

Life, Health and Chemical Sciences (LHCS)

Welcome and Notices

Accreditation success for Q64!

Welcome to our packed fourth edition!

We would like to mention a few opportunities:

- **Lab schools - registration opening shortly.** Click [here](#) for more details.
- **Remote exams preparation sessions - 7-8pm on 8 Mar and 12 May in the [Science UG meeting room](#)**
- **Calling students studying Q64 BSc Natural Sciences! There is an opportunity to present (poster or an oral presentation) at the Society for Natural Sciences student conference - click [here](#) for further information.**



SOCIETY FOR NATURAL SCIENCES

We are delighted to report the exciting news that our BSc Natural Sciences (Q64) has recently achieved accreditation from the Society for Natural Sciences!

Accredited qualifications have to achieve the standards set out in the Society's accreditation framework and are recognised as offering outstanding quality interdisciplinary science education, providing students with excellent learning opportunities to prepare them for future careers in research, education, business or industry.

This new accreditation, follows hot on the heels of news that our biology degree (R58) and Q64 (biology) are also now accredited by the Royal Society for Biology (RSB).

Introducing [Jane Loughlin](#), our new Director of Teaching

I joined the OU in 1999 - over 22 years ago. Whilst that seems a long time, I have many colleagues who have been here even longer, testament to what a great institution the OU is!

It was my first academic appointment, following a degree in Biochemistry, a PhD in neuroimmunology and several postdoctoral positions. I have become more of a general cell biologist, with a particular interest in developing 3D cell culture systems to model different kinds of pathologies; for example, the loss of myelin that occurs in Multiple Sclerosis, or what happens to cells when the brain suffers a shortage of oxygen or glucose. Modelling key features of a pathological process in culture can allow us to not only study the process but to test and develop therapeutic interventions.

I love to work with lots of very talented and interesting colleagues: not just other academics, tutors and students; but programmers, audio-visual teams, graphic artists, editors and curriculum support staff. I would never have had the same opportunities in another University! I am currently Director of Teaching (DoT) in LHCS, having taken on this role in August 2021 with responsibility for overseeing delivery and development of our curriculum, teaching and learning, and student support. Here too, I really enjoy that being DoT allows me to work with so many different teams across the University. In my time as DoT, I would love to see our students identify more and more with the School and really strengthen our community and connections.



Studying for a PhD within our School

Within the school of LHCS we have a thriving community of 26 PhD students! Thirteen of those study on a part-time basis, alongside their day-job, many sponsored by their employer. Projects are wide-ranging, and often reach across disciplines.

PhD projects are wide-ranging and include investigating aspects of cancer biology and possible treatments, both lab- and bioinformatics-based; asthma; the gut microbiome; development and testing of nanomaterials; development of recyclable plastics and preservation of museum artefacts.

Besides the supervision and lab infrastructure, the School provides students with seminars and skills training throughout their studies, and opportunities to attend conferences to present their research.

PhD students usually start in October and February. Check out the current positions to start in October, advertised at <https://www.open.ac.uk/about/employment/advert-staff-category/studentships>. See [Research Degrees | PhD | EdD | DHSC | MPhil | The Open University](#) for details or email STEM-LHCS-PhD@open.ac.uk

Meet one of our students

Chemistry captivated me since I started studying it in secondary school. I see it as a tool that helps us understand the singularities happening around us so, it is not a surprise that I decided to study chemistry at uni..



Doing a PhD was always a goal for me as I wanted to dive into research. The opportunity arose after my second year in the company I work for where I was involved in the research and development of various technologies for water purification and metal recycling. This area of research fascinated me because of the impact I could make in the environment and the health of people, while contributing towards a circular economy. Fortunately the company agreed to sponsor my PhD.

A part-time PhD was the most convenient option, although I was initially concerned about time restrictions, length of the project and career progression. Those concerns rapidly disappeared as the Open University provided me with time flexibility and the freedom to direct my own research. Moreover, my academic supervisors' input throughout the entire PhD was invaluable as it helped me navigate through numerous challenges. My PhD is now finished, the experience has been very rewarding and would encourage anyone who is interested in research to consider a part-time PhD as it brings the best of both academia and industry, exploring new areas of research while progressing with your career.

-Daniel Marin Florido
(Recent Part time PhD student)

Meet one of our tutors

What a great honour to contribute to the LHCS newsletter!

I first started my OU career in 2008 as a demonstrator for the SXR376 Residential summer school where OU students would come together for a week of laboratory activities.



During my third year of demonstrating I sported a burgeoning baby bump, so decided to take a break to raise my family. Jump forward 11 years and I'm now happily settled in the Peak District with my partner and gorgeous 11 and 9 year old sons. I love going for walks in the surrounding countryside with my fluffy toy poodle Freida and enjoying magnificent views of Kinder Scout.

My joy of demonstrating led me to tutoring on S377 Molecular and Cellular Biology, now replaced by S317, and I now tutor on 5 additional modules: SDK100, S294, S285, SK299 and SK320. I love helping support students through their studying journey and I appreciate the flexibility to work around my family. I was delighted to have my work noted recently with an Executive Dean's Building Excellence Award. I have also used the staff development fund to attend this summer's online European Human Genetics Conference and look forward to being a student myself this year and studying the level 1 business module B100.

-Heather Fraser
Associate Lecturer (tutor)

Virtual Student Internships – an insightful experience!

We were delighted to have had five OU students working as interns within LHCS last summer, across research and teaching. Three interns, working in collaboration with academic and support staff colleagues, used their rich student experience across various projects such as reviewing and creating induction resources for new students on the [Study Science site](#) and would love to get your feedback on what they have created.

They mentioned a few highlights: developing lots of transferable skills, working as a team with LHCS colleagues – and getting paid!

We plan to offer this exciting experience again – look out for our advert on [Opportunity Hub](#) in the coming months and please consider applying!



A Strategic African Partnership



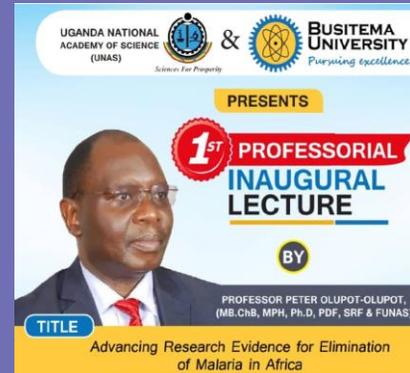
The Open University and Busitema University, Uganda have formed a strategic partnership led by [Dr Duncan Banks](#) (LHCS) and [Professor Peter Olupot-Olupot](#), Director of Research at the [Mbale Clinical Research Institute](#) based in Eastern Uganda.

With the help of the OU, notable recent successes have included the development of an MSc in Infectious Disease Field Epidemiology as part of a consortium of institutions developing sustainable research-based fellowship training on infectious disease epidemiology and biostatistics in Africa.

Post PhD viva photo of Professor Olupot-Olupot (centre) and Dr Banks (right), February 2015

Peter obtained his PhD with the Open University in 2015 with Duncan as his PhD Viva Examination Chair. The two of them have kept in contact ever since, forming strong research collaborations with several successful research projects.

The partnership has also been successful in obtaining Horizon 2020 European Funding for Research and innovation with the establishment of a European and Developing Clinical Trials Partnership Programme. Peter's recent successes have contributed to the award of a personal Chair for his work on advancing research evidence for the [elimination of malaria](#) in Africa.



Professor Olupot-Olupot's inaugural lecture 21st Oct '21

Do you have something to share or would like to get involved in the Newsletter? We are looking for students/ALs to join the editorial team!

We'd love to hear from you at STEM-LHCS-Teaching@open.ac.uk Please include 'newsletter' in the e-mail subject header.

The LHCS Newsletter is brought to you by Fi Moorman, Karen New, Eleanor Crabb, and Simone Pitman.

With grateful thanks to Becky Kinge for design.

Why did the biologist break up with the physicist?



They had no chemistry!