

Research

Open University faculty members are involved in three primary academic areas: course development, teaching, and research. At the OUI, research represents a wide range of disciplines, including social sciences, humanities, natural and life sciences, exact sciences, and engineering.

The Dean of Research, Prof. Manor Mendel, has overall responsibility for the OUI Research Authority (RA), the research institutes, and adherence to research ethics. The dean of research also serves as chairman of the board of OpMop Ltd., the OUI's technology transfer subsidiary.

The Research Authority

The RA encourages OUI faculty research by providing assistance in locating external sources for funding and in submitting proposals. Likewise, the Authority promotes the work of OUI researchers by direct support from an internal fund which finances research grants, fellowships for research students, and travel for presentation of research at scientific conferences abroad.

The RA is responsible for the financial and administrative monitoring of research proposals which have received funding, as well as for managing researchers' budgets. It also sponsors workshops which assist applicants in submitting grant proposals to external sources. The Authority provides lab facilities and computers, recruits research students and assistants, and encourages collaboration between OUI researchers and colleagues in other academic institutions. Annual events showcase the latest OUI research.

The Research Authority Steering Committee is comprised of four senior faculty members from different disciplines, appointed by the OUI president. The committee, chaired by the dean of research, determines criteria for the allocation of funds, and for the evaluation of applications to the internal fund.

News and Developments

- An increase in the number of external research grants awarded to faculty members has resulted in an increase of approximately 50% of total income from external research grants in comparison with the previous three years.
- The research programs coordinator, appointed by the RA, has facilitated the submission of more grant requests to Horizon 2020. In addition, professional consultants have assisted us in optimizing our submissions to these programs.
- The Computer Authority has set up a computerized system for the RA which enables it to accurately and effectively monitor income from external research grant funds.
- The RA website has been upgraded with a Hebrew and English database. This system also enables researchers and students outside of the OUI to search for specific researchers. A system has been developed, including a sophisticated search capability, which accesses all of the information needed by researchers in order to submit to external funds.
- In the context of the OUI strategic plan of refreshing and stimulating research, the steering committee has updated older criteria and consolidated new criteria for research grants financed by its internal fund.
- The computer unit has been developing a high performance computing system (HPC) for faculty members who require centralized computerization infrastructure for their research.
- In light of the increase in the number of faculty members engaged in behavioral research at the OUI, additional space for the construction of behavioral research labs is being sought. In addition to the existing lab in the Department of Education and Psychology on the OUI Raanana campus, a rental contract has been signed in Ramat Aviv. A building plan is currently underway to make the space suitable for lab needs. This lab will enable an increase in the number of research subjects (students) involved in studies, which will increase the scope of the research.

- The RA serves as an intermediary between researchers and various administrative entities at the university, including the Human Resources Authority. Salary reporting for research assistants employed via the RA required a special arrangement for retrieving data and making various calculations. The Computer Authority facilitated this process, which allowed most of the research assistants' time and salary sheets to be administered via the central system used by all employees.
- The procedural regulation regarding the purchase of computer equipment from the Fund for International Science Relations and other research foundations has been updated.

Research Centers

The three research centers at the Open University provide a scientific, institutional and practical framework for research, which allows interdisciplinary and reciprocal cooperation. The centers help researchers generate new scientific knowledge, participate in the mutual exchange of ideas, and foster cooperation with other researchers and experts in Israel and abroad.

The Institute for Policy Analysis

The Institute for Policy Analysis, headed by Dr. Varda Wasserman, is an interdisciplinary center dedicated to the promotion of research on theoretical, empirical and applied subjects related to the interconnection between policy formation and implementation, and social, political, and economic processes and mechanisms. The Institute encourages research focusing on Israel and abroad, comparative studies, and research examining the global and international dimensions of policy design and implementation. In order to create a vibrant and productive research environment for scholars from different fields, the Institute organizes international and local seminars and conferences, publishes a series of working papers, and provides research assistance to its members.

The Institute was founded in 2011 as the Research Institute for Policy, Political Economy and Society. As its focus shifted to policy processes, its name was changed and it is now called The Institute for Policy Analysis. This shift has resulted in ten new and veteran faculty members joining the Institute. The Institute's board is currently focusing on policy scenarios which will help in the analysis of policy alternatives for various current issues, as well as for establishing active research groups. Presently, one research group meets monthly to discuss army issues. In the coming months, another two research groups are expected to convene on education policy and on the "social protest" and its implications.

Events sponsored by the Institute

- **International symposium:** Corporate Responsibility in Israeli Industry: A Practice at the Organizational Core or Managerial Effects?
- The Army (including publication of an anthology of papers).
- Promoting Employment for the ultra-Orthodox (including publication of an anthology of papers).
- Is God Right-wing?
- **Israeli-Cypriot workshop:** A Comparative Examination of the Israel and Cyprus cases.
- Followed by the Flood? Economics of the Society of Abundance – Problems and Solutions.

In addition, the Institute published a book of scientific articles on the subject of mandatory civic service, and received a research grant for the study of corporate responsibility, and a research grant from the Ministry of Science for the study of policies promoting women.

A newsletter provides updates on the Institute's activities, and introduces research conducted by its members.

Research Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies

This research center, headed by Dr. Nitza Geri, explores the integration of innovative technologies with teaching and learning processes. The Center encourages studies by OUI faculty members aimed at improving the understanding of teaching and learning processes in a technology-rich environment, and integrating new technologies into the teaching of courses in the academic world in general, and the OUI in particular. The Center was established in 2010 to replace the Chais Center for the Integration of Technology in Education, which was founded in 2004. Fifty faculty members from various departments are currently carrying out research at the Center, in addition to a part-time research fellow. The Center works in close cooperation with the Shoham Center for Technology in Distance Education, and focuses on forging close professional ties among members of the Israeli research community. To this end, regular academic events are held, including research seminars, symposia, and conferences.

In 2014-2015, the Center held three symposia which were open to the general public: At Work, At Home, And In Your Mind – Technologies and Their Impact on Daily Life; Human-Machine Relations – In What Direction?; Children in the Digital Sandbox – Research Perspectives on Technology and its Use with Pre-school Children. Six seminars were held in which the Center's members, guest researchers, and graduate students (supervised by advisors) presented their research.

Selected studies conducted with the support of the Center are listed below:

- **Mamoon Abu Elheja and Dr. Avner Caspi:** "Faculty, Students and Facebook: The Challenge for Building Positive Relationships with Students versus the Risks of Losing Reputation."
- **Dr. Gal Ben-Yehudah and Prof. Yoram Eshet:** "The Effectiveness of Using Text-Highlighting as a Learning Tool in Reading from Print and from Digital Displays."
- **Prof. Nitza Geri and Amir Winer:** "Patterns of Online Video Lectures Use and Impact on Student Achievement."
- **Dr. Vered Silber-Varod, Amir Winer, and Prof. Nitza Geri:** "Knowledge Dam: Making Video Lectures Searchable by Using Automatic Speech and Text Recognition Technologies."
- **Dr. Yehuda Peled, Dr. Ina Blau, and Ronen Grinberg:** "Implications of the One-to-One Learning Model on Teachers' Pedagogical Perceptions and Educational Discourse in the Classroom."
- **Dr. Yoram Kalman:** "Business Model Analysis of the Innovative Potential of New Educational Technologies."
- **Tzipi Rosenfeld, Dr. Sarit Barzilai, and Dr. Ina Blau:** "Scaffolding Digital Game-Based Learning at School: Relationships among Learning Achievements, Perceived Learning, and Game Experiences."

Chais Conference 2015

The 2015 Chais Conference was the tenth in a series of annual research conferences on learning technologies organized by the Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies. The conference provides a forum for prominent researchers and development professionals in the field of innovative learning technologies in Israel, and offers a platform to present their studies and advancements in the field. The conference contributes to shaping Israel's learning technology research community and establishing the Open University as a leader in implementing the latest technologies.

Approximately 600 academics from institutions in Israel, as well as participants from other organizations and companies attended this year's event. At the conference, 34 articles and posters were presented. Prof. Yochai Benkler of Harvard University was the keynote guest speaker, and Prof. Sara Guri-Rosenblit, Dean of Development and Learning Technologies at the OUI, delivered a lecture at a plenary session. Selected articles from the conference are published annually in a special edition of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of e-Skills and Lifelong Learning*.

The Center for the Study of Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims

The Center is headed by Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi-Klorman and has over forty members, most affiliated with the Open University, and some representing other academic institutions. The Center promotes interfaith dialogue between the three monotheistic

religions on various subjects and covering different historical periods. Research also contributes to the Center's public role, enhances religious understanding and interaction, and presents research findings to the public. This approach attracts the interest of many scholars, some of whom have joined the Center's research team to participate in initiatives promoting the study of interfaith relationships.

Research groups sponsored by the Center

A new research group is studying the topic "Time, History, Theory, Culture," with an emphasis on the way in which different cultures and the religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam cope with the element of time. Seventeen researchers, all from the OUI, participate in the group, which has held four meetings thus far:

- **Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi-Klorman:** "Time and Space in the Study of Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims" (group discussion).
- **Prof. Guy Miron:** "Sociology of Time."
- **Dr. Yael Munk:** "Issues in the Conceptualization of Literary Time according to Mikhail Bakhtin."
- **Dr. Inbal Ofer:** "Lived Space: Henri Lefebvre and the History of the City."

A research group is studying Jewish-Christian relations in the first centuries of the Christian era, and is addressing the question of the parting of ways between Judaism and Christianity. The group comprises 13 researchers from the OUI and other academic institutions. It convened three times during the year for the following sessions:

- **Dr. Dmitry Kopeliovich:** "Jeremiah in Christian Literature."
- **Dr. Dan Jaffee:** "Jesus in Talmudic Literature: Between Image, Metaphor and Real History."
- A group meeting to determine the fundamental content for an anthology which will represent the unique voice of this research group and Israeli research in general.

A research group is studying the subject of identity formation in a multi-religious and multicultural environment. Four researchers and three research assistants from the OUI and other academic institutions are participating in this group. Several meetings have been held, focusing on the processing and analysis of field studies collected in the past two years, and on writing an article based on these data. On November 20, 2014, The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies held a symposium, "Whose Jerusalem? The City and The Challenges of the *Other*," in which a preliminary report was delivered by group members on "Narratives of Instruction at Christian Sites for Students in the Israeli Education System." Following publication of the report, a five-session workshop on the subject was conducted for tour guides.

Divan Workshops – Presenting and discussing research, and meeting with veteran researchers

- **Dr. Nina Pinto-Abecasis:** "The Multi-Cultural Space and it's Reflection in the Language and Culture of the Inhabitants of Tetuan in North Morocco."
- **Dr. Sarab Abu-Rabia-Queder:** "Challenges Facing Academician Bedouin Women in the Arab and Jewish Labor Market."
- **Ido Shahar:** "Maneuvering between the Shari'a Court and the Israeli Family Court: Alimony Charges by Muslim Women in Jerusalem as a Case Study."
- **Dr. Stefan Litt:** "Between Nazi Berlin and Democratic London: The Correspondence of Hans Fallada and his Jewish Literary Agent Carl Ehrenstein 1934-1938."
- **Prof. Assaf Dar:** "Jews and Muslims in Work: Ethnicity, Religion, and National Identity in Medical Organizations in Israel."
- **Dr. Debra Kaplan:** "Jewish and Muslim Travelers: Voyage Permits, Religion and Identification in Early Modern Germany."

International conference

- The 4th Annual JCM Conference:
"Economy and Culture: The Encounter between Jews, Christians, and Muslims."

A sample study conducted with Center support:

- **Dr. Chen Bram**, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute: "Immigration and Intergroup Relations: Jewish-Muslim Relations in Central Eurasia, Israel and the U.S."

This research combines an anthropological and historical study of Jewish-Muslim relations in Central Eurasia with a study of intergroup relations in mixed Jewish-Arab cities in Israel, in which immigrants from Eurasia constitute large groups. Comparative perspective is offered by exploring the connections between Jewish and Muslim immigrants from Eurasia in New York. The study relates the meaning of past experiences to current intergroup relations. It develops a theoretical framework that focuses on intergroup cultural intimacy, which allows the maintenance of social networks beyond religious and ethnic boundaries. Informal practices, such as "ritual exchange" are central in constructing proximity beyond group boundaries.

Collaborative Agreements

The Open University collaborates with outside academic institutions in order to provide the infrastructure necessary to enable OUI faculty members to conduct experimental research. Several years ago, the OUI and Tel Aviv University signed a joint agreement allowing OUI faculty members from various scientific and experimental fields to conduct ongoing research using the infrastructure available at Tel Aviv University. The contract with The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was extended, which enables Dr. Yair Ben-Chaim, of the OUI Dept. of Natural Sciences, to conduct research in the Department of Neurobiology at the Institute of Life Science of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. An agreement was signed with the Technion, which will allow Dr. Ofer Reany from the Dept. of Natural Sciences to extend his research at the Technion. The university is investigating the possibility of collaboration between the Faculty of Agriculture in Rehovot and senior faculty members at the OUI.

Research Code of Ethics

The Institutional Ethics Commission is entrusted with ensuring that research conducted at the OUI respects the code of ethics of different scientific disciplines as well as all OUI ethical criteria. The Commission has six senior faculty members representing different subjects – exact sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Among other issues, the Commission has addressed adaptation of the code of ethics for approval of research at the OUI to the code in effect in the European Union, and the formulation of a procedural regulation for surveys for the purpose of supervising the number of times OUI students are approached for purposes of internal or external research.

In addition to the Institutional Commission, four secondary departmental committees include senior faculty members and senior teaching faculty, each chaired by a representative of the Institutional Commission from the relevant discipline. The Ethics Committee of the Department of Education and Psychology handled approximately 700 inquiries by students and researchers in the field. Over half of these cases required repeated attention. In the framework of the conference for seminar paper instructors in psychology, a lecture was delivered on the subject of ethics and revitalizing procedural regulations. A representative of the committee participated in discussions on behalf of the OUI, together with the Chief Scientist and another representative of the Ministry of Education. A proposal was designed for granting authority to the ethics committees at institutions for higher education for checking proposals for research in the education system, in order to shorten the process of getting permission from the Chief Scientist in the Ministry of Education. The proposed amendments were published in a memorandum from the Director General, which was published in May 2015.

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Management and Economics conducted a pilot program. Decisions were made regarding refining the contents of the questionnaire for submitting a proposal to the committee and for conduct of the committee vis à vis instructors.

In the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, and in the Department of Sociology, Political Science, and Communication, a limited number of inquiries were filed by senior faculty members, teaching faculty, and students, and all were handled and closed.

Research Authority Events

Scientists' Night

This event has been held annually since 2007 in Israel and Europe under the sponsorship of the EU Ministry of Science and Technology. This year's theme was "the brain." The event, which was open to the general public, was attended by 2500 people, including students, faculty members, and OUI employees and their families. The range of programming included a variety of captivating lectures by OUI researchers and guest speakers, demonstrations, and tours. Visitors were able to take part in activities designed to allow them to experience and appreciate the senses and to better understand the difficulties of people with disabilities. The program included an exhibit of surrealist painting; screening of a fantasy film; a happening with challenging games; a performance by a sensory artist, "The Techniques Behind Mind Reading;" the creation of a "brain cap" for children, and other activities. Most of the programming for children was held in the OUI outdoor square, while lectures were delivered in the auditoriums. As part of the event, lectures by OUI researchers were also offered at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya and in the Kadima residential community. Emphasis was placed on making all programming accessible to people with disabilities and was conducted in conjunction with Access Israel.



Scientists' Night, September 2015

Individual Research Grants by External Funds

In the past year, 21 grants and fellowships were awarded by external research funds.

Grants from the Israel Science Foundation

- **Dr. Leonid Barenboim**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, (with Prof. Michael Elkin, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), "Locality in Distributed Computing."
- **Dr. Yair Ben-Chaim**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences, (with Prof. Hanna Parnas, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), "The Mechanism Responsible for Sensitivity to Tension of Receptors Attached to G Proteins."
- **Dr. Dror Goldberg**, Department of Management and Economics, "How the Americans Invented Modern Money, 1607-1692."
- **Dr. Nurit Gronau**, Department of Education and Psychology, "Perception in a Snatch: The Role of Perceptual, Conceptual, and Assignment-Dependent Factors in Competitiveness Between Stimuli."
- **Dr. Inbal Tuvi-Arad**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences, "Proximal Symmetry: Comprehensive Research on its Implications in Chemistry."
- **Prof. Adia Mendelson-Maoz**, Department of Literature, Language, and the Arts, "Yoram Kaniuk: His Life and Creative Works."
- **Prof. Guy Miron**, Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, "'Time Regimes' and 'Lived Time' of German Jews Under the Nazi Regime."

Premiere program

- **Dr. Ofer Reany**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences (with Prof. Gabriel Lemcoff, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), "Mechanical Connection Based Macromolecules: New Statuses of Connection Creating Unprecedented Features of Polymers."

Research workshop

- **Dr. Nurit Melnik**, Department of Literature, Language, and the Arts (with Dr. Shuly Wintner, the University of Haifa), "Grammar Development: Multilingual Aspects of Interface between Syntax and Semantics."

Grants from other external funds

- **Prof. Ronit Bogler**, Department of Education and Psychology, (with Prof. Adam Nir, Prof. Anat Zohar, and Prof. Adi Ben-David, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), received a grant from the Ministry of Education for research on "Autonomy of Schools and Learning."
- **Prof. Yoram Eshet** and **Dr. Ina Blau**, Department of Education and Psychology, received a grant from MEITAL, the Interuniversity Center for E-Learning for research on "From a Distance Yet Face-to-Face: Duo-Directional Video Technology and its Influence on the Perception of Learning and Acquiring Knowledge in Synchronic Learning."
- **Dr. Tal Hassner**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science (with Prof. Yosef Keller, Bar-Ilan University), received a grant from the Ministry of Science for research on "Protection Against Biometric Identity Theft."
- **Dr. Tal Hassner**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, in collaboration with the University of California, received a grant from the IARPA for research on "Graphics-based Learning Approach Integrated with Vision Elements (GLAIVE)."

- **Dr. Einat Hazkani-Covo**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences, received a grant from the Israel Cancer Association for research on "The Contribution of Follidrones to Gnomonic Instability in Cancer."
- **Dr. Einat Hazkani-Covo**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences, received a grant from GIF, The German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development for research on "Abundance and Significance of Naturally Occurring Organelle-to-Nucleus Gene Transfers."
- **Dr. Igor Rahinov**, Department of Natural and Life Sciences, received a grant from Volkswagen for research on "Molecule Interaction with Electronically Modified Surfaces: Towards the Next Generation of Heterogeneous Catalysts."
- **Dr. Gad Sagiv**, Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, received a grant from GIF for research on "Rituals and Ceremonies in Hasidism."
- **Prof. Tamir Tassa**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, and **Dr. Rica Gonen**, Department of Management and Economics, received a grant from the European Union for research on "TYPES Towards Transparency and Privacy in the Online Advertising Business."
- **Dr. Varda Wasserman**, Department of Management and Economics, (with Dr. Michal Frenkel, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), received a grant from the Ministry of Science for research on "Ultra-Orthodox Women – Between Work, Family, and Community: Towards a Synergetic Policy."

Two of the studies awarded grants from external funds are briefly described below:

Prof. Guy Miron: "Time Regimes' and 'Lived Time' of German Jews Under the Nazi Regime"

The research will explore the German Jewish experience under the Nazi regime from a new socio-cultural perspective based on fundamental terms from the sociology of time, such as "lived time" (which was coined by Eugène Minkowski) and "time regimes."

The integration of the Jews in German society during the emancipation era was accompanied by synchronization with the dominant surrounding time regime, predominately with the "bourgeoisification" of time. Time became relatively more regulated, planned, linear and evenly-flowing. This changed radically with the Nazi rise to power and the decline of Jewish emancipation in 1933.

Based primarily on real-time documentation, the research will seek to illuminate processes such as Jewish reactions to the Nazification of German time; how Jews came to terms with their exclusion from the national German time cycle; in what ways Jews refashioned the traditional Jewish calendar and Jewish holidays; expressions of linear, versus cyclical, time flow; experiences of uneven time flow as crawling and sometimes even standing still ("the time of waiting") on the one hand, and acceleration of time on the other hand; changes in the way Jews related, both to the future, and to the past.

Jewish press and additional communal archival materials will cover the public arena. Personal documentation (predominantly diaries and correspondence) will relate to more private experiences.

Prof. Tamir Tassa, and Dr. Rica Gonen: "TYPES Towards Transparency and Privacy in the Online Advertising Business"

Online advertising generates billions of euros- worth of revenue and millions of jobs every year, both directly and indirectly. However, the lack of transparency regarding tracking techniques, and the type of information companies collect about users is creating increasing concerns in society. Software tools for implementing mitigation (e.g., ad blockers) have been released to block any transfer of information from end-users towards the online advertising ecosystem. A massive adoption of these tools by end-users may cause disruptions in the digital economy by affecting the online advertising sector, leading to consequences such as loss of a large number of employment positions.

The OUI, represented by Prof. Tamir Tassa (mathematics and computer science) and Dr. Rica Gonen (management and economics), joined a consortium of industrial and academic European partners that launched a project called *TYPES* ---

Towards transparency and Privacy in the online advertising business. The project aims to cope with this challenge by defining, implementing, and validating a holistic framework of technologies and tools that guarantee both transparency and privacy preservation, and that give the end-users control of the amount of information they are willing to share. Prof. Tamir Tassa brings to the project his expertise in cryptography and privacy, while Dr. Rica Gonen brings her expertise in mechanism design and computational game theory.

Planning and Budgeting Committee Grants for Outstanding Postdoctoral Students from China and India

- **Dr. Ronit Weisman**, Dept. of Natural and Life Sciences, received a grant for a third year of study for a postdoctoral student from India.
- **Dr. Igor Rahinov**, Dept. of Natural and Life Sciences, received a grant for a postdoctoral student from India.

Research Grants and Fellowships from the Internal Fund

The OUI provides financing for its researchers to leverage their work and facilitate their application to external funds. In 2014-2015, the Research Authority received 134 proposals for support from the Internal Fund, of which 120 (90%) were approved for funding.

Honors and Awards

- **Dr. Hava Aldouby**, Dept. of Literature, Language, and the Arts, Research Associate, Daat Hamakom Center for Research Excellence, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- **Dr. Leonid Barenboim**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, received the Doctoral Dissertation Award in Distributed Computing, and the Best Paper Award at the 2015 Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC) Symposium.
- **Prof. Judith Gal-Ezer**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, received the Taylor L. Booth Education Award for 2015, by the IEEE Computer Society for "outstanding research and its practical application in the field of teaching computer science education."
- **Dr. Tal Hassner**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, was awarded the prize for the OpenCV State of the Art Vision Challenge, in the Image Registration category, and the Outstanding Reviewer Award at the IEEE CVPR 2015.
- **Gil Levi**, master's degree student in computer science, supervised by Dr. Tal Hassner, received the Best Student Project Award at the Israel Machine Vision Conference IMVC 2015.
- **Dr. Nurit Melnik**, Dept. of Literature, Language, and the Arts, member of the Young Scholars Forum in the Humanities of The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- **Dr. Yael Sela-Teichler**, Department of Literature, Language, and the Arts, Research Associate, Daat Hamakom Center for Research Excellence, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- **Prof. Iris Shagrir**, Department of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, Research Associate, Mandel Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center in the Humanities and Jewish Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- **Dr. Reut Tsarfaty**, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, member of the Young Scholars Forum in the Humanities of The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

The Open University of Israel Press

The Open University of Israel Press opened in 2013-2014. The new press, operating separately from the longstanding OUI Publishing House, which prints OUI course books, will publish original research and academic titles in all disciplines. During the year, the Editorial Board received dozens of manuscripts. Following a rigorous peer review process, four titles were approved for publication in 2016.

In the summer of 2014, the press announced the competition for the Goldberg Prizes for Exceptional Academic Manuscripts, one in the amount of NIS 50,000 for an exceptional manuscript by an author who has published at least one academic book in the past, and one in the amount of NIS 25,000 for an exceptional fledgling book. Two committees – one for each prize – were established with members from several universities to review the forty manuscripts submitted. Prof. Yoram Bilu won an award for his manuscript " 'With Us More than Ever Before': Making the Absent Rebbe Present in Messianic Chabad." The award ceremony was held in October 2015.

The OUI Press is headed by Prof. Aviva Halamish, who is joined by Prof. Sarah Guri-Rosenblit, Prof. Amir Horowitz, and Prof. Motti Regev in representing the OUI on the editorial board. Prof. Yoav Yair of the OUI and the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Prof. Tamar El Or of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Mahmoud Ganaim of Tel Aviv University, Prof. Katrin Kogman-Appel of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and Prof. Shezaf Rafaeli of the University of Haifa also serve on the editorial board. Lital Bechar-Avidan is the administrative coordinator.

Megamot

In April 2014, an agreement was signed by The Open University of Israel with the Henrietta Szold Institute for the joint publication of the journal *Megamot*. According to the agreement, the editorial board will remain under the Szold Institute, and the OUI will produce the journal in its publishing house. The two institutes appointed a new editorial board with two chief editors, Prof. Yoram Bilu and Prof. Yagil Levy. Four other active OUI board members include Prof. Ronit Bogler, Dr. Dafna Hirsch, Dr. Ido Liviatan, and Prof. Oren Soffer, collaborating with other members appointed by the Szold Institute. The first edition of the joint venture, a longer special edition, was published in June 2015. The beginning of production of a digital version is scheduled for the end of 2015.