

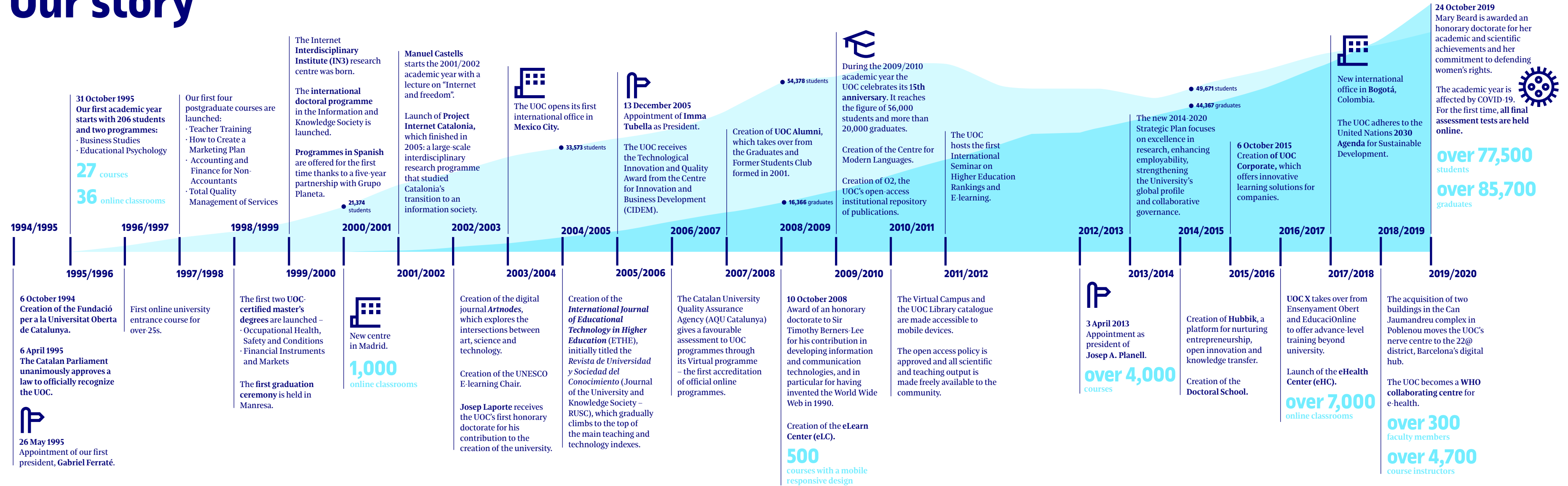
# LEARNING TRANS- FORMING

25 years promoting talent,  
generating and connecting knowledge

## TRANS- FORM

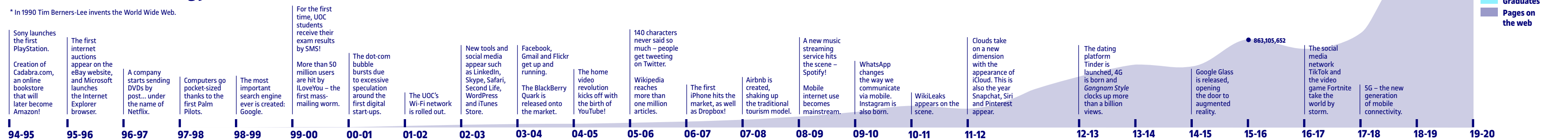
- 1** *1 tr. v.* To change in character or condition.  
*Transform a mathematical equation.*  
*Transform an alternating current or voltage.*
- 1** *2 intr. v.* To become transformed, to change.  
*The tadpole transformed into a frog.*
- 2** *1 tr. v.* To convert into a different substance.  
*The alchemists tried to transform lead into gold.*
- 2** *2 tr. v.* To radically alter. *He completely transformed his house during the renovation.*
- 2** *3 intr. v.* Only in fairy tales do frogs transform into princes.

# Our story



## Evolutions in technology

\* In 1990 Tim Berners-Lee invents the World Wide Web.



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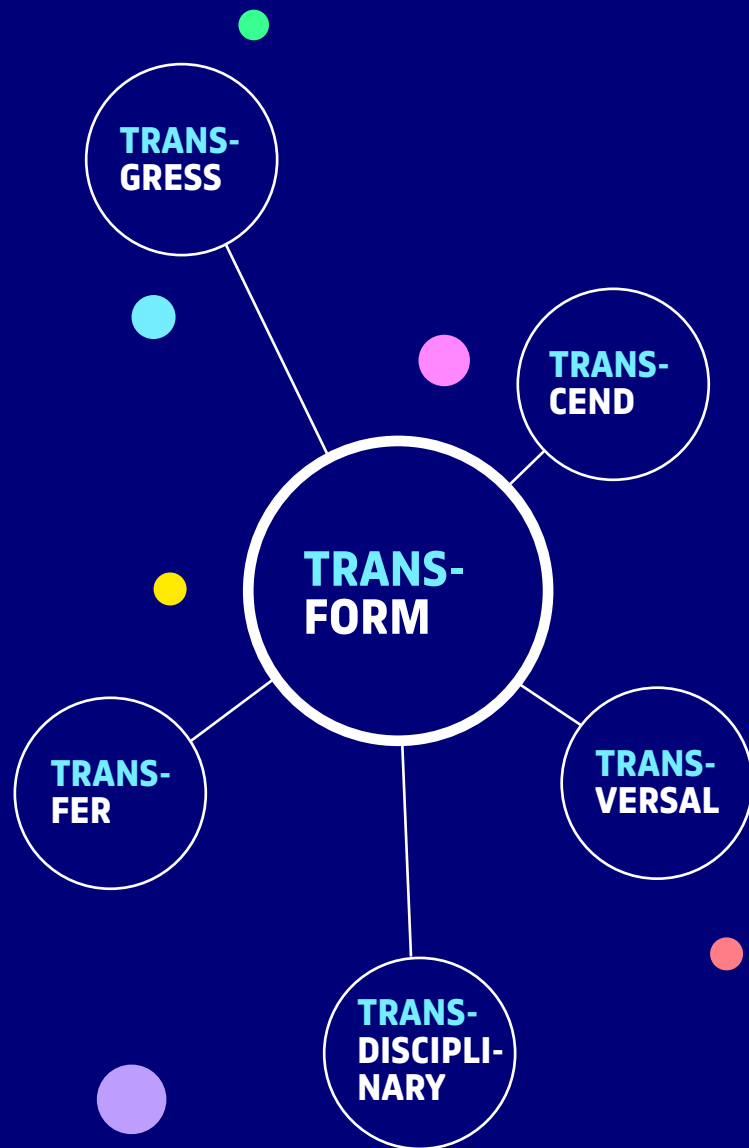


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# 25 years learning and transforming



Twenty-five years after its foundation, the UOC is a real point of leverage for changes in society

Founding the world's first online university might have seemed an outlandish venture back in 1995, but now, 25 years later, it has proved to be a stroke of genius making us a real point of leverage for changes in society.

Accordingly, as focal points for this commemorative 25th anniversary publication, we have chosen to highlight some of the people who represent these societal transformations: sixteen active and committed members of our community with diverse backgrounds, profiles and fields of activity, people who have chosen to grow and help others grow, to be drivers of change powered by knowledge.

From cover to cover, these pages are a testament to the progress forged by the 85,700 people who have graduated with us, by the teaching staff who have guided them, by our research groups and administrative staff, and through interactions and collaborations with other schools and universities, research centres, companies, administrations, institutions and suppliers. Last but not least, this progress is thanks to our ambition to develop people's talent anywhere we can and make ourselves a hub of knowledge and learning.

This societal impact – helping to form educated citizens with a critical spirit, ready for the challenges of the future – is something we have strived for since we first started out. At the UOC, we share the belief that transformation requires a different kind of training. It requires a self-demanding attitude, effort and openness to the rest of the world, while evolving and adapting to learn from the past and face the future with renewed energy.

We are a university that is open to people – wherever they are, wherever they come from – and is capable of understanding their personal and collective learning goals as its own.

My thanks to the entire UOC community for its transformative work and effort.

Thank you for these first 25 years!

**Pere Vallès**  
Chair, UOC Board of Trustees





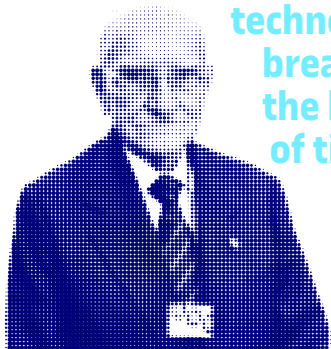
# 25 years, 3 stages

## Starting out



### Creating a distanceless university

“We wanted to use new technology to break down the barriers of time and space”



**Gabriel Ferraté i Pascual (Reus 1932)**  
Founding president (1995 - 2005)

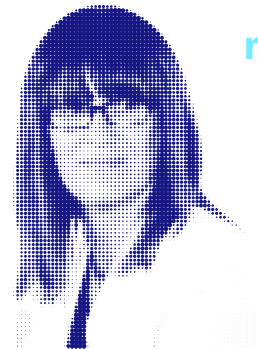
The ingenuity and visionary thinking of Ferraté and his team set the bar for our University's beginnings, growth and transformation over the course of its first 10 years. The former UOC president said: “Founding a university where every student would have to own a computer and log on to an online network was, at that time, a pipe dream. Public internet for widespread use didn't even exist then!” The UOC leveraged the incipient World Wide Web to become the first distanceless university, with its mission to provide lifelong learning.

## Consolidation



### Scaling up activity, openness and connectivity

“The UOC has progressed from being a major project to being a major university, a pioneer receiving wide acclaim”



**Imma Tubella i Casadevall (La Bisbal de l'Empordà, 1953)**  
UOC president (2005 - 2013)

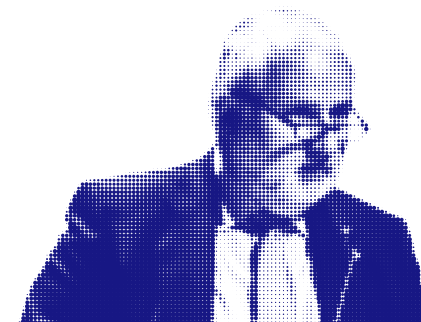
President Tubella's time in office saw the consolidation of an innovative, trailblazing university that was full of potential both within Catalonia and beyond. “The figures are testament to the impact the UOC has on society and our commitment to disseminating, sharing and generating knowledge,” explained Tubella. The UOC led the way in learning technologies, and in research into online learning and into the information and knowledge society. It strengthened its position as a financially sustainable institution.

## Expansion



### Educational transformation, with research at its core

“The UOC aims to continue in its role as a vector for change and progress, and to continue to play a part in transforming and connecting people, societies and ideas”

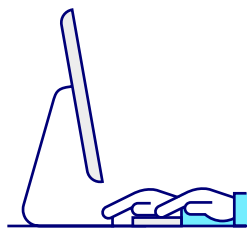


**Josep A. Planell i Estany (Barcelona, 1951)**  
UOC president (2013 - present)

For Planell it is clear that, from the outset, the UOC has played a leading role in the deep-rooted changes that are reshaping education and training, research and knowledge, employment and life itself. “Remaining faithful to our founding spirit and our will to serve the public and make a social impact demands that we continue to pave the way in promoting our society's digital transformation, in upgrading our learning model, in nurturing up-and-coming talent and, above all, in strengthening our citizens' critical spirit and civic-mindedness.”

# The world's first online university

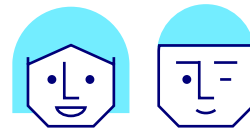
In 1995 the world's first online university was created: the UOC. It wasn't conceived as a distance-learning university, rather it exploited the arrival of the internet to become the first university without distances, with the mission of providing people with lifelong education. Now, 25 years later and in constant evolution, the UOC is working to become a 100% digital organization in this new global era.



**77,500**  
students



**85,700**  
graduates

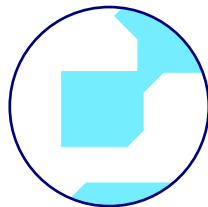


**5,300**  
course instructors and tutors

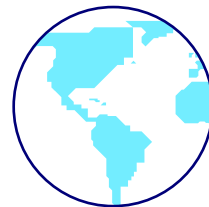
## The UOC has students in 142 countries



over  
**44,000**  
students in Catalonia



over  
**24,500**  
students in the rest of Spain



over  
**6,500**  
students in the rest of the world

Figures from the 2019/2020 academic year

## TRANS- GRESS

*tr. v. To contravene a command or law. There are legal consequences for companies that transgress the rules.*



## Lifelong training

**25**  
bachelor's degrees

**54**  
university master's degrees

**8**  
doctoral programmes

**15**  
UOC-certified master's degrees

**195**  
postgraduate diplomas and specialization programmes

**297**  
seminars, courses, language courses and professional specialization programmes

**208**  
open courses

**10**  
vocational training courses<sup>1</sup>

Programmes and courses offered in the 2020/2021 academic year

<sup>1</sup> Higher-level vocational training courses (Jesuïtes Educació in collaboration with the UOC)

**A highly diverse range of courses that adapts to lifelong learning needs, is accredited by quality assurance agencies and aligns with the European university standards**

**“The UOC has to be the leading university for distance learning”**



# Public service, private management

**Josep Bargalló**

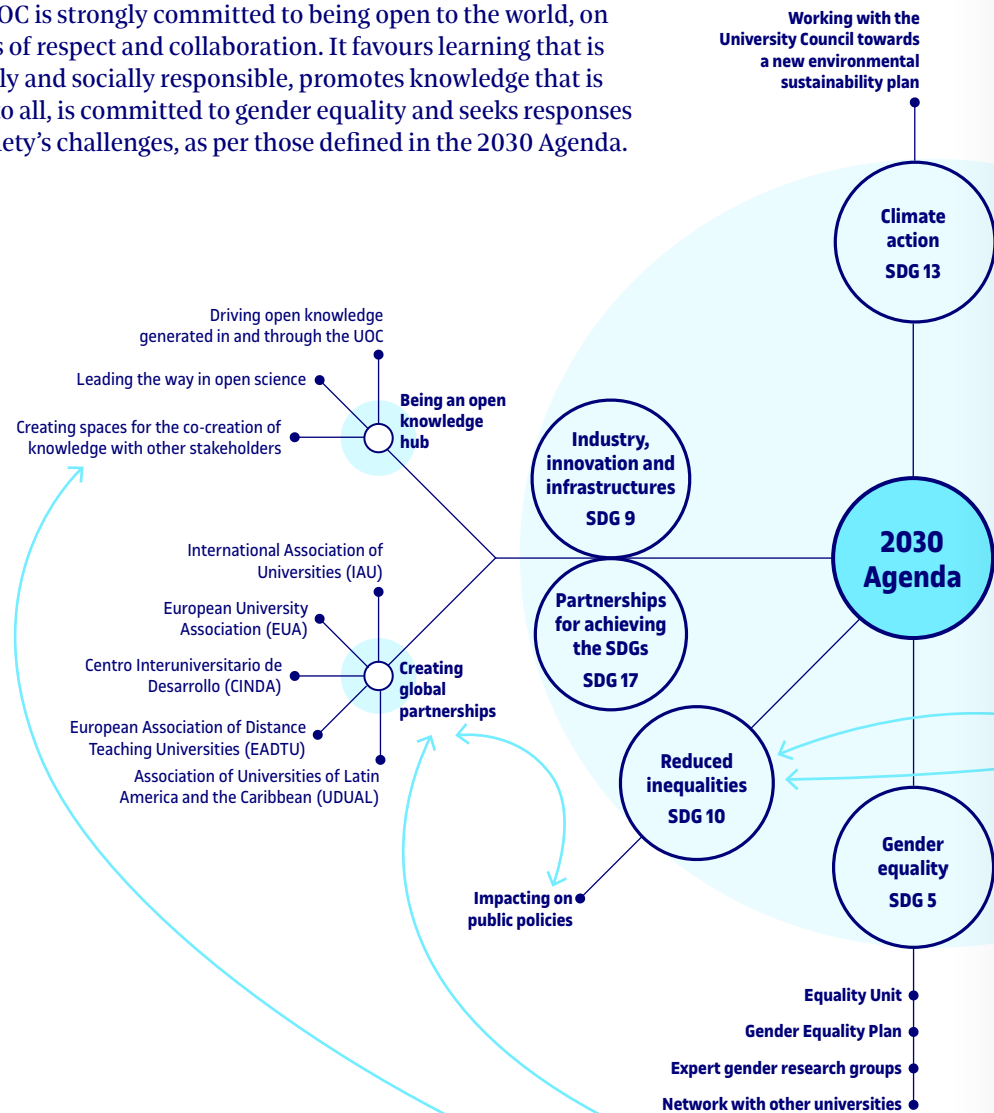
The Government of Catalonia's Minister for Education and member of the UOC's Board of Trustees

The Catalan Parliament voted unanimously in favour of the law to create the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya on 29 March 1995. Josep Bargalló, the current Catalan Minister for Education, was one of the members of parliament who spoke during the debate: “We began to approach the creation of the UOC as a distance education university from a modern point of view. It would be managed through a private foundation, but offer a public service and the majority stakeholding would be in public hands.”

The UOC was founded in 1995 with the backing of the Government of Catalonia: “It began by offering a public service and university-level distance education for students who, due to their work or where they lived, couldn't attend a more traditional university.” A unique university, working in parallel to the others, it offers a public service under private management: “This model, no doubt, lets the University overcome certain problems faster, and allows for human resources management that is better able to adapt to the constant changes.” 25 years on from its foundation, Bargalló believes the UOC “has to be the leading university for innovation in distance learning and the research centre for distance education in Catalonia. It has the expertise, the talent and the years of experience.”

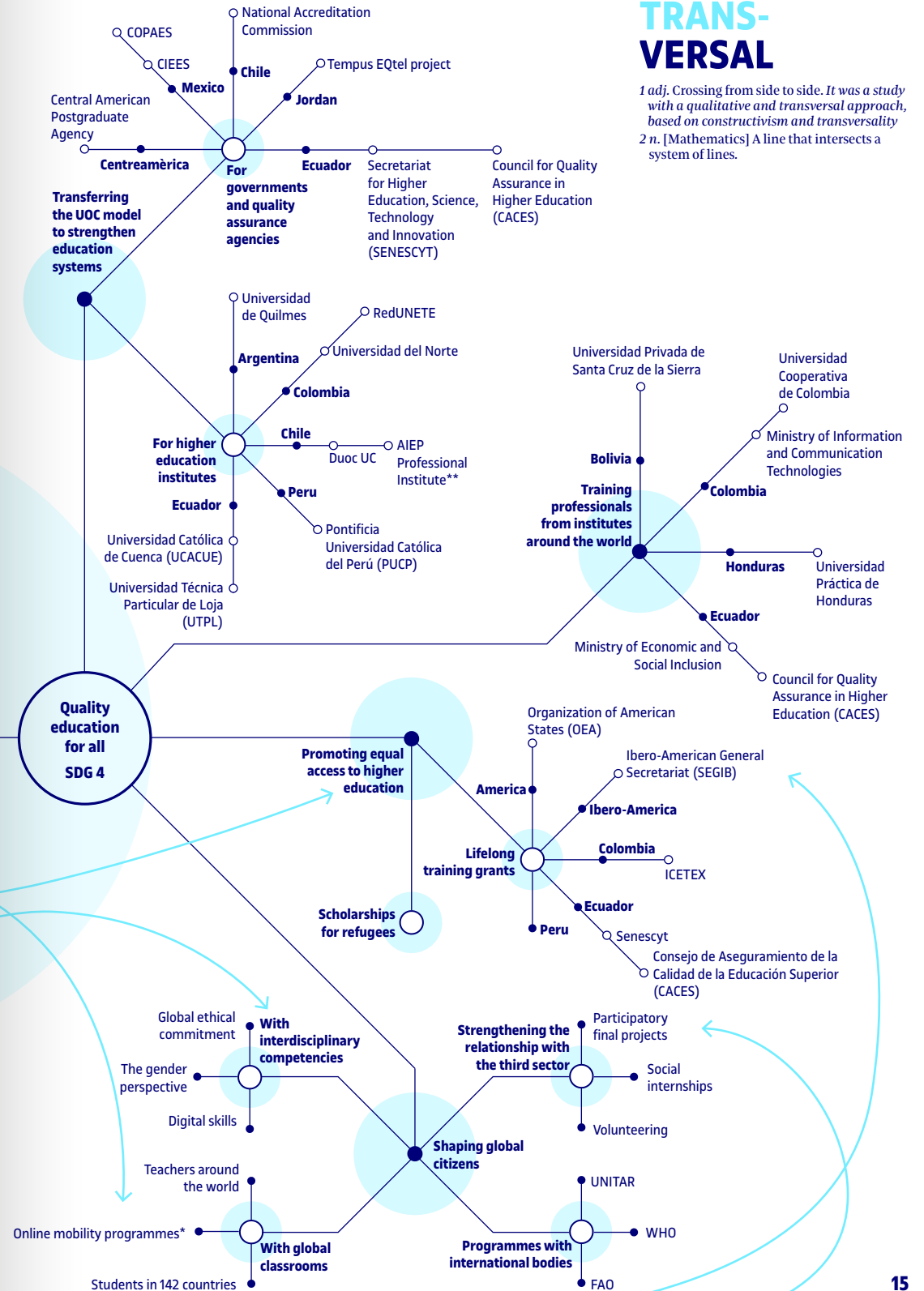
# A global university with societal impact

The UOC is strongly committed to being open to the world, on a basis of respect and collaboration. It favours learning that is globally and socially responsible, promotes knowledge that is open to all, is committed to gender equality and seeks responses to society's challenges, as per those defined in the 2030 Agenda.



\* More than 2,000 students from universities in Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Peru.

\*\* We will be giving online consultancy starting in December 2020.

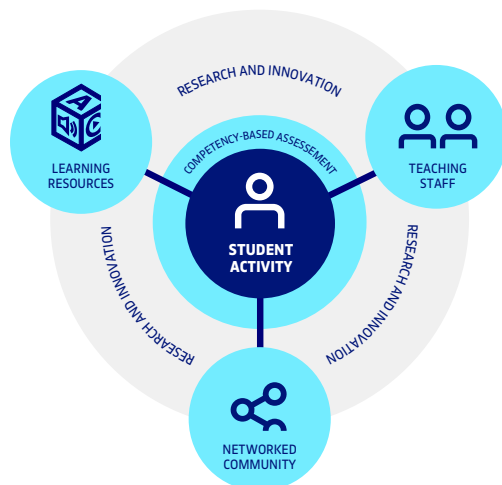




# Leaders in quality e-learning

The UOC's learning model puts students centre stage, seeking to constantly improve their competencies. It is based on continual support, finding solutions to activities, and collaboration between students. With a diverse range of courses available at the UOC, the learning model adapts to students' varying personal and professional profiles.

## How to study at the UOC



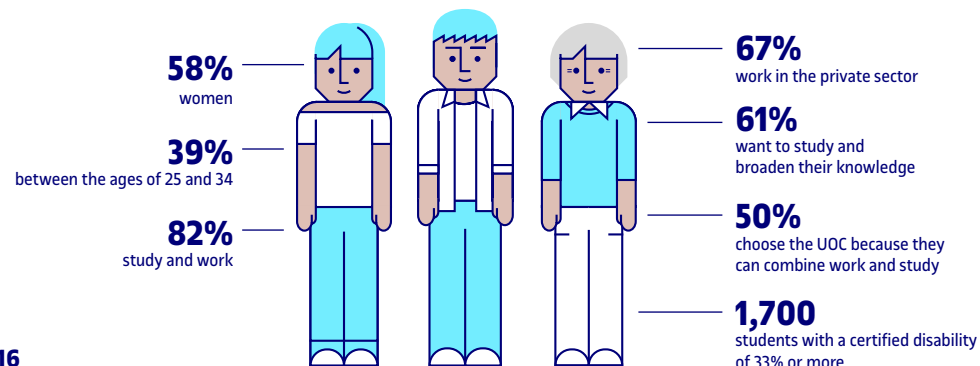
## Exchange students 154

Academic year 2019/20

The online mobility programme makes it possible to open up access to international educational experiences and strengthen peoples' global competencies.

**87% of graduates would choose to study at the UOC again**

## Who studies at the UOC?



# TRANS-FER

1 tr. v. To convey from one person, place, or situation to another. *He was transferred from Weston Hospital to Frenchay.*

21 tr. v. To pass over possession or control of. *He transferred the house to the new owners. The company will transfer the money tomorrow.*

22 tr. v. An act, process, or instance of transferring.

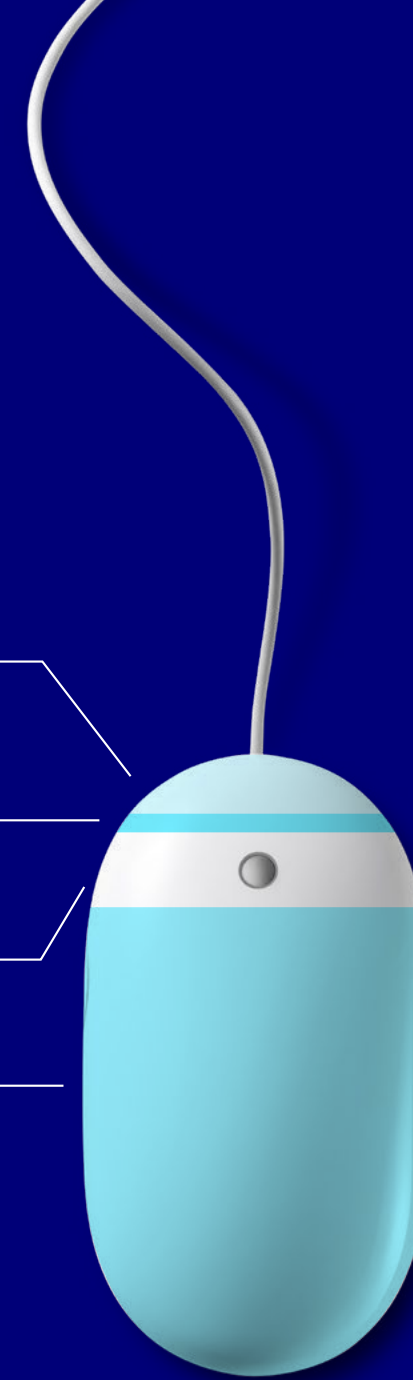
## A great team

**325**  
faculty and researchers

**153**  
full-time researchers

**667**  
administrative staff

**5,300**  
course instructors and tutors



Figures for faculty, research and administrative staff as of 31 December 2019. Figures for course instructors and tutors from the 2019/2020 academic year.



Times Higher Education World University Rankings

Global  
**Top 150**  
Young universities

Ibero-America  
**1st**  
Online university

Spain  
**2nd**  
University under 50 years old

# No excuses

## Hisham Al-Omeisy

Alumnus. Graduate of the Master's Degree  
in Conflict, Peace and Security

Hisham Al-Omeisy is a journalist who originally comes from Yemen. He was kidnapped by the Houthi rebels during the country's civil war, but fortunately after several months he was released. His optimism and desire to get back into a routine led him to take the UOC/UNITAR Master's Degree in Conflict, Peace and Security, which he successfully completed in 2019.

Can you study for a master's degree during a bombardment? The experiences of 300 aid workers, military personnel and employees of the United Nations and other international organizations who have studied in the UOC's online classrooms while posted to peacekeeping operations prove that it is possible. Since 2013, the UOC and UNITAR – the United Nations Institute for Training and Research – have been providing training in conflict management, peace and security to professionals on humanitarian and environmental missions around the world. There are more than 300 students on the master's degree, and around a hundred graduates such as Hisham Al-Omeisy, all wanting to build a better world: "I'm from a country that has been ravaged by poverty, but there's no reason to be ashamed of being poor. There is no excuse for ignorance in our information era."

**“I decided to acquire  
the tools needed to help  
save my generation  
and the next”**



**“Online education  
is profoundly  
democratizing”**



## Opening doors

### Elizabeth Salmon

Course instructor for the University Master's Degree in Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization

Elizabeth Salmon is a lawyer and holds a PhD in Public Law. In 2018 she became the first Latin American woman to chair the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council, a post she still holds today. She also heads the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, as well as being *amicus curiae* of the Special Justice for Peace in Colombia.

Ms Salmon is also a course instructor for the University Master's Degree in Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization at the UOC, a programme that has seen a considerable rise in the number of Latin American students. According to Salmon, this overall growing interest in studying human rights is due to the historical political situation in the region, which has passed through dictatorships and armed conflicts to regimes that advocate total democratization. She sees online education as a gateway to crossing borders and overcoming different economic, cultural, political and legal circumstances, which is a huge plus: “Online education is profoundly democratizing because it reaches the places it needs to reach, it's received by people who truly need it, and it also offers the chance to have high educational standards.”





# It's never too late

## María José Daussà

Graduate of the Bachelor's Degree in Humanities.  
Student on the Master's Degree in the Ancient  
Mediterranean

At 77 years young, María José Daussà exercises her body at the gym and her brain at the UOC. Having completed her degree in Humanities, she is now taking on the Master's Degree in the Ancient Mediterranean, which is offered jointly by the UOC, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the University of Alcalá. She schedules her studies around another very special role: taking care of her great-granddaughter. María sees more pros than cons in studying online. Indeed, with perseverance, no mountain is too high for her to climb, even if that mountain is a computer.

"I'm thankful that the classes are online because it's helped me to learn more about computers as well," said María, who discovered the UOC over 20 years ago while working at her own company. "I decided that I would study at a slow but steady pace and really engage in continuing education. I'm not out for a certificate or a piece of paper, I just want to keep on learning." She believes that self-discipline is key and has three hours a day set aside just for studying. "The more you master a field of knowledge, the more you realize that there's so much more to learn. A degree fills you with knowledge, sure, but most importantly, it equips you with a reading list to follow up on." And she does so day after day: "At the age I'm at now I would choose to study again, and I'd do it at the same university."

**"I'm not out for a certificate or a piece of paper, I just want to keep on learning"**





# Breaking down barriers

## Vanessa Fuentes

Graduate of the Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Tutor for the University Master's Degree in Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders

Vanessa Fuentes has cerebral palsy, but that doesn't mean that she's unwell and she has never let it be an excuse not to reach for her goals. The way she sees it, she's just wired differently. "We should be treated like anyone else," rather than being made to "constantly prove, in every area, the abilities that lie beyond our physical constraints". She is now a UOC alumnus and works as a tutor for the University Master's Degree in Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders.

Vanessa attended a special needs school until the age of 18, but found herself wanting to be part of a regular classroom. She pursued her education at a school for adults, which proved to be a highly constructive first experience with inclusion, before completing a bachelor's degree in Social Integration. Vanessa then wanted to become a psychologist, so she enrolled on a programme at a traditional university. She recalls the first two years going really well, but after that it became too much of an uphill battle. In fact, if it hadn't been for the UOC, she would have had to drop out of university completely. "The UOC's online environment is inclusive of people with disabilities," she said. After completing her Psychology degree, she soldiered on and eventually got her master's degree in Education and ICT (E-learning).

**“Only when physical, sensory and intellectual diversity is held in the same esteem as other diversities can we hope to see real inclusion”**



**“The UOC’s flexible model means students can study and work anywhere and wherever they want”**



# Always supported

## Nati Cabrera

Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences. Member of the Edul@b research group

Nati Cabrera is the director of the University Master’s Degree in Quality Management and Evaluation in Higher Education, a programme that resulted from a collaboration between the UOC, the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education to train experts in higher education quality.

“When the educational process offered by an institution is capable of bringing out the best in each person, that’s when it’s truly a quality process,” said Cabrera, who also pointed out that quality online learning can help ensure equal access to higher education for all. Cabrera considers that the cornerstone of the UOC’s learning model is its flexibility: “Students are able to study and work wherever they are and at any time.” And this is a model that also fosters constant interaction both with the teaching staff and among students themselves: “The UOC’s educational model doesn’t promote learning in isolation. There is a necessary element of individual self-learning, but we also encourage constant interaction: between the student and the course instructor, and between the students themselves.”

# Digital natives

## Ricard Mateu

Director of Technology

Notwithstanding the essentially digital nature of the UOC, the arrival of COVID-19 also sped up the move online of all the University's processes. This challenge was taken on by the team led by Ricard Mateu, director of Technology, which worked to guarantee that all employees teleworking were able to work effectively from home, and to ensure the success of the final assessment tests, which were all held online this year.

Technology has always played a part in every process at the UOC. And the new status quo triggered by the global pandemic has sped up certain processes: "Having all the tests online is clearly a step we would have had to take in the future anyway, because it completes our end-to-end online university model," explained Mateu. Previously the online tests were only aimed at students living abroad, but that changed in June 2020 when 30,000 online final assessment tests for 1,400 courses were taken in just six days: "Technology was a key element without which it wouldn't have been possible to do all of this, but there were also major efforts made by the faculties, who had to change the assessment processes, and by the Academic Services team, who had to re-engineer it all," said Mateu. However, the move online is still ongoing: "In the future we want to strengthen the automated checks of students' identities during the entire assessment process, analysing patterns such as their keystroke dynamics," he explained.

**“Having 100% of the tests online makes our digital university model complete”**

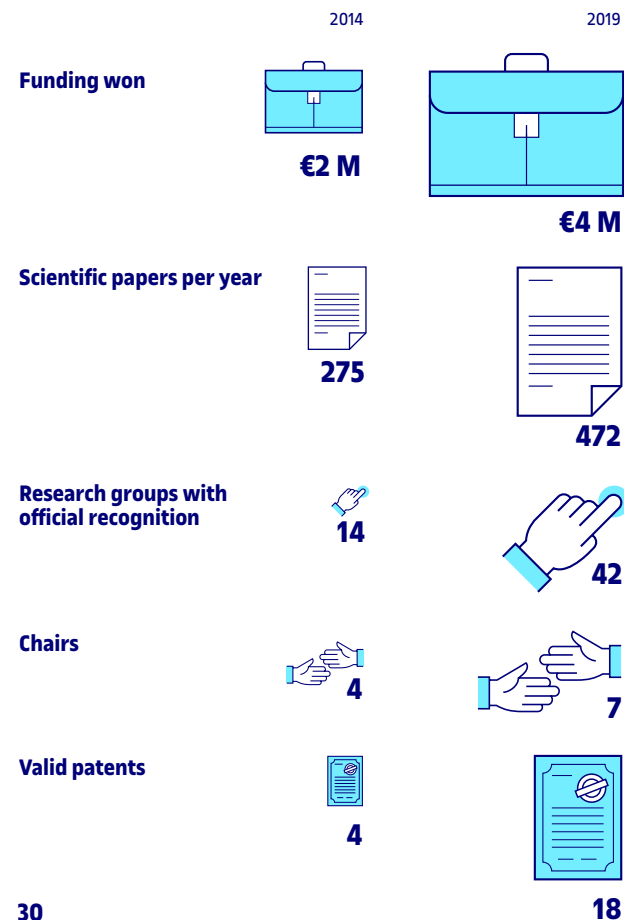




# The UOC is research and innovation

Research is an essential part of the UOC's mission. There is particular interest in interdisciplinary research, with a focus on areas where technology and human & social sciences converge. The UOC's research centres and its academic faculties lead these activities, and its Doctoral School also plays a part.

## Five-year evolution



## Two research centres, a doctoral school and a learning innovation centre

- Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3)**, specialized in internet and the effects of technology on human activity.
- eHealth Center**, an institute specialized in e-health (health, quality of life and ICTs).
- eLearn Center**, which promotes teaching innovation in e-learning.

## The fruits of innovation: university spin-off companies

The UOC's R&I activities have led to the creation of three spin-off companies:

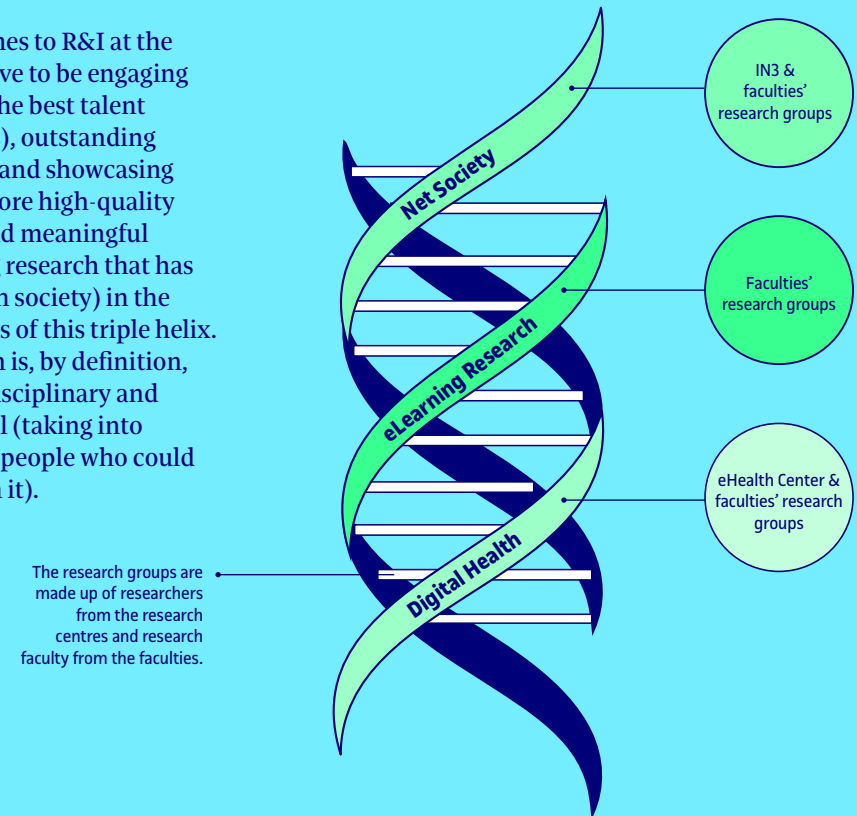
- Open Evidence**, which carries out consultancy and research in the areas of social sciences and human behaviour, ICT and data science.
- Care Respite** (created with the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the company Acceplan, with researchers from the University of Barcelona and the Computer Vision Centre) provides a remote e-health system for monitoring dependent people, assisting the work of carers.
- Immersium Studio**, specialized in augmented reality and immersive solutions for teaching, culture, health and tourism.

## TRANS-DISCIPLINARY

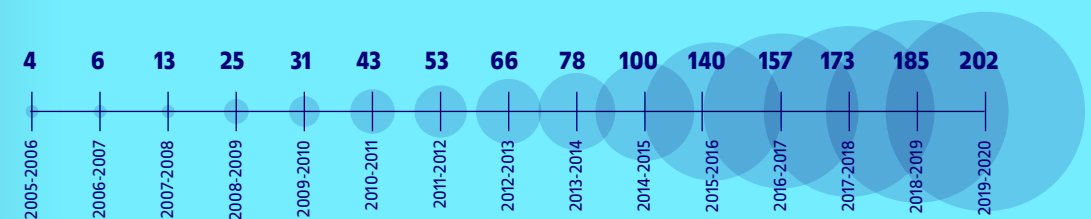
adj. [Education] Involving two or more academic, scientific or artistic disciplines.

## Engaging, outstanding, meaningful

When it comes to R&I at the UOC, we strive to be engaging (capturing the best talent and projects), outstanding (publishing and showcasing more and more high-quality research) and meaningful (conducting research that has an impact on society) in the three strands of this triple helix. Our research is, by definition, both transdisciplinary and translational (taking into account the people who could benefit from it).



## Our doctoral degree holders





# Knowledge to transform the world

## Mayo Fuster

Principal investigator of the IN3's Digital Commons group

Anthropologist, economist and doctoral degree holder in Political and Social Sciences, Mayo Fuster is an expert in collaborative economies and is the principal investigator of the Digital Commons (DIMMONS) group at IN3. She is an adjunct professor at Harvard University and a consultant to institutions including Barcelona City Council and the European Commission.

Mayo Fuster is an expert in the collaborative economy and participates in international forums on alternative models of economic production. But what is the collaborative economy? "It involves peer production among a community of individuals, with the support of a digital platform, capital and work, and it can work in many fields," explained Fuster. The DIMMONS group has three main areas of research. The first is socioeconomic innovation, commons-based peer production, and economically distributed production modes. The second concerns public policies for economic regulation and stimulus. And the third relates to "studying how collaborative and co-creative research methodologies can reinvent the way research is conducted".

**“We’re studying how collaborative and co-creative research methodologies can reinvent the way research is conducted”**



**“Someone once said to me: ‘But you’re a girl, how come you’re doing a doctoral programme in information technologies?’”**



## Breaking down stereotypes

### Samia Oukemeni

Doctoral degree holder in Network and Information Technologies

Samia Oukemeni is an expert in internet security and privacy and earned her PhD from the UOC’s doctoral programme in Network and Information Technologies. Her doctoral thesis dealt with privacy on social media. Her advice: “Before you post anything on social media, stop and think a minute.”

While Samia Oukemeni was doing her master’s thesis, she decided that she wanted to take her research further with doctoral studies. “I was rereading two of the articles on my subject that I’d liked most, both for what they said and the way they were written and set out. And it turned out they were by UOC students. So, I checked to see if the UOC, which I’d not heard of, offered doctoral programmes, and it turned out it did!” She had two options: doing it online over five years, or on-site in Barcelona, with a working group and the chance of a scholarship. She went for the second option. Oukemeni has developed an algorithm tool that assesses internet privacy and can be very useful both in allowing users to learn to be more cautious, and in helping provider companies to implement new, more secure systems.



# A hub for open knowledge

“As researchers we must provide data and scientific evidence on the issues of most importance to society, raising awareness about changes that can lead to a fairer and more sustainable society.” So said Mila Sáinz, the principal investigator of the Gender and ICT (GenTIC) research group, which studies gender in the network society.

Systematically opening up UOC knowledge is a commitment to the present and the future, based on open science and related to responsible research and innovation and open access educational resources.

## **Knowledge that helps to build a better world**

The principles of the 2030 Agenda Goals help highlight and strengthen the relationship between UOC research and improvements for society. The drive is to open up knowledge to all, but not just that. To give an example: almost half the research carried out through the IN3 research institute is committed to reducing inequality in any form.

The paradigm shift towards more open knowledge not only means making knowledge accessible, but also generating and interconnecting knowledge. In this regard the UOC works to foster open innovation and the co-creation of knowledge through participative processes that have a more holistic approach and are more closely aligned with social reality and challenges, while also taking into account knowledge from outside the academic sphere. To promote and support all these changes, universities must also encourage reflection on research assessment and evaluation methods.

## 50% of original papers by UOC researchers are published in open access.

... for its academic publications to be open access by default.

## The UOC's commitment for 2030

... to ensure that all research data created at the UOC follows **FAIR** principles.

The FAIR principles (findability, accessibility, interoperability and reuse of digital assets) refer to whether data can be easily found using metadata and are accessible through standardized, interoperable and reusable protocols.

**“Experts have  
been warning  
of a pandemic  
for years”**

# New challenges, new solutions

## Salvador Macip

Professor at the Faculty of Health Sciences

Salvador Macip is a doctor of medicine and a professor at both the UOC's Faculty of Health Sciences and the University of Leicester's Department of Molecular and Cell Biology. His area of research, both at the UOC and at Leicester, is cancer and ageing.

Salvador Macip has published several popular science books. Two of these, *Les grans epidèmies modernes* (The great modern epidemics; La Campana, 2010) and *Enemigos microscópicos: virus, bacterias y vacunas* (Microscopic enemies: viruses, bacteria and vaccines; Materia, 2016), are currently more relevant than ever. “We all need more basic scientific knowledge so that these things don't take us by surprise,” said Macip regarding the situation generated by COVID-19. Better global health (the analysis of how the disruption and overexploitation of ecosystems can lead to health problems) could possibly have minimized the impact of the pandemic and brought it under control sooner: “Pandemics are a global problem, and if we leave each country to its own devices, things can get worse, because decisions are often made based on political rather than scientific criteria, and that's highly dangerous.”





# Creating synergies

## Pau Alsina

Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities is promoting the next International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA), an annual congress that is coming to Barcelona in 2022: “It spans nations, sectors and institutions, and connects art, design, science, technology, thought and society through a theme that is more relevant today than ever: possibles,” explained professor Pau Alsina.

Distance labs and virtual reality open up new opportunities in online programmes that broaden the horizons of on-site learning. An example of this is the online Bachelor’s Degree in Art run jointly with Museo Reina Sofía: “The online environment enables a learning process to be created that is not focused so much on developing technical dexterity and expertise but on acquiring the competencies, skills and concepts that are necessary for learning how to paint.” Alsina is also editor of the e-journal *Artnodes*, which contributes to the dissemination, debating, discussion and sharing of results of research carried where art, science and technology converge: “A scientific journal is not just a publication; with time, it also becomes a knowledge community.” After almost 20 years it has become a leading international journal.

**“A scientific journal is not just a publication; with time, it also becomes a knowledge community”**



# Making your dreams come true

## Luis Villarejo

Co-founder of the spin-off Immersium Studio

How do you bring a triceratops to life in a museum? Ask the UOC spin-off company developed by Luis Villarejo, a computer engineer and expert in natural language processing. Villarejo had been working for over a decade in the field of educational technology before the know-how and experience he had gained in augmented reality led to the creation of Immersium Studio.

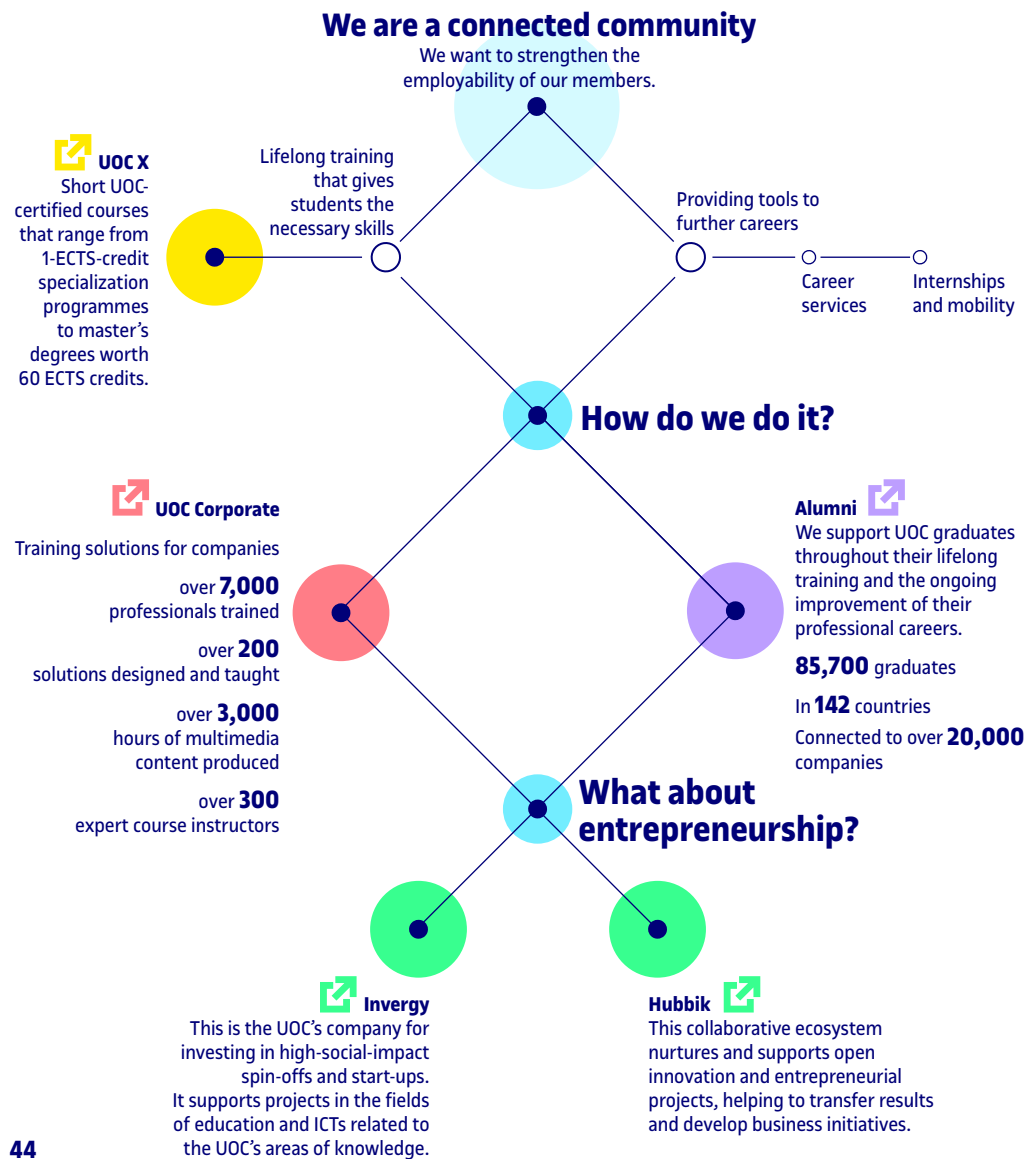
Every year, eight projects developed in the university community are promoted at SpinUOC, an event dedicated to entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer. Finalists like Villarejo have around five minutes to present their idea to agents and organizations that might be interested in implementing or promoting the projects in their fields. Immersium Studio is one of these spin-offs and a company that has received more than one award: “We were awarded the top prize for best product showcased at this year’s International Conference of the Immersive Learning Research Network, the most important annual conference for immersive learning. The prize means a lot to us since this is the leading immersive learning organization in the world. Winning this award is a sign that we’re doing the right thing.”

**“We create virtual and augmented reality experiences, especially for education, culture and tourism”**



# Reinventing the future

The UOC's courses place an emphasis on employability: ensuring graduates have all the knowledge, skills and capabilities they need to work professionally in their chosen fields.



## Alumni: a lifelong relationship

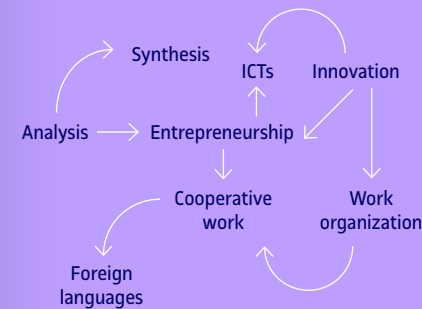
Alumni offers its community lifelong learning to help people continually refresh their professional skills and ensure the tools they need to develop their careers, while also nurturing entrepreneurial initiative and competitiveness. The UOC Alumni community is made up of people who go a step further: people from around the world, committed to social progress and change, who achieve what they set out to do: #whatyouwanttobe.

## TRANS-CEND

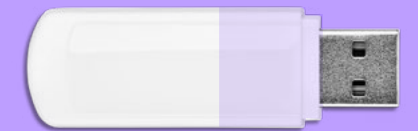
1 *tr. v.* To rise above or go beyond the limits of.  
2 *intr. v.* To triumph over the negative or restrictive aspects of.  
2 *intr. v.* To rise above or extend notably beyond ordinary limits.

## What is the profile of our graduates?

### Main skills

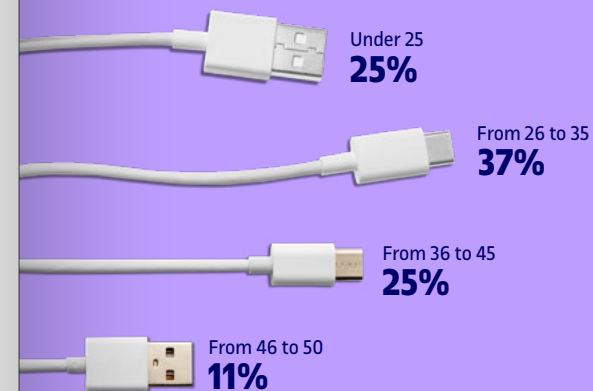


### Programmes

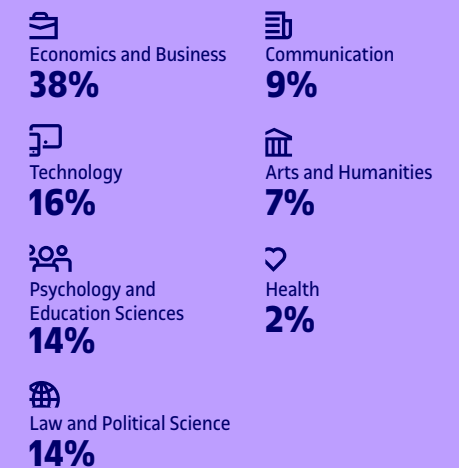


Bachelor's degree **65%**  
Master's degree and postgraduate **35%**

### Studying at any time and in any situation



### Sectors and areas of study



**“Graduates of online degrees stand out thanks to their capacity for autonomy and self-directed-learning”**



## Outstanding skills

### Elsa Puig

Talent seeker at Entretalent

Elsa Puig is a talent seeker, working for an organization focused on people management and professional skills training. She often selects professionals with UOC degrees and also recommends the University to companies that are looking for employee training options. She has her eye out for people who are not only capable of organizing their own work efficiently, but also eager enough to continuously adapt to changing environments.

UOC alumni excel thanks to their unique skills. According to Elsa, “they are highly proficient in self-management, self-learning, discipline and self-motivation; they are proactive information seekers when faced with a problem, and they are adept at using digital tools”. Ms Puig also considers that graduates who dovetailed studies and work “are more diligent and are better trained in time management”. In short, UOC alumni perfectly fit the demands of companies that “value students’ ability to settle quickly into their jobs and offer new viewpoints and approaches”. The pandemic has also shaken up the rules of the game, sparking a rise in the number of 100% online positions. “Graduates of online degrees are used to feeling part of a team, they have a keener ability to forge relationships over the internet and are less hindered by the constraints of physical distance”.



# A professional leap forward

## Sabela García

Alumnus. Graduate of the University Master's Degree in Cultural Management

From a very young age she knew she wanted to be part of an orchestra, but she never imagined she would end up managing one. Sabela García is a professional violinist and graduate of the UOC's University Master's Degree in Cultural Management. She is the technical director of the Royal Philharmonic of Galicia – a dream come true.

“At the age of twenty-eight, I realised that my career as an independent musician would lead to a dead end. So I thought I might work in something related to what I've studied and what I'm passionate about. I'd just finished a degree in Art History and Baroque Violin, but I was an over-qualified young adult without a stable job,” explained García. And that's when her career changed direction: “I loved music and I liked to think up and organize projects and put them into action. The master's degree gave me the theoretical foundation and the technical tools I needed to take a huge leap forward in my career,” said García, who has finally made two dreams come true: working in a top position in cultural management in a leading orchestra, and returning to her native region.

**“Doing the Master's Degree in Cultural Management was one of the smartest decisions of my life”**



**“We want to create a learning model similar to that of the UOC, whereby people are the main protagonists of their own development”**



## Solutions for companies

### Joseba Arano

Director of People, Quality, and Ethical, Responsible and Excellent Management at Calidad Pascual

Joseba Arano has over 20 years' experience in human resources and quality management at large corporations like Calidad Pascual, where he has led highly complex transformation projects. To help him in his drive to create a workforce of professionals in constant renewal, he looked to UOC Corporate, which specializes in the design of innovative training programmes.

“The UOC is an institution that has consistently responded well over time to our company's changing needs,” said Arano. As a company, Pascual has always sought to help its people develop, to transform their environment and contribute their best. And UOC Corporate has been there to help, designing specific programmes to meet their requirements. Arano recalled: “Irrespective of previous experiences, with the redefinition of our learning model in 2019, we saw an opportunity to work decisively across a broad range of leadership skills. We saw UOC Corporate as a partner.” Now Pascual is proposing “a learning model similar to that of the UOC, whereby people are the main protagonists of their own development and give the best of themselves”.

# A change of life direction

## Anna Ferry

Alumnus. Course instructor and tutor at the Faculty of Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications

After a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design at the BAU university design centre in Barcelona, Anna Ferry decided to take the Bachelor's Degree in Multimedia at the UOC. She was awarded a special award for the best academic record in her year, and the National Final Project Prize from the Spanish Ministry of Universities. Now she combines her work as a front-end and back-end developer with her activity as a course instructor and tutor.

"I created a web application to offer professional services, a kind of Wallapop for odd jobs," said Ferry about her final bachelor's degree project. It was the culmination of a very rewarding few years of study: "Multimedia studies include so many different areas that as well as learning a little bit about everything, it helps you to see which area is most suited to your profile," she added. The degree changed her life in every way: "As well as the most obvious aspect, i.e. gaining knowledge, the Bachelor's Degree in Multimedia has completely changed my life, because it was in the 3D Design class that I met my current partner, who I have a beautiful daughter with. I also met fantastic people (just because it's an online degree doesn't mean you can't make good friends!) and it's furthered my career."

 [w.uoc.edu/ca/anna-ferry](https://w.uoc.edu/ca/anna-ferry) [CA]

**“The Bachelor’s Degree in Multimedia has furthered my career”**



# A connected and committed community

The UOC's research, innovation and teaching activities connect with the outside world; not only with government and businesses, but also with the third sector. This connection with the third sector takes different forms: participatory final projects, social volunteering, university networks and spaces for co-creation with social organizations.

Participatory final projects, for example, are an alternative to the regular final projects for bachelor's or master's degrees: students collaborate with non-profit organizations, carrying out research to find solutions to real problems and helping to develop the organizations' social transformation projects. Participatory final projects, which are included in the syllabuses of some UOC programmes, help to create global citizens by incorporating processes for the co-creation of knowledge.

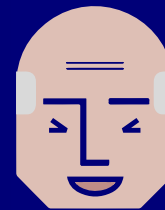
## Social volunteering programmes

UOC social volunteering programmes focus on local initiatives related to: breaking down social, digital and gender inequalities; inclusive mentoring for children and young people at risk of social exclusion; women's empowerment; psychological, emotional and legal support for sick people; the social economy and job skills for vulnerable sectors of society; and awareness of global inequalities. NGOs from around Spain, such as the Spanish Red Cross or Oncolliga, welcome student volunteers on-site at their facilities and programmes.



## Volunteers on the UOC Refugee Welcome Programme

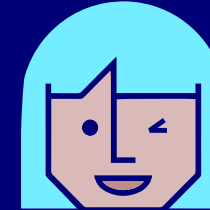
Juan Manuel Espinosa, Carme Sanchis, Fouad Aouaj and Sara León spent six months giving online (and sometimes also face-to-face) support to people with refugee status studying at the UOC, a group that has now grown to over a hundred in size. As part of the Welcome Programme, they helped people who had been forced to abandon their homes as they settled into the UOC.



**Juan Manuel Espinosa**

Retiree and activist with the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages – PAH)

Student on the Bachelor's Degree in Humanities and the Joint Bachelor's Degree in History, Geography and Art History (UOC, UdL)



**Carme Sanchis**

Psychologist and designer of collectible dolls

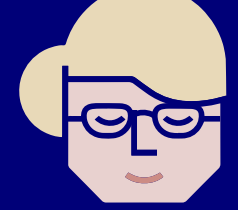
Master's Degree in Child and Adolescent Psychology: Intervention Techniques and Strategies



**Fouad Aouaj**

Social educator in a residential centre for educational action (CRAE) and activist with the anti-fascist and anti-racism movement, UCFR.

Student on the Bachelor's Degree in Law and the University Master's Degree in Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization



**Sara León**

Lawyer  
Master's Degree in Legal Practice





# The right question

Thoughts on the future

The current digital transformation will turn our world around; in fact, it is already doing so. In this new technological disruption, what is important is not so much the digital element as the notion of change driving the evolution of certain activities and certain sectors, the disappearance of others, and the creation of new, as yet undefined areas. The experiences generated by COVID-19 have sped up some of these ongoing shifts and, more importantly, have brought them further into the spotlight.

Facing these challenges, here at the UOC we are empowered by the experience of our successful and constantly evolving model. By asking the right question 25 years ago, we now have our own educational model that, thanks to technology, allows us to provide education without distances, adapting to students' different personal needs and circumstances and with a commitment to the networking of knowledge. To continue doing all this in the world of tomorrow, we must pose the right questions again today, and making use of technology start working together to create new solutions.

As digital natives, at the UOC we have always known that transformation means different ways of educating, researching and thinking; that it means being, in every sense, a university without distances. On this path, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda offer the ideal framework, because we need our digital transformation to favour people, prosperity, the planet, participation, equality and peace.

As a unique institution and a node in a global system, we want to play a part in this future digital transformation: to put ourselves in the shoes of people who are studying, refreshing their skills, and creating tomorrow's world.

Because the future won't wait – it's being created every day.

**Josep A. Planell**  
President of the UOC



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