

Our shared history

Until the late 1960s, the only way to get a degree was by attending university full-time. About one in twenty school leavers attended higher education. For adults who had missed out in their youth the only option was giving up work to study full-time. As a result higher education was a distant dream for the vast majority.

The OU changed all that and allowed people to study on a part-time basis and continue to work while studying. It was the Scottish Trade Unionist Jennie Lee who, as the Minister for the Arts, was pivotal to founding the OU in 1967. The OU was a revolutionary idea at the time and, in its early years, the OU struggled to survive.

Today however the OU has 180,000 students worldwide, undertaking studies in a wide variety of subjects at different levels.

... and our shared vision

More important than this shared history is our common vision for the future – to continue to work together to widen access to higher education and training to all.

Through improved access to learning, the partnership between the STUC and The Open University will help Scottish workers and their families develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed.



Why recommend the OU?

- The Open University is Scotland's leading provider of part-time higher education
- 3 out of every 4 OU students are in work. Studying part-time demonstrates special qualities such as determination, adaptability, motivation, organisation and problem solving skills. Indeed, the skills which OU graduates bring are recognised and highly valued by employers and many sponsor their staff on OU courses
- Number one in UK for student satisfaction for third year running*
- Courses are flexible so that students can fit studies around work and family commitments.

* As published in the 2005, 2006 and 2007 National UK Student Satisfaction Survey

Find out more

General enquiries

ULRs and individuals who require information and advice about courses, credit transfer and the best place to start their studies can

Visit: www.openuniversity.co.uk/stuc
Email: scotland@open.ac.uk
Phone: 0131 226 3851

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (number RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (number SC 038302)

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ULR updates

OU
If you are a ULR and want to be kept up-to-date on the STUC OU partnership, workplace learning developments and OU information events please e-mail us at R11-Learning-Development@open.ac.uk and we'll add your details to our database.

STUC
To keep up to date on trade union-led lifelong learning initiatives, email STUC at learning@stuc.org.uk to be added to the database.



The Open University

Working together to open doors for Scottish workers



The STUC and The Open University's partnership agreement will open up learning opportunities to over 600,000 employees in Scotland.

Together we will work to ensure that those who have previously benefited least from education and training are able to develop their skills, confidence and careers through learning.



The STUC is delighted to be working with The Open University in Scotland. We share an ethos based on extending educational opportunities to all. In workplaces across Scotland, our Union Learning Representatives are making a difference by encouraging and supporting workers who in turn are returning to learning. Learning enhances career prospects, supports social justice and encourages social and civic participation. Most importantly, it can be fulfilling and fun.

Grahame Smith
General Secretary
STUC



Because of our shared values, the OU has a long and successful history of working with trade unions in Scotland. Our agreement with the STUC will enable us to take this to a new level by creating a direct route to hundreds of accessible and flexible learning opportunities for thousands of trade union members.

Peter Syme
Director
The Open University in Scotland

Working with Union Learning Representatives

The dedication and enthusiasm of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) is already starting to make the STUC goal of lifelong learning for all a reality.

The OU is delighted to be able to work with ULRs to highlight the opportunities we can offer their members. Along with this document outlining the OU STUC partnership, the following resources are being developed for ULRs:

- Leaflets for your members
- Posters
- A dedicated website page which will guide you through the partnership and answer your questions
- Standard presentations for employees
- The opportunity to request additional support for OU workplace learning groups
- The opportunity to request an OU tutor to support your *learning at work days*, subject to availability

Overcoming the cost of learning

The cost of courses and training is a real concern for many members. However, sometimes people assume that they cannot afford to spare the cash to invest in their personal development, without really finding out exactly what the costs are and what help is available.

At The Open University (OU):

- Free places are available to those on household incomes up to £16,090 (more if you have dependants).
- Anyone with an individual income of £18,000 or less can get £200 towards course fees with an ILA Scotland learner account. However if the individual studies for 60 points, part-time, he or she can get a £500 ILA Scotland learner account towards selected courses. For example, if a £500 ILA Scotland learner account is used towards *Exploring Science*, which is a 60 point OU course (equivalent to half time study), this could bring the remaining cost to the individual down to less than £5 a week by using the OU's student budget account*.
- Union members qualify for a 10% discount on their first level 1 course of 30 or 60 points

Those who don't qualify for government help, or support from an employer, can use the the OU's student budget account* to spread the cost of fees over the length of their course.

* OUSBA agreements are credit agreements regulated by the Consumer Credit Act 1974

OU learning in the workplace

The OU has over 14,000 students across Scotland, so you're likely to come across a few.

If you identify a group of members who wish to learn a specific OU subject at the same time, in the same workplace or location, then the OU can support you in setting up workplace learning groups. This would allow us to work together to offer additional support to your group such as introductory learning skills or cover a specific course topic in more detail.

A range of starting points

The Open University really is open to everyone, as there are no entry requirements. We offer a wide range of courses at various levels, so there

will be a suitable starting point for everyone. Each course is measured in credit points (60 points is equivalent to half-time study).

For people who have not studied before, or haven't been in education for a very long time, our Openings courses (10 points worth of study) are a great place to start. These are access-level courses which have been specially developed and provide extra support to new students.

Most people start their OU studies with a level 1 course. Our 60 point courses at this level include *An Introduction to Business Studies*, *An Introduction to Health and Social Care*, *An Introduction to Social Sciences*, *Exploring Science* and *The Arts Past and Present*. There are many other 30 and 60 point courses to choose from as well as a range of short courses (worth 10 or 15 points) for those who want to learn more about a specific topic of interest or want to test out the OU before committing further.

One in four OU students already has a previous qualification to the level of HNC or HND. Credit can be transferred from previous studies to count towards an OU degree and reduce the time students take to obtain their degree.