



The Why and Way of OLA

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What is OLA?

- Company owned by 7 universities
- U/G, P/G and VET programs
- High quality, flexibly delivered programs
- Print, on-line and audio/video formats
- Four study periods a year

What's special about OLA?

- Open access
- No limit on numbers
- No prerequisites
- Plan your own study timetable
- Study at your own pace
- Choose your own degree

Which Universities?

- Monash University
- Swinburne University
- RMIT University
- Griffith University
- Macquarie University
- University of South Australia
- Curtin University of Technology

When can you study?

Four Study Periods a year

2003-2004

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Registrations close | 11 FEB | 16 MAY | 18 AUG | 17 NOV |
| Study Period begins | 3 MAR | 2 JUNE | 1 SEPT | 28 NOV |
| Study Period ends | 30 MAY | 29 AUGUST | 28 NOV | 27 FEB |
| Examined By | 30 JUNE | 22 SEPT | 22 DEC | 24 MAR |
| Results Returned | 19 AUG | 17 NOV | 18 FEB | 19 MAY |

Undergraduate Program

- Students pay \$435 per undergraduate study unit.
- Units are available at first, second, and third year undergraduate level.
- All OLA undergraduate units are equal to one-eighth of an equivalent full time student.

How do you pay?

- Upfront
- A loans scheme Open Learning Deferred Payment Scheme (OLDPS) covering part of the cost is available for students studying full-time. In the future FEE-HELP will be eligible for part-time students and cover the full fees.
- Austudy is available for eligible students.

Choices

- Students may study individual units or follow designated program to take out a degree
- Credit transfer is available for previous studies.
- Students may credit OLA units to other programs and finish degrees already commenced.

What Degrees?

- Students can study the following undergraduate degree programs
 - Bachelor of Arts (Art)
 - Bachelor of Arts
 - Bachelor of Arts (Indigenous Studies)
 - Bachelor of Arts (Internet Studies)
 - Bachelor of Communications Bachelor of Arts
Criminology and Criminal Justice -

What Degrees?

- Bachelor of Accounting
- Bachelor of Business in Financial Planning
Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Business Studies
Bachelor of Business in Transport and
Logistics Management
Bachelor of Commerce (Commercial Law)

What Degrees?

- Bachelor of Applied Science (Information Technology)
Bachelor of Applied Science (Internet)
- Bachelor of Human Life Science
- Bachelor of Technology

Expansion plans

- OLA is currently working towards the delivery of an undergraduate nursing qualifications and the first bridging units will be available in 2004.
- A teaching qualification is already envisaged, commencing in 2005.
- Undergraduate programs can already be used to apply for admission into postgraduate teaching programs

What disciplines do we offer?

- Open Learning Australia has nearly 300 undergraduate unit offerings
 - Art, History, Chinese, Media, Gender Studies, Justice Admin, Philosophy, Indigenous Studies, Sociology, Geography.
 - Accounting, Business Communications, Business Law, Financial Planning, Management, Marketing.
 - Information Technology, Human Life Sciences

How do you study?

- Materials delivered to OLA students include:
 - Study Guides
 - Readings
 - Audio Tapes
 - CD-Roms
 - Web-based learning

The role of the internet

- Some units are delivered completely on-line.
- Some units are significantly delivered on-line using websites and PDF format.
- Other units have significant resource based websites, which include features such audio streaming, short video clips, graphics and links to additional resources around the world.

Taking advantage of technology

- Many OLA units are heavily text-oriented.
- Course providers are used to the lecture mode on -campus and have a strong emphasis on readings for distance students.
- The challenge is to make the content interactive so that the student experiences the full benefits of the on-line environment.

Other challenges

- Students learn best when they are able to interact with others and discuss issues.
- The challenge is create these learning communities among students who are often geographically remote.
- OLA is working to create such communities for all its offerings, including print based units.

What we are doing?

- The development of the OLA online Learning Portal
- The Portal provides
 - Access to online units
 - Access to growing range of online resources
 - Discussion forums for prospective students
 - Discussion forums for OLA students and ‘alumni’
 - Dedicated study groups for each unit whether online or print based

Access to Resources and Readings

- Australian higher education places a high emphasis on wide reading, a range of opinions and critical analysis of those opinions.

Distance Library

- Library materials can be borrowed from the University of South Australia
- Photocopies sent
- Increasing numbers of specialist on-line databases available to all OLA students

OLA provides broader curriculum for regional campuses

- We are also working with regional universities to broaden curriculum offerings
- The DEST-OLA Agreement provides Australian Universities with access to OLA undergraduate subjects.
- The purchase of OLA units by universities on behalf of their students is called 'Block Registration'.

How it works

- DETYA has determined that:
 - each unit is counted as load at the university and not included in OLA's collection return.
 - unit loads, HECS liabilities and debts will be reported by the university as normal load/liability/debt.
 - students will have normal HECS options.
 - students are not eligible for OLDPS.

Advantage for regional campuses

- Diversity in choice of content and study modes.
- Affordable approach to low enrolment subjects.
- Productive use of semester breaks
 - fast tracking studies
 - catch-up.

Who uses OLA?

- The Northern Territory University has participated in a Pilot Block Registration project since Study Period 4 1998.
- There were nearly 500 registrations by NTU students in OLA units in 2002.

Other Universities

- Both Swinburne University of Technology and Monash University have accessed on-line units developed through the Indigenous Open Learning Project, *warrit ngulu*.

Back to fundamentals:how did we start and how do we work ?

- 1993/94 Open Learning Australia was established
 - Promote flexibility and openness in universities
 - Commenced as the TV Open Learning Pilot
 - Funding for 4 years, commercial thereafter

Related Government Funded Open Learning Projects

- 1994 OpenNet, PAGE and EdNA
 - OpenNet online delivery of vocational education
 - PAGE flexible delivery of continuing professional education
 - EdNA promotion of networking principally in schools
 - Change of focus for EdNA and OpenNet due to rapid development of commercial networking services

How do we work?

- OLA is a course broker which sources academic programs and tuition from 36 course providers
- providers accredit programs
- 90% of programs from shareholders universities

Credit Transfer-the core of our operations

- Many first and second year undergraduate subjects are shared between OLA courses
- Students can study such subjects and then have these recognised when they register for a degree through an OLA provider

Credit for OLA Subjects

- Many universities across Australia recognise OLA subjects for credit in on-campus programs
- OLA maintains a credit transfer database which records the exemptions available at the various universities

OLA Core Services

- Marketing and promotion
- Enrolment management and fee collection
- Advice on study options and subject requirements
- Resolution of service problems, quality management
- Library services

OLA as an Investor

- New courseware developments
- Courseware updates and revisions
- Business case approach

OLA Demographic

- 60% rural, 40% city
- 55% female
- Median age 30
- Small number of Indigenous people <1%

Managing Quality- Proactive

- Advice and guidance on the format and content of study materials for flexible learning markets
- Market research on study needs and requirements of target groups

Managing Quality- Programs

- Courses are tendered on a 3 year basis and providers sign service agreement
- The service agreement specifies expected levels of service to students
- OLA reviews student performance on a subject basis
- OLA is the first point for general student issues

Business Future

- Steadily grow core business
- Market extension into corporate training
- Develop the capacity to sell and deliver learning on-line
- Entry level learning resources. Drivers are motivation and quality
- Career pathways
- Learning Centres

Learning Centres

- If the potential of OLA to motivate and assist people from regional Australia especially those with disadvantaged backgrounds is to be realised a new approach is needed
- This involves developing a community based learning culture and providing access to learning support.

OLA's Approach

- OLA is currently working to facilitate the development of a network of distributed university access Learning Centres.
- This includes collaboration with existing learning nodes and centres. Viability, especially in smaller centres is premised on working with existing educational centres and institutions and other relevant organizations to establish Learning Precincts



Where are they?

Some Examples

- Kalgoorlie
- Hindmarsh
- Lilydale
- Bendigo
- Shepparton
- Alliance with Learning Network Queensland

What Makes for Success?

- Programs of local relevance and addressing local needs
- A viable joint occupancy of the Learning Centre
- Flexibility in use of space and infrastructure
- Relevant to a range of age groups
- Visible and diverse occupancy
- Access to technology
- Resources for study and research
- Community group participation
- Co-location with existing educational organizations

Shepparton as a Model

- Community support
- Vision for the future
- Development learning culture within a learning community
- The role of the Learning Precinct
- Range of options

Conclusion

OLA is a significant player in higher education with potential to contribute even more

OLA can bring value to regions and can work with communities to address learning needs now and in the future.

Community support is the way forward.