The Open University’s Affiliated Research Centre (ARC) Programme supports the provision of doctoral training in the UK, Europe and worldwide. Through collaborations with institutions undertaking high-quality research we have created a network of partner organisations whose interests complement our own teaching and research strengths. This enables students to study towards an Open University research degree qualification in a centre of research excellence. ARCs benefit from our positioning as a global leader in innovative and high-quality programme delivery.
What is an Affiliated Research Centre?

The Open University’s ARC programme began in October 2007. It enables leading research institutes, who do not have their own degree awarding powers to provide doctoral training with our support.

Our community of ARCs

- Architectural Association School of Architecture (UK)
- British Antarctic Survey (UK)
- Consorzio Mario Negri Sud (Chieti, Italy)
- DSTL (UK)
- ESC Rennes (Rennes, France)
- Fondazione IRCCS ‘Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori’ (Milan, Italy)
- Health Protection Agency (UK)
- HR Wallingford Group (UK)
- International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (Trieste, Italy)
- Istituto Clinico Humanitas (Milan, Italy)
- Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri (Milan, Italy)
- KEMRI - Wellcome Trust Research Programme (Kilifi, Kenya)
- Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (Bangkok, Thailand)
- MRC Laboratories, The Gambia (Banjul, Gambia)
- MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology (UK)
- MRC Mammalian Genetics Unit (UK)
- MRC National Institute of Medical Research (UK)
- Oxford University Clinical Research Unit - Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)
- Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (UK)
- Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (Naples, Italy)
- Stowers Institute for Medical Research (Missouri, USA)
- Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine (Naples, Italy)
- The Roskamp Institute (Florida, USA)
- Transport Research Laboratory (UK)
Recognised quality

Since The Open University’s launch in 1969, more than 1.6 million people worldwide have achieved their learning goals by studying with us. A hallmark of the OU’s delivery is the quality of its programmes. These comply with standards set by the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The QAA audit of the OU in 2009 expressed “confidence”, the highest level of endorsement, in the quality of our programmes and the academic standards of our awards. Similarly the 2011 QAA audit of OU Collaborative Provision expressed “confidence” in our arrangements for programmes delivered in collaboration with other organisations.

Flexible

In keeping with the OU’s mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas, one of the key features of the ARC programme is its flexibility. Within the framework of the programme, ARCs can recruit eligible students and appoint supervisors to projects that fit with their own institution’s research priorities. Wherever they are located in the world, ARCs can offer their students a respected UK research degree qualification.

Cost effective

The Open University values its relationship with the ARC community. ARCs find that affiliation and student registration fees are at a level which ensures a cost-effective route for students to obtain a high-quality research degree.

Excellence in support

ARC students and their supervisors have access to a range of OU resources including the online library, and research degree skills training materials to guide them through the fundamental principles of postgraduate study. Periodic meetings of ARC coordinators provide opportunities to network and share best practice. Our partnership team works closely with ARCs from first enquiry through the approval process, and thereafter.
Hear from our ARC community

“One of the benefits of offering UK PhDs through The Open University is that it adds a further ‘international’ feel to our Institute and to the daily lives of both our researchers and our PhD students. Over the years our Open University PhD Programme and our relationship with the University have seen a constant improvement in our own training skills that has proven to be of further benefit to our PhD students.”

Dr Roberto Buccione, Co-ordinator, PhD Programme, Consorzio Mario Negri Sud Research Institute, Italy

“One of the most important things I’ve learnt from my studies within the ARC programme is that for doing good science it’s really important to discuss data and results with other researchers from different labs and with different backgrounds. Another substantial advantage of getting a PhD with the Open University is that you’ll receive a title that is recognised worldwide. This is extremely important if you are interested and/or don’t want to cut yourself out of a potential research experience abroad. All in all, I’ve been extremely satisfied with my choice of attending the OU PhD programme and I really recommend this experience.”

Dr Roberta Zappasodi, studied at Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori of Milan, Italy. The discoveries she made in her research project will lead to new immunotherapeutic strategies against cancer.

“Choosing to attend Open University/Stowers Institute program as a pre-doctoral student is one of the best decisions I have made in my life. The skills I have developed and the experience I have gained by working and interacting with the scientific community are invaluable assets to anyone interested in this career path. Another important aspect of this program was the wonderful support from the core facilities and the training on the cutting-edge technology, for example microscopes, which is unique to Stowers Institute.”

Dr Praveen Kumar Suraneni, a research student at The Stowers Institute for Medical Research has provided new insights into how biological cells move around the body, which has implications for diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. His research was published in the Journal of Cell Biology.

Join Us

For further details on how your organisation can become an Affiliated Research Centre of The Open University write to:

Senior Manager Collaborative Provision
Research Degrees Office
The Open University
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1908 654882
Email: research-degrees-ARC-SE@open.ac.uk
Web: http://www.open.ac.uk/affiliated-research-centre-programme