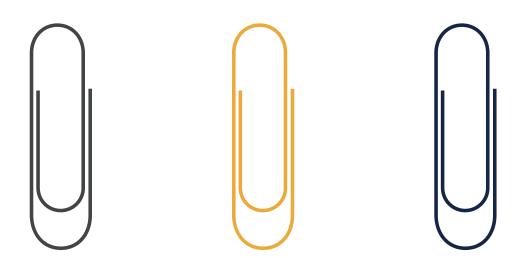


Press pack

2015-2016 academic year



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Press pack

1. The UOC today

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Open University of Catalonia, UOC) is an innovative, prestigious institution, internationally renowned for its educational model and use of technology.

Founded in 1994 with the backing of the Government of Catalonia, the UOC is an institution that grew out of the knowledge society. It offers top-quality distance education and is a world leader in research and the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to education.

Two decades after its foundation, the UOC celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

The UOC was launched in the 1995-1996 academic year, with 200 students enrolled in officially recognized courses in Educational Psychology and Business Studies. Today it is Spain's leading online university by number of alumni and ranks second among Catalan universities in terms of enrolment.

The University's institutional centres are located in Barcelona. It also has an extensive regional network to support and energize the University community and ensure seamless interaction with the social environment. This network – made up of 12 regional centres and 51 UOC points – extends throughout Catalonia and also includes locations in Madrid, Seville and Valencia.

Internationally, the UOC has two points, in Andorra and Alghero, and a regional centre in Mexico that handles work related to the strong presence the University has achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean. The UOC also has a delegate for Colombia, Peru and Chile.

Internationalization is one of the UOC's key strategic priorities: over 800 agreements have been signed with universities, educational institutions and companies worldwide. Since April 2013, when the UOC's new president, Josep A. Planell, took office, 72 new international agreements have been signed or are currently under negotiation: 42 in Latin America, 7 in Africa, 6 in the United States, 5 in Asia, 4 in Europe, 1 in Australia and 1 in Andorra.

The UOC also belongs to many educational networks. At the local level, it is a member of the Inter-University Council of Catalonia (CIC), the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP), the Vives University Network, and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE).

At the international level, the University is a member of leading distance education and e-learning networks (32 in total).

The UOC in figures

- > 20 years leading ICTbased learning
- > 74 official degrees
- > 39,450 students enrolled in official degrees
- > **58,094** graduates
- > 3,587
- > 6,390 virtual classrooms
- > 600 agreements with companies and institutions worldwide

> 320 companies and institutions in the network of UOC Associate Companies

* data for 2014-2015 academic year

As an innovative institution, the UOC has received many awards and recognitions for its work and achievements. For instance, it has been acknowledged on five occasions by the IMS Global Learning Consortium for its impact on learning.

In turn, since the 2003-2004 academic year, the University has awarded a number of honorary doctorates to distinguished Catalan and international figures. To mark its fifteenth anniversary, the UOC bestowed this degree in the 2008-2009 academic year on Sir Timothy Berners-Lee, the father of the World Wide Web.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya was the first university in the world that was born in the virtual world and which gave classes only online.

When it was founded, in 1994, there was only the Spanish Distance Learning University (UNED) in Spain that offered distance learning but not online. It would not be until more than a decade later, in the 2007-2008 academic year, when Spain's second online university would be created, the Valencian International University (VIU), followed some time later by the Distance University of Madrid (UDIMA) and the International University of La Rioja (UNIR).

Governing bodies

In 1994, the Government of Catalonia supported the creation of the UOC to offer online learning in Catalan to meet the demand that had been detected. Until then, the UNED was the only university that offered distance education (in Spanish).

With the support of the Catalan Government and through the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC), the UOC was formed with the mission of actively supporting the generation and dissemination of knowledge, of being a distanceless university and of being an institution that met students' demands and society's needs.

The UOC's organizational structure is built around the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC) and establishes two types of governing bodies: single-member bodies and mixed-membership bodies.

FUOC bodies

The Board of Trustees is the highest representative, governing and administrative body of the FUOC. It is responsible for appointing and dismissing the president and the general manager, approving the University's budget and accounts, approving the action plan presented by the president and evaluating results. The Board has 11 members. Of these, 3 are representatives or distinguished persons designated by the Catalan Federation of Savings Banks, the Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping of Barcelona, and the Institute of Catalan Studies; another 3 are natural or corporate persons designated by the above institutions who are salient figures in social, cultural, scientific or professional spheres who are not employed in the public sector; and the remaining 5 trustees are designated by the Government of Catalonia. The Board of Trustees is presided by Pere Vallès, Director and

The UOC community includes

> 52,513 students in over 80 countries

> **58,094** graduates

> 3,587 academic staff

> 491 administrative staff

> 400 research staff

* data for 2014-2015 academic year

CEO of SCYTL, and Pere Fabra, General Secretary of the UOC, is the Board's secretary.

With the formation on 22 July 2014 of a new Board of Trustees, whose members where mostly private trustees, the UOC became a Foundation that is outside of the public sector. This enables it to preserve its identity as a sustainable public service university and gives it more independence in its management.

- > The Standing Committee: is the body to which the Board of Trustees delegates some of its functions. This is the Foundation's standing administration and management body and its mission is to manage the institution's ordinary affairs.
- The Advisory Board: is an advisory body. In addition to counselling and interfacing with society, it provides input to the budget, programming and appointment of the UOC's president. In addition to the UOC's president and the FUOC's director, its members include representatives from Parliament, Catalan public universities, employers' and union organizations, and respected people from the spheres of research and culture.

UOC single-member bodies

- > President: Josep A. Planell i Estany
- > Vice Presidents: Marta Aymerich Martínez and Carles Sigalés Conde
- > General Secretary: Pere Fabra Abat
- > General Manager: Antoni Cahner Monzó

UOC mixed-membership bodies

- > The Governing Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with current legal and statutory regulations, and proposes strategies and programmes to the UOC's Board of Trustees. Its members are the president, the vice presidents, the general manager, the general secretary and one representative of the faculty, one representative of the students and one representative of the administrative staff. These representatives are chosen by the University Council and the Student Council from among their members.
- The Board of Directors is the University's standing administration and management body and its mission is to manage the institution's ordinary affairs. Its members are the president, the vice presidents, the general manager and the manager of the Office of the President and Institutional Relations.

The UOC also has other coordinating and representative bodies, such as the Strategic Committee, the Academic Committee and the **University Council**, which is the university community's highest participative body with representatives from all of the University's stakeholders. The Student Council is the highest representative body for students, and the *Sindic de Greuges* (Ombudsman) is responsible for protecting the rights and overseeing the duties of all members of the university community. At present, the ombudsman is Agustí Cerrillo.

2. The educational model

The UOC, launched on the Internet two decades ago in the context of the knowledge society, has become a leader in research and the application of ICT to education.

The University's educational model is the main feature that sets it apart from other higher education institutions. The focus is on learning activity that is adapted to each student's needs, and the approach combines a range of resources and work dynamics based on mentoring from teaching staff and interaction with classmates.

The model is network-oriented, web-based, dynamic, flexible and constantly evolving.

Students are at the centre of the learning process: they manage their time, plan their pace of study, and construct their own academic path based on a personalized model. They can study when and how they like, and wherever they want, using a computer, mobile phone or tablet.

The UOC encourages students to work independently but also fosters teamwork, and learners are supported throughout their studies by lecturers and counsellors. Students must be able to manage complex activities and situations and produce knowledge based on a collective, collaborative approach. This involves using problem-solving methods, doing project work, jointly creating products, and engaging in discussion and inquiry. Assessment is constructive and continuous and is integrated in the learning process: students are assessed as they learn and acquire competences.

The model is highly flexible and requires a mix of dynamics and resources suited to a broad range of learning situations and needs. This is why the UOC has made the latest technology and communication tools an integral part of the learning activity students engage in. These elements include:

- > social tools that facilitate interaction and sharing of knowledge (blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, etc.);
- > multimedia content that makes it possible to present knowledge in an interactive, motivating way, using a combination of audiovisual and written elements;
- > advanced communication systems, both synchronous and asynchronous, that facilitate flexible, clear communication that meets the needs of each situation (video chats, forums, video blogs, etc.);
- immersive environments that make it possible to interact with people and objects in a way that simulates real situations, and games that motivate learning;
- > mobile devices that provide students with quick access to content and learning activities.

The **Virtual Campus** is the main learning environment and the place where members of the UOC community meet and interact.

It is where students engage with the educational process and have access to virtual classrooms, learning resources and

The Virtual Campus in figures

- > 2,267,499 users per year
- > 6,390 virtual classrooms
- > 11,000 working groups

> 2,108 subjects in Catalan

- > 1,893 subjects in Spanish
- > 21 subjects in French

> 205 subjects in English

> 575 counselling spaces

* data for 2014-2015 academic year

content, and spaces for cooperation and exchange. *My UOC*, the Virtual Campus home page, is a modular space that students can organize as they wish.

The Virtual Campus also includes administrative and information areas, such as the Virtual Secretary's Office, where students can take care of any academic matters, and the Virtual Library, which is part of the UOC's pedagogical model and one of the key support elements for learning, teaching and research.

w.uoc.edu/educational-model

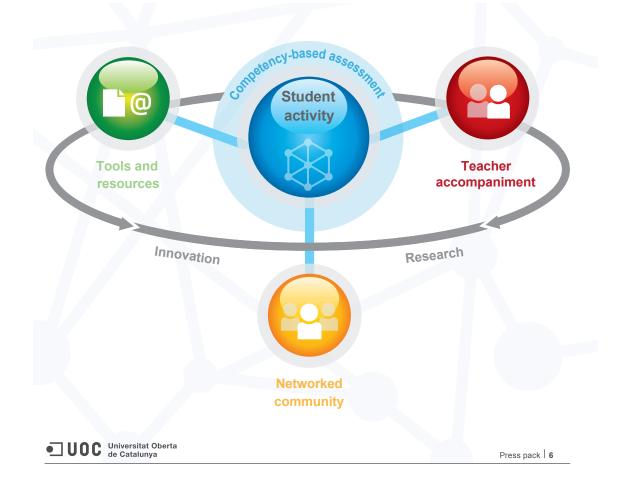
Learning activity is at the heart of the UOC's educational model. Resources include the sections, content and tools required for learning and assessment. Collaboration is understood as the set of communicative and participatory dynamics that facilitate joint construction of knowledge between classmates and lecturers. Mentoring refers to the actions carried out by teachers and counsellors to monitor students, support them in the learning process, and assess their progress. Assessment is continuous, constructive, and integrated in the learning process.

Open-source educational innovation: Open Apps

The UOC is a multi-device, multi-channel university that responds to the needs of students. From its inception, the University has developed and tested methodologies and technologies aimed at successfully tackling the educational and management challenges facing its students, lecturers and management staff.

To disseminate its educational model and share the results of applied innovation, the UOC has created the Open Apps portal, a virtual, collaborative, open repository that brings together innovative, successful experiences in education and management.

Open Apps includes a wide range of innovative products, from applications and procedures related to teaching practice and the learning process, to solutions for improving university management processes. Under this conceptual umbrella, the UOC has coordinated a European project known as SpeakApps, a virtual open-source platform that brings together applications, tools and materials for oral language learning.



3. Courses, students and teaching staff

The degrees offered by the UOC are official and comply with the requirements of the European Higher Education Area.

The UOC's degrees are endorsed by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA), guaranteeing academic rigour and compliance with the standards required by the European University System.

Official status of university degrees is granted by the Council of Ministers, who orders their inclusion in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications (RUCT). The UOC's degrees are official and entered in the Register.

Courses are organized in seven areas of knowledge: Arts and Humanities; Health Sciences; Information and Communication Sciences; Law and Political Science; Economics and Business; IT, Multimedia and Telecommunications; and Psychology and Educational Sciences.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, the course offering includes 20 bachelor's degrees and 34 university master's degrees, all of which are officially recognized.

The following official programmes are being introduced this year:

- > Bachelor's Degree in Economics
- Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration and Management (UOC-UB)
- > Bachelor's Degree in Translation, Interpretation and Applied Linguistics (UOC-UVic)
- Bachelor's Degree in History, Geography and Art History (UOC-UdL)
- > University Master's Degree in Cultural Management (UOC-UdG)
- University Master's Degree in the Mediterranean in Antiquity (UOC-UAB-UAH)
- > University Master's Degree in Employment and the Job Market: Intervention and Coaching in the Workplace
- > University Master's Degree in Neuropsychology
- > University Master's Degree in Sustainable Tourism and ICT
- University Master's Degree in Bioinformatics and Biostatistics (UOC-UB)
- > University Master's Degree in Application Design for Mobile Devices
- University Master's Degree in Free and Open-Source Software (UOC-URJC)

Course offering

- > 20 bachelor's degrees
- > 223 specializations, micro-courses and seminars
- > 93 postgraduate diplomas
- > 34 university master's degrees
 - 30 UOC-certified master's degrees
- > 3 doctoral programmes

The offering is also being expanded with three new double degrees (two official degrees are studied together):

- > Business Administration and Management, and Tourism
- Computer Engineering, and Business Administration and Management
- > Tourism, and Marketing and Market Research

The University also offers master's degrees (30), postgraduate diplomas (93), specializations (158) and courses (17).

Psychology is the most popular bachelor's degree, followed by Business Administration and Management, and Law; and the university master's degrees with the highest enrolment are Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders, Education and ICT (e-learning) and Legal Practice.

The UOC offers three pioneering and highlyregarded doctoral programmes in its areas of specialization: Information and Knowledge Society, Education and ICT (e-learning), and Network and Information Technologies. These make up **the Doctoral School**, formed two years ago and currently with almost 300 doctoral students enrolled in it.

In addition to officially recognized qualifications, within the framework of its **Seminar programme** and the **Summer Open University** (UOd'E), the University offers short courses that allow students to combine learning and professional development. The **University @thenaeum** allows learners to take subjects in any area of study or from postgraduate programmes without meeting admission requirements.

The UOC also has a **School of Languages** that provides language training for over 6,000 learners, with courses in English, German, Chinese, French, Japanese and Catalan. This year, the offering has been increased to include English up to C1, Spanish for foreigners and courses to prepare for official examinations, such as the HSK examinations for Chinese and the DELF examinations for French. In addition, for the first time, a blended training course designed for Barcelona City Council employees has been offered.

Development Cooperation brings together educational and research programmes related to development cooperation, humanitarian aid and sustainability.

studies.uoc.edu

The UOC has the second-most **students** of any Catalan university: over 52,513 learners are enrolled in official and UOC-certified programmes.

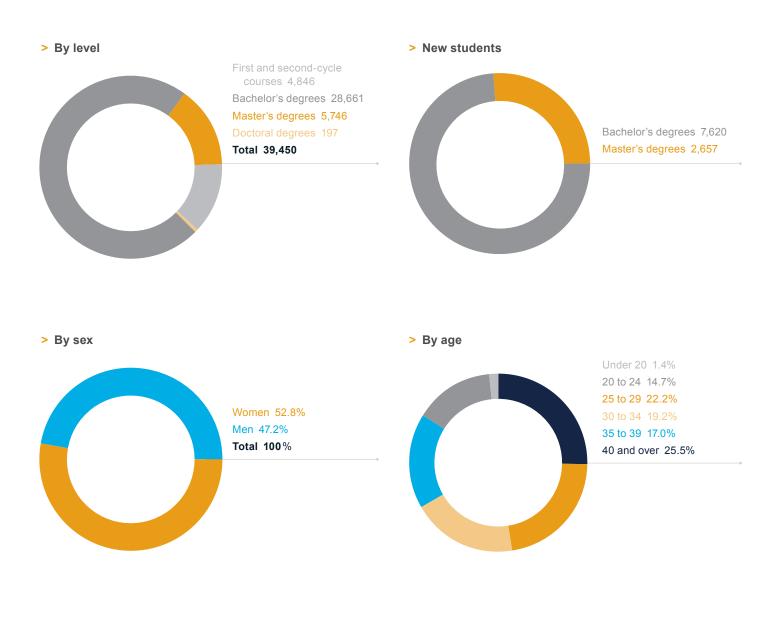
During the previous year, almost 40,000 students followed an officially recognized degree course (10,300 of these were new students). Of these, 29,777 lived in Catalonia (75%), 8,406 in the rest of Spain (20%) and 1,627 live abroad (4%), in 85 countries (with Colombia, Andorra, the United Kingdom and Germany at the top, followed by the United States, France and Switzerland). More than half were women and one out of four was aged 40 or over. Nearly 5,000 students graduated.

The bachelor's degree courses with most students enrolled on them were Psychology, with almost 20% of the total, and Business Administration and Management, with 17%. In turn, the most popular university master's degree courses were Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders, with almost 1,000 students, followed by Education and ICT, and Legal Practice, with more than 400 students each.

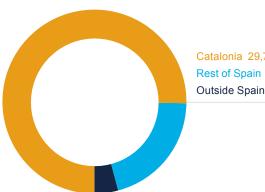
The UOC's academic results confirm the effectiveness of its educational model. The **success rate** achieved by students (ie the pass rate for the subjects in which they are assessed) is **over 90%** every year. Last year, it was 92.3% in the bachelor's degrees and 96.5% in the university master's degrees.

Moreover, the **performance rate** (the percentage of subjects students pass out of the total number in which they enrol) is **above 70%** every academic year. In the first semester of the last academic year, the performance rate was 74.2% for bachelor's degrees and 85.5% for university master's degrees.

Students*



> By location



Catalonia 29,777 Rest of Spain 8,046 Outside Spain 1,627

* Students enrolled on official courses / academic year 2014/2015



By programme*

> Bachelor's degrees

Business Administration and Management	5,152
Social Sciences	95
Communication	1,630
Criminology	1,317
Law	3,501
Social Education	1,972
Computer Engineering	2,453
Humanities	1,258
Information Science	387
Catalan Language and Literature	379
Marketing and Market Research	1,153
Multimedia	1,546
Psychology	5,619
Labour Relations and Employment	939
Telecommunication Technologies	657
Tourism	603
Total	28,661

> Master's degrees

Health and Safety	389
Ancient Mediterranean (UOC-UAB)	67
Electronic Administration and Governance	54
Legal Practice	400
Economic Environment Analysis	93
Political Analysis	105
Multimedia Applications	170
Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders	958
Organization Management in the Knowledge Economy	335
Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization	96
Education and ICTs	442
Telecommunications Engineering	83
Telecommunications Engineering (UOC-URL)	109
Computer Engineering	211
Chinese and Japanese Studies: Contemporary World	102
Taxation Policy	344
Cultural Management	226
Humanities: Contemporary Culture, Literature and Art	113
Nutrition and Health	369
Free and Open-Source Software	170
Psychology, Health and Quality of Life	87
Corporate Social Responsibility	50
Information and Communication Technologies Security	393
Information Society	133
Telemedicine	88
Medical Social Work	104
Strategic Management of Information and Knowledge in Organizations	37
Catalan Studies	18
Total	5,746

* Students enrolled on official courses / academic year 2014/2015



UOC Alumni

The UOC has more alumni than any other online university based in Spain. The UOC Alumni community now includes 58,094 graduates in 80 countries worldwide. The Alumni Network includes a number of sector-based, territorial, international and advocacy groups that promote networking activities such as UOCmeet and Infocom. UOC Alumni has its own representative bodies and regional branches: Alumni Madrid, Alumni Sevilla, Alumni Balears and Alumni Canarias. The spring of 2014 saw the launch of UOC ON, a social app for iOS and Android devices that connects the entire University community, promotes online social exchanges and collaboration, and facilitates interaction with companies and society as a whole.

Teaching staff

The **UOC's academic staff** is made up of 262 faculty members and 3,325 teaching collaborators who support students throughout the learning process. All members of the academic staff are leaders in their field of knowledge and experts in e-learning and the strategic use of digital technology.

UOC teaching staff play an important role in building a university that is quality-oriented, committed and effective. Their activities include teaching; research, innovation and transfer; and dissemination of knowledge.

The UOC distinguishes between three types of teacher: the **lecturer in charge of the subject**, who is responsible for designing and coordinating the training process, defining resources and activities, and quality assurance; the **tutor**, whose role is to accompany students, facilitate learning, and guide and assess learners in a personalized way; and the **counsellor**, who acts as an institutional contact for students over the course of their studies.

Teaching collaborators are mainly professionals from various companies and organizations, freelancers, and university and secondary school teachers. Eighty per cent of teaching collaborators formalize their relationship with the University through a contract for the provision of services, and 20% work for the UOC under agreements with their home universities. Over half of these teachers (54%) are men; one in four is aged between 41 and 45, and four out of five are Catalan.

4. Research

The UOC is a research and innovation leader in its areas of expertise and specialization: the information society and e-learning.

Research, one of the pillars of the University's activity, is organized through the academic programmes and two prestigious research centres: the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3) and the eLearn Center (eLC). Over 400 professionals, organized in some 40 RDI groups, are involved in research. In addition to groups focusing on the UOC's areas of expertise, the University now has research groups that specialize in the arts and humanities, social sciences, health sciences, and technology and communication.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, the number of research groups officially recognized by the Government of Catalonia as "emerging" or "consolidated", from 14 to 26. This recognition will be valid until 2016.

In turn, a total of 15 UOC projects have been approved this year in competitive RDI calls within Spain, and 3 competitive calls in Europe.

The projects focus on diverse fields of research, from language comprehension and learning in virtual environments, to ways of improving ICT training, and gender and ICT.

Directed by David Megías, the IN3 focuses on studying the Internet, the network society and the effects of the interaction of digital technologies with human activity.

Its research activity is structured in 19 groups, of which 13 have been recognized by the

Government of Catalonia. The Institute has about 170 researchers, as well as visiting lecturers, postdoctoral researchers and visiting scholars for temporary stays.

The eLearn Center, directed by Christine Appel, specializes in applied research, experimentation, innovation, and training in e-learning at the UOC. The eLC currently has 10 research groups, five of which have been officially recognized by the Government of Catalonia.

It is staffed by 126 researchers, who work with visiting lecturers and students on predoctoral and postdoctoral stays.

The eLC's mission is to safeguard the University's educational model, ensure its continued development and excellence, promote good practices, and deliver training in its area of expertise: teaching and learning processes; organization, management and policy in education; and technological resources for learning.

There are two other focal points for applied research at the eLC: the Education and ICT programme, which trains teachers and professionals working at universities, schools and in business in the use of ICT for education and training, and the experimentation laboratory, a virtual network based on cloud computing for designing, carrying out and analysing experiments in the field of e-learning.

transfer.rdi.uoc.edu

5. Open knowledge

The UOC lives on the Internet and shares knowledge freely online through serial publications, special projects, blogs, social networks, the library and document repository, OpenCourseWare and Open Apps.

The University currently publishes 7 scientific journals and 3 general interest journals, prepared by faculty and teaching staff, and dealing with a wide range of fields: from the changes that the ICTs are having on the humanities to culture, the economy, communication, education, or law and politics.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the journal *Digithum* was accepted for inclusion in the Scopus database. With this, 60% of the UOC's catalogue of scientific journals are present in one of the most prestigious indexes of scientific output.

The UOC also disseminates knowledge through two special projects: LletrA, a space for showcasing Catalan literature online, set up in cooperation with the Ramon Llull Institute; and Debates on Education, a project run in cooperation with the Jaume Bofill Foundation that provides a forum for faceto-face and online debate on the future of education in Catalonia.

O2 – The "Oberta" in Open Access is the UOC's institutional repository, a service provided by the UOC Library. The repository currently contains over 6,500 digital resources related to research, teaching and university management. OpenCourseWare is a website where the UOC openly shares its teaching materials, and Open Apps is an online environment for sharing experiences, resources and applications aimed at optimizing teaching and management processes.

To disseminate knowledge in audiovisual format, this academic year the UOC has launched channels on YouTube and iTunes U, an educational platform that uses Apple's iTunes technology to distribute free audiovisual content of an educational and institutional nature to any device.

The UOC also has open, active channels and digital spaces for social interaction on Facebook, Flickr and LinkedIn.

w.uoc.edu/open-knowledge

UOC Corporate

UOC Corporate was created with the goal of becoming a reference partner for organizations that seek innovative, networked education for developing their professionals and improving their competitiveness.

With a track record of 20 years as international leader in technology-intensive learning, the UOC helps them leverage their cumulative experience, advising organizations on the most suitable e-learning model in each case, designing innovative solutions to meet the needs of companies and institutions, and assisting them in their implementation.

In addition to its open and tailor-made programmes, UOC Corporate has introduced the Performance Learning Paths, short courses accredited by the UOC that address specific business challenges using quality resources prepared by business and academic experts, presented in innovative formats that guarantee a useful, relevant learning experience with a direct impact on improving performance.

UOC Corporate has designed and delivered solutions to Agbar, CaixaBank, Banc Sabadell, Catalana Occidente, Leche Pascual and MC Mutual, among others.

corporate.uoc.edu

Annex

Services for journalists

UOC News offers journalists a wide range of resources.

In addition to this press pack, which is updated every academic year, since 2010 the Media and External Communications Office has published an annual **UOC Experts Guide** to make it easy for media organizations to contact members of the University's teaching and research staff.

The experts identified in the guide are listed by area of knowledge and in an alphabetical directory. The entry for each expert indicates his or her area of knowledge and fields of expertise, email address, phone number, and profile on social networks.

You can search the **online guide** by area of expertise or name. Alternatively, you can request a printed copy of the guide by writing to **gpremsa@uoc.edu**.

The press office also offers media organizations a number of other useful resources:

- > Twitter account @uocnews, to keep up-to-date on current affairs, analysed by the UOC's experts.
- > Subscription to the UOC email alert service.
- > RSS subscriptions to the press room (news, interviews and events), academic e-journals, networked knowledge spaces, and UOC blogs.
- > Photo gallery of events and holders of UOC posts.
- > Videos reports and interviews showcasing distinguished figures and academic events, on the UOC YouTube channel.

The following resources are also available on request:

- > specific information and data on the UOC's activity, including academic and institutional events, student profiles, etc.;
- > contact with members of the Governing Council, lecturers, researchers and experts working at the University for interviews, articles, opinion pieces, discussions, etc.;
- > photos and images related to specific events and other items not available under an open content licence (provided via a private Flickr group or FTP server);
- > video and audio recordings of important events organized by the UOC.

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