

# In Partnership



The Open  
University

Open University International Partnerships

Open University Worldwide

Newsletter for International Partners

August 2009

## Arab Open University to offer first postgraduate awards

The Arab Open University (AOU) is preparing to launch its first postgraduate programmes in 2010.

The MSc in Software Development and the MA in English Literature will be offered through AOU branches across seven Arab countries, including a new branch opened in 2008 in Oman. Graduates will receive an OU validated award alongside an AOU qualification.

The programmes provide a continuous study path for graduates of the BA English Language and Literature and the BA Hons in ITC programmes.

Professor Lewis Mukattash, Acting Rector and Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, outlined the demand for the MSc in Software Development. "Software plays a central role in almost all aspects of daily life: in government, banking and finance, education, transportation, entertainment, medicine, agriculture and law. The number, size and application domains of computer programs have grown dramatically. In addition, the continuously increasing complexity of software systems needed by e-Governments, commerce and industry stress the need for skilled software engineers."

The MA in English Literature has been adapted under a consultancy agreement for local cultural needs. This qualification is expected to be in high demand in Arab countries owing to the recent expansion of the teaching of English in schools, the growth in the number of universities, and business and media opportunities for graduates proficient in both Arabic and English.

Professor Mukattash continued; "The AOU believes that the validation of a strong and viable MA Programme in English Literature will help the AOU prepare students for employment in local and regional markets as well as in a global market. Graduates will also be equipped to appreciate other human cultures and heritages, and communicate with the world at large, understand it, and make themselves understood within it."

The AOU is accredited by Open University Validation Services and licenses Open University course content which form part of their validated programmes. The postgraduate programmes will be offered using a blended learning style of face to face tutorials and distance elements.



Above: Professor Musa Mihsein, the next Rector of the Arab Open University, with Alan Tait, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Curriculum and Awards at The Open University.

The Arab Open University has also recently announced the university's next Rector, who will take up appointment in October 2009. Professor Musa Mihsein is currently the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Development at the University of Derby, where his many responsibilities include several faculties, student support, information services and marketing. In addition to an academic career in research and lecturing, Professor Mihsein has also pursued a career in industrial research with British Gas.

In preparation for his work at the AOU, Professor Mihsein visited The Open University in the UK during August, meeting with staff from Open University Worldwide, OU Validation Services and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Curriculum and Awards.

For more information on working with Open University Worldwide, visit [www.ouworldwide.com](http://www.ouworldwide.com)



## Prime Minister celebrates 40 years of The Open University

The Prime Minister hosted a reception to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the OU during June.

More than 100 guests attended the event, including politicians, special advisors, senior civil servants and Open University students, alumni, stakeholders and key figures from the establishment of the University.

Among the guests was the Rector of the International Institute of Management LINK, Sergei Schennikov. IIM LINK has been working in partnership with the OU since the early 1990s to offer business qualifications in Russia.

Prior to the event the Prime Minister Gordon Brown, himself a former tutor, said: "The success of distance learning, pioneered 40 years ago by the Open University, has been nothing short of a revolution for higher education. It has opened the doors to a whole new audience of students who have not only seen academic success but reaped the wider rewards learning brings.



Pictured: Sergei Schennikov, Rector of IIM LINK, with Lady Wilson, widow of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who established The Open University.

An approach to higher education which emphasises accessibility and flexibility has put the UK at the forefront of e-learning."

## New Global MBA to reflect worldwide business cultures

The Open University and international media group Pearson plc are working in partnership to offer a Global MBA programme.

Based on The Open University's existing triple-accredited MBA, the Global MBA is designed to offer students an opportunity to study for the Open University MBA award in multi-national learning groups, using a blend of innovative learning methods. The first presentation will be piloted in the UK, Norway, Sweden, India, Singapore and Malaysia, offering students a diverse and global perspective on the world of business.

The global nature of the programme will also be supported through a series of residential schools, named Global Exchange Events. These residential events of three to five days, will take place in London, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai and Oslo.

The partnership brings together the academic programme innovation of the OU and the education, publishing and commercial expertise of Pearson. The two organisations bring complementary knowledge and skills in the design, production and delivery of education.

The Global MBA is a pilot and will allow the two organisations to develop ways of working together, potentially to deliver a broad range of programmes. Pearson's connection with The Financial Times will also make available additional up to the minute resources for tutors and students. A weekly digest of financial

and management news will be supplied by the Financial Times, from which tutors can base lessons and case studies. This will include the FT Digest, e-paper edition of the FT and premium access to the Financial Times' online subscription service.

Nick Watson, Project Director of the Global MBA, said: "This is a hugely exciting opportunity which will break new ground for The Open University Business School's MBA. This programme is truly international in outlook and will offer not only a chance to share experiences with students from other countries, but to study in a number of residential schools around the world."

For the first time, the MBA will be structured as a continuous programme of study lasting 30 months, instead of a flexible selection of course choices. The 30 month programme will offer students the opportunity to lock step with an ongoing support group and share their growing understanding of the business world. Another innovation is dual tutor support. In addition to the traditional course tutor, who will guide the students through the specific course material, a programme tutor will oversee the student journey.

The pilot of the Global MBA begins in November 2009, with the second presentation following in May 2010. Approximately 180 students are expected for the first presentation and 250 for the second. For more information, visit [www.open.ac.uk/mbaopen/mba-programme](http://www.open.ac.uk/mbaopen/mba-programme).



### OU's online research repository publishes 10,000th article

A research paper which argues that mobile phones and portable devices can lead to new perspectives and practices in learning has become the 10,000th item to be deposited in The Open University's online research repository, Open Research Online (ORO).

The 10,000th item, "Will mobile learning change language learning?", was written by Agnes Kukulska-Hulme, Professor of Learning Technology & Communication at The Open University, and first published in ReCALL, the journal of the European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL). Professor Kukulska-Hulme looked at the impact mobile devices are beginning to have on how learning takes place, and concluded that an emphasis on mobility can lead to new perspectives and practices. The research paper includes current examples of mobile learning from the UK, Norway, the Netherlands and America.

Open Research Online is a free, publicly accessible repository of the Open University's peer-reviewed research outputs, making available journal articles, book chapters, books and more as electronic copies (also known as e-prints). Approximately 7,000 people across 170 countries visit ORO each week and it is now the eighth largest higher education repository in the UK. As such, it forms an invaluable resource for researchers, students, policy makers and end users across the globe.

Professor Brigid Heywood, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) at the OU, said: "This is an astounding achievement. We established this online resource just three years ago and have been both surprised and delighted at the rate at which ORO has grown in its relatively short life. To reach 10,000 items in that space of time without mandatory deposit is testament to the hard work and support of individuals across the university and the commitment of this institution to open access. Alongside initiatives like OpenLearn, it is another



example of the OU's drive to make key resources freely accessible to all."

Researchers benefit from the wider access and impact their work is offered through a central, publicly available source, and are better able to understand how their work is being read and used by the wider academic community. Improved access to research also assists researchers in applications to research funding bodies. Over 20 per cent of the articles deposited on ORO provide access to the full-text, with research ranging from dating climate change on Mars to investigations of rhythm in North Indian music.

ORO is just one example of the distinctive scale and reach of the OU's innovative, research-informed public engagement initiatives, which range from broadcasts on prime-time television to the use of Open Educational Resources such as OpenLearn ([www.open.ac.uk/openlearn](http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn)). For more information or to search Open Research Online, please visit [oro.open.ac.uk](http://oro.open.ac.uk).

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### Chinese universities to explore professional development

The Open University has signed two Memoranda of Understanding with Chinese universities to explore the growing need in China for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Non-credit bearing material will be used to support universities addressing the need for practical training alongside existing theoretical learning.

The Ministry of Education is supporting a drive for CPD and vocational courses to complement theoretical understanding. There is also a high demand for CPD amongst people trying to improve their job prospects in the economic downturn and compete amongst growing numbers of graduates.

The CPD courses are likely to consist of online materials with, where necessary, additional Chinese facilitation. Short flexible courses are expected to prove a good fit for professionals who work full time. The OU is also working with universities in China to explore further opportunities within the CPD market.



## Knowledge Media Institute leads the way in Future Internet

Have you ever wondered what the Internet will look like in five years? The Open University's Knowledge Media Institute (KMi) will help you wonder.

KMi was originally conceived fifteen years ago with a remit to help the OU deliver its existing world-class distance learning across the developing landscape of the Internet. KMi did this by engaging in key research projects and translating that into real delivery systems for learning content. Now a globally recognised £3.5m Research and Development lab in the field of internet technologies, KMi continues to deliver award winning, cutting edge research outputs as collaborative web 2.0 environments and importantly, web 3.0 semantic web and semantic web services outputs, all with a learning element.

KMi is currently coordinating the STELLAR Project, an EU consortium of 16 academic and commercial partners with interest in shaping the European Technology Enhanced Learning environment of the future.

KMi academics are playing leading roles in Future Internet projects such as ServiceWeb 3.0 and SmartProducts; working with organizations such as the Halle Orchestra to determine the effect of New Media in specific market niches; developing the OU presence in iTunesU; investigating the possibilities of sophisticated image retrieval systems; building social learning

platforms and delivering new communications and network tools.

This work, amongst the 15 other live projects in the lab, represents the current standing of KMi as a leading academic institute.

The key research themes of KMi echo the leading edge of this global research field as KMi research teams have live projects in Future Internet, Knowledge Management, Multimedia & Information Systems, Narrative Hypermedia, New Media Systems, Semantic Web & Knowledge Services and Social Software.

Translating this research knowledge into services is the job of Alan Fletcher, KMi Business Development Manager. As KMi are always extending their networks across sector and geographic boundaries, Alan is keen to identify collaborative partners in the field who are looking to benefit from the knowledge of KMi or work together to develop research themes.

For details of KMi knowledge transfer and collaborative opportunities, contact Alan at [a.j.fletcher@open.ac.uk](mailto:a.j.fletcher@open.ac.uk) or visit [kmi.open.ac.uk](http://kmi.open.ac.uk) for more details on the projects and research themes of KMi.

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## Fellowships focus on equality law and education in Africa

Two fellowship placements at the Open University have focused on labour and equality law in South Africa and teacher training in Sudan.

Judge Dhaya Pillay, Senior Judge of the Labour Court in South Africa, spent four months with The Open University Business School's Centre for Law. Dhaya contributed to a number of projects and took part in debates on a number of academic topics and new course proposals.

In particular her interest in international labour law and plain use of English led to contributions to a major 60 point level one course; *W100 Rules, rights and justice: An introduction to law*. A unit covering what constitutes misconduct in



Pictured: Judge Dhaya Pillay.

the workplace and how this is managed in different jurisdictions is currently under development. Integral to the unit will be consolidation of important study

skills; information literacy, problem solving and critical analysis.

Mohamed Suleiman of The Open University of Sudan spent three months with the Faculty of Education and Language Studies and the English in Action team, researching a proposal for training teachers of English in Sudan.

Mohamed noted that many teachers of English in Sudan have not studied English in depth and suggested several key methods for training and supporting teachers, including looking at how a dynamic language evolves over time and ensuring all four areas of language skills (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) can be both assessed and used in everyday contexts.



### MSc workshop in Vietnam

Hoa Sen University in Vietnam is planning its first Postgraduate offering, with the support of The Open University.

Lindsey Court, Staff Tutor with the Maths Computing and Technology Faculty, and Brian Hambling, tutor, ran a two day workshop during July on the MSc Information Systems and Technology Management. The workshop was funded by the Prime Minister's Initiative 2 (PMI2) and attended by ten senior staff from Hoa Sen, including Deans, Lecturers and Heads of Department.

The workshop focused on how the course is created and structured, the role of the tutor and staff tutor, assessment, student support and the online Virtual Learning Environment. The workshop also explored some of the course modules that make up the MSc, including Systems Engineering and Project Management.

The MSc will build on Hoa Sen's current undergraduate programmes. Hoa Sen University offer a range of courses across four faculties: Training and International Cooperation, Economics and Commerce, Sciences and Technology, Linguistics and Culture.

Hoa Sen University plan to offer the MSc from October 2010, under licence from The Open University.

### Online film explores the OU



Pictured: Cheong Hee Kiat of SIM University, Singapore, speaking on the film.

Open University Worldwide has created a film designed to explain The Open University and why the University puts so much emphasis on collaboration. The 30 minute film is split into seven chapters, enabling viewers to combine a general introduction with the particular area they are interested in, such as research, teaching or the use of learning technology. The film includes interviews with students, employers, graduates, the Chancellor, international partners and a wide range of staff from across the university.

The film can be viewed on line at [http://www.ouworldwide.com/Video\\_What\\_is\\_the\\_OU.asp](http://www.ouworldwide.com/Video_What_is_the_OU.asp) and will soon be available through YouTube and iTunes. For more information or copies of the DVD, contact Becky Thornton on [k.r.thornton@open.ac.uk](mailto:k.r.thornton@open.ac.uk).

## Working in partnership with Open University Worldwide

There are many ways to work in partnership with The Open University, depending on your needs and circumstances.

#### Offer an OU degree

Students are registered with the OU, which provides tutor training, student assessment, examination and awards. Partners manage student communication and guidance and distribute course materials.

#### Offer your own degree

Licence OU course materials for flexible use in your own course. Partners can select the most useful course units, adapt or translate material, and access print, audio-visual and online resources.

#### Consultancy

Expert advice on how to run workshops, write course material and establish distance learning organisations. Areas of guidance include quality assurance, strategy and management, learning support, teacher education and computing.



Above: The Open University campus in Milton Keynes, UK.

For more information on any aspect of working with The Open University, please contact your partnership representative, visit [www.ouworldwide.com](http://www.ouworldwide.com) or call +44 (0)1908 858785.