

Facts and Figures 2020/21



Headlines

About the OU: Operating at scale

Total number of students taught since 1969	2.2 million
Total number of students in 2020/21	205,420
Percentage of part-time UK-domiciled undergraduates taught by the OU in 2019/20	47%
Students on validated programmes	43,156
FTSE 100 companies that have sponsored staff on OU modules	75

About the OU: We are global

International students directly studying with the OU	8,802
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About the OU: Our students

Percentage of 158k directly-registered OU students already in work	70%
OU undergraduates who had no previous HE qualifications on entry	77%
OU UK undergraduates who live in the 25% most deprived areas	26%
New OU undergraduates aged under 25	34%

About the OU: Research and Enterprise

UK research position (based on REF 2014 Power rankings)	41st/128
Research deemed world-leading or internationally excellent (REF 2014)	72%
Number of doctoral degrees awarded in 2020/21	124

About the OU: Innovation in learning

Visitors to OpenLearn website since launch in 2006	95.2 million
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Student and customer statistics*	2019/20	2020/21
Undergraduate-level students	125,741	148,126
Postgraduate-level students		
Taught	9,008	10,625
Research part-time	393	386
Research full-time	551	450
Collaborative	58	69
Students on non-credit-bearing courses	889	2,608
International special scheme students	0	0
Students on validated programmes	39,078	43,156
Total Students	175,718	205,420

* All student statistics are student headcount unless stated otherwise.

Student distribution	2019/20	2020/21
UK students		
England	95,681	111,039
Scotland	18,280	22,360
Wales	10,717	14,475
Northern Ireland	4,212	5,588
Total UK students	128,890	153,462
Republic of Ireland	933	974
Other EU	4,638	5,123
Non-EU	2,179	2,705
Students on validated programmes	39,078	43,156
Total	175,718	205,420

International Students	2019/20	2020/21
Global Direct students in Europe	5,537	5,519
Global Direct students outside Europe	1,790	2,168
Total Global Direct students	7,327	7,687

Students by subject area (FTEs)*	2019/20	2020/21
Subjects allied to medicine	1,813	3,003
Biological and physical sciences	15,123	18,943
Mathematical sciences, computer sciences and engineering & technology	11,854	15,044
Social studies	11,153	16,125
Law	3,959	5,125
Business and administrative studies	6,718	7,895
Languages	4,095	4,548
Historical and philosophical studies	5,456	6,833
Creative arts and design	1,151	1,203
Education	6,852	9,280
Other	32	40
Total	68,204	88,038

* Excludes non-credit-bearing modules, study materials, packs and validated programmes.

Features of Open University students	2020/21	
	UG level	PG level
Male:female ratio	37:63	45:55
Age profile		
17 and under	1%	0%
18-21	10%	1%
22-24	12%	5%
25-34	36%	26%
35-44	23%	31%
45-54	11%	23%
55-64	5%	10%
65 and over	2%	4%
Median age of new undergraduate-level students	28	

Ethnic origin of new undergraduate students*	2019/20	2020/21
White	88%	89%
Asian	4%	4%
Black	3%	3%
Mixed and Other	4%	4%

* where ethnicity was disclosed.

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Qualifications on entry of undergraduate level students	2019/20	2020/21
No formal qualifications	3%	2%
A Levels - amount not specified	18%	16%
1 A Level or lower	33%	34%
2 A Levels or equivalent	24%	24%
HE qualification	20%	20%
Postgraduate qualification	3%	3%

Other student information	2019/20	2020/21
Number of students receiving help with fees	12,305	14,312
Number of students with disabilities	30,791	36,400
Number of students receiving credit transfer awards for prior study	4,980	5,934
Number of students working full/part time	96,724	111,556

Qualifications awarded	2020/21	1971 to 2020/21
Foundation degrees	277	7,568
First degrees	17,770	449,399
Higher degrees	2,339	75,704
Undergraduate certificates and diplomas	7,224	380,284
Postgraduate certificates and diplomas	1,002	81,607
Validated qualifications (under/post-graduate)	7,779	185,209

* The number of qualifications awarded in 2019/20 was lower than usual due to timetabling of June conflation activity which saw qualifications being awarded later than in previous years. As such, qualifications awarded in 2020/21 are also impacted by this.

Student Assessment	2019/20	2020/21
TMA and CMA assignments submitted	724,651	893,214
Examinations taken	9,112	33,024
End-of-module assignments submitted	9,564	35,424

Student Contact	2019/20	2020/21
Number of telephone calls from students	322,566	414,604
Number of Emails received from students	290,534	325,251

Modules information	2019/20	2020/21
Number of standard modules offered		
Undergraduate level	346	354
Postgraduate level	138	141
Overseas versions	0	0
Curriculum partnerships	24	30

Most popular undergraduate modules*	2020/21
DE100 - Investigating psychology 1	9,249
DD102 - Introducing the social sciences	8,104
TM111 - Introduction to computing and information technology 1	5,935
B100 - An introduction to business and management	5,804
A111 - Discovering the arts and humanities	5,656

* Based on number of students.

Most popular qualifications*	2020/21
BA/BSc (Hons) Open degree (QD)	2,467
BSc (Hons) Psychology (Q07)	1,675
Bachelor of Laws (Hons) (Q79)	925
BA (Hons) Business Management (Q91)	823
BA (Hons) History (Q01)	704

* Based on number of qualifications gained.

Validated Programmes	2019/20	2020/21
Number of validated programmes	360	347
Number of approved validated institutions worldwide	44	42
Total students to have achieved validated awards	6,892	7,779

Research and Enterprise	2019/20	2020/21
Value of research grants and contracts awarded in year	£17.2m	£11.5m
Number of running research grant and contract awards	390	477
Number of postgraduate research students registered for study	824	836
Research quality Grade Point Average (GPA) score	N/A	N/A
Number of research outputs downloaded from Open Research Online (ORO)	1,842,048	2,023,103

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Media	2019/20	2020/21
Average daily usage of Moodle	30,974	40,012
Views/listens of OU programmes via BBC	332 million	332 million
Accumulative years of OU/BBC partnership	49	50
Peak-time TV and radio co-produced programmes	31 series	31 series
Amazon Kindle - downloads	0.6 million	1.0 million
Amazon Kindle - total downloads (since 2016)	1.7 million	2.7 million
YouTube - total visitors (since 2008)	53.4 million	59.7 million
YouTube - video views	6.3 million	6.4 million
Location of visitors to OpenLearn:		
UK		39%
USA		13%
India		10%
OpenLearn visitors	13.6 million	14.4 million
OpenLearn free courses	1,011	1,066

Notes on fees and funding

The way higher education is funded is determined by each of the national governments of the UK, so the cost to students in each country reflects the amount of teaching grant the OU receives directly from each of these administrations and the support that is available to students to pay their fees.

A small number of modules exceed the £3,096 fees typical in England and Northern Ireland for 60 credit undergraduate modules.

Fees		2020/21
Undergraduate module (60 credit points)		
England and non-UK		£3,096
Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales	£1032 to	£2,625
Undergraduate residential school		
England and non-UK		£385
Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales		£385
Postgraduate taught module (60 credit points)	£2,040 to	£6,140
Research degree		
Full-time		£4,407
Part-time		£2,203

Cost of study	2020/21
Typical total fees for BA/BSc (Hons) degree	
England and non-UK	£18,576
Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales	£6,192

Finance	2019/20	2020/21
	(£ millions)	(£ millions)
Income		
Tuition fees and education contracts	330.7	393.2
Funding body grants	96.6	104.5
Research grants and contracts	11.9	13.8
Other income	18.0	16.9
Investment income	13.7	30.0
Donations and endowments	3.2	3.1
Total income	474.1	561.5
Expenditure		
Staff costs	272.4	366.4
Other operating expenses	138.7	144.9
Depreciation	6.5	7.6
Interest payable	3.0	0.9
Total expenditure	420.6	519.8

Staff statistics	2019/20	2020/21
Salaried academic staff	1,210	1,327
Academic-related staff	2,061	2,297
Support staff (secretaries, clerks, technicians etc)	1,629	1,794
Associate lecturers	3,923	4,438

Notes on 2020/21 statistics

Please be aware that some of the figures in this report may be impacted due to the COVID pandemic.