

UoC



Press pack

2017/2018
academic year

Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya

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54,000 students

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“Since it was formed 22 years ago, the UOC has become a global university that views education as a force for people’s development and well-being, wherever they may be.”

Josep A. Planell, rector.

A pioneer in e-learning

The UOC is a university that offers online education; all students and teachers need is an internet connection to access its Virtual Campus. Learning at the UOC is based on projects and activities, done both individually and in groups with other students. Students manage their own time and set their own pace for their studies, combining their learning with their other responsibilities.

Taking into account the demands of society and business, the courses the University offers are designed and constantly updated to suit all stages of adult life. The focus is on employability, the needs of new professional profiles, and the acquisition of skills.

The UOC has a very global presence, with over 54,000 students in 102 countries, centres in Catalonia, Spain, Mexico and Colombia, and many projects, agreements and collaborations with universities and institutions in countries near and far. Its president, Josep A. Planell, is currently the president of the international network CINDA.

The University provides a public service and is managed privately through a not-for-profit foundation. This governance model has three important features: the Government of Catalonia subsidizes part of the budget; the prices are determined by the Government of Catalonia and the foundation's Board of Trustees; and the UOC operates in accordance with the

policies and regulations established for public institution and, in this respect, must render account to the Parliament of Catalonia each year.

The UOC was created in 1995 as a Government of Catalonia initiative to offer lifelong learning through the use of information and communication technologies. It started its first year with 206 students but today, 22 years later, it has more than 54,000. Almost 60,000 people have graduated and it has 3,692 members of teaching staff.

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A pioneer in e-learning

The UOC in figures*

54.059
students

58.792
graduates

6.438
virtual classrooms

3.692
teachers

Faculty

22
bachelor's degrees

35
university master's degrees

3
doctoral degrees

7
chairs

25
UOC-certified master's
degrees

327
postgraduate diplomas,
specializations and courses

Students

54.059

80%
study and have a job

70%
already have a
university degree

Graduates

58.792

92%
would choose the
UOC again

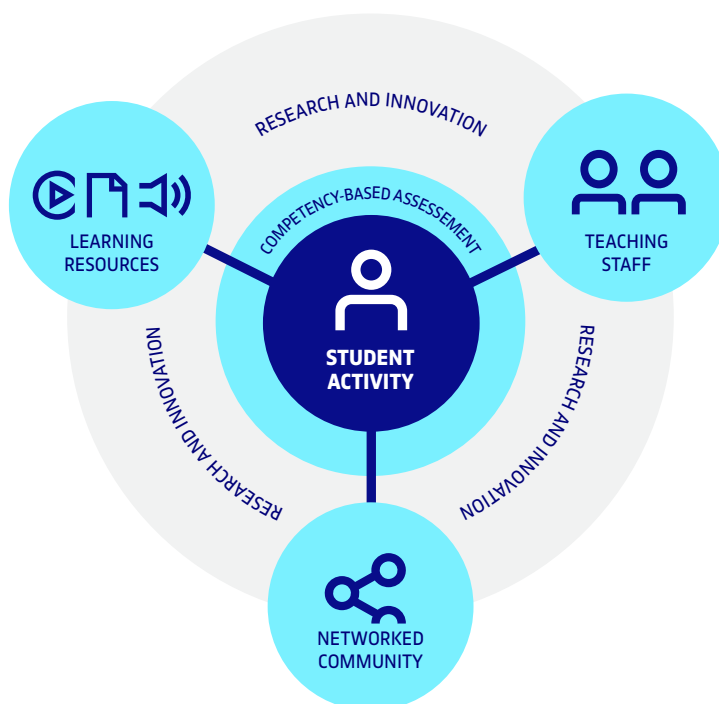


88%
would study for the same
qualification again

82%
work in a job related to
their studies

* Course data 2016-2017

A unique educational model



The UOC's educational model focuses on learning; it offers various options to adapt to each student's needs, enabling them to learn in ways that are similar to how they work and communicate online. Thanks to the applied research, innovation and the inclusion of new trends in e-learning, it is a living model that is constantly evolving. This explains the reason for the eLearn Center, the force behind this evolution that is leading the change in the educational model.

Learning activities are the core of the educational model. Students have three key means at their disposal to support their learning: guidance provided by the teaching staff, collaborations through networking, and the learning resources.

At the UOC, people learn by doing. Students are given challenges to overcome one by one, enabling them to acquire the skills needed

in society and the workplace today. This educational model is based on an intensive use of ICTs, offering two key benefits: not only does it allow students to study wherever and whenever they want, it provides them with important technological skills.

ACTIC (Accreditation of Skills in Information and Communication Technologies) is an official digital skills certificate awarded by the Government of Catalonia. To date 14,193 UOC students have obtained this certification in recognition of the digital skills they acquired in the ICT Skills course that is taught as a component of all the UOC's bachelor's degree programmes. The UOC is currently the only university in Catalonia to offer this certificate, having done so since 2014, when it obtained the Catalan Government's recognition of equivalence with the ACTIC intermediate-level certificate.

A unique educational model

Evaluación

The UOC's assessment is continuous and formative and provides feedback aimed at continuous learning improvements and the development of skills.

3,500 students take part in the TeSLA project

The UOC is leading the European TeSLA (Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning) project, which verifies the student's identity during the entire **e-assessment** process and is funded by the European Commission within the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme. The TeSLA consortium comprises 18 expert organizations, including eight universities (both on-site and online), three quality assurance agencies, four research centres and three technology companies from 12 countries (Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Finland, Germany, France, Mexico, Switzerland and Portugal). In total, there is a team of around 80 professionals involved in 18 months of large-scale pilot tests, with participation from over 14,000 students across Europe.

Teacher-guided learning

The learning process is led by an interdisciplinary team of almost 3,700 teachers with complementary profiles and roles. Their work is collaborative and they are experts in online teaching. The teaching staff who support the students in their courses and the authors of the learning resources given to students are usually **course instructors** who combine their work at the UOC with work in a particular profession or with academic activity in another university. This team guarantees considerable flexibility in the academic offering, a high level of specialization and scalability in the model. While they study at the UOC, each student has a main **tutor** who provides personalized support.

Virtual Campus

The learning process happens mainly in the Virtual Campus classrooms. In any given classroom there may be students and teachers from different countries studying or teaching. All of them share this space in which they interact and exchange experiences. This is a context in which students gain from their fellow students' knowledge, points of view and interculturality. Since September 2016, there is a new unified, multilingual Virtual Campus.

Students learn through projects and activities. They learn by working individually and in cooperation with their fellow students on each course.

It is a dynamic model that is continuously incorporating new trends in e-learning.

**Carles Sigalés,
Vice President
for Teaching and
Learning:
“The goal is for our
students to attain
the highest possible
level of learning in the
shortest possible time
and for this learning
to really help them
reach their goals”.**



For more than 22 years, the UOC's students have been able to further their education, adapting their studies to their job or personal circumstances. The UOC's students have a specific feature that sets them apart from those who enrol for the first time in a traditional university: they are not studying full-time. They combine their studies with other activities: they usually work, have prior university qualifications, professional experience and children to look

after. Therefore, they have very little time and need to be able to manage it well.

The average UOC student is 30 years old; 52% are women and they come from very varied social and geographical backgrounds. There are no age requirements or cut-off marks; the only requirement is to have the educational background indicated for each programme, in accordance with the admission requirements currently required by law.

What are UOC students like?

- Aged between 25 and 45.
- Studying, working and with family responsibilities.
- Effective management of the little time they have is key.
- Prior education and professional experience.
- Wide variations in social backgrounds and locations.

Graduates are more competitive in ICTs, computer science and critical thinking

According to the latest study performed by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) on the graduate employment rates, UOC graduates differ from those of brick-and-mortar universities in their higher level of technical training, use and application of ICTs, written expression, critical thinking, computer literacy and ability to solve problems.

The results from the 6th edition of this study, in which 1,895 graduates were interviewed, also show that the graduates from universities such as the UOC have a different profile. They are over 40 and most

of them (58%) combine their studies with a job related with what they are studying. Another feature of this student group is that their employment rate is higher, they have more job stability and earn higher salaries (over €2,000 a month) than university students as a whole. The study also highlights that 17% of these students chose distance education to obtain a qualification that accredits functions they already perform in their work but which are not related with their first university qualification.

UOC Alumni is a network linking all these graduates, who are connected

to over 20,000 companies. Its mission is to accompany them in their lifelong learning and continual professional growth. It offers a job bank and a career guidance service. There is also a Premium version that offers a wider scope and improved mentoring. Graduates can redraft their CVs and get advice on managing it on social media, on how to prepare a job interview or on changing their career direction. In addition, they can consult experts about their career, receiving prompt and thorough answers. Finally, entrepreneurs can find the support and personalized guidance they need to prepare themselves and create a business plan.

What is students' level of satisfaction with the UOC after graduating?

92%

would choose the UOC again

88%

would study for the same qualification again

76%

would recommend studying at the UOC to their friends and relatives

90%

want to keep ties with it

Courses for all stages of life

The UOC offers course for all stages of life. These courses are regularly redefined and updated in response to the demands of society and business. They focus on employability, the needs of new professional profiles, and the acquisition of skills.

Firstly there is the conventional university offering: bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctoral degrees. This includes both official courses endorsed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and the UOC's own programmes, all of which are accredited by the relevant quality agencies and are compliant with European university system standards.

And then there are courses offered that go beyond university education: short courses, language courses, advanced-level vocational training and one-off courses. In addition, the University also offers bespoke training for companies and institutions. Through UOC Corporate, it provides custom training programmes to contribute to their professionals' growth, drive the companies' transformation and improve their competitiveness.

The wide-ranging fields of knowledge the courses stem from are divided into seven faculties: Arts and Humanities, Psychology and Education Sciences, Information and Communication Sciences, Law and Political Science, Economics and Business, Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications, and Health Sciences.

For the 2017/2018 academic year, the courses offered include 22 bachelor's degrees and 35 university master's degrees with full official recognition, and more than 300 master's degree programmes and postgraduate and specialization courses from 13 areas focusing on acquiring new professional skills. The University also has seven chairs whose projects on learning, research, technology and knowledge transfer are aimed at generating and sharing knowledge in their specific fields.

Among the new courses this year are bachelor's degrees in Art, International Relations, and Speech Therapy, a doctoral degree in Bioinformatics, as well as fourteen master's degrees, four postgraduate courses, and four online vocational training programmes.

Bachelor's Degrees

Arts and humanities

- Anthropology and Human Evolution
- Art
- Catalan Language and Literature
- History, Geography and Art History - joint UOC, UdL
- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Translation, Interpreting and Applied Languages - joint UOC, UVic - UCC

Communication and information

- Communication

Design, creation and multimedia

- Digital Design and Creation
- Multimedia

Law and political science

- Law
- Criminology
- Public Administration and Management - joint UOC, UB
- International Relations

Economics and business

- Business Administration and Management
- Economics
- Labour Relations and Employment
- Marketing and Market Research

Computer science, multimedia and telecommunications

- Computer Engineering
- Double Degree in Computer Engineering and in Business Administration and Management
- Multimedia
- Telecommunications Technology

Psychology and education

- Psychology
- Social Education

Tourism

- Tourism

University Master's Degrees

Arts and humanities

- Ancient Mediterranean - joint UOC, UAB, UAH
- Contemporary History and Today's World - joint UB, UOC
- Cultural Management - joint UOC UdG
- Humanities: Contemporary Culture, Literature and Art

Cities and Urbanism

- Cities and Urbanism

Health sciences

- Medical Social Work
- Neuropsychology
- Nutrition and Health
- Child and Adolescent Psychology: Intervention Techniques and Strategies

Communication and information

- Corporate Communication, Protocol and Events
- Strategic Management of Information and Knowledge in Organizations
- Business Administration (Organization Management in the Knowledge Economy)
- Digital Journalism and Communication
- Social Media: Management and Strategy

Design, creation and multimedia

- Multimedia Applications: Smart Content Design and Development

Law and political science

- Electronic Administration and Governance
- Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization
- Political Analysis
- Taxation
- Criminology and Criminal Justice - joint UPF, UAB, UdG, UOC

E-learning

- E-learning Education and ICT

Economics and business

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Economic Environment Analysis
- Taxation

-
- Digital Marketing
 - Human Resources Management

Computer science, multimedia and telecommunications

- Bioinformatics and Biostatistics - joint UOC, UB
- Computational and Mathematical Engineering - joint URV, UOC
- Computer Engineering
- Computer Vision - joint UAB, UPC, UPF, UOC
- Information and Communication Technology Security - joint UOC, UAB, URV
- Mobile Application Development
- Multimedia Applications: Smart Content Design and Development
- Telecommunications Engineering - joint UOC, URL
- Data Science
- Telecommunications Engineering

Psychology and education

- Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders
- Employment and the Labour Market: Intervention and Coaching for Work
- General Health Psychology - joint UdG, UOC
- Neuropsychology
- Teacher Training - Secondary Education, Language Teaching and Vocational Training (specializing in English, Natural Sciences, Vocational Training and Guidance, and Educational Guidance) - joint UPF, UOC
- Teacher Training - Secondary Education, Language Teaching and Vocational Training (specializing in Mathematics) - joint UAB, UB, UPC, UPF, UOC
- Educational Psychology
- Quality Management and Evaluation in Higher Education

Tourism

- Sustainable Tourism and ICTs

Courses for all stages of life

UOCx: going beyond university learning



Xtended Studies

The fact that the programmes the UOC offers are based on what people want has driven it to seek ideas for new types of courses. The objective tends to be interdisciplinary courses in formats that are more flexible and easier to customize. This result is courses that go beyond the traditional university offering, channelled through UOC Xtended Studies (UOCx):

- 97 short courses and language courses
- 41 advanced-level training courses for professionals
- 8 advanced-level training programmes (vocational training, FP)
- 3 university entrance courses
- 9 MOOCs

MOOCs

The UOC offers nine MOOCs (massive open online courses): *Introducció a la gamificació a través de casos pràctics* (Introduction to Gamification through Case Studies), *Tàndem MOOC* (Tandem MOOC), *Ser competent digital per a viure i conviure en la societat en xarxa* (Digital Competence for Living and Sharing in the Network Society), *Programació per a tots amb Scratch* (Programming for Everyone with Scratch), *Joan Miró: An Artist Who Defined a Century*, *Introducció a Business Intelligence* (Introduction to Business Intelligence), *Hands-on ICT MOOC: Design Studio for ICT-based Active Learning*, and *Com crear la teva empresa i no morir en l'intent* (How to Set Up Your Own Company and Not Die Trying).

UOC Corporate, a partner for organizations



UOC Corporate was created to be a key ally for organizations that believe in innovative e-learning as a way to train their professionals and thus improve their competitiveness. It designs innovative solutions to respond to the needs of all kinds of companies and institutions, also providing support for the corresponding implementations.

UOC Corporate offers organizations the full range of the University's value-added services aimed at enhancing employment opportunities, encouraging the transfer and dissemination of knowledge, and exploring together with companies new possibilities for cooperation that reinforce the business sector's competitive edge.

Pastora Martínez, Vice President for Globalization and Cooperation: “Excellent examples of our ability to integrate the 2030 Agenda in our strategy can be found in two programmes we’ve been running with United Nations agencies for some years now, one with UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) and the other with WHO (World Health Organization)”.

The UOC’s goal to become a global university is rooted in the need to spread education as a force for people’s development and well-being worldwide. In this respect, the University is committed to:

- Contributing to educating students as global citizens, giving them essential skills that allow them to understand and cope with a world that is constantly changing, and transferable skills and techniques to solve the problems of a global labour market and to adapt to the changes arising over their lifetimes.
- Increasing the impact of the knowledge generated at the University and contributing solutions to the global challenges faced by the environment and the world.
- Improving the institution’s competitiveness, contributing to the University’s sustainability in terms of finances and quality, and improving its international positioning.

The University has also developed a strategy for building a social UOC within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which establishes a series of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For the first time, one of these goals is to ensure quality higher education for everyone, while research and innovation are also recognized as forces for driving change. In this context the University sees itself as an agent for individual and collective transformation.

The UOC’s intention to make itself a global and social institution entails:

- Developing learning programmes with skills to make students global citizens and professionals.
- Establishing a multitude of international partnerships in teaching and research fields.
- Developing specific themed projects focused on attaining the SDGs.
- Working to recruit and retain academic, professional and student talent around the world.

The strategy has already started to bring results: In Colombia, the UOC is developing research projects with the University of Los Andes, with which it also publishes the *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*. As for teaching, the UOC is developing joint programmes with the University of Antioquia, the University of Bucaramanga, and Uniminuto, with which it has also initiated student cooperation and virtual mobility actions. This strategy also enables complementary proposals to be designed that offer high added value for both institutions, such as a cooperation with the University of Talca (Chile) whereby students enrolled on its bachelor’s degree in Design study two courses at the UOC.

36 refugees with scholarships to study languages and specialization courses

Thanks to a scholarship programme for refugees and asylum-seekers that the University is running for a second time, this academic year a total of 36 refugees aged between 19 and 46 are studying languages and specialization courses at the UOC. Twenty of them have chosen languages, while the remaining sixteen have chosen specialization courses in the fields of nutrition, health, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, translation, marketing, and quality management.

These students are based all over the world. Many of them are in Spain, while others are studying from Norway, Algeria, Greece and Western Sahara. This represents an opportunity for them to continue studying despite having been forced to leave their homes by armed conflicts, violations of human rights, climate change or poverty.

The scholarship programme for refugees and asylum-seekers is funded by revenue from the charitable enrolment scheme, a voluntary contribution students can make when enrolling. This programme is another way in which the University underlines its commitment to ensuring universal access to higher education.

37% of Catalan university students with a disability study at the UOC

Of the university students with disabilities in Catalonia, a large number have chosen the UOC: 1,064 of the 2,854 disabled students who enrolled during the 2015/2016 academic year did so at the UOC. As regards numbers of disabled students in Spain as a whole, the UOC is in third place behind the UNED and very close to the University of Valencia. (Figures taken from the 2017 edition of the *Fundación Universia's* guide on disability services at universities.)

At the UOC this group has grown by almost 200 people in just two years, going from 873 students to 1,064. The University offers these students personalized monitoring, the chance to adapt the format of their final tests and continuous assessment tests, curricular adaptations, study activities with adapted materials and websites, and internships adapted to their capabilities. They are also given the same exemptions and discounts as they would be on official programmes at other public universities in Catalonia.

Recognition

Social responsibility is a commitment that is integral to the UOC's values.

- The UOC is the top university in Catalonia and third in Spain in terms of disabled student numbers (2016/2017 academic year).
- It has been recognized by the ONCE Foundation's ILUNION for its commitment to accessibility (2017).
- Winner of the Spanish Federation of Rare Diseases' (FEDER) Award for the Inclusion of People with Rare Diseases (2016), highlighted for its commitment to the social inclusion of disabled people and its disability services plan.
- Gold Medal awarded by the Spanish Red Cross (2015) for educational work in the values of integration, tolerance, education for peace, and coexistence.
- Fem.talent award (2015) for promoting equality.



Being socially responsible, the UOC...

- Promotes equal opportunities and the transformation of the people and societies in its ambit.
- Is especially inclusive because it caters to people who cannot attend university on-site, and because it has no cut-off marks.
- Brings cooperation and knowledge transfer to society.
- Is committed to open access to knowledge.
- Has its own platform to boost entrepreneurship and innovation: HUBBIK.



The UOC worldwide

- Students in 102 countries and centres in Catalonia, Spain, Mexico and Colombia.
- More than 12,000 students outside of Catalonia.
- Most programmes are given in Catalan and Spanish, some are given in English.
- Any classroom may have students and teachers working from very different countries.
- More than 700 students are enrolled on virtual mobility programmes.
- Projects, agreements and collaborations with universities and institutions around the world.
- Key international alliances with UNITAR, WHO, FAO and UNDP.

R&I: strengthening the knowledge society and the future of learning

The UOC conducts research in all its fields of knowledge, but focuses especially on its areas of specialization: e-learning and the impact of technology.

The University also has 43 research groups, more than 400 researchers

and a Doctoral School. The UOC's support for research and free knowledge transfer is yet another way it is seeking to make an impact on society. To give some examples of this: first, the UOC's academic journals are open access; second, the UOC has a public online

archive – the O2 – with teaching materials, research papers and educational videos; and third, the UOC has its own platform to foster entrepreneurship and innovation: HUBBIK.

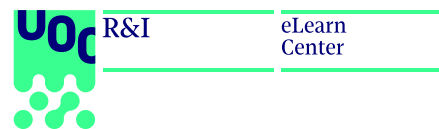
The UOC has three research centres:

Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3)



Specializing in research on the network society, the knowledge economy, and the study of network technologies and specific areas of software, the IN3 has ten research groups. Their activities focus on care and preparedness in the network society, internet computing and systems optimization, gender and ICT, complex systems, software engineering, urban transformations, communication networks and social change, the Internet of Things, and digital commons.

eLearn Center



Through the eLearn Center the University supports both applied research in e-learning and innovation in this field. It also helps convey the value of e-learning as a key part of the UOC's identity, both internally and externally. Among other services, it offers the analysis and redesign of courses or programmes, the organization of themed sessions, studies and selections of learning resources, data to improve teaching, and an experimentation area for pilot tests in real environments. In addition the eLearn Center acts as an observatory for all kinds of online learning activities.

eHealth Center



The eHealth Center seeks to educate and empower citizens and professionals through technology so that they can lead the paradigm shift in health. It is people-centred, using research, education and counselling to contribute to social progress and well-being. And it uses information and communication technology to tackle the health and quality-of-life challenges that will emerge over the coming decades.

R&I: strengthening the knowledge society and the future of learning

As the result of all this research, the UOC offers society technological solutions, patents and licensable technologies, apps, spin-offs, and services connecting universities and businesses.

Launch of Invergy, a company investing in start-ups

The University has created a company to invest in education and ICT sector start-ups that seek to benefit society. Launched under the name of Invergy, the company has an initial budget of 500,000

euros and is part of HUBBIK, the services platform aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the UOC community, including students, graduates, professors and researchers.

Antoni Cahner, the UOC's General Manager:
"Invergy's creation relates to the UOC's mission to promote the economic development of our society, supporting innovative companies that strengthen the ties between business, knowledge and society".

Marta Aymerich, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research:
"We want to contribute to society's progress with all the knowledge our research and innovation offers, creating this value that enables us to innovate for the higher education of the people who belong to this society".

More than 400 researchers

3 doctoral programmes

7 chairs

43 research groups

43 international research projects

- The UOC conducts research in all its fields of knowledge, focusing especially on e-learning and the impact of technology.
- The eLearn Center is the UOC's research institute specializing in e-learning.
- It promotes applied research relating to e-learning.
- The IN3 – or the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute – is the UOC's research institute specializing in the internet and technology's effects on human activity.
- The interdisciplinary nature of its teams and research are a key feature.
- The eHealth Center is the UOC's research institute specializing in digital health (health, quality of life and ICT).

The UOC's Media and External Communications Office provides journalists with a broad range of services and resources, enabling them to find out more about the University, follow institutional current affairs and contact its experts and spokespeople.

The website [UOC News](#) is the UOC's current affairs platform and offers people working in the journalism and communication a number of useful resources:

Press pack

This is updated each year and summarizes the University's basic information and key data.

Subscription to the weekly newsletter *L'actualitat en 7 dies*

To keep informed of the UOC experts' viewpoints on general and institution-specific issues of current interest.

Experts guide

This provides contact details for the University's teaching and research staff. The experts are ordered by fields of knowledge and are also listed in an alphabetical directory. Searches may be made online or you can ask for a printed copy.

RSS subscription to UOC News

To receive all the news generated by the Media and External Communications Office team.

Flickr photo gallery

Of the UOC's ceremonies, events, experts and personnel.

Twitter account @uocnews

For keeping track of current affairs with analysis from the UOC's experts as well as institutional activities. An alternative channel for contacts and queries addressed to the Media and External Communications Office.

UOC YouTube channel

Videos with reports, interviews and events.

Contact us:

Communications
Lluís Rius (Director)
lrius@uoc.edu
93 253 23 04

Media and External Communications Office
Ester Medico (Director)
emedico@uoc.edu
93 253 23 21 - 620 069 273

news@uoc.edu

Núria Bigas
nbigasf@uoc.edu
93 253 23 42
619 416 930

Elisabet Escriche
eescriche@uoc.edu
93 253 57 55
616 825 752

Anna Sánchez-Juárez
asanchez-juarez@uoc.edu
93 253 23 35
620 041 736

Anna Torres
atorresgar@uoc.edu
93 253 23 29
©619 415 835

Barcelona
Bogotá
Mexico City
Madrid
Palma
Seville
Valencia

Headquarters
Avda. Tibidabo, 39-43
08035 Barcelona
(+34) 932 532 300

All the UOC's centres at
seus.uoc.edu

uoc.edu

 **@UOCuniversity**
 **@UOCrespon**

 **UOC**
 **UOC.universitat**