

A Pioneering University, a Leading University

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Open University of Catalonia

Annual Report 2005-2006



Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya

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Academic Year 2005-2006

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The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya as an institution is a direct result of the knowledge society. Its mission is to provide life-long training to people. The key objective of the University is to make sure that each person can satisfy his or her learning needs while taking the best advantage of their efforts.

To this end, the information and communications technologies (ICT) are used intensively, enabling the overcoming of time and space barriers and offering an educational model based on personalisation and the accompaniment of the student throughout. The motor that drives and projects the University into the future is the will to become a reference point in academic as well as in research quality.

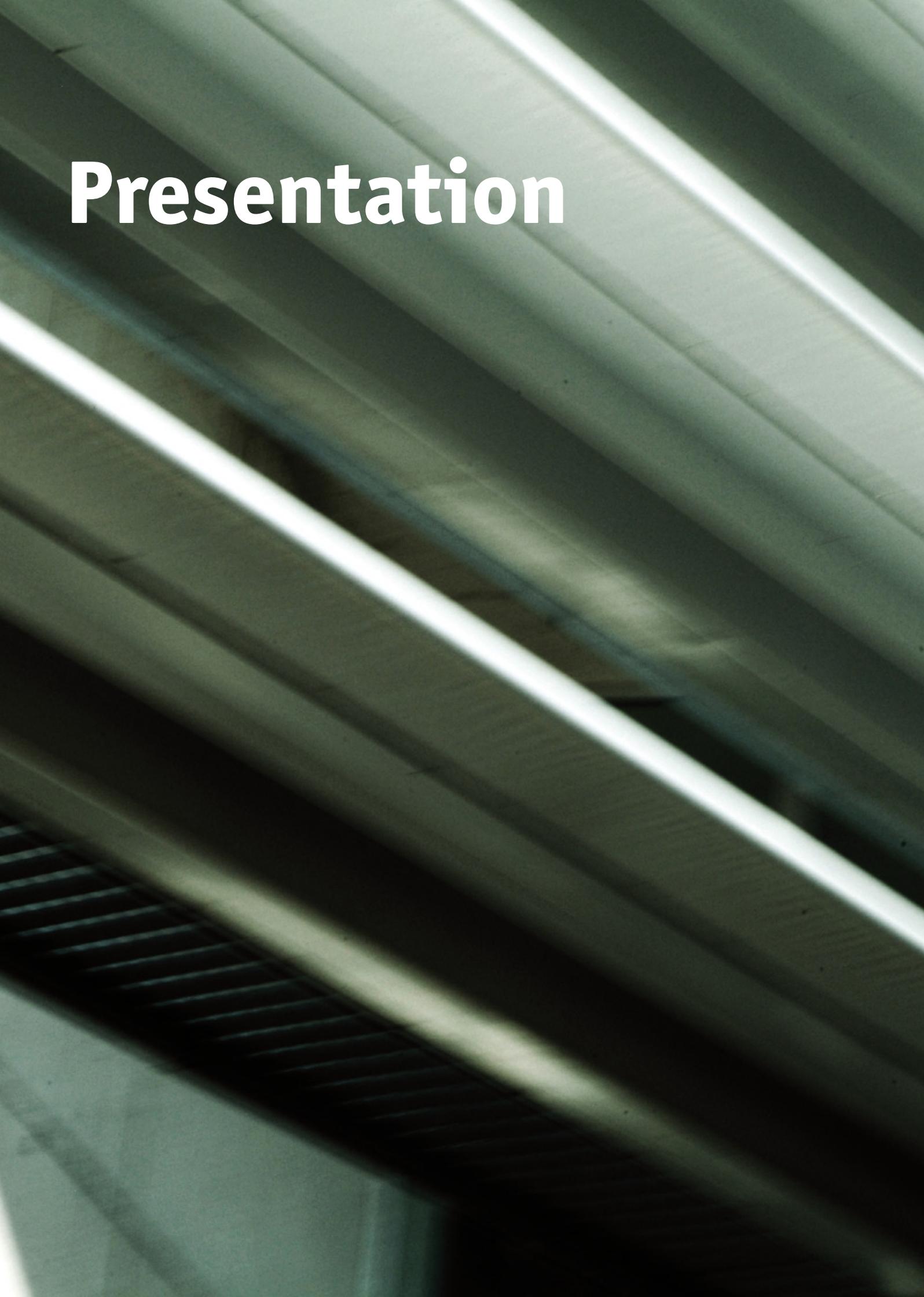
The UOC's mission is to provide life-long training to people.

Contents

- 7 Presentation**
- 15 The UOC – A Brief Summary**
- 27 Governing Bodies and Institutional Activity**
- 39 Teaching**
- 59 Research**
- 67 University Community**
- 73 Services to Support Research and Teaching**
- 83 University and Enterprise**
- 91 Financial Report**
- 103 Annexes**
- 121 Index**
- 123 Table of Contents**



Presentation

A close-up photograph of a metal grate, likely from a kitchen hood or a similar industrial setting. The grate consists of several parallel metal bars, creating a series of rectangular openings. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the top edges of the bars and deep shadows in the recesses, creating a strong sense of depth and texture. The overall color palette is a mix of metallic greys and dark shadows.



**“We have decidedly
sought to move from
a great project to a
great university”**

I gladly took up my post as Rector of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in December 2005. It was the first handover of the helm of the UOC in the nearly eleven years of existence of the institution – a period of time too long perhaps, seeing the necessary renovation that must be constantly carried out in universities and their management teams. Nevertheless, it is fair to admit that if we are now what we are, if we have reached the point that we have reached, it has been largely thanks to those who have preceded us – the growth of the UOC throughout this period has been exponential as regards the number of different degrees and students registered. The UOC has become global, and we now have students in Catalonia, in the rest of the Spanish state, and throughout the world.

Little by little, our university became a great project. But great projects are not enough. Throughout this last year we have sought to lay down the foundations to make the exponential growth I was earlier referring to compatible with quality teaching and a fostering of research, together with a will to work within the Catalan university system.

The Governing Council and I have, during this year, favoured the changes that we deemed necessary to improve and regain the identity traits of the University, while striving to remain faithful to its foundational principles and its differentiated distance-teaching methodology based on the information and communication technologies: we have fostered an organisational culture based on participation and co-responsibility; we have worked to establish a new policy of identity, growth and reach of the University; we have made significant progress in academic staff policies, in order to clarify their role and their academic careers; we have managed well the accreditation of the teaching staff; we have introduced the necessary changes in order to adapt to the new European Higher Education Area; we have provided the necessary conditions to improve research and its results – one of the *raisons d'être* of the university; we have worked on the UOC's technological model in order to continue making use of the latest developments in the field of the ICT and of free software; we have introduced a number of improvements in the management sphere so as to provide a service that increasingly adapts better to the needs and challenges of the University; and, finally, we have promoted the University business group using criteria of service to society, but also those of efficiency and rigour in the expenditure.

We have decidedly sought to move from a great project to a great university.



Imma Tubella
Rector



Ever since its creation, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya has known how to become an innovative networked organisation based on the intensive use of the information technologies, not just to showcase a teaching offer meant for the largest segments of society and the research it carries out, and the social dissemination of its knowledge, but also to channel its management, participation and internal workings. It therefore constitutes an example of an innovative and flexible university organisation, that is open to the world, yet rooted in the social, cultural and scientific reality of Catalonia, with a valuable network of Catalan institutional and business alliances.

You may check below the results achieved by the University during the academic year 2005-2006. In the field of training, the UOC consolidated its teaching of quality and diversified it, and managed to make a deeper penetration into Catalan society, after having prioritised the adaptation of virtual teaching to the EHEA and having promoted the implementation of the latest advances in ICT into its educational model. In the field of research, it has promoted research activities among the faculty and encouraged international collaboration in R+D+I projects and programmes with prestigious external groups and institutions, and it has also favoured the community's mobility. As regards its relationship with the environment, the UOC has redoubled its social commitment from various spheres: regarding co-operation, by means of a greater territorial presence as well as its international commitment; and regarding the business and social sphere, with a will to improve people's life-long training and a clear design to carry on promoting the knowledge and information society.

This year has seen important changes at the University. To a large extent, the path followed by the UOC during its first years of existence would not have been possible without the impulse and the strong leadership of Gabriel Ferraté, its first Rector, who deserves the recognition of the Catalan government for his task at the helm of the University during all these years. The governing team now led by Rector Imma Tubella is under the right conditions to ensure that the UOC becomes a university of reference not only for its academic quality, but also for the quality of its research, and to find its place within the framework of the Catalan university system as a complement to face-to-face public universities.

“The UOC is an example of a university open to the world, yet rooted in the social, cultural and scientific reality of Catalonia”



Joan Manuel del Pozo
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



The Report for the academic year 2005-2006 shows that one of the main objectives of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is to come closer to Catalonia's business fabric. This is borne out by the numerous agreements that the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya is signing with a number of SMEs and also with large companies throughout this period. And this objective – as expressed by Rector Tubella – will keep on being one of the leading lines of action of the UOC in the coming years.

One of the most extended perceptions of university in Catalonia is that this institution lacks a connection to the business world. Reality shows that all too often university and enterprise do not speak a common language. Resolute steps need to be taken, such as the UOC is doing, so that university and enterprise do not turn their backs on one another; that they get to know one another better and collaborate more often. A recent report by AQU (Agència de la Qualitat Universitària a Catalunya – *Quality Agency of the University System of Catalonia*) states that 'Catalan universities do not possess the mechanisms to discover what the emerging trends of the labour market are, such as would enable them to adapt their study plans to the new professional needs'. It is essential for this space of de-relation gradually to vanish, and for university and enterprise to interact more and more. The numerous agreements signed by the UOC with large companies and SMEs in 2005-2006 should be framed within this context.

These agreements seek a number of objectives, all of which are well chosen. The UOC has signed agreements that have favoured the creation of research groups of the knowledge society. The challenge is not an easy one – research requires time, patience and constancy, and companies have unavoidable deadlines, as well as budgets that require long-term competition and short-term profitability. Other agreements have favoured the training of people in the companies themselves, be it through a transfer of the UOC models and teaching methods specifically applied to this company, be it favouring the conditions to study directly at the UOC. A number of those agreements go far beyond this and show an interest for training citizenry in general. A mention is also deserved by those agreements that have been signed with a view to something that is very interesting, namely, to obtain that the UOC becomes, within a short time, the institution that certifies that enterprise and the administrations are making the right use of ICT in order to improve the quality of the products and services they offer to the citizenry.

The UOC's open nature is a reference to the intensive use of the ICT in its teaching model, but also to the fact that it is a university system open to the environment where it works, and it is concerned about the business challenges present in the 21st century, not just from the point of view of training, but also from that of research, collaboration and the transfer of knowledge.



Josep Vilarasau
Chairman of the FUOC Council

“The UOC’s open nature is also a reference to the fact that it is a university system concerned about the business challenges present in the 21st century”