

# The university of the knowledge society

 **UOC**

Universitat Oberta  
de Catalunya

[www.uoc.edu](http://www.uoc.edu)

Universitat  
Oberta  
de Catalunya



# About the UOC

## Experience and quality in online education

- The UOC is an online university born from the knowledge society and whose mission is to provide people with **lifelong learning** and education.
- After 15 years, we have over 54,000 students in 87 countries and 22,500 graduates.
- Approved courses, master's and postgraduate courses and short courses.
- Knowledge transfer and cooperation with businesses and institutions.



# A new university model

The UOC engages people who offer quality online university education and promote:

- innovative education enabling personalised learning,
- technological leadership that facilitates interaction and collaborative work,
- academic research on the information society and e-learning,
- the dissemination of knowledge.

The UOC fosters cooperation and exchange within its university community and with other universities, institutions, the business community and civil society, whilst at the same time forging international alliances to enable sharing and learning.





# Fields of knowledge

The fields of knowledge of the different UOC educational programmes and initiatives are as follows:

- Information and Communication Sciences
- Economics and Business Studies
- Humanitarian Cooperation, Peace and Sustainability
- Law, Political and Administration Sciences
- Health and Environmental Sciences
- City Management and Urban Planning
- Global Executive Education
- Humanities
- IT, Multimedia and Telecommunications
- Languages and Cultures
- Psychology and Educational Sciences
- Tourism
- Information Society
- The Islamic world
- Food systems

# Studies

The training offered by the UOC includes approved diplomas, degree and postgraduate studies, and the postgraduate, lifelong and bespoke training programmes:

## **DIPLOMA, DEGREE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

- **Foundation degrees / degrees / postgraduate studies / masters**
  - Official university courses
  - Own university courses
- **PhD**
  - PhD on the Information and Knowledge Society

## **INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE INSTITUTE**

- Official postgraduate programmes (official master's degrees)
- Own postgraduate programmes
- Open education (University @thenaeum)
- Training for businesses and institutions

# Pedagogical model

## The value of the educational model

The UOC's educational model is the university's main feature that has distinguished it since its introduction. It was created with the intention of appropriately responding to the educational needs of people committed to lifelong learning, and to make maximum use of the potential offered by the Web to complete an educational activity.



# Pedagogical model

## **The description of the model**

The learning activity is the central figure of the educational model. The students have three main elements with which to complete it: the resources, collaboration and accompaniment.

## **The resources:**

They include the content, spaces and tools necessary to carry out the learning activities and their assessment.

## **Collaboration:**

This is understood as the set of communicative and participative dynamics that favour the combined building of knowledge among classmates and teachers, through teamwork to solve problems, develop projects and group product creation.

## **Accompaniment:**

This is the group of actions carried out by teaching staff to monitor students and to give them support in planning their work, in resolving activities, in assessment and in making decisions. At the same time, the student receives personalised treatment from teacher accompaniment, s/he enjoys continuous guidance during his/her academic path and s/he establishes relations and communication with the educational community.

[http://www.uoc.edu/portal/english/la\\_universitat/coneix\\_la\\_uoc/presentacio/index.html](http://www.uoc.edu/portal/english/la_universitat/coneix_la_uoc/presentacio/index.html)





# The UOC in figures

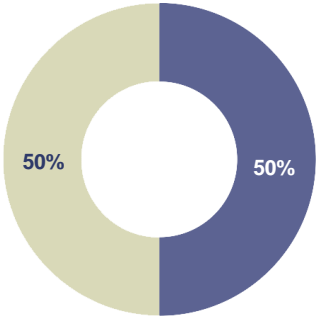
Evolution of no. of students enrolled diploma and degree level



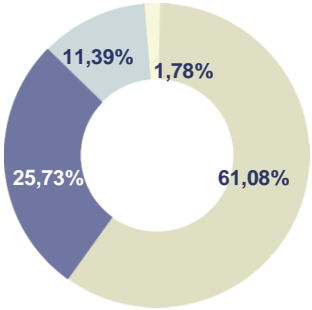


# The student, committed to learning

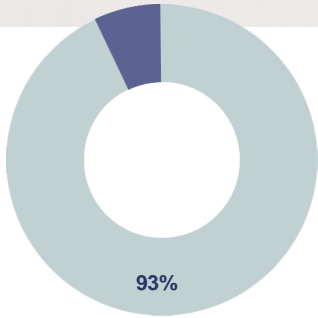
Student profile



women  
men



under 22  
between 21 and 25  
between 26 and 30  
over 30



work over 30 hours a week

# Strategies for participation of students



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# The experience with external evaluation

The Quality Agency in Catalonia (AQU), created the VIRTUAL programme in 2007: the evaluation programme that involves the assesment of virtual learning. This process had had two units of analysis:

## DEGREES

1. Strategic position of the degree programme
  - 1.1. Internal strategic position
  - 1.2. External strategic position
2. Study programme
  - 2.1. Definition of the study programme
  - 2.2. Adequacy of the study programme
3. Instruction design
  - 3.1. Teaching methodology
  - 3.2. Adequacy of the activities
  - 3.3. Organisation of the degree
  - 3.4. Student orientation and tutorial system
  - 3.5. Technical set-up for instruction

# The experience with external evaluation

## INSTITUTIONS:

1. Institutional mission and vision
  - 1.1. Institutional mission
  - 1.2. Institutional vision
2. System capacity
  - 2.1. Students
  - 2.2. Teaching staff
  - 2.3. Infrastructure
  - 2.4. External relations
3. Quality assurance mechanisms
  - 3.1. Institutional vision and mission
  - 3.2. System capacity
  - 3.3. Internal and external strategic position
  - 3.4. Learning outcomes and study programme
  - 3.5. Instruction design (I)
  - 3.5. Instruction design (II)
  - 3.6. Learning assessment
  - 3.7. Outcomes

More information: [http://www.aqu.cat/universitats/abanseees/virtual\\_en.html](http://www.aqu.cat/universitats/abanseees/virtual_en.html)

# The experiences with external evaluation

**Students participation** involved different actions:

## **SATISFACTION SURVEYS (Non direct participation)**

UOC had been doing the on-line surveys since 1996, the questionnaires that they receive are based on the [Lifecycle](#) of them. The results are disseminated for all levels or responsibility: the university, the programme, the subject and the virtual classroom.

## **STUDENTS COMMITTEES OF REPRESENTATIVES (Direct/Non direct participacion)**

UOC has an internal policy that promotes the participation of students in the virtual campus, in their studies, and also at the geographical centers. The current process of EHEA, gives to students, and other stakeholders more importance to the role in the processes of decision making.

## **INTERNAL EVALUATION (Direct participacion)**

During the self-evaluation, the UOC open up a virtual forum for students for a large period of time in relation to a formal visit. For more than 2 weeks, students and members of the external committes have enough time to share their most important goals

# The experiences with external evaluation

## WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE WITH THESE FORUMS LIKE?

The fact that our students are not physically at the university hinders their participation in terms of the student's own time and the evaluation committees' visit. This difficulty became an opportunity to try other ways to participate, not just thinking about the solution not only to replace a present situation, but to obtain the maximum participation of students using new communication technologies.

First, the reaction of the agency was suspicion! They did not believe in the possibility of generating an interesting debate for students and assessors.

We offer the evaluators access to our virtual campus one month before their visit, and we offer them support in the promotion of groups and in managing the virtual environment.



# The experiences with external evaluation

## WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

	N. of participants	N. messages	N. comments to the self-evaluation report
<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>DEGREES</b>			
<b>Law and Political Science</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Psychology</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Business and Economy</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Computer Engineering</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>0</b>

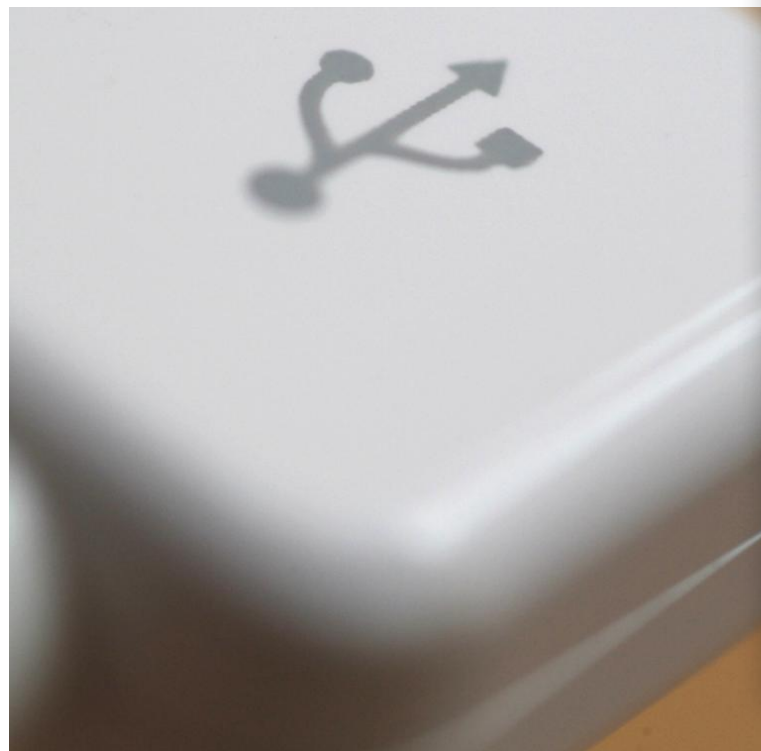
More information: [http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc\\_82914538\\_1.pdf](http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc_82914538_1.pdf)

# How to develop the student's abilities in quality processes?

The Catalan Agency pushes for the completion of courses aimed at students to encourage their abilities in relation to participation.

The courses offered this February, and the skills that students achieved were to:

- \* **Understand and evaluate** the process of developing the new framework for the university, creating a European Higher Education Area.
- \* **Recognize and analyze the guidelines** and European standards assurance quality and its involvement in the activities of agencies and universities.
- \* **Identify and promote good practices** for quality assurance of the university and promote continuous improvement.
- \* **The ability to actively participate and promote participation of students** in forums representing the university and the main assessment processes and quality improvement
- \* **Understand the internal quality system** at the Open University of Catalonia and analysis and assessment from a methodological point of evidence and indicators.



# Course structure and Units

UD 0 – Welcome and planning for learning and constructive collaborative.

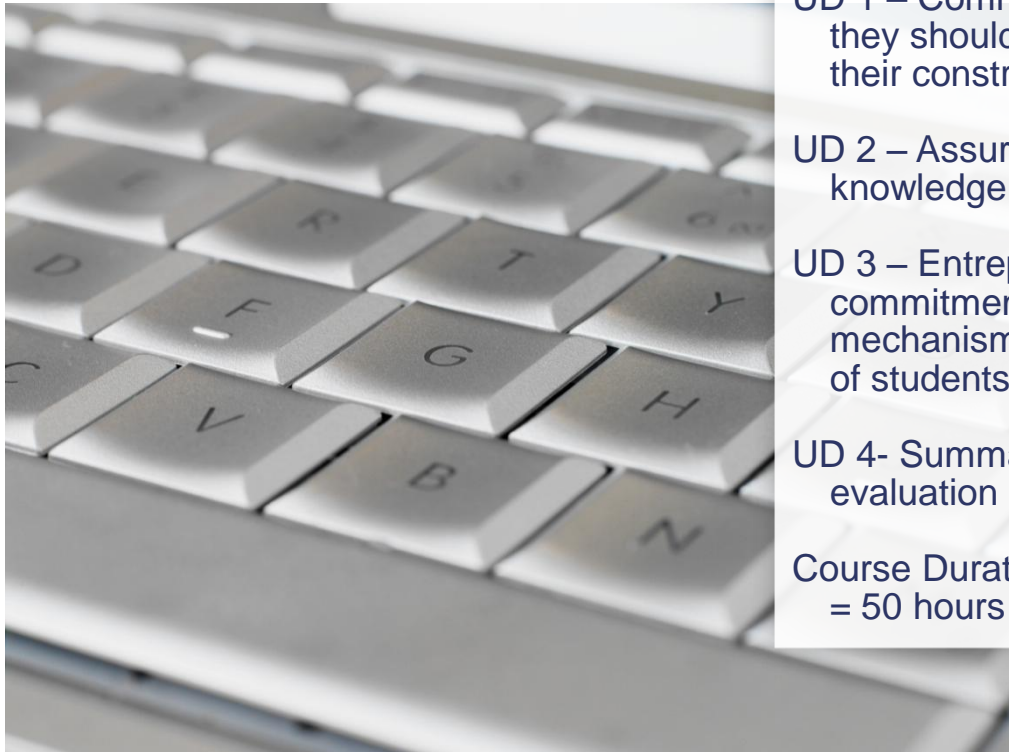
UD 1 – Commitment EHEA: Universities and the role they should play for students as active agents in their construction.

UD 2 – Assurance Quality training in key employment knowledge society.

UD 3 – Entrepreneurs quality: University quality commitment to everything, the importance of mechanisms that promote the effective participation of students and consolidate the culture of quality.

UD 4- Summary and conclusions closure, and evaluation results

Course Duration = 5 weeks  
= 50 hours total dedication



# Students opinion

-Regarding the level of knowledge in the subjects treated in the course, students satisfactorily assessed the outcome of the learning achieved, the average value being 4 (on a scale of 1 to 5).

-Regarding the evaluation of three teaching units of the course (in terms of structure, clarity, suitability and interest), it was noted that they all had a similar rating (average value of 2.2 on a scale of 1 to 3.) The rating reflects the fact that the course was long and intense for students, the following of students decreased in size as the course progressed, the first unit (UD1 . Commitment EHEA) more valued than the last (UD3. Entrepreneurs quality).

- Regarding the activities undertaken, the student evaluated activities 1 to 7 individually , taking into account the following criteria: interest in the work content, appropriateness of the methodology used and correspondence-credit workload (in terms of time commitment). The rating was satisfactory (above 2 in all cases on a scale of 1 to 3) except with respect to time commitment that had been assessed below 2 in all group activities.

# Students opinion

In the open questions:

- What did you like the most:
  - 1 - Contents
  - 2 - The tools and group work
- What changed:
  - 1 - The time spent and the workload
  - 2 - The group size
  - 3 - The collaborative work tool
- What skills and abilities would you like to focus on:
  - 1 – Better knowledge of EHEA
  - 2 - Role of evaluator
  - 3 - Role of representative

# Conclusions

- Although the proposal was raised with a limited number of seats (24 maximum), all 32 students enrolled have finally been accepted , which has meant that the groups (4) were more numerous than would have been desirable for effective participation in group activities.
- Having students with different profiles and skills (there are students from 6 UOC studies), has required an extra effort to adapt to ways of doing many different viewpoints, given that the work has been group work for the most part.
- A recognized innovation project (Aplica2010) has meant that the first pilot to use a tool for collaborative work of web.2.0: Google Docs with students of the UOC.

## Improvements:

- Reduce the duration of the course and the number of activities
- Reduce the number of group activities
- Improve the feedback of activities
- Improve the documentation of the new training tool for collaborative work and improve the organization of googledocs documentary.
- Assess the restructuring of the content based on profiles

A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a teal top, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a blue folder or book with the text 'www.uoc.edu' printed on it. The background shows a staircase railing and a green wall.

# Thank you!

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