was deployed gave me a great focal point and aim. Knowing I had TMAs/EMAs to complete meant I had goals of my own to achieve, and the time whilst he was away always seemed to pass a lot quicker than before I started my studies with the OU.

Fellow partners of military personnel have spoken to me about starting their own studies with the OU and I’ve always been very positive about it. It’s a great way to study but to still have your family life without compromising anything and of course you can take your studies wherever you’re posted! It's difficult at times and does take some juggling of priorities but studying soon becomes second nature. I’ve been so positive about my experience with the OU that my partner has recently taken the incentive to sign up for a study programme whilst he still works on his career.

Laura Hart

My learning adventure

I started my learning journey in 2011, there had been many false starts over the years. My first tutor thought I had been a student for some time as my PI number started with an R. I wish I had started my pedagogical journey sooner.

I was at a Bridges to Learning workshop, and I cannot remember what it was about, but it was one of the staff that said to me during coffee, just do it, so a big thank-you to the B2L partnership team under the direction of Ann Hansen.

Learning to me is like playing a game of snakes and ladders over the years, falling off and jumping back on, The Open University didn’t judge me for what, I couldn’t do, but believe in what I could achieve with persistence and determination.

At the same time I wanted to give something back, and I volunteered as a Residential School Representative for the Students Association at Bath in 2012, what a journey that was. As soon as I arrived, it was organising a disco and quiz and speaking to students at induction. I had never done anything like this but worked at it with another student. Our objectives at the Weekend School was to raise money for OUSET the students’ charity. The charity aims to support students in times of need with financial assistance.

When I first started studying in 2011, I had just been made redundant, so made the mad decision to leave for antipodean adventure, with books and laptop. I didn’t have a MacBook then. I will never complain about slow broadband connections, or a breakdown in the VLE. I sent my first TMA from Alice Springs on a satellite connection.

I have attended Students Association Conferences on campus in Milton Keynes on the following occasions 2012, 2014 and 2016, that shows how long I have been studying with the OU, but I am not as old as some.

My journey hasn’t been easy as my mother passed away in September 2012, my biggest regret is she won’t see me graduate in 2017 and walk across the stage to receive my degree. What I did learn was that the OU has fantastic support systems in place, and what OU students need to understand that you have to look for it, as the system doesn’t work the other way round.

I have participated in Consultative Forums online and at my local regional centre, and I don’t know how many face to face events on campus. I have learnt so much about how a team works. It has given me confidence to work on the marketing stall, selling merchandise and interacting and upselling to students. I have co-ordinated this event twice, not bad for someone who has an SpLD or as the OU calls it ‘Visual Stress’ - another label to get used to.

I am now coming to the end of my degree in Health and said that was that, but have recently started to think about what next...

Ken Oliver

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Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘There’ll be no stopping you’
What students want...

...and what helps them study best

One of the burning issues of the past few years among students has been the method by which module material has been delivered. The OU has always been in the forefront of using new technology in teaching and so a move towards providing more online or onscreen tuition is a logical development of this.

But is this what students want? Does it enhance their learning experience? Many students have been vocal in their opposition to a move away from printed material to an online or onscreen model. Are they representative of the student body as a whole or just a vocal minority? This research project looked to answer those questions and to give a broad overview of students’ views as to what helps them study best.

It was an extensive project inviting views from students on the Students Association Research Forum, as well as two surveys of representative samples of students. The results will, we hope, help the Association representatives put forward an evidence-based argument when discussing future module development. I would like to thank all the students who took part in this project for their time and for the quality of responses.

So, what did we find? Probably the clearest point was that students prefer having module material in a printed format. That is not to say they want everything as exclusively print – the option to have same material in other formats in addition to the hard copy was a popular one. When it comes to pedagogical issues such as assimilating material as in exam revision, however, printed material was clearly preferred. However, some elements of online module provision were popular. iCMAs, online quizzes and similar methods of learning which allow a student to assess their understanding of what they have learned were highly rated by students. Equally, while students wanted module material as hard copy the ability to access external material via online means was also highly rated.

Part-time distance learning requires flexibility of study, and module delivery formats are crucial in enabling students to learn effectively and manage their workload in a way that puts them in control. As we engage in further dialogue with The Open University, this research project is the groundwork to ensure that the student voice is heard while changes are considered within the University.

Peter Cowan
Vice President Administration
(Outgoing Vice President Educational Support and Research)

You can read more about the research project on our website.

Concerns that students identified...

Ease of navigating module content
Availability of print versions
Annotating and highlighting study materials
Balance of print and online delivery
Screen fatigue
Flexibility of study
Hidden costs

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘In spite of the hurdles, I can do it’
Could you be a Nightline volunteer?

Nightline London are looking for OU students to volunteer on their hotlines. Applications are open now (until 28 September), so if you think you could be there to help fellow students through a difficult time and you live in, or near London, visit the Nightline website to find out more and apply.

The OU Students Association has been affiliated to London Nightline for 2 years now, and since then thousands of OU students have contacted the team. For those of you who haven’t heard about it, Nightline is a confidential listening service operating through the night. Its run by students for students, and OU students across the world can call, text or email if they feel they need someone to talk to.

We’re really proud to be affiliated to Nightline, and we’re even prouder of the OU students who volunteer to help. Every year a new team are recruited – joining the friendly and supportive Nightline community.

Volunteers are all people who are willing to commit to attending four training sessions and spending 12 nights a year on the hotlines.

Do you have good listening skills? Do you care about your fellow students? Could you give up a night’s sleep a month? Do you live in or near London? Yes? You could be just the person we are looking for!

The application process is handled by Nightline, and comprehensive, high quality training will be provided throughout October to all successful applicants. We would recommend taking your time to complete the application form, as not all applications are successful. If you have any questions for us here at the Association, please email ousa@open.ac.uk and if you have a question about the Nightline, or the application process, please email volunteering@nightline.org.uk.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we had lots of OU students on the lines, there to support their fellow students?

The Disabled Students Group

Our acronym – DSG – is now known and respected as a ‘centre of excellence’ across the whole Open University community: both by staff and students alike. We are affiliated to the OU Students Association and have a direct link to the Association’s Central Executive Committee (CEC) via our ex-officio Committee members: VP Equal Opportunities and VP Student Support.

Every member of the DSG – including the Committee – are studying whilst overcoming long-term health issues, which can and do raise obstacles to successful study. These health issues include physical health, mental health and cognitive problems like dyslexia. Therefore, we’re very proud of our unofficial motto ‘Students Supporting Students’ because it’s something we do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. And have been doing for over 10 years now.

There are currently over 22,000 students registered as ‘disabled’ with the OU. Many of these students are not aware of the excellent support that’s available from the OU or the Association. Via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and all social media platforms, the DSG can and does point students in the right direction to get the support they need as well as sharing their own first-hand experiences.

Via our excellent links to the OU - through the CEC - we can (and do) raise any issues with the OU to make them aware of any existing (or potential) problems students with disabilities might be experiencing. These items might include: online only delivery of Module material; accessible module material formats; attending tutorials, etc.

Our closed areas – both on Facebook and on the VLE - offer safe and friendly environments where students can share experiences; get advice and make friends. We hold regular online activities and events on our DSG Facebook page or in a designated ‘closed’ Facebook group created specifically for the event/ activity. These events/activities are also held in our Members Only forums on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment).

You can find information and links to everything about the DSG and loads of information on our DSG Website and on social media.

“Nightline has been one of the best things I’ve ever done and I’d encourage any OU student who is in the London area to get involved. All you need to bring to it is a willingness to commit and a healthy sense of empathy.” Previous OU student Nightline volunteer.

“Nightline has been one of the best things I’ve ever done and I’d encourage any OU student who is in the London area to get involved. All you need to bring to it is a willingness to commit and a healthy sense of empathy.” Previous OU student Nightline volunteer.
Here’s your starter for 10...

How well would you do on University Challenge?

1. How is the number four expressed in Roman numerals on many clock faces? The clock faces of Westminster Tower, housing Big Ben, are exceptions, having four expressed as ‘IV’?

2. In the Gregorian calendar, what is the hundredth day of a common, or non-leap, year?

3. Which elemental gas takes its name from the Greek for ‘strange’?

4. Named after its crescent shape, the lunate bone forms part of which joint of the human body?

5. In snooker and billiards, which French word is used for a shot played with the cue nearly vertical so as to achieve a sharp swerve in the cue ball?

6. What five-letter name links: an isolated island of the South Atlantic; the ‘naked rambler’; the singer Badly Drawn Boy; and an England cricketer and ballroom dancer?

7. ‘Always use a small saucepan’, ‘always use a kitchen timer’ and ‘never have the water fast boiling’ are three of the rules for cooking what on Delia Smith’s website?

8. Which part of the eye is affected by macular degeneration?

9. How many litres are the in a cubic metre?

10. An abridged version of which play was performed by a Norwegian Sami theatre group in 2003 in a replica of the Globe theatre made of ice and snow?

Answers on back page!

Hi everyone and welcome to the Societies’ section of OU Students Magazine.

As at any university, societies can be an important part of life for OU students! There are societies focused around academic areas (such as OUPS, the Psychology Society), societies offering an outlet for your creative side (such as Write Club) and societies about your interests (such as Central Region Arts Club or Mountaineering Society). There’s a full list of affiliated societies on the OU Students Association website here.

So why join a society? Societies offer all sorts of different things - from support for your academic work (revision events, specimen answers), to newsletters, to day visits and longer trips away. Most of all, they put you in touch with other students who share some of your interests.

Societies can help make your OU journey easier and more enjoyable.

If you’d like to join a society, just use the details on the link to get in touch! All the societies love to have new members. You can often go along to an event without joining, just to get a “feel” for it, if you like. Later on, you might want to help out in some way, or join the committee; that’s another way to make new friends and can even enhance your CV.

Cath Brown
Societies Committee Chair

Join a society!
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...

http://www.open.ac.uk/ousa/societies

The views and opinions of the authors who have submitted articles to OUstudents Magazine belong to them alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the OU Students Association or all of its members.
Hello, Alicia here from The Open University Ballet and Opera Society (OUBOS). We’re a society designed for people who appreciate and enjoy Ballet and Opera already, or for those who want to dip their toes into something new. There are many methods of accessing productions around the country/world, whether it’s online, in the cinema or in their original locations, so it’s perfect for us as distance learners. This society is here for discussing plots, costumes, productions, hints and tips on what to watch, organising trips, and where to get the best student discounts too!

Everyone knows that plots, character portrayal and atmosphere are crucial to believability and getting empathy when required. To see how this is done in an environment where the words are sung or there are no words spoken at all, then join our society to experience something special. Our society meet ups, whether they’re in person or online, are also great excuses to talk to like-minded people who understand the OU babble of course codes, TMA’s, EMA’s and the pressure of balancing life, study and work; all whilst sharing a new or fully honed hobby of watching ballet and opera.

So please join us, by emailing ou_ballet_opera@hotmail.com, and get social on…

**Our OU Forum**

**Facebook**

or Twitter: @OU_Ballet_Opera.

**Our Website**

We’re here as something that will bring us closer together, when studying from a distance, so we look forward to hearing from you.

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**Criminology**

We are currently seeking enthusiastic and motivated students to become involved in such an exciting new project at The Open University.

The Criminology and Criminal Justice Society is not just for anyone who’s degree focuses or even slightly touches on crime but also for those with an interest in such an enthralling topic. You'll also be kept up to date with crime related news and events in our monthly (very exciting) emails. If you find crime and criminal justice as interesting as we do then what are you waiting for?!

For further details please contact Ryan on the email address below:

e: ryan.warwick@my.open.ac.uk
f: groups/OUCrimSoc/
t: @OUCrimSoc

**Meeting Days, Times and Venue**

Meetings and venues will vary as we have loads of fantastic events planned throughout the year!

**The Open University Criminology and Criminal Justice Society (OUCrimSoc)**

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**Engineering For Humanity Society**

**Engineering for Humanity - Summer project**

The OU-EFH (Engineering for Humanity) Summer project is a great way to get practical experience, build your CV and to do something that makes a difference in the world.

It’s a member led programme open to all students and alumni from all courses and disciplines. Participants will work together to produce a real world solution to address in, some small way, a global issue. Typically people will give between 2 and 10 hours of their time.

To find out more and get involved visit:

[www.ouengineeringforhumanity.wordpress.com](http://www.ouengineeringforhumanity.wordpress.com)
OU Development and Environment Society

OUDES (The OU Development and Environment Society) is now accepting new members.

OUDES is for students and alumni of the OU and offers support on courses relating to development and the environment, though it is open to all.

The society aims to be a way for likeminded people to get together to discuss issues relating to development and the environment – we have a very active Facebook page and organise meet ups (the next one will be to visit a foodshare project in October) for members to visit relevant projects. We run a series of webinars online and send a quarterly newsletter. Another big part of the society’s core offer has been its revision weekends – feedback in the past has been very positive about these helping students with their courses.

To find out more, or to join, visit our website: www.oudes.org

#OUdivest Campaign Launched

The Open University Development and Environment Society (OUDES) have joined forces with People and Planet to create the #OUdivest campaign. We want the OU to commit to taking student’s money out of dirty fossil fuels, so we’re working with the university to help make it more sustainable and put into practice what is taught on the environmental studies courses.

To find out more or sign the petition visit: www.oudivest.wordpress.com

You can also find out more by searching for the hashtag #OUdivest on Facebook or Twitter.

The Open University Development and Environment Society

Open University History Society

The Open University History Society (OUHS) is one of the oldest societies affiliated to the Students Association, being formed more than thirty years ago. It is a society run by its members for its members.

The aim of the society is to promote the scholarly study of History. To this end it produces, every quarter, its own journal Open History which is sent free to members. Members are encouraged to submit articles, size fairly immaterial, to the editor for inclusion in this publication. Open History also includes reviews of some of the latest historical publications.

OUHS also organises free to member visits to historical important venues. Each year it holds it’s a residential study weekend which incorporates the society’s AGM. At this weekend members are encouraged to present papers relating to the main theme of the weekend. For many this an opportunity to taste public speaking for the first time. We offer a friendly welcoming audience.

At the moment it has members from all over the UK as well as the continent of Europe and the USA. Membership applications are welcome from the student as well as from the more experienced historian. Many of our members are OU graduates, some of whom have since proceeded to higher qualifications. Many have been members since their first steps on the History road.

The society has an excellent website www.ouhistory.org.uk The site lists, amongst others things, details of OUHS events and a selection of book reviews. A membership (£15 per annum) form can be downloaded from our site.

Don Vincent
Honorary Chair
Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Today you will mostly find me hiding beneath a pile of books playing catch up’

Why Plexus?

**Do you have Pride? Are you a keen Learner? Have a passion for Equality? Take No eXcuse’s? Provide Unity? Are you enthusiastic about providing a Safe environment? If so, stop and read this.**

It's the start of a new academic year and with this comes new and exciting opportunities. Alongside new students, new modules and new challenges the new OU LGBT+ Society, Plexus is launched.

**Why Plexus?** We feel that the Society needs a name that not only identifies the individuals within it but also highlights our aims and reason for existence. Plexus has been built and designed around the needs of The Open Universities LGBT+ Students, Staff and Alumni where we can come together to address issues and support each other as a Society. In turn this is bringing together the people who want to fight back against the 'norm' of society due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Just like your brand new module materials, the society is new and is currently in the developing, the current Plexus Committee is working hard to achieve affiliation with the OU Students Association which will in turn bring excellent benefits for the Society such as showcasing our work at the bi-annual Conference and having our voice heard nationally through the OU Societies.

Plexus aims to play an important role within the OU Students Association and any existing students reading this will know how beneficial being part of a Society can be to help you become motivated and ensure you are not alone with your studies.

We cannot do this without the support of our peers and this is where we look to you, our fellow OU Students, to help us build a strong Society that has its voice heard throughout the University. Do you like the sound of what you have read, are you keen to be involved in a Society that brings you closer together with people as passionate and driven as you? Get in touch with our Committee Chair Graham Rimmer on chair@ouplexus.co.uk, visit our website [www.ouplexus.co.uk](http://www.ouplexus.co.uk) or search for PLEXUS on Facebook and join our closed group.

The website will provide you with all the relevant information you need to find out about us as a Society, the aims of the group, the Plexus Committee members and what you can expect from joining us. If you have experience within other Societies or are looking for a new challenge why not enquire about our Committee Member Roles these are Communications, Bisexual Students Representative, Black and Minority Ethnic and we recognise younger students may have a different perspective to their journey; so we have the created OU Young Students Representative. This will enable you, the members to have a personal impact on moving Plexus forward.

We are an inclusive group that offers Pride, Learning, Equality, No eXcuses, Unity and Safety so come and give us a try and we look forward to meeting you. To join Plexus please visit our website and complete the Join Plexus form on the homepage.

**Plexus Committee Members**

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**Peer Support**

**Experienced OU students, here for you**

Studying getting you down? Don’t know where to turn? Then please contact Peer Support.

Our Peer Supporters are current and past OU students who understand the difficulties of studying alone. We understand how lonely and overwhelming it can be, trying to balance study with a busy life and or coping with other problems such as disability.

Anything you discuss with us is confidential and we may occasionally have to ask one of our team for advice, but, ‘in general’ nothing goes outside this small group.

We can answer a simple question or be there for one to one support for as long as you need us. We can’t help with academic issues - these should always be taken up with your tutors or Study Support Team - but anything that makes study difficult for you, is within our scope.

Don’t struggle on alone. Send us a message on the Peer Support Forum, and one of us will contact you within a few hours.”

You can find more information about Peer Support on our [website](http://www.ouplexus.co.uk), or on the special confidential forums here.
M500 Winter Weekend

Interested in mathematics? Want vibrant company and gorgeous food? Want to meet like-minded people who are going through, or have been through, the OU experience?

The M500 Society Winter Weekend takes place at Florence Boot Hall, Nottingham University, Friday 6th January – Sunday 8th January 2017.

Established for nearly thirty years, the Winter Weekend is a great explosion of mathematics and mathematical ideas, old and new.

As a flavour, the 2016 Weekend considered Hat problems and parity; how to solve the Tower of Hanoi in seven words; bubbles and Steiner points. Other recent topics have included: the Solar System; fullerenes - new mathematical forms of carbon molecule; Leonhard Euler and (some of) his work; codemaking and codebreaking; and knots and knot theory. In 2017 we look forward to, among many other topics, “The Genesis of Numbers and the Numbers of Genesis”; “Shift Happens – the future of mathematics teaching”; and “Shape Shifting – wiring your brain for spatial mathematics”.

If you are interested in mathematics and want a fantastic weekend, then this is for you, accessible to anyone who has studied mathematics – even if you’re just starting.

We also have a whole range of social activities - good conversation, good food, the famous M500 quiz, sing-a-long-a-Euclid (if you want to), a fun maths competition and meeting friends old and new.

To book, or enquire further please email winter@m500.org.uk

M500 Society

Students For Ethical Science

You may have concerns about the suffering of animals resulting from their use in education and research. If you are be interested in studying Life Sciences, but worried about causing harm to animals through your studies, please do not be put off. You can now study for Life Sciences qualifications at the Open University without causing harm to animals.

As a student society affiliated to the OU Students Association, Students for Ethical Science aims to persuade the Open University peacefully to replace its harmful use of animals in Life Sciences with academically equivalent or superior non-harmful alternatives. We have been instrumental in bringing about the OU Students Association policy to support this aim, promote transparency in the university’s animal use and enable students to opt-out of harmful animal experiments without compromising their academic progress.

We enable members to contact each other via our members' online forum, accessible from our website. We exchange information with other bodies campaigning for humane science, such as the Dr Hadwen Trust, BUAV, InterNICHE and political parties.

We also provide information and support to students who wish to study Life Sciences without harming animals. Please see the course choice information and advice on our website at www.ouses.org.uk.

The Open University has phased out most of its residential school science modules. Although sadly this means there is less scope for hands-on practical work for undergraduate science students, the good news is that students studying towards the new qualifications will be able to study Life Sciences without their participation directly harming animals.

To find out more and how to join us please visit:

- The Students Association Ethical Science forum on the Virtual Learning Environment
- www.ouses.org.uk

Or send us an email.
Change Ringers Society

Change Ringing is very much a British art. Campanology (full circle Change Ringing) is fairly unique to the United Kingdom. Within the UK, there are about 7000 churches with Bells hung and used for full circle ringing (which is what we do). However, the UK is not quite unique - Australia has 58 such towers, the USA has 47, and the rest of the world has a total of 35. So with 98% of the entire world of church bells hung for Change Ringing situated within the UK, it is rightly considered, an English art.

The English tradition of Church Bell Ringing goes back many years. Today there are about 40,000 of us throughout the world all enjoying the tradition and the associated social contact. Rather than being seen and not heard, we are the opposite – heard and (rarely) seen.

It has been written that since the OU's launch in 1969, 1.89 million people worldwide have achieved their learning goals. A fairly large number of these are, or have been, associated with Change Ringers.

The Open University Society of Change Ringers is a group of people who have been, or are associated with the OU, most of whom live in the UK, so we try to arrange meetings to suit this scattering.

Our interests are to bring together members of the Society to events that are organised by committee. These events are open to members and non-members alike and the level of ringing capability is of no significance - though we do encourage good standards.

Our Society was formed in 1979 and has been affiliated to the OU Students Association for 36 years. We have a formal Committee and Constitution.

Amongst our members, we have five “A” students (students who started studying in 1971 – the first year that the OU presented its courses). Through the years, our members have made over 1000 visits to parts of the UK – including visits to North and Southern Ireland, Lundy, Alderney, Jersey, Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Brownsea Island. We meet about 3 times each year and we would welcome additional members. Full details can be found on our website: www.opuscr.org.uk

Dr Turing Society

Do you have an interest in technology?

Do you want to meet fellow likeminded students?

Then why not join our society!

We are currently looking out for a Treasurer and a Secretary. If you have a few hours per month to spare and are willing to communicate with fellow society organisers over Skype or similar then send us a message via the contact page on our website: www.drturingsociety.org.uk we would love to hear from you.

We have some big ideas but we won’t be able to put them into action without your help so if you are interested visit our website for more information. We hope to be in contact soon.

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘TMA writing is always better with chocolate’
The Write Club

A team effort from the start

These last 18 months have been a manic ride here at Write Club. It is hard to imagine that it was only last February that we pulled the idea of a creative writing society together and the committee put a huge amount of work into getting set up properly. This allowed us to become affiliated to the OU Students Association by March. We currently stand at over 700 registered members and are anticipating another surge in membership once the October study year kicks off.

Write Club’s membership is instrumental in keeping the Society alive and we couldn’t continue without such active engagement. We have a large and active Facebook group, where we post daily prompts and challenges, such as Micro Fiction Mondays and Topic for Tuesdays. We also recently engaged in Camp NaNoWriMo, which is a virtual camp, where a small group commits to writing to a target over the course of a month. The Write Club cabin generated over 110,000 words during July.

Write Club OU Society is a place where creative writers can come together, offer each other support, encouragement and feedback. We have three writing specific forums on the OU Students Association’s forums. We have a general prose forum, where we also post general chat and summer activities. We also have a novel support forum for longer pieces of work that are looking for a longer term commitment to feedback, and lastly, a poetry forum The Poet Tree, where we discuss and share poems.

Our forums are ‘closed’ so that we can know exactly who can gain access. Being ‘closed’ means that only registered Write Club members can access the forums and the way to gain access is by emailing membership at WriteClub@gmx.co.uk with your name, email address and your OU number.

All members have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to offer feedback and critique on each others’ work, and you never have to worry about your stories/poems being seen by anyone outside of the closed membership. This opportunity to safely share feedback and critique on works-in-progress enables us to ensure that the work can benefit from other students input before being polished into a piece ready for submission. The closed forum system also enables the work to be classed as ‘unpublished’ for competition or submission purposes, as it isn’t technically out there on the big wide web. This also means it won’t get caught by plagiarism software, as it would if you were sharing it on a blog or a Facebook group.

The committee put a lot of hours into making Write Club a safe and encouraging place for new writers to share their work. From moderating our forum to answering questions on the Facebook group. No question ever goes without a response by someone, and we encourage members to share stuff of interest, like Writing Competitions and Submissions Deadlines.

The one thing that has become clear since we started Write Club is that people need support when they are writing. Write Club offers a safe place to share work, companionship, support, and encouragement. That is what we are about, making sure that there is somewhere you can come to share the things that affect us as writers.

Who else but other writers know the joys and frustrations of getting the final word in a first draft down, and then realising with a lurch that the hard work is just beginning? Who else can you share the disappointment of knowing that the best line you feel you have ever written needs to be cut? That it just doesn’t work in the piece you are working on, no matter how great you think it is. Where else can you share those fears and know that there is someone, at any time of the day that can relate, and talk you through their experience of the same thing happening to them?

We could not do this without the members. We thank them all, and welcome you to the Club.

Cinnomen McGuigan
Deputy Chair Write Club OU Society

Find us in the following places:
Facebook
Write Club forum
WriteClub@gmx.co.uk
The Psychology of Desire

May 5th-7th 2017

The Open University Psychological Society is holding a conference for OU students and anyone with an interest in the subject, on the ‘Psychology of Desire.’ This will encompass a range of desires and will be presented in a way to be of interest to both academics and lay persons.

We have some eminent speakers who will be presenting their research and integrating with the broad theme of desire. OUPS President Frederick Toates, a prize-winning author, will introduce the conference, looking at similarities across desires and explaining how is it possible to want something even when we no longer like it. From Holland, Stephanie Both will be talking about human sexual desire, when things goes right and wrong, and Lance Workman will look at this from an evolutionary perspective.

Jon May will talk about how to help people change desires in the light of their goals and Aldo Badiani will discuss desires, incentives and the influence of the environment.

Morten Kringelbach will speak on the topic of desire, music, dance and the brain. We will also learn about the influence of the heart on cognition, emotion and desire from Sarah Garfinkel. Neil Frude will add some humour before dinner with ‘Desire: Delights, Dangers and Denial.’ Finally, bestselling author Marc Lewis will critique the medical model of addiction as a disease, in his talk ‘Addiction: a standoff between desire and dread’.

Therefore, if you are interested in why we desire the things we do and what we can do about it, we hope that you will consider booking.

The accommodation for the weekend is in conference facilities and the price includes all talks, meals and a disco. Our conferences provide great opportunities to learn, socialise and network.

Please click on the link to book: www.oups.org.uk
Meet your student leadership team!

Make sure to check out the next edition to learn more about the rest of the Central Executive Committee!

Chris Pane
President

I chose the OU because it gives me the flexibility to enjoy studying while working. The first thing I do when I get new module materials is power through the first two weeks of work, while I’m fresh and highly motivated.

I wanted to be an inventor when I grew up and now I spend a good portion of my time working/playing in a research and development lab.

My hero is David Attenborough - he’s inspired generations to care about nature by showing them its beauty and intricacies.

I’m looking forward to the journey and making new friends along the way during my term as President.

Nicola Simpson
Deputy President

This summer I have been to a few music festivals as a volunteer steward with Oxfam.

I have lots of everyday heroes, people just getting on with their daily lives no matter the obstacles that get in their way.

If I had a theme tune it would be... Dum de dum Dum de dum Dum de dum Dum de dum... Dum de dum Dum de dum Dum de dum... Ooh ee ooh...

There are lots of interesting things in my remit which I am looking forward to, student consultation, monitoring the progression and implementation of Student Association Strategy, supporting the president and other members of the Executive team in special projects. I’m looking forward to all of it!

Peter Cowan
Vice President Administration

I chose to study with the OU because my wife was an OU student, and it seemed a great way to study something I liked while still at work.

My favourite module so far has been A219, Exploring the Classical World.

When I was younger I wanted to be something exciting like the heroes in books I read though that was before I realised adventure was being cold, hungry, miserable and likely to die at any minute somewhere far far away.

My advice for any students looking to get involved in the Association is go on. You can commit as much or as little time as you are able. Every contribution is important and valued.

Rachel Hughes
Vice President Communications

I chose to study with the OU because I knew that I wanted to go back to uni to further my education, make my kids proud of me and remove the stigma of being unable to study when you have mental health issues. The OU seemed perfect for disabled students and students from different backgrounds.

My theme tune would be the Pink Panther! Always makes me smile.

The last film I watched was Hot Fuzz. Such a brilliant film.

I’m looking forward to opening up the lines of communication between the Association, the OU and the student body. I also want to help students be aware of the different types of support that the University and Association provide.
Stephanie Stubbins  
**Vice President Community**

When I was younger I wanted to either be an actress or a social worker. Not related to each other at all. I now just want to be me :)

Outside of the OU and OU Students Association, I like to do creative work. Beadwork, glass painting, watercolours and acrylics.

My dad is my hero. He has been battling with cancer (2015-2016) and has just gained the all-clear. While receiving chemotherapy treatment he signed up for OpenLearn courses. Whatever he does he is a constant inspiration to me.

I would say if you are thinking about volunteering, go ahead and dip your toe into a volunteering role. It’s a great way to meet other students and help other students; it is a rewarding experience and is a lot of fun too!

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Lorraine Adams  
**Vice President Education**

I’m originally from Australia, but have lived in Greece for longer.

Social Psychology was one of my favourite modules, and it was the reason I veered from Psychology to Sociology.

My advice for students looking to get involved? Take the first step. It took me six years of studying with the OU before I got involved with the Association and I regret not being involved sooner.

I’m looking forward to making sure the OU know what students want and letting students know what the current issues are within the OU.

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Cherry Day  
**Vice President Equal Opportunities**

Had to take early retirement due to diagnosis of genetically-inherited Cerebellar Ataxia. Needed to keep my brain busy even though the body was and is ‘breaking down’.

My favourite module so far has been A363 - Advanced Creative Writing.

When I was younger I wanted to be a singer with a big dance band like Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey etc. That changed to a rock band as I got older!

With only two more modules to go before I graduate I keep the graduation ceremony in my minds eye as motivation. That day will be one of the proudest moments of my life.

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Caroline Poppenga  
**Vice President Representation & Research**

I was born in Germany but live in Guildford in Surrey.

My favourite module so far is DU301 - Making sense of strategy. I had a fantastic tutor and the material really got me thinking.

As I was growing up, my ambitions changed every year. I wanted to be anything from a deep sea diver to a dentist. I’d have needed at least four different degrees!

During my term I’m most looking forward to listening to the student voice and working on implementing what students want in order to have a better study experience.

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Alison Kingan  
**Vice President Student Support**

My advice for students wanting to get involved is do it. Even if it is wondering about whether you should meet another student at a coffee morning - don’t think, go.

The last film I bought was Shaun the Sheep, the Movie.

My heroes are George Harrison and previous past President, Roz Evans.

I speak a bit of French and a teeny weeny bit of Welsh.
Hi, I’m Chris Pane, and I’m the President of our Students Association.

I’m currently an OU student in my 2nd year, studying towards a Computing degree. The flexibility and distant learning aspects of the OU are brilliant; they allow me to study whilst working for Lush, volunteer for Greenpeace, and spend time enjoying being a dad.

Being elected at Conference in June was amazing! It was inspiring to see so many OU students, including those watching along online, sharing experiences, knowledge and making new friends. I know first-hand how important it is to be able to find a community of like-minded people and I think that a big part of getting your voice heard and creating change in any community, is the quality of relationships you have with those around you. I, along with the rest of the Central Executive Committee will work to further strengthen the relationships between students, the Students Association and the University, to ensure that the OU student community itself continues to flourish and grow.

The power of the OU student voice is louder than ever due to the great work done by the previous team of elected students. During my tenure as President, I’d like the Central Executive Committee to work closely, calling on the knowledge and experience of those previously involved and the fresh perspectives of those new to the Association.

As we stand on the shoulders of the success of those that came before us, I’m committed to making sure OU students feel empowered, their opinions are being heard and action is taken. We’ve already taken the first step by making sure that every OU Students Association member has the right to vote in our elections, and I guarantee that we can continue to improve on the openness and inclusiveness of the Association.

The emphasis that the University are putting on making sure that students are the highest priority is fantastic – I’m looking forward to seeing this in practice, with more opportunities for students to get involved in the decision making process, so that we can make a difference to our University.

I have high hopes for the next two years and know that, together, we can enjoyably improve the student experience.

Chris Pane
President of the OU Students Association

Want to write for OUstudents Magazine?
If you would like to share your story, we’d love to hear from you!
Get in touch by emailing:
oustudents-magazine@open.ac.uk

Starter for 10 answers
1. Ill
2. 10 April
3. Xenon
4. Wrist/Carpus
5. Massé
6. Gough
7. (boiled) eggs
8. The (central part of the) retina
9. 1,000
10. Hamlet

OU student life can be tough and if it all gets a bit too much, don’t forget Nightline is there for all OU students wherever they are. Student volunteers are on the hotlines from 6pm each evening waiting to take calls. No topic is off bounds and they’ll listen as long as you need.

It could really help to talk your problems through, whatever they’re about and however difficult they feel right now.

Hundreds of OU students have already made that call so you’ll be in good company.
Call: 020 7631 0101
Instant message (Skype): chat.nightline
Skype Phone: londonnightline
Text: 07717 989 900