SPACE ARTEFACT
DISCOVERED IN ASSOCIATION ARCHIVE

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE
BE THE FIRST TO KNOW ABOUT THE UPCOMING EVENT

OU STUDENTS.COM
THE BRAND NEW RESOURCE FOR OU STUDENTS

OU REDESIGN EXPLAINED
Our President, Nicola, breaks down the ‘radical reinvention’ of the OU

FRESHERS FORTNIGHT
A look back and a look forward to our next big Freshers event

A GROWING TEAM
The Association welcomes a new team of Community Champions

CONFERENCE 2018
BE THE FIRST TO REGISTER INTEREST!
Welcome to this edition of OU Students magazine...

Doesn’t time fly when you’re having fun? Here at #OUstudentsHQ we can’t believe how quickly the year has flown by! As usual, it’s been a fast-paced couple of months since the last edition, with lots of work being done to better represent the OU student voice and grow our community. The end of a year is a time of celebration and we want to celebrate you, our lovely, passionate and supportive community. You inspire us every day.

It’s also a time of reflection, to look back at the past year and take stock of everything that has occurred. We’re proud of what the Association has achieved so far and hope to continue that success in the New Year.

In this edition we look at the recently launched Association website and all its new features, promote opportunities and share stories from OU students. So pop on your favourite festive tunes, grab a hot drink and get cosy with this edition!

Happy holidays – we’ll see you in 2018!

The Editorial team

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Welcome to oustudents.com

We’re proud to announce that oustudents.com is now live!

Our brand new website has been a year-long project which started with a staff and students workshop to map out the new site structure. You can sign up for newsletters to keep up to date and create an account to apply for volunteering roles. The website is also packed with information, news and blogs about our services and what your student reps have been up to!

We are also working with Royal National Institute Of Blind People (RNIB) to continually improve accessibility so the site can be used by all students. Keep an eye on the site in the coming weeks and months for more improvements and features as we make oustudents.com the place to visit for OU students looking to get the most out of their University experience.
It’s beginning to look a lot like…

CONFERENCE

Conference, the biggest event in the Association calendar, happens every two years. You could be one of the hundreds of OU student that attend in 2018, either online or at the OU campus in Milton Keynes!

Plans are in the offing for the Student Association Conference 2018 happening 22-24 June at the OU Campus in Milton Keynes and simultaneously online. It’s a huge event in the OU student calendar and demand is always high for delegate places. Make this date the first one in next year’s diary.

Want to find out more? Be the first in the know by signing up to the interested in Conference students list here for early information. Alternatively put a note to self to say visit www.oustudents.com in January for more details as they become available.

Register interest

Sign up to the interested in Conference list to be one of the first to know information about the event!
Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘I wrote an essay. It makes sense and everything. Wonders will never cease!’

Did you miss any of the Freshers Fortnight activities in 2017?

Or are you a prospective new OU student who hasn’t experienced Freshers yet?

With new module start dates in February 2018, we are getting prepared for the first Freshers Fortnight of 2018.

From 22 January - 2 February 2018 we’ll be hosting a variety of activities including online chats, competitions, videos, meet-ups and live events from the OU campus in Milton Keynes. There’ll be a range of information available to you as well as opportunities for you to take part in Freshers either on campus or from your computer at home.

There’s also tonnes of other activities going on throughout Freshers Fortnight including our archive project, Student Voice symposium, University Challenge warm-up event and the latest edition of STUDIO, our student radio programme.

So whether you’re a new or a continuing OU student, there’ll be something during Freshers Fortnight for you to get involved in.

Check our website www.oustudents.com and social media channels in January for more information on Freshers Fortnight and how you can get involved.

During Freshers Fortnight we asked you two questions for our Freshers prize draws to win an OU Students Association bundle depending on whether you were #new2OU or #back2OU. We had many entries for both questions. Unfortunately, not everyone can win but we loved your responses so we’ve included a few of them below.

**#new2OU**

Let us know why you’re excited to start your OU journey with **#new2OU**

Super excited to be a part of #new2OU! I feel like I’m doing what I want to do. So happy I get to be a part of the openuniversity

I cannot wait to take my first step. New knowledge, new friends and a sense of purpose, what’s not to like? #new2OU

Being #new2OU is the first step towards the realisation of a lifelong dream to study sciences. Excited and grateful to start the journey!

I am so excited to start with the OU to gain a qualification so I can stand tall and say I was never too old for this #new2OU

#new2OU Time to be challenged, time to learn

I am sooo excited to start my journey with OU because it’s the first time I’ve done something for me in ages! I love to learn #new2OU

#excited

**#back2OU**

Let us know what lessons you’re bringing to the next step in your OU journey with **#back2OU**

Telling myself I CAN do it, even if I find it difficult at the time. Keeping organised and ensuring I keep a positive attitude #back2OU

Not to follow the crowd and worry about what others are doing. Instead, do what works for me. We all get to the same destination! #back2OU

My lesson is to prove to myself that my anxiety and depression will not stop me from doing what I want to achieve in life #back2OU

Don’t worry if others seem to be miles ahead of you – they probably aren’t and it’s not a competition! #back2OU

I plan to make revision materials during the course this year. It will save me time and stress before exams if I am organised #back2OU

There is no shame in stepping back and evaluating how things are going #back2OU

Don’t worry if you missed out on any of the activities during Freshers Fortnight, we’re already getting prepared for our next Freshers event in January 2018. Check out page 9 for more information.

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Anyone else hover over that submit button before they pluck up the courage to press it?’

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘I wrote an essay. It makes sense and everything. Wonders will never cease!’
The Road to University Challenge

By the time you’re reading this we will have our OU University Challenge Team together and ready for their auditions in January. But how did we get to this point? How did we get from over 400 registered interested students to our team of four OU students and reserve member?

From August to November 2017 we’ve been working hard to get our University Challenge Team together.

In August, we put the news out for students to register their interest in being a part of the University Challenge Team. We promoted this throughout September and ended up with over 400 students registering their interest. From these registered students we sent out a general knowledge quiz containing 30 questions selected from the University Challenge pack. After a couple of weeks, those with the highest scores and completed in the quickest time were invited to the next stage where they completed a specialist quiz round in either Maths and Science, Arts and Literature, History and Politics or another General Knowledge round.

Once again those with the highest scores and fastest times were invited to the online auditions stage where groups of five students that part in an online test against each other using Adobe Connect. We then selected the final four students and reserve member to be a part of Team Open.

From here, our team will take part in auditions for University Challenge in January and if selected will go through to the recording stages later in the year.

OU University Challenge Warm Up Event

To prepare for the interview stage, we’ll be holding our own University Challenge warm-up event at the Open University campus in Milton Keynes on Friday 26 January 2018 between 8pm and 9pm, with reception drinks from 7.30pm. This is an opportunity for our new University Challenge team to compete against other teams in preparation.

All students are welcome to attend on a first come, first served basis, however if you can’t make it to the evening we will also be streaming the whole thing live on our Facebook page. Email student-community@open.ac.uk to find out more.

Did you know?
The Open University have won University Challenge twice before in 1984 and 1999.

Did you know?
The Open University has the record for the highest score during the Jeremy Paxman era of University Challenge with 415 points in a semi-final in 1997.
Cyber abuse is on the rise worldwide as more online platforms are being used for socialising, working and learning. Our online spaces are no exception to this. The OU Students Association is determined to encourage and maintain a safe online environment for OU students to chat, debate and learn from one another. 

During our most recent by-election, we took proactive steps to ensure all students had a good experience with our elections forums by making significant changes to the structure, moderation and guidelines. 

But this isn’t the end, we’ll continue to work on it. 

WE... rewrote our election engagement guidelines to ensure fair and fast moderation of unacceptable comments

WE... ensured that a moderator was available to help at all times that the forum was online

WE... Restructured the forums to ensure a better experience for all users - improving the atmosphere significantly

This is a story of hope and encouragement to those who feel the struggle and isolation that being in prison often brings. I served 15 years in this mindset, feeling that no one cares and I did not know where or even if I would fit into society.

I have been released just over a year now and it has been difficult at times. I found the readjustment after so long overwhelming. This year I have volunteered with the Prison Education Trust. They have been a fantastic source of support and helped me gain self-belief and confidence. 

I was invited to speak at a conference and met Ruth, a member of OU staff who was in the process of joining the Students in Secure Environments team at the Open University and generously offered to fund a visit London for me. 

This was to visit the Kestral Award exhibition and book launch and see the great exhibits sent from across the estate. I was then to travel to Milton Keynes to the OU campus and meet up with the staff there. I turned up full of excitement and was met by Ruth.

The next few hours were spent meeting OU and Students Association staff, who all made me feel that I was the most important person there. I walked around and from the Chainsaw Sculpture (Tree of Knowledge) to the amazing library, each step felt fantastic. To walk the grounds of the best academics was a dream come true. The campus is spread across land on the scale of a reasonable prison but of course was much more acceptable.

I cannot remember a lot of the staff names but each of them left a huge impression on me. These are people who in my eyes are doing life the correct way, and not the way I had chosen. I felt encouraged and inspired. I had studied in prison with the OU but had at times felt alone and without support. I now know that is not the case. The staff there are all over the situation, I can ensure you. They have so many projects going on and are full of so much enthusiasm, that I felt I was in a whirlwind at times, but one that dropped me into a bush full of cheesecake. (The reason I used the word cheesecake was because everyone in prison loves it!)

I am honoured to have had the pleasure and opportunity to visit and can only express how much with this statement: the man who touched his toes on the grounds was an ex-prisoner but the man who left was a member of society.

Thank you all for a great visit and the boost I now feel inside to succeed in my degree.

Paddy
OU student
OU Graduations are good for the soul

Association President, Nicola Simpson, gave a rousing speech at an OU graduation ceremony in Cardiff...

My name is Nicci, I'm an OU graduate and the President of the OU Students Association and it's my first time speaking at a Graduation ceremony so you can imagine how I might be feeling right now here on such a special occasion in such a grand place.

When I was asked to speak today at a moment in your lives, signalling a change in your trajectory, I was terrified about the consequences of saying the wrong thing. I went through an emotional process something akin to being a student so I got a bit of late nights and huge personal sacrifice, I was terrified about the consequences of saying the wrong thing. I went through an emotional process something akin to being a student so I got a bit of...
Space artefact discovered in Association archive

STEM Faculty Association Representative Cath Brown presented a space patch which was flown on board the Challenger space shuttle to the OU Observatory. The space patch was found in the Association archive and is now on display for all to enjoy.

As well as experiments carried out by the three mission specialists, the flight deployed the Earth Radiation Budget Satellite from its payload bay. It was designed to measure the amount of energy received from the sun and reradiated into space as well as studying the seasonal movement from energy from the tropics to the polar regions on earth.

Garneau carried out a series of experiments sponsored by the Canadian Government including medical, atmospheric, climatic and robotic science. Kathryn D. Sullivan took her spacewalk on 11 October and performed a three hour and a half ‘extravehicular activity’ as Challenger orbited earth. She and David Leestma carried out an experiment that proved the feasibility of refuelling satellites in orbit.

It was a successful mission, and notable for several firsts, including the first Canadian in Space (Marc Garneau) and the first American woman to carry out a spacewalk (Dr Kathryn D. Sullivan) as well as the first time two female astronauts had flown together. Paul Scully-Power was born in Australia and had American nationality, making him the first Australian-born person to go into space.

The space patch

Mission patches are cloth iterations of spaceflight emblems worn by the astronauts and other personnel affiliated with that mission. It is usually an embroidered patch traditionally worn on the space suit. The term space patch is usually used for an emblem designed for a manned space mission. The first was used in 1963 during the flight of the Russian Vostok 6 mission. Space patches always have the names of the astronauts involved in that particular mission, with this patch being particularly interesting as it included the Canadian flag next to Garneau’s name.

This space patch has added poignancy as the tenth mission sadly ended in tragedy in January 1986. Kathryn D. Sullivan visited the OU on August 29 1985, when she gave a talk - A geologist’s view from the Space Shuttle - to members of the Earth Sciences department. She jokingly referred to her photographs of the Earth’s surface taken from the space shuttle as her ‘vacation pictures’. This space patch was presented to the students and faculties of the OU during Dr Sullivan’s visit. Members of staff who’ve been at the OU some time do remember it being on the walls of various offices since her visit. It was found in the Students Association archive and we are pleased to present it to the STEM Faculty and Observatory so it can be displayed and enjoyed by all.
Buddies scheme boosts student motivation

Authored by the Open University Student Buddy team: Jo Fayram, Qian Kan, Anna Motzo and Anna Proudfoot

Each buddy receives training via Adobe Connect (an audiographic, synchronous online learning platform) and continued support from module team chairs. The aim of the buddy scheme is to provide students with informal support in the lead-up to TMA and/or EMA submissions.

Research conducted by a team of academics to assess the efficacy of the buddy initiative has revealed that both the students and their buddies benefited as follows:

Students

- Improved confidence and motivation. Buddy presence encouraged students to submit their assignments and increased their motivation to complete the module.
- Enhanced sense of community between the participants.
- Increased level of engagement: student buddies can ‘tune into’ and enhance the experience of some distance-learning students by offering extra moral support, sharing study tips and providing practical guidance.

Student Buddies

- A clearer awareness of their own approaches to study.
- Improved language ability through revising module materials.
- The development of new skills for employability.
- Personal satisfaction through supporting others.

The project is led by Dr Jo Fayram, Senior Lecturer in WELS with Dr Qian Kan, Anna Motzo and Anna Proudfoot.

Dr Fayram said: “Students have particularly valued being allowed to ask any question, no matter how ‘daft’ and the opportunity to hear how former students ‘survived’”.

The scheme has expanded on Level 2 modules as well as all Level 1 modules. The scheme has attracted a majority of students telling us they feel their knowledge of the subject has increased as a result of the session.

Feedback so far has been encouraging, with the vast majority of students telling us the feedback on social media (below).

Pictured: The first ever OU student buddy, Maria Nicholls (far right) sells the benefits of buddyng at the cross-faculty ‘Learn About Fair’.

Students benefit from having a buddy to play the role of mentor, according to a scheme run by the Faculty of Wellbeing Education and Languages (WELS).

Pioneered by the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics in WELS, the Student Buddy scheme was embedded in 12 modules to support level students via module-wide student forums prior to assignment deadlines.

The buddies assigned to each module (one or two buddies per module) are students who have recently completed the module. They run a dedicated thread in a module-wide forum and provide moral support to students as they progress through their studies.

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From Royal Mail to the Roman Empire

New OU graduate Paul Williamson tells us how he rediscovered his passion for History after a successful career in accountancy.

When I left school I had achieved good A-level results, five passes, but was not really sure what I wanted to do. My school advised me that as I was so good at History, I would probably enjoy Law. So in 1973 I found myself starting a Law degree at Birmingham University. However, as I started I realised I had made a horrible mistake and I was definitely not cut out for Law. In those days halls of residence were not guaranteed and I found myself in digs a long way out from the university with poor public transport. I cut my losses and left.

I then decided to study Accountancy and qualified as a Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA). This led to a very successful career in industry and I became the Finance Director for Royal Mail Operations before taking early retirement in 2010.

I saw retirement as a new opportunity and one of my new objectives was to gain a degree. I saw this as unfinished business! I chose the OU as it offered the kind of flexible study that would tie in with my new lifestyle. The courses were affordable and the entry module (AA100 in my case) was varied and interesting.

I suppose I went back to when I left school in a way. History was, and still is, the subject I found most interesting. The OU offered a History degree that was very varied with lots of interesting modules.

My passion was always the Roman Empire. This however, was not a module, though eventually it was introduced – and in fact was the last module I took for my degree. I enjoyed the tutorials immensely and it also led to me joining the Roman Society of the University of London.

The biggest challenge any student faces is dedicating appropriate time to studying. There were times when I fell behind and then it becomes a slog. I occasionally asked for an extension but tried to avoid this. The OU is moving from face-to-face tutorials towards online ones. I have to say I always enjoyed the face-to-face ones but there are opportunities with the online ones. I experienced this in my last year. After teething problems with the booking system, I found I had the freedom to attend more tutorials, not just those of my nominated tutor. The TMAs are always a challenge, mainly trying to tease out what the assessors are looking for.

Initially, I was not keen to attend the graduation ceremony. I had achieved what I set out to do and did not need any further confirmation. Eventually I wilted under pressure from my wife. And... it turned out to be a superb day with most of my family attending. I felt very proud and it might have taken 40 years, but finally I could draw a line under this.

My interest in all things Roman has been bolstered and I have recently visited Rome and Pompeii, building on what I have learned. I certainly have a new perspective on what I am seeing and I intend to continue my studying, albeit informally. I have also turned my attention now to another retirement objective, learning Spanish.

If you are having a low moment in your studying, and we all do, stick with it. It is worth it in the end. Whatever you achieve is only by hard work and trust me, you will be both glad and proud when it is all over.

Paul Williamson
OU Graduate

Want to write for OU Students magazine?

Have an inspiring tale to share with the OU student community? Avid photographer? Want to fill other students in on something interesting? Write short stories or poetry? Get in touch with the Editorial team!

Contact us
Write to the Editorial team
**Reporting back…**

The Central Executive Committee, your elected student leadership team, have had a very busy few months! Read on for a small glimpse at some of their activities and achievements over the last three months...

You can download full versions of these reports here.

### Area Association Representatives for England

Victoria Crawford has been busy reading all posts and commenting regularly on both the OU forums and our ‘Talk to your Students Association’ forum. In addition – she has followed discussions in the working and steering groups she is a member with. Social media has also been a focus for Victoria: As well as setting up the new England Area Association Reps Facebook page, she has been reading and commenting on student posts on both Facebook and Twitter, signposting to resources where appropriate. Victoria has also continued to connect with students using the #new2OU hashtag.

Anca Seaton volunteered for the role of ‘lead rep’ for the Bath residential school, attending two weekends in that role and one in her post as an Area Rep. She found it a great opportunity to meet Engineering students and to promote awareness of the Association, our shop and the money it raises for our educational charity. Feedback received from student attendees was positive – they learned about how the Association works for them and represents their collective voice. Anca has also been working with Cath Brown, Faculty Association Representative for STEM to put together ideas for future events.

### Area Association Representative for Scotland

Patricia Gray has attended several meetings both online and face-to-face, sharing information about the Association and providing insight into the OU student experience. She also went to a workshop at Glasgow Caledonian University, aimed at new OU students in Scotland.

### Area Association Representative for Wales

Claire Smith has been hard at work, keeping students in Wales appraised of her activity as their representative. There has been a lot of interest in student meet-ups in Wales, where local events in Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Swansea were hosted. Claire used this opportunity to share links to the Association website, where students could promote their events to a wider audience and find support from the community team. Social media has also been a focus for Claire: her accounts are growing healthily and are proving to be a useful resource for OU students in Wales. Claire has also been active in the Appointments Committee forums as new applications for representative roles are posted for approval.

### Area Association Representative for Northern Ireland

Cinnomen McGuigan has been discussing ways to gain more engagement in the nation with Assembly Executive members, and hosted a Freshers event in Belfast. Her social media accounts are growing well, which she uses to talk to staff and students on an almost daily basis. Cinnomen noted that social media is proving to be more popular than the regional student forums, so most of her interactions with students occurs on Twitter, Facebook or email. She is also busy with several working groups as part of her role and engages with them regularly.

### Faculty Association Representative for Arts and Social Sciences

Tanya Malone has settled quickly into her new role as part of the elected student leadership team and has already found ways to represent students in her faculty, most notably at a volunteering event hosted on the OU campus by the Association. She has also set up dedicated Twitter and Facebook accounts and joined relevant online groups affiliated with the Association. Tanya has also attended several training events and played a big role in several Freshers week chats.

### Faculty Association Representative for Business and Law

Jamie Slater has noted a steady growth of his social media accounts that he uses to engage with students in his faculty. He has also noticed that social media is proving to be more popular with students than using the forums, but he attempts to monitor both as often as possible. Jamie, an Army veteran, worked closely with Vice President Equal Opportunities, Cherry Day, to produce material for a presentation about former service personnel and how studying benefits them. By all accounts the presentation was very well received.

### Faculty Association Representative for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Cath Brown has kept very busy, attending multiple meetings and events spanning the breadth of her role. Some notable examples being several Sciences Board of Studies meetings, a sustainable academic communities workshop and a meeting about student engagement projects. Cath has been a frequent visitor to our ‘Talk to your Students Association’ forum and used her social media accounts to alert students to opportunities and resources. She also represented the Association and the Bath residential school, several meet-ups and a faculty summer barbecue. Cath continues to communicate her work with students on social media, the forums and blogs for the Association website.

### Faculty Association Representative for Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies

Jan Thompson has been very active on social media, where she has seen a growth in audience. She uses her accounts to interact with students regularly and share interesting items often. Jan has been busy with the Senate Reference Group and the Learning Experience Networking Zone, whilst also reading and posting in multiple forums.

### Faculty Association Representative for the Open Programme

Claire Davey has sought advice and support from her elected student leadership team members on how to establish connections with the individual faculties in order to better represent the needs of Open Programme students. She also aimed to open a dialogue with students in her faculty to get a feel for their experiences and needs. She found that ‘Open Mic Night’ was a vehicle to do just that. Claire has also taken part on student forums.

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Meet the team

Find out more about your elected student leadership team on our new website.
OU REDESIGN...

Association President, Nicola Simpson, breaks down the ‘radical reinvention’ of the OU, how students can find out more and get their voice heard in the process...

In June of this year the Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks announced a radical overhaul within The Open University. You may have heard this referred to as a radical reinvention, OU Redesign or the Students First Transformation Programme. The Vice Chancellor suggested that over the next two years this transformation would deliver teaching with digital innovation at its heart; a streamlined curriculum; greater choice over start dates and the pace of study and according to the Vice Chancellor, students would also be able to work flexibly on screen, tablet or mobile.

Since this announcement (which you can read online) the Students Association has been calling on the Vice Chancellor to enter into a dialogue directly with students about the proposed changes. We know from our own experiences as students (and from research that we have carried out) that, while students want choice and flexibility, they are also concerned that teaching delivered almost exclusively online or onscreen will simply not work for them and thousands of others.

This Autumn students taking part in the online and face to face consultation events held in Belfast, Croydon, Leeds and Milton Keynes and over 750 posts were made to the online consultation forum. You can read the background to the consultation and all of the online comments.

The Proposals

Students were consulted on a new proposed presentation plan of four module start dates per year. According to the University students could study all year round, without a long summer break if they wanted to - at various study intensities (either 15, 20 or 30 hours per week). The University believes this will give students more choice, the ability to react to life events that can sometimes make it difficult to study (as you could potentially delay module assessment) and help students stay focused, by allowing students to study at their desired intensity and completing modules one after the other, rather than at the same time.

The second topic for discussion proposes that all new modules would be delivered online or onscreen. The proposal suggests that: ‘some print materials may be sent out for some modules, and others may be specified as part of the module (for example literature texts). It isn’t altogether clear which modules or subject disciplines would continue to receive printed material, but the suspicion of many students is that print will largely be a thing of the past.

What students think of the proposals

If you were one of the hundred or so students who attended a face-to-face consultation event, it is likely that you heard many students speaking against a move to online or onscreen-only study. At the consultation event I attended in Belfast only one student said that an online / onscreen only learning environment would work for them personally. Students would rather prefer a blend of online / onscreen learning materials alongside printed materials.

Students talked about the difficulty of studying online in areas that fast broadband hadn’t yet been realised and of screen fatigue. Those working online and onscreen in their day job found it particularly challenging to study in the same way. Other students talked about the need to ensure the OU maintained its founding mission to be ‘Open to All’ – something that is at risk if print material and face to face tutorials are lost.

Increasing the number of start dates and flexibility about study intensity did appeal to students, but many had questions about how this would work in practice. There were questions about the implications for tuition, student community, assessment and how student finance might work in this proposed new world. Some students also thought it wasn’t clear enough whether they could continue to study at an intensity of 30 credits per year.

What next?

There are lots of changes in the pipeline - digital by design and changes to module start date are just some of them. It is vital that the University continues to have an open dialogue with students about the future of our University. Your representatives will continue to stand up for your academic interests at Council and Senate and directly with those making decisions about the future of the University.

Stay up to date with the latest news via the Association website and keep giving us your feedback in the Talk to Your Students Association forum and on social media. This is OUR University, you are the expert in what you need and your voice can make a difference.

Meet-up hosts wanted!

OU Students we need your help to make the BIG Feb meet-up the largest one yet!

On Saturday 24 February 2018, we want more OU students than ever to get together, chat and share their OU experiences.

Sign up to host a BIG Feb meet-up in your area at www.oustudents.com/big-feb-meet-up-hosts

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: 'Watching the kettle boil is such great procrastination'
In the last edition of this magazine I wrote a little about myself. If you missed that and are desperate to know more, you can find something about me on our website here.

As promised, here is a little bit about what I’ve been up to in the last couple of months. I talked with a member of OU staff about various fees and funding items. During a postgraduate funding discussion, the Hardship fund for postgraduate students in England was mentioned. This helps students on low incomes who have already applied for a loan but experience problems paying for the fees. There is more information about this and other aspects of fees and funding on our website.

At another meeting with OU staff we discussed pesky deadlines for EMAs (End of Module Assessments). The submission deadline is midday UK time with a grace period up to midnight. If you press the submission button after midnight you’ll see a warning message about the 10% loss of marks for late submission. Submissions just before the deadline don’t get that warning which could be a problem, particularly if you get a slow broadband speed or interruption, which means your EMA is received after midnight. It is the receipt time, not the send time, which counts with the OU. Advice was, if possible, don’t submit too close the deadline.

I have recently resumed studying. There are obvious signs – additional chocolate wrappers, less time to keep up with cricket, which is a yearlong activity and returning lifelike dreams such as getting 7% in exams and having a tutor in your house saying your assignment is rubbish. It got me thinking about what I wish I’d known as a new student in 2001. My recent blog here, is me writing to the 2001 me, giving me that helpful information. If you ever worried about asking ‘daft’ questions you will see I’ve already claimed that prize. It is in my blog. “You can open your modules material box when it arrives rather than wait until the module start date. Nobody’s going to come to your house and throw you out of the OU if you’ve opened the box.”

Yes, that first box of module materials in 2001 remained unopened until another student assured me I could open it.

I have been musing recently about an experience three years ago that deeply affected me. When my volunteer remit included students in secure environments, I was aware of the problems such students encountered. I assumed everything was rosy when they were released and their problems would mirror that of every other student, such as can the cat be removed from the laptop long enough to write a TMA? Three years ago I listened to a talk about research into how students no longer in a secure environment coped with study. A high percentage dropped out, which could be due to one of the problems identified that I’d never even thought about.

Their accommodation could be in a bed and breakfast or hostel; time might be needed to rebuild relationships rather than read that next book; lack of knowledge about who to contact in the OU or how; exam date and venue sent to the wrong address; old devices might be too outdated for study or their passwords forgotten. Thus the Through the Gate Peer Support Service was launched to provide somewhere for students experiencing this could go for a listening ear or to help with signposting. If this rings a bell, please consider talking to one of our specially trained Supporters, there’s more information here.
Here for you...

Emma Greenstein, OU Mental Health and Disability Processes Advisor, has a wealth of experience and knowledge when it comes to helping OU students. In this interview she shares how mental health difficulties can affect study, and where students can find support.

How can mental health difficulties, like depression and anxiety affect study?

Mental health difficulties come in many different forms and are experienced differently by each individual. Some may be dealing with more extreme examples of relatively common feelings and behaviours such as anxiety and depression. Whilst others may be experiencing extremely distressing thoughts and distorted perceptions which they find difficult to deal with and which people around them find difficult to understand.

Whatever the underlying mental health issue, difficulties with motivation and concentration are often the big challenges. Anxiety and depression can result in students being overly self-critical which can lead to anxiety about submitting assignments.

Medication typically causes fatigue and affects the student’s ability to concentrate for any length of time.

Tutors can help students to identify and implement effective strategies for managing workload and staying on track. This will include:

- Advice on study priorities
- Possibility of substitution
- Individual study support
- Occasional extensions

Students with anxiety and/or depression may be concerned about attending and participating in tutorials, (online and face to face). There may be times when it is difficult for the student to communicate with the University directly. They are encouraged to appoint a named advocate who can discuss their studies with the University on their behalf.

How and why is it important for a student to declare any mental health difficulties to the OU?

It’s really important in terms of ensuring that students get all of the support and adjustments in place so that they can have a successful study experience. It’s all about levelling up the playing field so that students with mental health difficulties are not at a disadvantage – they are entitled to reasonable adjustments.

But it’s the student’s choice whether or not you let us know about a disability or health condition that may affect study.

When students register for OU study they are asked whether they have a disability, health condition, mental health difficulty or specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) that might affect their studies.

Not only is this our legal duty, it enables us to support students more effectively if we know about specific needs. If someone hasn’t yet told us that they have a disability, they can do so by editing their profile on Student Home. Students can declare at any stage – either when they register for a qualification or once they are on their module – telling their tutor or any member of their Student Support Team. By email, phone, face to face.

Where can students find the mental health study guide on their module sites?

Via Student Home, Services for Disabled Students, Support for a Mental Health Difficulty, Studying and staying mentally healthy.

What can students do to look after their mental health throughout studying?

Remember that physical and mental health are interrelated. Working to stay happy and healthy while you study will involve many areas of your life. It is helpful to be aware of how these different elements combine to keep us healthy e.g. eating well, taking exercise, getting plenty of rest, staying connected with the important people in our lives, managing pressure maybe through yoga, practicing mindfulness or simply by making time to do the things we enjoy. Developing a good support network and knowing when to ask for help is key.

Having good organisational and time-management skills is beneficial to the whole process of studying, to your everyday life, and to future career prospects. Developing good strategies helps you to look after your mental well-being and to get the most out of your study, because you stay in control. A mental health study mentor could support you with this – so do apply for a Disabled Student Allowance which could provide you with funding for a mentor.

Should students get in touch with their Associate Lecturer or Student Support Team when experiencing a mental health difficulty?

Yes – there may well be all sorts of support and flexibility that we can discuss if we know that someone is in difficulty. The sooner the better.

Aside from the OU, what support is on offer for people with a mental health difficulty?

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Just keep thinking, I WILL get this degree’

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Keep your goals in sight’
There are many services and organisations that offer help and support to people experiencing emotional distress. Your GP may be the first person you talk to about your mental health problems. If you have a good relationship with your doctor, you may find it helpful just to know there is someone you can talk to about the feelings you are having. Your GP may refer you to specialist services if he/she feels they will help you. If you are unhappy with your own doctor, you can ask to see another doctor at the same practice or make an appointment with a different practice in your area. ‘Mind’ offer an information line to answer questions about:

- Types of mental health problem
- Where to get help
- Drug and alternative treatments
- Advocacy

The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day - in full confidence.

Nightline is a confidential listening and information service run by students for students which operates through the night. Operating hours are mainly in line with term times at campus universities.

And there is always the OU Students Association online Peer Support service.

It’s important to notice when our mental wellbeing may be slipping, so that we can take action to boost it. These are some signs that you may be experiencing lower mental wellbeing:

- Have you been withdrawing and not feeling like socialising lately?
- Have you been distancing yourself from friends, family and housemates?
- Have you felt that your academic, sporting or extracurricular performance hasn’t been where you’d like it to be recently?
- Have you experienced a significant change in your eating habits - having a much smaller, or bigger, appetite than usual?
- Have you noticed that you’re sleeping more than usual, finding it difficult to fall asleep or having difficulty staying asleep?
- Have you found it more of a struggle to take care of your personal appearance lately?

This is not an exhaustive list of things you may notice when your mental wellbeing is starting to drop; don’t treat it as a checklist where you have to notice a certain number to take action. It’s worth taking action as soon as you notice one of these signs.

Find out more about Student Minds and the work they do at: www.studentminds.org.uk

Taking care...

Student Minds, the UK’s student mental health charity, is a brilliant resource for any student wishing to build their knowledge and confidence to look after their own mental health and support other students. The following article can be found in full on their website.

Disabled Veterans scholarship fund

Above: Cherry delivers her speech at the fundraising event

Association Vice President Equal Opportunities, Cherry Day, delivered a presentation at a fundraising event for the launch of a new scholarship fund for disabled Veterans. The aim of the event was to raise enough money to be able to fund two full scholarships, an aim they ultimately met! In attendance was the OU Vice Chancellor Peter Horrocks, Milton Keynes Mayor David Hopkins, and a Colonel from the Ministry of Defence. Also at the event were local business and charities and a number of alumni, including some of whom had been on active duty during their studies.

Cherry’s speech discussed PTSD, taking inspiration from her father who was discharged from the army with a minor ‘nervous breakdown’ and as a consequence was unable to continue his studies to become a Civil Engineer.

The second half of her speech was from a current student who had struggled after completing a mission in Afghanistan. It was an incredibly low period of his life, but it was much improved after he began studying with the OU.
Do you have a disability? Make a Date with the Careers Team

Cathy Lovell, OU Careers Advisor, details how students with a disability or health issue can find great support with career planning and job seeking...

My name is Cathy and I am a careers adviser with the OU. In my time with the OU, I have noticed that sometimes students aren’t aware there is a careers and employability service, so I am writing this article as part of putting this right. I have been an OU student, so I understand the challenge of juggling many commitments at once. Because I know the challenges, it is important to me to support students in developing career plans and making all that hard work pay off.

I am particularly concerned, as I know a high number of OU students have a disability or health issue, depression/anxiety, or have a specific learning difficulty such a dyslexia or autism. If this applies to you, then you are in good company with many other OU students, and we in the careers team, want to develop resources to support you in all aspects of career planning and job seeking.

If you have a disability, learning difficulty or health issue, the careers team have an action packed autumn programme for you.

The key starting point is to explore career areas that are relevant to your interests and skills, and then to make sure you understand your rights, how to help yourself in the job market and knowing where to look for opportunities. It will also be helpful to consider whether to tell a prospective employer about your disability and if so, how you want to do this.

We want to support you with all these issues and are developing resources to help you every step of the way. Take a look at resources already on our website, which can be found in the Help Centre on Student Home.

Once on our pages, scroll down and select ‘attend a webinar’ or ‘join a forum’ and you will find:

**Webinars**
- Opening Doors: job seeking and internships for students with disabilities
- Mind the Gap: how to present a gap in your employment record
- Homeworking: opportunities working from home
- Forum: Alternative Ways of Working: If 9-5 is not for you

Many more items are being added this Autumn, and more resources are being added in the New Year:

**7 December**
- Pain & Gain: Career planning for students with long-term pain

**Coming soon...**
- **Podcasts:**
  - Telling Prospective Employers about your Disability
  - Mindfulness and Careers
  - Job Seeking with Dyslexia

**Ebook:** Job Seeking with a disability. This includes links to live vacancies and internships as well as information and advice.

We also have a Career Planning and Job Seeking Workbook which you can order from our website, or you can contact the Careers Team for one to one guidance. So, when you have submitted your first TMA, take time to look at what we have to offer – it’s never too early to start thinking about your career plans!

**Cathy Lovell**
OU Careers Adviser

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**New OpenLearn course launched...**

The OU Business School share the news about the course designed to combat growing debt problem among 16-18 year olds.

The Open University Business School is on a mission to break the cycle of debt for as many young people as possible by getting 23,000 16 to 18 year olds to sign-up to a new OpenLearn course, but they need your support.

The Business School’s True Potential Centre for the Public Understanding of Finance (True Potential PUFin) has joined forces with University Challenge star and Arithmophobia Expert, Bobby Seagull, and MoneySavingExpert’s Martin Lewis, to develop an OpenLearn course specifically designed for the financial education needs of 16 to 18 year olds. Managing My Money for Young Adults, which launched on Friday, 3 November, is delivered through video content, animations, case studies, activities and quizzes and provides 24 hours of learning broken into eight bite-sized sessions.

The course has been developed following research findings from True Potential PUFin, which reveals one in seven 18 year olds are already in debt, almost two-thirds (64%) of this age group believe this could have been avoided if they’d received more effective personal finance education, with 94% saying it would have been prevented with some form of guidance or support.

If you have connections with a school, teachers, have children in this age group or you know of anyone who would benefit from this course, please share the Managing My Money for Young Adults course link with them. The course also offers a 23-page teachers pack, which provides a step by step guide around both delivery and content of the course for teaching staff.

The course has been launched as part of an ongoing initiative that has received funding of over £2 million from a range of donors including True Potential LLP, and the Chartered Accountants’ Livery Company Charity, which has funded the development of this course.
It’s been a busy few months here in the volunteering team, as you have all been busy applying for roles since the last magazine and we have welcomed many new volunteers to #teamOUstudents!

We have a great new team of Community Champions, seven Ambassadors for the OU Students Educational Trust and we have just finished advertising for Volunteer Archivists to support the archive project which will be running 22 January – 2 February 2018! It’s an exciting opportunity to find out how archiving and cataloguing 45 years of history will work, and an excuse to have a rummage through some incredible photos of years gone by!

It’s uplifting to have so many new people applying to be part of our team, and so we thought with such great work going on across the Association we would relaunch #spotlightsunday to celebrate those star volunteers who give up their time to volunteer.

So if you know of a volunteer who deserves some recognition for the time they give up to help fellow students (and who you think deserves one of our fantastic new mugs) why not nominate them to have their contributions celebrated on the website and our social media too. And don’t forget to send us a photo when you receive your mugs!

Recent winners...

During the last month, we also celebrated Trustees week which you may have seen online - we have a great team of Team of Trustees who support our educational Trust and another team who are the main governing body for our entire organisation.

Our Trustees work hard to ensure that everything we do is in line with our mission and charitable objectives, which is good for you as students as our mission just so happens to be:

“To encourage a vibrant and active student community with open access and equal opportunity, to which all OU students feel a sense of belonging and where they are able to positively influence the student experience and engage and support each other”

If you have any ideas about how we could do this, why not take a look at our current volunteer roles as we are always looking for enthusiastic students who have ideas and a willingness to improve the OU Student experience!

Find your perfect role at: www.oustudents.com/search-roles

Best overheard #OUstudent comment: ‘Remember, anything is possible’
**Welcome to the Music Society!**

The Open University Music Society (OUMS) held its Annual Music Day and AGM in Winchester this year, seat of power of Alfred the Great, about whom Thomas Arne wrote The Masque of Alfred in 1740 (later revised as an oratorio and then an opera) from which comes the chorus ‘Rule Britannia.’

It is also the home of Winchester Cathedral where Samuel Sebastian Wesley was organist from 1849 to 1864. Wesley was the composer of such anthems as ‘Wash me Throughly,’ ‘Blessed be the God and Father,’ and ‘Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace,’ as well as a number of hymn tunes. He was responsible for the introduction of the current organ at Winchester, which is a slightly smaller version of one shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The group followed a very informative guided tour of the Cathedral, learning about the shrine of St Swithun and the chantry chapel of Bishop William of Wykeham, who founded Winchester College to educate boys who would go on to New College, Oxford, which he also founded.

After lunch and the AGM the group visited a small military museum.

The society publishes a journal three times a year with contributions from members on all things musical, including articles on members’ musical activities, reviews, general articles about music, occasional quizzes and puzzles. If you have an interest in music (as a listener, performer, concert-goer or in any other capacity) and would like more details of the society, please visit our page on the Association website.

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**Societies**

Find your tribe, have fun and enrich your study...

Joining a society is a great way to meet other OU students, have fun and enrich your OU study.

Societies are an essential part of every student’s university life and it’s no different for students of the Open University. Joining a society can help you to feel part of the community, give you a sense of belonging to your University and keep you in touch with what other students are thinking, feeling and doing.

All affiliated societies are listed on the Association website and there are over 20 to choose from. If you can’t find a society that interests you, maybe you can set up a new one? We can help get your potential society promoted and we’ll send you a set of guidelines to help you along the way.

Please contact us through the **central societies mailbox** and we will get back to you with further details.
Interested in History?

Then why not join the Open University History Society. Our Society has been affiliated to the Open University for more years than I care to remember and is run by current and past students of the Open University. Our aim is to promote the scholarly study of history but do not be alarmed its not all hard work. As a member you and your family will be able to take part in one of the several visits that we organise each year to places of historical interest. Meet up with people with like-minded interests and share your views and opinions on historical topics. Our membership is spread throughout the country and covers all aspects of the historical record. This diversity has never been a handicap for us, in fact it adds more interest. Each year we organise a non-profit making weekend seminar where members can discuss their particular area of research. Of course we set a theme for the weekend and for the February 2018 weekend this is ‘Peace after War’ (still a few places left if you are interested). We like to keep the theme as wide as possible so that whatever period of history you are interested this will not be a barrier. At this weekend we like to encourage new members to present a short paper on their selected topic, in such a friendly and easy going atmosphere there is plenty of scope for debate. Also as a member you will get free our magazine ‘Open History’ which is packed full of articles written by members, history news and book reviews.

Visit our page on the Association website to find out more.

Poetry society

The OU Poetry society holds a special meeting in November each year. Various workshops and tutorials are held and society members have time away from home to focus on their writing. In 2016, Wes Magee was the tutor. Wes has published six poetry collections for adults, and many books for young readers—fiction, poetry, plays, picture books, and anthologies. An award-winning author for children and for adults, Wes regularly visits schools, libraries, and festivals. The 2016 weekend was enjoyable and we look forward to our 2017 tutor, Maggie Sawkins, who will be at Kewstoke this year.

Membership of OU Poetry society is for any student or member of the staff, past or present, of the Open University, who has an interest in poetry. If you fulfil these criteria, you are welcome to apply for membership on the membership page of our website.

Open University Law society

Whether you are a new or existing Open University law student the Open University Law society (OULS) is for you! We are a student-led and student-run society that exists to support you throughout your law studies, introduce you to a world of law-focused social events, networking opportunities and more. The OULS provides students with a heap of resources to enrich their experiences during their law degree. Events and socials are arranged exclusively for members, as well as reminders to keep you in the loop regarding the many external law fairs and career days available to you. A dedicated news team keeps you up to date on goings on in the legal sector, in the Open University, in addition to opportunities and offers you may have missed!

Members of the OULS also have the benefit of participating in ‘mooting’ competitions as well as receiving first-hand experience and training from our renowned mooting programme. For the uninitiated, moots are fictional cases, usually set in an appellate court, in which participants take the roles of barristers and present submissions. The aim is to persuade the judge that the original decision in the fictional case was either right or wrong, depending on the role you are allocated, and this is done through the application of case law. Getting involved in mooting will help assist you with legal research, written and vocal presentation skills and introduce you to many other OU law students at all stages of their studies. It’s never too early to start and it’s hugely beneficial, regardless of whether or not you envision standing up and arguing in court as your ultimate dream.

So, what are you waiting for? Get involved, join your fellow law students, and discover what opportunities await!

The OULS is a member of the wider Open University Students Association and membership is only £5 a year.

You can find more details on how to join, what’s coming up, and who this year’s elected officers are at www.ouls.org.

Wes Magee - photo from the English Association

Mooting with the OULS

The OULS has successfully run a mooting programme for OU law students for several years. We offer training workshops, entry into national competitions representing the Open University, and even our own internal competition. Last year the ICLR Open University Mooting Competition 2017 - Grand Final was held at the Supreme Court and judged by Lady Hale herself!

Get social and network!

Networking is a key skill for prospective lawyers. Whether it’s meeting key legal figures at open days or seminars, or getting to know your fellow students at exclusive social events, the OULS has you covered! You can find more details on how to join, what’s coming up, and who this year’s elected officers are at www.ouls.org.
Stress in the workplace...

The OU Law society share ways to recognise stress in the workplace and what to do about it...

No matter who you are, you’ve probably experienced a time in your life when you have felt stressed. Students at the Open University often find themselves balancing a life of work deadlines, TMA submissions, and family commitments as standard, before adding the other strains that everyday life can throw at you such as a bereavement, money concerns, marriage and starting a family. When faced with too much, it’s no surprise that we can start feeling overwhelmed. Our individual lives are hugely varied, but something that almost everyone has in common is the need to work. This article focuses on stress in the workplace including ways to identify stress, what an employer is legally obliged to do to help keep their staff healthy and happy, and what employees can do if this isn’t happening.

Symptoms of stress
Stress can hit people suddenly or increase gradually over time. We all experience stress differently so here are a few common signs:

- Feeling irritable, aggressive, impatient or wound up
- Having problems sleeping or having nightmares
- Unable to concentrate and finding it hard to make decisions
- Smoking or drinking alcohol more than usual
- Feeling sick, dizzy or getting headaches

If left alone, stress has been proven to have an adverse effect on health. Its physical effects can include heart disease and back pain whilst also leading to psychological effects such as anxiety and depression.

What should employers do?
Employers should be aware that in 2016, work-related stress, anxiety and depression was responsible for the loss of more than 11.7 million working days at a cost of over £5.2 billion. Aside from the moral and ethical reasons to reduce this, all employers have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.

They can fulfil this obligation by ensuring that they have a robust health and safety policy in place which is understood and followed by managers. Managers should in turn be monitoring and addressing potential sources of stress, conducting risk assessments and considering whether stress may be a factor in absenteeism or poor performance.

What should employees do?

- Alert your manager or Human Resources representative as soon as you begin to notice signs of stress or foresee a stressful situation.
- Document meetings and communications where you discuss any issues you’re having which may contribute to the detrimental effects on your mental health.

What should employees do?

- Not taking issues or grievances seriously
- Unwarranted disciplinary procedures or unfair suspension
- Excessive workloads and imposing detrimental changes to an employee’s work
- Misplaced expectations regarding pay or benefits
- Causing psychiatric injury to an employee

Finally, do look out for stress and other mental health problems in colleagues and friends. Even happy events such as a wedding or expecting a child can cause people to feel immense pressure. Speaking openly and patiently with someone can help them identify when they’re stressed and what their triggers are. You may be able to help them address some of the causes of stress or assist in seeking professional support.

If you would like to speak to someone, London Nightline is a listening and information service run by students for students open from 6pm to 8am every night of term. You can talk to them about anything, big or small, knowing that you are doing so anonymously and confidentially.

How can you get in touch with them?
Phone: 0207 631 0101
Text: 07717 989 900
Skype Chat: nightline.chat
Skype Phone: londonnightline
IM: nightline.org.uk
Email: listening@nightline.org.uk

**The society of OU Philosophers**

The Society of OU Philosophers is organising a reading group covering Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. The discussions, which take place on our forum, are intended to spark debate and promote helping each other out with difficult passages. We cover new sections on a fortnightly basis (except for holiday breaks) so that everyone can find the time to follow along and participate.

Wittgenstein, the eminent 20th-century philosopher who made numerous significant contributions to philosophy, particularly in the areas of language and logic. However, he published only one book during his lifetime — the Tractatus. His other published works mainly consist of a vast collection of notes that were published after his death. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein formulates his aim as setting a limit to thought. He attempts to enquire into what can and cannot be intelligibly expressed, to draw a line between sense and nonsense.

Studying philosophy is much more fruitful and enjoyable together with other people. If you are interested in philosophy and understanding the world by means of rational enquiry, you can join our Society by visiting our website. Please feel free to join our Forum and reading group anytime - we welcome everyone from any background, no previous Philosophy experience needed.

**References:**

- Student Minds website, accessed 18th October 2017
- Health and Safety at work website, accessed 20th October 2017
- OU Students magazine, Autumn 2017 edition, accessed 18th October 2017

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Open University Psychological society hosts national conference

11-13 May 2018, Warwick University

The uncertainties, pressures and stress of 21st century life present real challenges for individuals, families, organisations, governments etc. Challenge and stress may well be the price of a meaningful life, but crossing the line between the two may be a turning point between well-being and ill-health.

Stress has a major impact on health, productivity at work and enjoyment of life. Based on an enormous body of research, psychologists have developed a good understanding of the biopsychosocial nature of stress and its impact on human experience. We also have an insight into the factors that contribute to resilience and how it can be developed and maintained in the face of the inevitable adversities of human life. This knowledge can provide a valuable perspective on life with practical implications for coping and thriving under pressure.

This conference will address issues of stress and resilience and should be of both academic and practical value to a wide variety of people. Two different but complementary strands are planned. The wide variety of people. Two different but complementary strands are planned. The

Our other stream is more work/occupation oriented. Our agreed speakers here are:

- Professor Angela Clow (University of Westminster, London) will look at how health is affected by stress (for instance how stress impacts upon circadian rhythms and becomes a major route to physical and mental ill-health, and to decreases in cognitive function).
- Professor Andrew Oswald (Warwick) will be talking on ‘Modern Research on Happiness and Mental Well-being’
- Dr Jim White, an internationally-recognised expert in stress management, will be talking about his intervention called Stress Control
- Professor Stephen Palmer (City, University of London) talking on How to reduce stress, enhance resilience and wellbeing. Stephen is an ex OU student and OUPS member.

And, for the Saturday evening session, Jim Handley will run a workshop on stress, resilience and coping in OU students (using examples from OUPS members’ responses to a survey). The workshop will address the nature of stress, coping and resilience and the of sources of stress, responses to stress and coping strategies; and how to develop a personal action plan.

Price: £290 for OUPS members / £310 for non-members (en-suite room in management conference facilities; all meals included; excellent transport links; free sports facilities and free parking).

For further details and how to book please visit our website.

Professor Frederick Toates (Open University) will give the biological background to stress; provisionally talking on ‘Lessons to be learned from the study of brain, motivation and behaviour’.

Dr Gillian Ragsdale (Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education) will take an evolutionary perspective; talking on transgenerational transmission of stress via epigenetic processes.

Our three confirmed speakers in this area first relates to biology, evolution and health.


Quiz answers:

1. Which shoe company was established in the Somerset village of Street in 1825 by its eponymous founder, a Quaker, and remains largely owned by his family?

2. Prior to Matthew Dobson’s discovery of sugar in the blood suggesting it affected the entire body, diabetes was considered a problem of what organ?

3. Which lake is formed by a natural widening of the River Adda and lies in the foothills of the Bernese Alps in the Lombardy province of northern Italy?

4. Launched in the UK in 1979, employing an audio cassette player for mass storage and a TV set as a monitor, what was the first computer in the world to sell for less than £100?

5. In David Copperfield, what is the name of Mr Wickfield’s clerk, who through manipulation and blackmail, succeeds in becoming his partner despite his protestation ‘We are so very ‘umble’?

6. In astronomy, what word describes the apparent or real motion of a satellite, such as the moon, which makes it appear to oscillate in such a way that the parts near the edge of the disk are alternately visible and invisible?

7. In 1993, which politician became the first Canadian Prime Minister to be voted out by her own constituents when Hedy Fry won Vancouver Centre for the Liberals?

8. In Englebert Humperdinck’s opera Hansel and Gretel, the witch turns the two children into what?

9. ‘Someone who leaves no turn unstoned’ was George Bernard Shaw’s description of what profession?

10. Bruxism, which usually occurs at night during sleep and may be due to nervous tensions or stress, is commonly known as what?
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