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UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

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A year in review

Welcome to our special review issue, where we take a look back at some of the highs and lows of the HE sector in 2018. Four industry experts share their experiences and insights from mental health initiatives to staying competitive in the international market. Brexit, of course, features heavily and we debate its impact in 2019.

A Stonewall report into the LGBT+ university experience reveals some disturbing insights where we learn that “1 in 7 LGBT+ students had been subject to negative comments and abuse by staff!” Discover more on page 26.

We take a look at some amazing new facilities being opened on campus from a newsroom in Winchester (p34) to the ‘access for all’ sensory garden at Leeds (p44). Plus, see our case study on Leicester University’s Passivhaus, the multi-million pound George Davies Centre (p36).

This year’s AUDE (Association of University Directors of Estates) report reveals that “the overall performance level of university estates is better than ever”. See in detail on page 40.

Kim Renfrew keeps us up to date with student accommodation expectations, from ensuite facilities and a need for community and belonging, to security systems (p49).

Plus, stay on top of all the edtech developments (p67) and Nicola Yeeles looks at the positives and negatives of BYOD (bring your own device) and highlights potential concerns of a digital divide (p75).

We eagerly await Bett 2019 – turn to page 79 for information on the show and how to get a free pass.

For up to date HE news, views and event information, remember to visit universitybusiness.co.uk.

Please continue to keep me up to date on what’s going on at your university. Just drop me a line at cathy.parnham@wildfirecomms.co.uk



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- The latest campus tech
- Marketing masterclass
- 2019: the challenges ahead
- Bett show preview

Collaboration key to tackling student mental health crisis



As students prepare to start or return to university, Dan Worman, CEO of Refero, argues that lack of collaboration and integration, rather than lack of support services, is giving rise to a mental health crisis among university students

A report published by the Institute of Public Policy Research in 2016 showed the numbers of university students disclosing mental health problems had increased fivefold in a decade. Furthermore, ONS figures show 95 recorded student suicides for the 12 months to July 2017 in England and Wales.

Understandably, increasing pressure is being put on higher education providers to tackle this crisis. Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of the Office for Students (OfS), the higher education sector's first watchdog, called for universities to improve student mental health services as a 'top priority'. And higher education minister Sam Gyimah said that universities must deliver emotional support for students alongside academic courses in order to "fulfil (their) purpose".

At Refero, we believe the responsibility for addressing the worrying trend in student mental health shouldn't fall squarely on the shoulders of higher education providers. Indeed, Dandridge herself acknowledged that the issue is not the sole responsibility of universities but a wider social problem. With this in mind, we believe that attention should be dedicated to improving collaboration and integration across the wider eco-system of stakeholders.

The real issue here is not a lack of support services per se, but more a question of ensuring that students have easy access to them via an interconnected network of internal and external organisations – effectively a 'safety net' – and that these 'touch points' or engagements are fully governed and auditable to ensure that students do not fall through the gaps.

Why universities should lead the charge

Universities are relaxing their entry criteria; admissions service, UCAS, highlighted a huge rise in the number of unconditional offers for university places. Unfortunately, the noble goal to make higher education more widely accessible to all socio-economic groups often exposes some of the most vulnerable people in society to factors that could exacerbate mental health issues, e.g. financial stress due to rising tuition fees.

As participation has expanded, national trends in mental ill-health have materialised in student populations, causing an increase in demand for support services. Universities have reported a huge surge in

“We believe that attention should be dedicated to improving collaboration and integration across the wider eco-system of stakeholders”

demand for counselling services in recent years, with as many as one in four students either being seen or waiting to be seen by counselling services in some institutions. Yet, simultaneously, many establishments are cutting back on counselling in favour of 'wellbeing' services that encompass a much wider range of services. This approach has seen universities garner criticism for pushing back on the NHS. Again, the key here is not to 'push back' but to collaborate to offer 'wrap-around' care for students.

While holistic care of students requires input from multiple stakeholders, we believe universities are uniquely placed to lead the charge.

The business case for support services

So, what role do higher education providers play in facilitating wider engagement with multi-organisations? Clearly, universities have a duty of care to safeguard students – many of whom are away from their family in an unfamiliar environment for the first time – but there's also a very real business case for tackling mental health. Students are a source revenue for universities and there is an obvious need to protect that income.

We know that student wellbeing and satisfaction is tied to retention rates, engagement and academic performance, thereby boosting universities' results and reputation to help drive advantage in an increasingly competitive sector. By reducing the numbers of students that 'drop out', universities are able to

→



“Higher education providers must be encouraged to work in partnership... to tackle mental health and improve student wellbeing”



Image © depositphotos.com

protect and maintain revenues. A US study revealed that of the 100% of students that state a desire to leave, universities are only able to prevent 9% from going on to do so. It's clear that prevention or early intervention is best; all too often we hear “if only we'd have known sooner, we could have intervened”.

Higher education providers must therefore be encouraged to work in close partnership with health and care organisations, local communities, parents and even employers to tackle mental health to improve student wellbeing, as well as protecting their own reputation and revenue. But aren't universities already collaborating with other service providers?

Supporting existing ways of working

Today, there are many student services, from within the university and externally, already in existence but more often than not they operate in silos – with various people and platforms for engagement, lacking any one single overlay service delivering real integration and, crucially, tracking those student journeys.

Enrolment services tend to serve as the entry point into university life and the ideal opportunity to connect students to services such as the Student Union or bodies such as the National Union of Students (NUS), as well as valuable student support services from guidance counsellors, disability services or financial aid. However, this engagement tends to be quite fragmented today.

One of the most frequently asked questions by students is regarding the availability of local GP services. While many universities will provide links to primary care providers via their student enrolment facilities, there is often no further follow-up or audit trail ensuring that those students have indeed enrolled or have ready access to the services they may well require throughout their student life.

Technology providing the fabric of the 'safety net'

Technology enables new ways of engaging people and connecting them with support services; there is a need to harness technology to improve and build upon more traditional ways of working – disrupting rather than destabilising existing models – to eliminate the possibility of students falling through the cracks at the point where services cross over.

Students should be able to sign up to an online platform and send requests to their university ranging from “Where's the nearest bus to campus?” to “How can I get an appointment to see my GP?”. Simple questions regarding campus, logistics and course details can be picked up and responded to easily by a receptionist or administrator. But the real value comes from the potential to connect students with GPs and/or other valuable resources digitally, providing a clear audit trail of those engagements.

But how do universities facilitate this engagement without incurring additional costs? The ideal solution is one platform that enables universities to pick and choose from a catalogue of services that they might wish to trial or introduce, from messaging and self-help to artificial intelligence (AI) and analytics. The key thing is bringing the many services that fall under the umbrella of student support services together into a single consolidated platform, combined with the ability to switch elements on or off according to need.

Universities of the future are increasingly embracing digital... but the real value comes from integrating with wider student and public services, including health and social care organisations, especially GPs. Indeed, students have come to expect this. Only by embracing technology to improve existing ways of working will we see real improvements in how student mental health is managed in the future. 

New economic models post-Brexit

Imperial College London announces a post-Brexit arrangement with the Technical University of Munich to recruit academics jointly. The new employees will be shared by the UK and German universities, giving the staff a form of dual academic nationality so that UK academics can access EU funding after Brexit.

The agreement between Imperial College London and the Technical University of Munich will focus on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) industries, reports Ashmita Das, co-founder and CEO of online platform for freelance scientists Kolabtree. The two universities have worked together on 21 European-funded research projects in the past and are well placed to collaborate long-term on projects in these fields.

The partnership has been established to address the concerns of UK academics and institutions losing access to EU research networks when Britain leaves the European Union. Working collaboratively on EU projects will also

ensure that Imperial College London can stay part of the latest research developments.

A quarter of Imperial's academic staff are from other EU countries, as are about 20% of its students. It is no surprise, then, that universities are concerned about access to skills. However, thinking creatively about employment models for scientific projects could offer a low-cost solution that transcends international barriers. For example, hiring freelance PhD-level scientists provides low-cost access to specialist skills.

To hire the perfect freelance scientist or researcher for your project, visit <https://www.kolabtree.com/>



Signing of pledge to reduce carbon emissions

Vice-Chancellors from five UK universities and Students' Union representatives met with the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Director General

Julian Critchlow, and Office for Students CEO Nicola Dandridge to officially sign the Government's Emissions Reduction Pledge on Thursday, 18 October 2018.

BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Professor Andy Long (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham), Nicola Dandridge (Chief Executive, Office for Students), Professor Julie Sanders (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Newcastle University), Iain Patton (Chief Executive, EAUC), Julian Critchlow (Director General, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), Professor Joy Carter (Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester), Ali Milani, (VP at NUS), Professor Robert Van de Noort (Acting Vice-Chancellor, University of Reading) and Jason Dabydoyal (President of Reading University Students' Union).



This event was organised and facilitated by EAUC and the National Union of Students (NUS) for Green GB Week, a landmark celebration of Clean Growth. The Pledges made by these universities are reflective of the dedication and aspiration in the higher and further education sectors when it comes to reducing carbon emissions. Those that have signed are committing to reducing their institutions' carbon emissions by 30% by 2020/21 against a 2009/10 baseline.

Setting this example will reduce carbon emissions on campuses, influence the behaviour and awareness of local communities on carbon emissions and highlight the role of universities and colleges in leading the UK to net zero emissions in a timely manner. The recently

published IPCC report serves to highlight that timeliness on this topic is crucial.

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive at Office for Students (OfS), said:

"Universities are influential voices in local, regional and national society, so have an important role to play in showing leadership in our collective efforts to tackle climate change. Students expect their universities to be taking action on this issue, including by highlighting the impact of unchecked climate change and making sure they are leading by example in reducing their own carbon footprint. These universities are taking important steps to address a problem which will affect us all, and I hope many more universities will consider signing up to the emissions reduction pledge."

Hillary Clinton receives honorary degree from Queen's University Belfast

The Former US Secretary of State was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) for her exceptional public service in the USA and globally, and for her outstanding contribution to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

At the honorary graduation ceremony Secretary Clinton addressed the audience of staff and students from the University, talking about the political situation in Northern Ireland; the peace process and Good Friday Agreement; Brexit and democracy.

"The world is watching, Northern Ireland has been a symbol to people...of democracy," she said. "We need that, that symbol, that reality, more than ever because democracies across the world are facing a toxic backlash," she said.

"We are at a point in our history, not just in Northern Ireland, but in the UK and Europe and across the world where we are facing real difficulties in how we want to move forward"

"We are at a point in our history, not just in Northern Ireland, but in the UK and Europe and across the world where we are facing real difficulties in how we want to move forward. It poses very real questions, not just for politicians but also for citizens."

Secretary Clinton spoke about her first visit to Northern Ireland in 1995 as the then First Lady with President Bill Clinton and how different a place it was back then, and how much it has progressed: "It was such a great pleasure for me to return to Belfast. It is such a special place for me and my family and we are delighted to be back here."

Speaking ahead of the ceremony, the President and

Vice-Chancellor of Queen's, Professor Ian Greer, said: "We are delighted to award an honorary degree to Hillary Rodham Clinton. The former US Secretary of State is an internationally recognised public servant, who has developed strong links with Queen's and Northern Ireland.

"She made a considerable contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process and, as Secretary of State, focused on economic development to underpin the emergence of a strong and competitive Northern Ireland. With her long-standing commitment to

peace, stability and economic regeneration, she is a strong advocate for Northern Ireland and an inspirational role model for the Queen's community."

During the honorary graduation ceremony, Professor Adrienne Scullion, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Queen's announced a new scholarship and fellowship in Secretary Clinton's name, honouring her long-standing commitment to peace, stability and education.

The scholarship, entitled 'The Hillary Rodham Clinton Award for Peace and Reconciliation', will allow two exceptional female students from the USA who wish to



pursue study in a field related to politics, conflict transformation or human rights the opportunity to study at the University.

The fellowship, entitled 'The Hillary Rodham Clinton Early Career Fellowship', will allow an outstanding early career

researcher to work in the fields of conflict transformation; global security and borders; human rights including women's rights and children's rights; international law; international politics; international relations; and women in politics.

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Appointments, Awards & Acknowledgements

Dragons' Den star appointed Chancellor at Solent University

Theo Paphitis was officially inaugurated as Solent University's new Chancellor on Thursday 11 October.

Theo Paphitis said: "I am looking forward to getting my teeth into my new university role. Solent University is in a fantastic position and, with its stellar teaching staff and ambitious students, has so much potential to keep rising up the rankings in all areas. In an increasingly competitive world, we have to be the best at what we do and I can't wait to get started."

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graham Baldwin, said: "Theo joins us at an exciting and



challenging time for higher education. No stranger to Solent or the broader sector, with two of his daughters graduating from the University, I am confident Theo's appointment will help to strengthen our position as a local and global institution.

"Solent plays a key role in supporting local and regional economies, sharing knowledge, skills and resources with the local community. With his knowledge and experience from industry, Theo will also help us to strengthen partnerships and further enhance our commitment to real-world learning."

Theo takes over the position from Admiral The Right Honourable Lord West of Spithead, who served for 12 years, and will be Solent's second Chancellor. With him, Theo brings his entrepreneurial and business experience to the University and its students.



Image © Amos Miller

New Vice-Principal at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Dr Shirley Thompson is appointed Vice Principal (Music) at Birmingham City University's Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Shirley has achieved an international reputation as a musicologist, specialising in French baroque music. Dr Thompson joined Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2001 and was appointed to the role of Director of Postgraduate Studies in 2009.

Dr Thompson said: "I am delighted to have been appointed to the role of Vice-Principal (Music). I'm excited about working in this new capacity in an institution I love, alongside wonderful colleagues and students."

Since gaining her PhD from the University of Hull in 1998, Dr Thompson has edited a book on Charpentier and published many articles and reviews. She has also prepared numerous editions of Charpentier's music for such well-respected performers as Emma Kirkby, Ex Cathedra and the St James' Baroque Players, including music for two BBC Proms.

Professor Julian Lloyd Webber, Principal of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, said: "Shirley's expertise will prove vital to Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and I look forward to working alongside her as we continue to expand our offering to students worldwide."

Shirley Thompson succeeds Paul Bambrough – now Principal of The Purcell School for Young Musicians.

Plymouth College of Art makes two new appointments

David Noyce is appointed Chair and Dr Sue Brownlow Deputy Chair of Plymouth College of Art's Board of Governors.

David represented HEFCE within universities for over 20 years and was a regional consultant within the South West for 10 years. He had a brief looking at higher education institutions experiencing difficulties, learning a lot about what the threats can be in higher education and how to prepare for and avoid dangers. Towards the end of his tenure, he took a role within the top management group, representing specialist institutions, including specialist art schools.

David said: "I hope my range of experience has taught me a lot about how to safeguard specialist art schools and about the unique challenges and opportunities they face within the sector. I believe strongly in the vision for the future of Plymouth College of Art and want to see staff, students and graduates prosper."

David Noyce has directed

major expansions of medical and dental education; was integral to the Combined Universities in Cornwall partnership, a transformative project in one of the most deprived areas of the country; and initiated numerous regional projects addressing widening participation, research collaboration and outreach to business and communities.

David holds a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Oxford and is a qualified teacher and community worker. He is also an Honorary Fellow of St George's University of London and was formerly a Governor of the University of East London.

Dr Sue Brownlow, Deputy Chair of Governors, moved to Cornwall in 2002 where she headed up the Regional Development Agency's work in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, leading large-scale development projects and grant-funding agreements and working with the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter and other local



HE institutions including Dartington College of Arts.

Sue said: "I believe strongly in Plymouth College of Art's vision for the importance of social justice and creative education, making a difference to the young people in Plymouth and increasingly on a much wider canvas."

"Some of the changes I've observed in the compulsory education sector have been worrying, with a focus on exams and performance measures for schools that risk limiting exposure to the arts for young people. It's vital that Plymouth College of Art continues to give young people such fantastic opportunities to pursue a career in the arts and broaden their horizons."



Bristol launches 'Science of Happiness' course

The University of Bristol has become the first UK university to launch a 'Science of Happiness' course, designed to teach students a set of science-based strategies for living a more fulfilling life.

The course draws on the latest results in psychology and neuroscience to get to the root of what happiness is and how to achieve it, as well as teaching tangible practices which students can apply in their everyday lives.

It comes amid growing concerns around the mental health and wellbeing of students, with 94% of universities experiencing a sharp increase in the number of people trying to access support services (IPPR Report – Sept 2017). The course is one part of Bristol's wider approach to improving wellbeing and pastoral care across the University.

Bristol's new course was inspired by Yale University's highly successful 'Psychology and Good Life' course – the most popular in its history, with one in four students enrolling.

Science of Happiness is a 10-week optional course that starts by asking students to measure their own happiness levels and discover personal strengths which will then be developed and reflected upon

as the course plays out.

It's being led by eminent psychologist Professor Bruce Hood, who has carried out world-leading research into how the brain works and how humans think. Professor Hood previously gave the prestigious Royal Institution Christmas Lectures 'Meet Your Brain', and promises to deliver an engaging and interactive course

He said: "We're living in a climate where there are challenges to mental wellbeing, especially among younger generations. Most people think that the path to happiness is success in jobs, salaries, material possessions and relationships. While these goals are associated with happiness, they do not necessarily guarantee happiness and, indeed, the relentless pursuit of these may actually contribute to unhappiness.

"The course is aimed at all students and not just those who might identify as having challenges with their wellbeing. Ultimately, the aim of this course is to give students a greater understanding of what happiness is and how the human mind often sabotages happiness. Greater awareness among the student body will equip students to pre-empt and improve the mental health of themselves and others."



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Safeguarding students: understanding what works

Safeguarding risks to students in higher education take many forms, from bullying and harassment to sexual violence and compromised mental health. Responding to these risks is a sector-wide challenge, towards which both the Office for Students (OfS) and UUK have taken a leading role. In September 2018, independent evaluators appointed by the OfS from AdvanceHE published a report on the research undertaken to date to share ‘what works’ and inform sector and institutional practice.

Background: How did we get here?

Back in 2016, the UUK Harassment

Taskforce published its now well-known report *Changing the Culture*. Its recommendations, which stressed the need for institutions to be more systematic in their approach to harassment, sexual violence and hate crime, were followed by guidance on handling alleged student misconduct and, earlier this year, were supplemented further by a progress report (*Changing the Culture: One Year On*).

The Catalyst Fund

At around the same time, the OfS assumed responsibility from HEFCE for Catalyst funding aimed at promoting safeguarding students in higher education. In all, the Catalyst Fund allocated £4.4m in one-to-one match funding to help HEIs with a

total of 108 one-year projects designed to keep students safe. This has been divided between sexual violence and harassment (round one) and hate crime and online harassment (round two). The intended outcomes of these projects encompass institution (i.e. leadership and staff) and student-focused objectives including management, involvement, training, reporting, collaboration and monitoring.

A third round of funding (£1.5m) was allocated by the OfS in March 2018 for 17 two-year projects aimed at developing knowledge and practice to address hate crime relating to religion or belief. In addition, the OfS is working with Research England to support mental health and wellbeing for postgraduate



research students. The overall strategy is to stimulate cultural change through a diverse range of interventions.

So, what works?

AdvanceHE's analysis of the 45 completed Round One projects focuses on several key themes: delivery and effective management; leadership and governance; student and staff involvement; partnership and collaboration; and the embeddedness and sustainability of change. In the main, these projects concentrated on tackling issues of student-student sexual misconduct with a smaller number addressing domestic abuse, hate crime and other forms of harassment.

● **Delivery & Management** – particular success has been noted in relation to the creation of new posts and roles, new policies, processes and reporting systems and the implementation of training and prevention strategies. This is despite significant challenges and barriers including the short one-year timeframe, delays in recruitment, the need to narrow project scope and reformulate priorities and recruiting students for training.

with those on courses with content linked to safeguarding was effective.

- **Partnership & Collaboration** – projects involving participants engaging with external agencies were found to have mutual benefits. For universities, it provided access to specialist knowledge that could inform project design and delivery. For agencies such as the police, it was a way to break down barriers and debunk myths believed to inhibit, for example, the willingness of complainants to report crimes.
- **Embeddedness & Sustainability** – a key reported feature of established safeguarding work in HE is that it is usually based solely in Student Services, which limits the development of an institution-wide approach. Catalyst funding has helped to overcome this in some institutions by facilitating co-operation between student unions and a range of academic departments. As might be expected, this has been more difficult in larger providers and those with a collegiate structure, but led

“ Targeted training and modification of the governance of safeguarding are reported as having a significant impact and the potential to be the basis of sustainable long-term change ”

● **Leadership & Governance** – it was always anticipated that the success of projects would depend heavily on the extent of senior leadership buy-in. Without this, the sort of provider-wide approach needed to make genuine cultural change would likely remain elusive. Targeted training and modification of the governance of safeguarding are both reported as having a significant impact and the potential to be the basis of sustainable long-term change.

● **Staff & Student Engagement** – effective staff engagement occurred when projects drew on a variety of academic interest areas, thereby utilising a range of in-house expertise (e.g. criminology, sociology, psychology) to inform design and delivery. Unsurprisingly, it also helped to have staff who were personally interested in safeguarding and, therefore more likely to engage and invest their own time in pushing projects forward. On the student side, collaboration with student unions and engagement

to more creative responses, such as, in one case, collaboration with the local authority and other external partners.

While it is accepted that 12 months is not long enough both to build and implement meaningful safeguarding initiatives, learning points and positive effects have already been identified.

Of the outcomes cited in the evaluation report, the top two related to improved collaboration – better cross-sector sharing of practice and more partnership working. Enhanced student awareness and engagement as well as improvements to the handling of disclosures and reporting methods and increased reporting also stand out.

Bystander training aimed at particular groups (e.g. those working in accommodation) or group leaders (such as club captains) is a popular approach, the intention being to empower students (and others) to act as 'pro-social citizens'. The Intervention Initiative, which is a programme of

eight facilitated one-hour sessions originally created by academics at UWE in 2014, is perhaps the most developed UK resource and is freely available.

Arguably the most valuable insight to emerge so far is confirmation that, for there to be tangible cultural change around gender-based violence, intervention is needed before students enter further or higher education. This suggests that initiatives should be aimed at children well before they complete school and emphasises the importance of how HE providers interact with and share information with schools and colleges.

Another clear message is the positive effect that Catalyst funding has had on institutions' willingness to address these difficult issues by alleviating senior management concerns about reputational damage. With scores of institutions working simultaneously to address what is a sensitive but sector-wide issue, no one provider is being associated with and potentially tarnished by student vulnerability.

What next?

Addressing multi-faceted student safeguarding issues in HE effectively is a massive and ongoing task. While many of the round one projects are still developing, it is clear that Catalyst funding has already helped a number of institutions to achieve promising signs of improvement. Equally clear is that true cultural change can only realistically be a long-term aspiration and one likely to require intervention by schools and colleges as well as by HE providers. The evaluation of round two projects will begin shortly and the results will feed into a final evaluation report due in March 2019.

What will happen once the evaluation process is complete is yet to be determined. Many would welcome safeguarding guidance from the OfS and/or UUK so that best practice can be shared and help the sector maintain the momentum of progress to date. 

To be kept up to date on legal, regulatory and governance issues, please register for VVW's dedicated HE portal OnStream at www.co.uk/he-onstream



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ST HUGH'S COLLEGE

HOW WE TRANSFORMED THE WAY WE MANAGE OUR FOOD PROCUREMENT

Founded in 1886, St Hugh's College is now one of the largest colleges of the University of Oxford, with around 800 students. Quality is at the heart of everything the college does – whether it's in the teaching from first-class academics, to the food served to students, fellows and guests, including those visiting conferences and events.

We spoke with the Domestic Bursar for St Hugh's, Rahele Mirnateghi, to understand how she balances the procurement process, taking into account her desire for continual improvement while closely managing budgets in an unpredictable climate.

“As the domestic bursar, it is my role to oversee the domestic side of the college. Catering is, of course, a large part of what we do, every day. St Hugh's College is able to host conferences and functions both during term time and out of term.

“Out of the academic term, we

comes potential budget implications, based on the fluctuating nature of food prices.

“I started to look at food procurement and how we could do this better. I have limited resources and need my chefs to be hands-on, in the kitchens cooking, not spending the majority of their time on managing administration, price negotiations or handling other administrative queries.

“Pelican Procurement approached me at the right time, although at the time I wasn't convinced that working with a third-party would be right for us. I get a lot of calls from companies saying the same thing, ‘we can save you money’; however, I was impressed by Pelican's team and its cautious approach, and professional, understanding attitude.

“It struck me that they know the market very well indeed – and understood our needs. I arranged for them to visit and review our purchasing process and suggest what changes could happen to help us from a budget and invoicing

“We have identified financial savings of 14%. This is impressive when you consider we'd already been involved with a purchasing framework, plus the uncertainty of Brexit is impacting prices”

convert all bedrooms into hotel-style accommodation. We welcome people from all over the world and it really is a beautiful college, with fantastic grounds. With 500 bedrooms on site, it is a large operation that takes a lot of organising.

“For me, I started working at St Hugh's College in 2012 and my background has always been in hospitality, mainly in the hotel sector. What I really wanted to do here was put my stamp on the quality aspect – within the remit of the college – respecting its focus and priorities.

“I want the students, fellows, college members – well, everyone who comes here – to enjoy the experience and the focus I place on wellbeing. My aim is to create an atmosphere where everyone can eat well, sleep comfortably and enjoy the experience.

“From a food perspective, the team and I have worked very hard to look at the quality of the food offering – constantly looking to better ourselves. However, with that

perspective, stock control, supplier management and reporting point of view.

“A big area for me is being able to track purchasing habits; I wanted to make significant savings without compromising quality or delivery service, and also reduce administration for my chefs as well as the finance team. I had hundreds of invoices on my desk that needed verifying and I would rely on input from the chefs to confirm what had been delivered.

“Working with Pelican over the last year has ticked all these boxes. Following a bespoke tender with key lines, including wholesale, fruit and vegetables, butchery, dairy and fish, we have identified financial savings of 14%. This is impressive when you consider we'd already been involved with a purchasing framework, plus the uncertainty of Brexit is impacting prices. To realise savings without impacting quality was something I wished for, and that's what was delivered.

“The great thing was that the tender wasn't just a review of prices; it also gave us an opportunity to look at the quality of suppliers. Pelican were able to present different options to us and be impartial, offering guidance only and letting us make decisions. They also negotiate directly with suppliers, which saves me a lot of time.

“During the tender process, we chose some suppliers who weren't the cheapest either; for example, we wanted to be able to support the local community as much as possible, so we decided to continue purchasing some of our items from local suppliers, but Pelican has been able to manage these relationship for us, too. We are able to continue supporting local suppliers, which is important for St Hugh's to give back to our local economy.

“Pelican even ensures suppliers are meeting the delivery criteria, and so we can be confident that we will receive what we need, when we need it. At the





start, we even had Pelican come here and be visible, inspecting the quality of deliveries. That was very reassuring to know we had extra hands supporting us.

“In fact, the key here is that whenever we’ve faced any issues, the team from Pelican has been extremely responsive – Michelle Parnham and Sarah Garnade act promptly as if they are members of our internal team. Pelican has created efficiencies with reduced administration and the finance team now has everything centralised onto an online procurement portal called Pi. Reports can be accessed whenever needed, which is great for when I need to plan for the next year’s budget, for example.

“Now, instead of hundreds of invoices, I receive one centralised statement from Pelican and we use the e-invoicing service, which the finance team are really impressed with. My chefs are able to buy from agreed lists and it makes it far easier to manage budgets. Working with Pelican

has certainly had a positive impact on our balance sheet, with significant savings.

“On top of this, the stock management aspect of Pi is really good; the chefs are able to work in a more structured way and this has been noted.

“I value regular updates on performance, reports on savings and purchasing behaviours. I now have a far more strategic view on our food procurement than ever before”

“The things I really value are regular updates on performance, reports on savings and purchasing behaviours. I now have a far more strategic view on our food procurement than ever before.

“Using the Pi system means I can be far more precise at determining costs for commercial activities as well as our internal charges. Having

the visibility of what is being spent, where, means I was able to do this.

“Ultimately, I’m here to do the best for the college and I am very grateful for the expert support I have received this year. The savings achieved haven’t meant

compromising on quality, and that is my fundamental goal. This will continue to be my objective for the coming year, and I look forward to working with Pelican to see how the relationship is going to develop further.”

For more information, please visit
www.pelicanprocurement.co.uk
<https://www.st-hughs.ox.ac.uk>



Driving a new leadership culture at London South Bank University

How a proactive approach to embedding strong staff leadership training is helping LSBU steadily climb the league tables

Since 2014, London South Bank University (LSBU) has been steadily climbing the league tables and winning awards. The University has worked incredibly hard to boost its reputation, not only within London but also nationally.

At the same time, LSBU has, like the rest of the sector, faced considerable challenges in terms of recruiting, converting and retaining quality graduates within an intensely

competitive HE marketplace.

To help LSBU meet this challenge, a new vice-chancellor was recruited in 2014 to deliver a transformation strategy and ambitious five-year plan, raise the University's reputation and achieve business success. Plus, a new executive team was brought on board, to effect positive change and help support the leadership team in their bid to deliver an effective organisational strategy.

The University took a proactive approach to embedding strong staff leadership training across LSBU's executive and other staff teams. Professor David Phoenix, LSBU's Vice-Chancellor, said: "We expect a lot from our leaders at LSBU, particularly given the journey we are on and the level of change we are currently experiencing in the HE sector. The University needs leaders right now who can show real vision and enterprise; leaders who engage with staff and the wider organisation with honesty, integrity and openness when delivering that vision."

LSBU wanted to give its

leaders the skills they needed to flex their approach depending on circumstance and to develop awareness of how their individual leadership style could affect other people. The University recognised that Emotional Intelligence (EI) was vital in achieving this. LSBU partnered with international people development and business psychology consultancy JCA Global, to support the cultural transformation. The aim was to engage, empower and inspire leaders to create a culture of accountability and openness to change and innovation.

Jo Maddocks, Chief Psychologist at JCA Global,

"A new vice-chancellor was recruited in 2014 to deliver a transformation strategy and ambitious five-year plan, raise the University's reputation and achieve business success"

explained: “Culture is shaped by a leadership climate, created through the behaviours of an organisation’s senior leaders.

“To use a metaphor, a person’s behaviour is like the leaves on a tree, with different shapes, sizes and colours. The branches of a tree are similar to the neural networks of the brain where we think about what we feel. The trunk of the tree is where feelings are experienced, just as they are in our bodies. These feelings are drawn from the roots, which are our attitudes. In order to change leadership behaviour and climate in an authentic and sustainable way, individuals must first fully understand their feelings and attitudes.”

Using the business psychology principle of EI for sustained behaviour change, JCA helped develop the awareness and capability of senior leaders at LSBU to identify and understand their own behaviours, feelings and

attitudes, and then channel this to create a positive and productive leadership climate.

Dr Markos Koumaditis, Director of People and Organisational Development at LSBU, said: “The first stage of the process was about getting to know ourselves and understanding who we are as a leadership team, particularly as there were a lot of new people in the team. We then looked at the kind of leadership style that we expected our staff to demonstrate.

“The Leadership Climate Model was something that initially attracted us to JCA and it proved to be extremely helpful, giving us an in-depth understanding of where we were and what we needed to do.”

This bespoke project took a phased approach with:

- Structured interviews with the executive and operations team and key stakeholders, to diagnose the



issues and build credibility and trust with the team

- A three-stage leadership intervention using JCA’s Leadership Climate Model, a Leadership Climate Survey and an exercise to identify desired behaviours for leaders
- Leadership Attributes Framework articulating what good leadership looks like, giving clear guidance around required behaviours
- A bespoke 360-degree feedback tool completed by strategic and operational leaders and their teams, resulting in a personalised development plan
- Leadership Academy offering development programmes based on the attributes, core skills and knowledge identified for leaders.

Adnan Bajwa, Head of OD and Engagement at LSBU, has a personalised development plan and has taken part in the Leadership Academy. He said: “EI has helped me to press pause and really think about where I am, what I need and what the people I lead and work with need. The JCA tools gave me useful and actionable feedback on my strengths as well as potential blind spots, and the Leadership Academy provides the opportunity to help develop these areas.”

There is already evidence of positive results for the business arising from the transformation programme and culture change. The positioning of LSBU in higher education league tables has improved substantially, and the University is intent on progressing further as the enhanced leadership culture becomes more embedded.

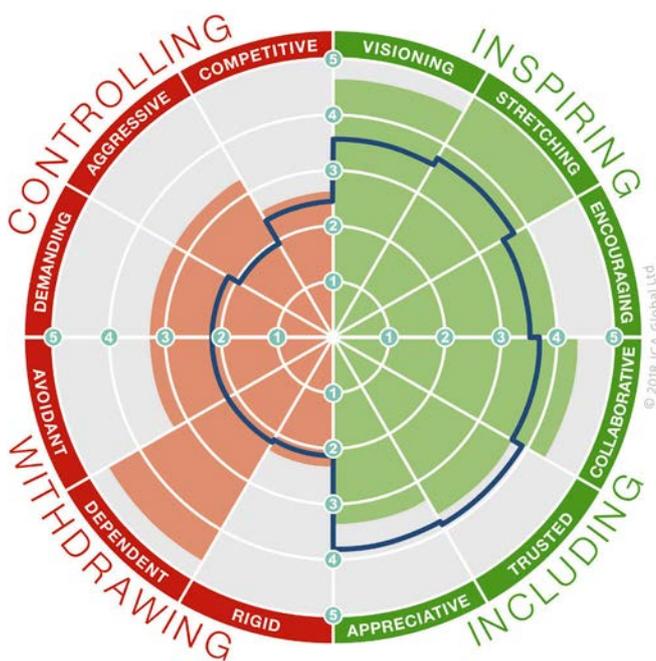
Dr Markos Koumaditis added:



“We have seen a 5% increase in confidence in leadership within our executive team, which was apparent in the results of our employee engagement survey. We are also seeing signs that we have managed to develop leadership attributes and there is now a much greater confidence within the organisation in terms of how our leaders operate.”

www.jcaglobal.com

“We expect a lot from our leaders at LSBU, particularly given the journey we are on and the level of change we are currently experiencing in the HE sector”



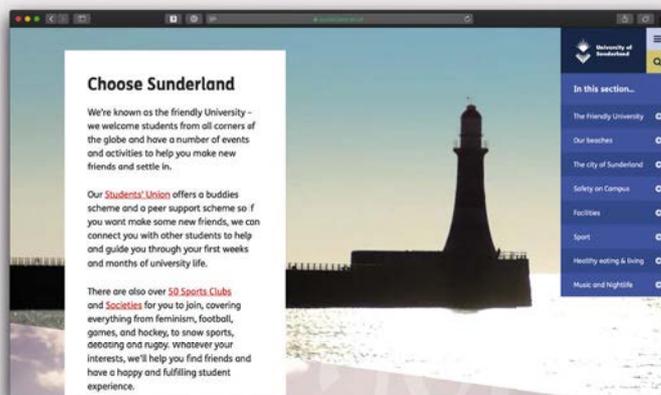
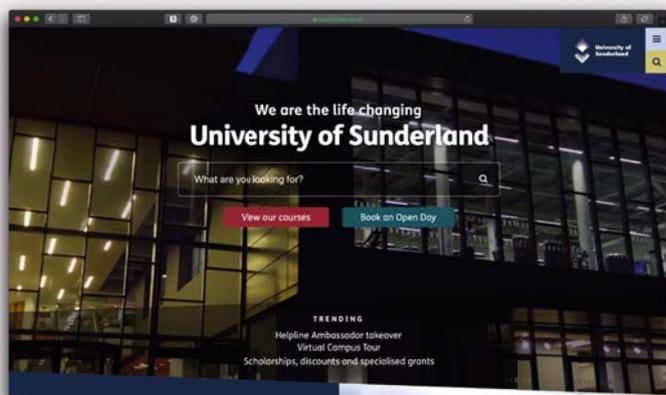
The JCA rating diagram

Evidence of business results from leadership transformation at LSBU:

- LSBU Engagement Survey has shown a 5% increase in leadership and confidence in leadership.
- Engagement KPI (average staff engagement score) has risen from 58% in 2015/16 to 69% in 2018/19.
- In 2018, of the 48 questions that have a comparison to 2016, 92% of questions improved.
- Awarded University of the Year for Graduate Employment by *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018*.
- Achieved Silver Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) rating in 2017.
- Awarded Entrepreneurial University of the Year at the *Times Higher Education (THES 2016) Awards*.
- In *The Guardian's* top 100 league table for UK universities, LSBU’s Business School achieved fourth place and the School of Law and Social Sciences leapt 45 places to 13th place.

“A BOLD, UNIQUE WEBSITE: UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN THE SECTOR”

Nathan Monk, Solutions Architect from creative agency SMILE, shares a short insight into how they approached redesigning the multi-award winning University of Sunderland flagship website



The project started with an interesting insight: market research undertaken by the University found that people weren't sure where Sunderland was located in the country. The reality is that it's a wonderful, vibrant North East city by the sea, with many benefits to the student community. So we designed a site that positions Sunderland as equal parts destination and university.

Our approach to redesigning websites is scientific: we break the process down into chunks (or sprints for all you Agile fans out there), develop a hypothesis, and create a measure of success.

Measuring success is an essential part of the process – too many design companies focus on aesthetics instead of business goals. Without understanding and measuring the paths and actions users are taking on the website, you could end up with a website that is nice to look at, but ultimately a failure.

We pride ourselves on creating websites that are as effective as they are beautiful. With the University of Sunderland that meant a website that not only won a gold

HEIST award, but which also delivered 67% more open day bookings, 36% more prospectus downloads, and referred over 7,000 people to apply via UCAS.

How did we get there? By adopting a user-centric approach that understood the needs of the users, and which could also craft the journey that the University wanted users to take through the site.

We took a component-led approach to design, simplifying the masthead, and deployed an off-canvas menu, to give more screen real estate to content. There were some key conceptual underpinnings that subliminally act as nods to the location. A key example was 'the shoreline', an angular divide between sections, reflecting the point at which the sea meets the sand at the local beach. The project flowed beautifully, with content informing design and technology enhancing the solution.

Working well with university stakeholders is a key part of a project's success and, to create a smooth delivery flow, we created clickable high-fidelity prototypes, constructed on-site with the website

working group. The prototypes were sent out to the stakeholder groups for feedback, and the results were collected, assessed and refined to meet the measure of success. This approach became an important part of the legacy that we left behind.

The University team were great to work with: they had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve and communicated this through their brief. We explored further possibilities and solutions together as the website developed and that iterative, collaborative approach is what we think gave this project the edge.

The University of Sunderland flagship website now has a bold and truly unique design, with a distinctive and flexible visual language. It's a true representation of the University, and has an integral role in the University of Sunderland's continuing success.

The University of Sunderland was awarded Gold in the 'Best Website of the Year' category at HEIST 2018 and 'Digital Campaign of the Year' at the North East Marketing Awards. This was a rewarding confirmation that its bold and confident approach puts it ahead of its competitors.

“Several agencies pitched websites that were in line with the best websites in the sector. However, SMILE were selected for their vision to deliver a website that was ahead of the curve, where video, intuitive search and simple navigation were central to success. In short, we decided that our new website would be bold and unique, unlike anything else in the sector”

Emma Cottle, Digital Content Manager, University of Sunderland

Website success in numbers

- 19% increase in undergraduate recruitment
- 7,000 people referred to UCAS
- 67% increase in open day bookings
- 36% increase in prospectus downloads

To find out more about this and other projects, visit <https://wearesmile.com>

Q In your opinion, has 2018 been a successful year for UK HE?

GW: Despite the immense turbulence generated by debates over Brexit and the challenges faced by minority governments across the UK, there is reason to be genuinely upbeat about UK higher education. I have no doubt that we have the strongest, most vibrant university sector, for a nation of our size, in the world. Our emphasis on delivering quality and our ability to innovate and work with students as partners are critical to this success. The continuing high level of applications from students from the EU and further afield demonstrates this.

AC: While some universities, including Regent's, may have had a successful year, it has been a difficult and negative year for the sector as a whole. There is every sign that domestic, European and international recruitment is in decline. The downward demographic of young students will continue until 2026. More young people are considering the value of a university degree very carefully and are opting for early, direct entry into the workplace.

The removal of the numbers cap and excessive



unconditional offers have increased recruitment at some ‘top’ universities – but only by substantially reducing recruitment at lower-ranked universities and threatening major problems for financial sustainability.

Maintaining international student numbers in the net immigration figures and refusing post-graduation employment in the UK for the majority of such students presents a very negative image of the UK for potential students, who will seek places elsewhere.

The deepening confusion about Brexit generates antagonism among potential EU students, and is deterring top academics from coming here, for fear of exclusion from collaborative research projects and funding.

The introduction of the Office for Students (OfS) has not been as effective as might have been wished. Almost a third of HE providers are yet to be placed on the new register for 2019/20, despite the fact that recruitment for that year has commenced. It appears that many institutions may be in breach of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulations by not warning potential students that all offers would be subject to registration.

“There is every sign that domestic, European and international recruitment is in decline”

ABM: NCUB can, of course, be expected to answer ‘yes’ to this question. But we can’t pretend the picture isn’t a challenging one. Press coverage has hardly been relentlessly positive; working with a new support and governance landscape, however well-designed and intentioned, was always going to require some careful thought; and the perceptual impacts of Brexit have already taken a toll on how our institutions are regarded globally.

However, there have been some remarkable success stories, and universities seem ever more attuned to their economic, civic and knowledge-exchange agendas, and ever more switched on to opportunities to influence policy direction. The sector is resilient.

PR: In fundamental terms, yes, but I feel the sector has perhaps made it too easy for some sections of the media to peddle bad news. If the headlines are to be believed, universities are competing not on price and quality, but on unconditional offers and inflated grades handed out to essay-mill-addicted students ill-equipped for the modern workplace. But UK HE would simply not continue to grow in popularity in the way it is if that were true.

I hope that next year the sector will push back, and get the good news out there of how students’ lives are being transformed for the better, and how university research is improving and enriching the whole of society.

Q How will developments with Brexit impact the sector next year?

GW: This is the \$64,000 question. There is little doubt that crashing out of the EU without proper preparation would be damaging to many sectors, including HE. We know the Government is negotiating to avoid this, and we have published policy statements recommending a position to take. In the more likely event of a negotiated exit, we should be looking to secure a deal on a reciprocal fee arrangement for students from European nations wishing to study in the UK, to prevent a big drop in EU students.

MillionPlus has recommended an arrangement similar to that implemented in Scandinavia and Australia-New Zealand, where students can cross the Tasman Sea to study for the same fee as local students – and without needing a student visa.

AC: Currently, there is no certainty about any aspect of Brexit. The possibility of another referendum appears to be growing – but with no definition of what this would ask or the likely outcome. The length of a transition period, if the UK does leave, is yet to be agreed. The UK Government is under threat and future leadership is uncertain.

EU students come to the UK both for the quality of the education provision and for access to the Student Loan Company (SLC). Recruitment from the EU is marginally up in September 2018 as students seek to get in ‘under the wire’ to benefit from the current freedom of movement and loans. However, in a worst-case scenario, where continental EU nationals would require a Tier 4 visa, would have to pay international student fees and would have no rights to future employment in the UK, recruitment could drop off a cliff. Top universities would be affected but survive on reputation, at least for now – but lower-ranked institutions could be devastated.

ABM: Assuming that Brexit will unfold as predicted is a dangerous enough game in itself, without making predictions as to its effect. So. I’ll pack away the tea leaves, horoscopes and crystal ball and think, instead, in terms of how some negative impacts might be mitigated.

It’s encouraging to hear [Higher Education Minister] Sam Gyimah speak of continued engagement with EU funding programmes, if only for the networking →

Contributors



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The unwelcoming message sent by Brexit will continue to deter many EU students from studying in the UK

2019 will see student mental health continue to rise up the agenda



and collaboration they engender; the UK has accessed 14% of the total Horizon 2020 budget to-date and replacing it won't be easy. And warm words don't equal progress. Government needs to work through any issues with Horizon Europe fast, if we're to maintain productive engagement, even on a 1-1 basis.

Likewise, rhetoric and policy emerging from the Home Office needs to keep pace with our universities' needs for the best and brightest minds. We must streamline and modernise our immigration system in pursuit of an advanced knowledge economy, and ensure that the messages we give the world are confident, outward-looking and welcoming. This also extends to the EU nationals already doing such valuable work in our institutions.

PR: The closer we get to Brexit, the less clear things seem to get. On the positive side, there seems to be growing acceptance that we must be fully open for skilled labour from all over the world – and I assume this includes academics and researchers. As research

and higher education is a global endeavour, not just a European one, a genuine 'whole-world' approach can only give benefit. I hope a similarly open mindset applies to recruitment of bona fide students from around the globe and, more importantly, that the tone of voice of UK Visas & Immigration changes to reflect this.

Q Major initiatives have been launched this year to improve student mental health. Will HE continue to improve on this in 2019?

GW: This is an absolutely critical area of work for universities. We've already seen a major shift to enhance wellbeing support and counselling services for those facing mental health challenges at university. Efforts are being redoubled to deliver further improvements to students in this area. Universities can't do this on their own; they will have to work with local NHS services and the excellent mental health charities, such as Student Minds, who can offer their expertise.

AC: Statistics issued by the Office for Students (OfS)

show that the suicide rate for students at university is below that for the population as a whole. Figures show 95 recorded university student suicides for the 12 months to July 2017 in England and Wales, with the rate for young men higher than that for women. Nonetheless, a report published last autumn by the Institute of Public Policy Research showed that the number of students disclosing mental health problems has increased fivefold in a decade.

Many universities are still sleep-walking through this problem and are not allocating sufficient resources to student support and counselling. However, the problem cannot be solved by simply throwing money at it. Universities should promote strong values that turn their institutions into caring communities where students look after each other and where it is recognised that admitting to problems is a sign of strength, not weakness. I do not see many universities taking this approach, without which the problem will not be solved.

ABM: NCUB has been convening our members on an aspect of this very topic: student wellbeing and resilient transitions into the workplace. Judging by university appetite for this work, the desire is clearly there to continue to learn and develop. We can't overlook businesses' role in this, either – they have valuable learning to share and, in turn, they can glean much from engaging with university approaches to student mental health and wellbeing.

PR: Jisc was recently visited by James Murray, father of Bristol University student Ben, who tragically took his own life earlier this year. James is clear that data and analytics have a role to play in early identification of students who are struggling. This is not about replacing the expert humans who provide that support – it is about starting a conversation between human beings that otherwise might not occur because students in need, who have got into a dark place, are often the least likely to ask for help.

Q UK institutions performed well in world university rankings this year. Are we remaining competitive in an international market?

AC: No. The top British universities are holding their own – but even this is under threat. Opening up access to students who are less academically qualified and offering very low contact hours and challenge will eventually threaten recruitment at even the top universities. The Government's unwelcoming approach will lead to a reduction in the UK share of the international student market. The potential reduction in research funding will eventually damage major projects and will threaten the UK economy through reduced collaboration and patent registration.

The solution? Ease immigration regulations, remain in the EU and provide incentives for bright graduates to stay and develop their entrepreneurial business here.

“The number of students disclosing mental health problems has increased fivefold in a decade”

ABM: Rankings and league tables are a useful metric up to a point, albeit afflicted by reporting lag. Our research is globally competitive in quality, and that seems unlikely to change at short notice. So where can we compete better outside these measurements? Is it in enhancing, rewarding, recognising and catalysing new forms of knowledge exchange? Is it in improving relationships with business, driving investment in research and development, and equipping our graduates for the workplaces of the future? Or is it in rooting universities' activity in a sense of their own place, physical and human geography?

Each university will have its own strengths, →

Contacts

MillionPlus www.millionplus.ac.uk

Regent's University London www.regents.ac.uk

National Centre for Universities and Business www.ncub.co.uk

Jisc www.jisc.ac.uk

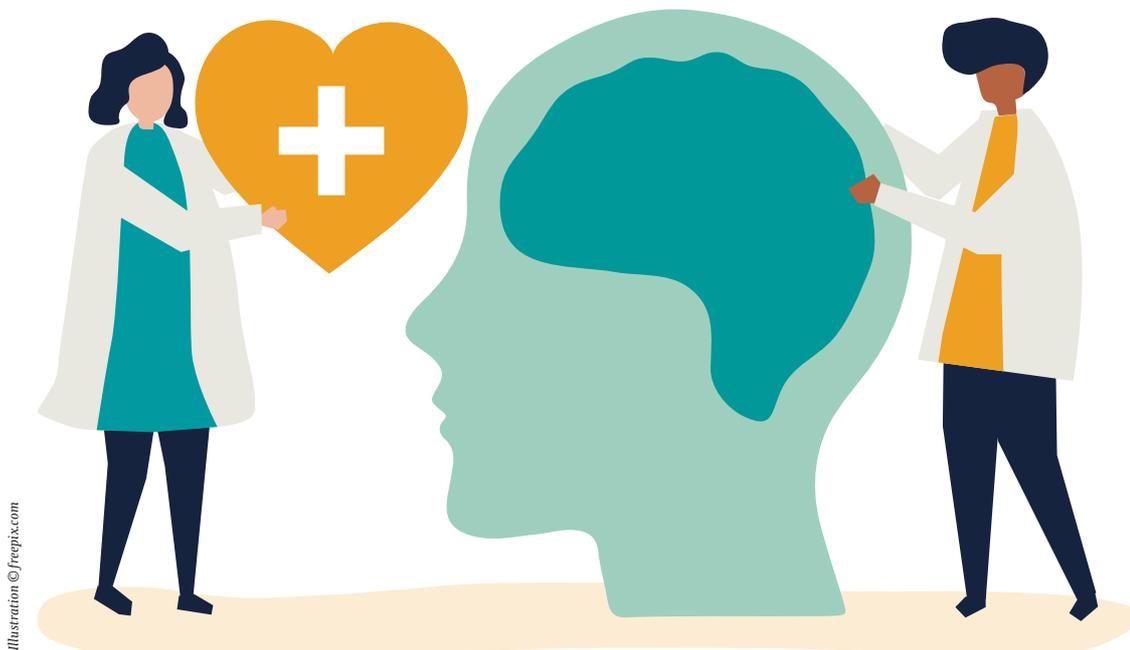


Illustration © freepix.com



Artificial intelligence, data and information will play an ever-more important role in helping to shape students' university experience, and help prepare them for a changing job market

constraints and strategic priorities. I would only humbly suggest that they remain outward-facing and eager to learn from others.

Q What lessons learned in 2018 will help us prepare for the year ahead?

GW: To stay focused on delivery of high-quality, world-class teaching and research, despite the turbulence around you. Put simply, Keep Calm and Carry On Excelling.



AC: Despite the wealth of possibilities and the rising level of threat, I fear that very few lessons have been learned. The environment is changing rapidly, and the Government and universities should examine their strategies deeply and urgently. The key to future success is for all institutions to be distinctive and relevant to their location. Institutions should listen far more carefully to students about what they want from the university experience, and consider how to prepare them for a continually changing job market where many traditional roles will be replaced by artificial intelligence – and where graduates may have dozens of very different types of employment.

They should look at different and more effective ways to deliver programmes, and consider the portfolio that they offer. In particular, they should encourage entrepreneurial activity. At Regent's, within a year of graduation, 62% of students start their own businesses or join family businesses.

The Government, meanwhile, should alter its focus on value for money (VfM) as measured by starting salaries and consider more carefully social value for money (SVfM), the movement being taken up by more than 20 universities, which measures the contribution of a university to its local and national economy, cultural and social life.

PR: I think we have learned the crucial importance of data and information – whether at national level, in terms of showing that UK higher education is in rude health despite the negative headlines, or at local level, using data and learning analytics to improve the success of all students. As the fourth industrial revolution progresses, with 'Higher Education 4.0' as a key element of that, the importance of AI and the good data that underpins it will become ever more key.

ABM: Expect the unexpected... **UB**

Further reading

Institute of Public Policy Research report on student mental health

www.ippr.org/research/publications/not-by-degrees

NCUB advice on student wellbeing

www.ncub.co.uk/what-we-do/student-wellbeing

Jisc guidelines on using learning analytics

www.jisc.ac.uk/learning-analytics

Jisc blog on possibilities offered by 'Education 4.0'

www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/the-potential-of-education-4-is-huge-the-uk-must-take-the-lead-now-12-sep-2018

Illustration © Freepix.com / Image © depositphotos.com

VIDEO CONTENT – MAKE IT WORK HARD FOR YOUR MONEY



We are experiencing times of unprecedented student recruitment challenges in UK Higher Education. The need to reach a wider base of audiences in the UK and overseas has seen many universities start to take video, and other rich media content such as virtual tours, much more seriously. But how can universities make sure their rich media spend is working as hard as it could and is resulting in increased student enrolments?

To further understand this, *University Business* caught up with Vicky Hayhurst, Commercial Director at Revolution Viewing – the sector’s leading video and rich media supplier. Vicky has visited 106 UK universities in the last four years. Her visits range from project briefings and debriefings, to delivering research presentations about what prospective students need and want from rich media, to strategic consultancy with senior marketers to help universities plan their rich media requirements alongside their overarching student recruitment strategy.

Revolution Viewing’s work and client base mean that the agency has a unique insight into how the sector is using rich media content in the pursuit of student recruitment.

So let’s start with the things that universities have been doing well:

- interrogating campaign results and asking more from advertising and content distribution agencies who are using more sophisticated programmatic marketing
- recruiting more in-house content producers, especially for social media, where there has been some great success with low budget, high-impact targeted recruitment campaigns – Loughborough University and the University of Glasgow have done particularly well here
- setting metrics to measure the success of rich media content, measuring and reporting on these – the University of Bradford has excelled at this
- harnessing the power of emerging technologies such as chatbots to provide speedy responses to enquiries at key points in the recruitment cycle – well done to Leeds Beckett for their award-winning clearing campaign
- understanding that high-quality content, which makes enquirers feel reassured about applying to a university and applicants feel proud to accept an offer, must be supported by student-led, authentic content and both must stay true to the university’s brand – Lancaster University and London Metropolitan have had some real wins
- realising that personalisation (if done well...) is key to increasing the impact of messaging, especially during conversion – the University of Salford has run a personalised conversion video campaign

for the past two years spending half of what it would have spent on printed direct mail pieces and increasing the percentages of offers to firm accepts.

And here are the things universities should focus on to make their money work harder:

- conduct consistently, and far enough in advance, content planning and align this with insight of multiple audiences and their increasing expectations, behaviours and needs at various stages of the recruitment cycle
- use insight to build the case for investment and show the impact it has across other recruitment tools – for example, Revolution Viewing knows that almost 90% of prospective students* are more likely to attend an open day or apply to a university if they have previously seen content that the agency has produced
- implement end-to-end CRM systems (or at least an approach to CRM if there is no system) – this enables more targeted recruitment and measurement of return
- factor in audience targeting and distribution platforms when budgeting and ensure consistency of investment from one year to the next
- share campaigns and objectives across marketing agency partners
- keep content records and share these internally so that teams are aware of what content could be used across the institution and where there are gaps
- don’t allow subjectivity, institutional history or bias to cloud decisions – work with credible agencies whose experience and knowledge can help to reduce the risk here.

*Statistic taken from RV’s primary research programme with prospective students, in collaboration with Hotcourses Group.



Acceptance without exception

Universities are typically seen as leading the way in LGBT+ policies and politics. But in light of a report by Stonewall on the LGBT+ experience in UK universities, Alex Diggins asks how accurate is this perception and can institutions do more?

The recently released Freddie Mercury biopic *Bohemian Rhapsody* is a triumphant piece of cinema. Swaggeringly cool with a foot-tapping jukebox soundtrack, it shows how Mercury strutted, sashayed and skyrocketed Queen to phenomenal success. But it also demonstrates how much has changed for the LGBT+ community. Mercury endures open abuse on the street; tearfully comes out to his wife (only for her to say she's known "for years"); and conceals evidence of the AIDS which would eventually contribute to his death.

Much, fortunately, has changed. And universities have often been seen as being at the forefront of that change; they are perceived, as Mhairi Taylor, Equality and Diversity Manager at Glasgow University, argues, as "bastions of liberal ideals". But a recent report by Stonewall, *LGBT in Britain – University Report 2018*, has thrown a bucket of cold water over this complacency. Its findings should galvanise university leaders to take a hard look at their own

LGBT+ provision; and consider that, as Mhairi notes, "the reality on the ground for staff and students can be quite different" from the apparently accepting status quo.

PRESENT PREJUDICES

Stonewall's report makes grim reading. It found that one in seven LGBT+ students had been subject to negative comments and abuse by staff, and one in five by fellow pupils. In addition, more than a third of trans students had experienced abuse, and an appalling 7% had suffered physical violence on account of their identity. Prejudice was particularly acute for those with multiple or overlapping identities. One in four BAME (Black, Asian and ethnic minority) students who identified as LGBT+ had experienced abuse in the past year, and figures were also proportionally higher for disabled students. "For many pupils, universities are arty, liberal spaces where people can explore their identities," said Pete Mercer, Head of Public Sector Membership Programmes at Stonewall. "But, as our report indicates, for many others, that certainly isn't the

case. [They are] faced with harm and discrimination for simply being themselves – this is completely unacceptable."

The report's data can, of course, be contested due to its relatively small sample size: it asked 5,000 LGBT+ students across the UK about their experiences, and investigated the specific cases of the 522 who responded to the questionnaire. And those who had experienced prejudice, and wished to report it, may have been more likely to respond. In addition, as it relied on students self-identifying as LGBT+, it's potentially vulnerable to manipulation from people unscrupulously identifying to distort the statistics. Nonetheless, its findings make sobering reading and deserve to be taken seriously. In fact, the relative scarcity of good data is a problem which is shared across the sector. There is no compulsion for institutions to collect data on sexual orientation or gender identity. This is down to fears over data protection and institutional prejudice. But, unfortunately, this means that, as Pete argued: "Institutions don't know if LGBT students are dropping out →





their courses en masse. The lack of data means that when universities say they don't have a problem with prejudice, it simply means their assumptions are unfounded."

PRESENT SOLUTIONS

What can be done? Institutions can tackle LGBT+ prejudice through their policies and cultures. The approaches are entangled and mutually supportive – but both must be championed to root out the abuse and discrimination that still apparently tarnishes UK universities.

Start with policies. One of the most important is having clear avenues through which LGBT+ staff and pupils can raise complaints, propose policy and facilitate dialogue with senior leadership. "One of the most important elements of our work is the importance of listening," said Karen Cooke, Chair of the LGBT+ staff network at Cardiff University. To this end, Cardiff has

an LGBT+ working group that meets three times a year and incorporates representatives from the staff, pupils and leadership. This forum provides a space "to discuss what is working, what needs to improve and

and administrative staff on unconscious bias and bystander intervention, in addition to initiatives such as giving staff and students the option to disclose their identity as non-binary and use the title Mx. As Karen Bush, Head

“One in seven LGBT+ students had been subject to negative comments and abuse by staff”

how we can effect change together”.

The idea of a LGBT+ working group – composed of a cross-section of staff and students – is one that is repeated at Essex and Glasgow, which also both scored 10 out of 10 in Stonewall's benchmarking criteria of LGBT+ friendliness, Gay by Degree. Other policies adopted across all three institutions include training for academic

of Equality Diversity and Inclusion at Essex, said: "People are not just one thing – we all have multiple identities and the intersection of these identities impact on our experiences."

This intersectionality can prove a challenge to universities' creaking administrative systems, though. "There can be indirect challenges with policy implementation, particularly when they interact with



technical systems,” admitted Karen Cooke. “Many systems are built or based on the idea of binary genders, and a number of our staff and student community have very different attitudes to gender and it can take a while for systems to catch up.”

CULTURAL CHANGE

As those systems catch up, however, universities must ensure they foster a supportive culture for LGBT+ people. Depending on their location, this can be easier for some than others. For large, metropolitan universities like Glasgow, which already have a vibrant LGBT+ scene, it is mostly a matter of facilitating and encouraging existing LGBT+ communities. This can involve gestures like flying the rainbow flag, when appropriate, or selling rainbow pins so people can identify as LGBT+ or as an LGBT+ ally. But institutions can also tangibly support LGBT+ people

through funding for student and staff networks. These support networks are especially important for smaller, more rural institutions where LGBT+ people may not have a wider community for support.

Movements to diversify the curriculum, so that they more accurately reflect the LGBT+ experience, are also critical. “Understanding the value of the student voice is very important,” explained Pete. “[It’s about] ensuring the LGBT experience isn’t erased.” In some subjects – the social sciences, for example – academia has been ahead of the curve in this respect. But in others, like psychology, there is still an implicit assumption that heterosexual relationships are the norm, and gender identities are binary. Unsettling these assumptions is an important part of making universities a more comfortable, welcoming space for LGBT+ people. Ultimately, though, perhaps the most

significant step institutions can take is realising they aren’t rarefied, complacently liberal spaces; instead, they are “microcosms of wider society”, as Mhairi noted. They should be leaders in setting policies and encouraging cultures that support LGBT+ communities. But they are, nonetheless, caught up in the wider currents of society. And from the election of Donald Trump to the poisoning of the body politic with hateful discourse directed at ‘others’ of all sorts, the need for universities to take a stand for inclusivity and tolerance has grown all the more acute. As Pete states: “I would urge any institutions reading this to think carefully about what they think, versus what they know.”

Bohemian Rhapsody shows how far we have come – but also serves as a reminder of how far we have to go. [UB](#)

Except in direct quotation, this article uses LGBT+ as it is the most widely accepted term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and non-binary people.

NEW “DOORJAMMER LOCKDOWN”

FAST EXTRA DOOR SECURITY FOR THREATENING SITUATIONS IN UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS

The makers of DoorJammer, the award-winning portable door security device, have introduced their new “Lockdown” product to deal with threatening situations in public buildings.

Under pressurised conditions where a large number of people may be at risk, “DoorJammer Lockdown” can be quickly deployed to secure doors, therefore barricading access to an intruder or an attacker.

Light in weight (822gms), but very strong and made of steel, “DoorJammer Lockdown” provides extra robust security for inward opening doors. It can be quickly fitted in seconds and valuable time isn’t wasted hunting for keys or padlocks. The device’s flange goes under the gap of the door (minimum gap 3mm) and the bolt is twisted to secure. “DoorJammer Lockdown’s” clever mechanism means that the more the intruder attempts to push or kick the door, the more the device stays in place – keeping the occupants safe on the other side. “DoorJammer Lockdown” helps universities follow current police and National Counter

Terrorism’s (NaCTSO) advice, to “RUN, HIDE, TELL” – and when hiding, create a safe place by barricading yourself in.

“DoorJammer Lockdown” is UK-police accredited via their “Secured by Design” initiative, successfully passing the rigorous PAS24 impact resistance standards on complete door frames. This included a direct impact test of up to 50kg of force at the device’s fullest possible extension.

When urgent evacuation of the secured room or area is required, “DoorJammer Lockdown” can be swiftly removed by the occupants.

“DoorJammer Lockdown” is cost effective, as expenditure on replacement of doors and locks is avoided.

An overall winner at last month’s British Invention of the Year Awards, “DoorJammer Lockdown” is priced at £39.99 (ex-VAT), with free postage on orders over £50.



“DoorJammer Lockdown” is great value for money – but for peace of mind, it’s priceless!

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ESTATES & FACILITIES

THE LATEST CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION, REFURBISHMENTS, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND CATERING NEWS

Elite centre launches to boost manufacturing revival

The new £12.5m Black Country Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills (ECMS) has officially been launched by journalist and television presenter, Steph McGovern

Based on a hub and spoke model, dedicated training centres are now fully operational across the Black Country – in collaboration with training providers and professional industry bodies – to upskill employees and train new apprentices in metal-forming skills.

The ECMS hub, based at the University of Wolverhampton's £100m regeneration project at the former Springfield Brewery, is an employer-led training facility for the Black Country. It has been designed to build on the region's industrial heritage by providing specialist training, short courses and apprenticeships, helping to close skills gaps identified by employers.

The ECMS spokes comprise: a new National Press and Tooling Centre in Aldridge, focusing on the delivery of toolmaking apprenticeships and technical courses; a spoke at Dudley College, focusing on advance welding training; and another based in Tipton, boasting advanced moulding and melting facilities to deliver foundry training at all levels.

ECMS is a collaboration between the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Wolverhampton, Dudley College, Cast Metals Federation, Confederation of



GROUP PARTNERS LEFT TO RIGHT: Ninder Johal (Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership), Ian Fitzpatrick (Chief Executive, Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills), Gareth Jones (Managing Director, In-Comm Training), Steph McGovern (Journalist and Television Presenter), Martin Dudley (Chairman and CEO of Thomas Dudley Ltd), Professor Ian Oakes (Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Wolverhampton), Pam Murrell (Chief Executive Officer, Cast Metals Federation and Institute of Cast Metals Engineers), Neil Thomas (Principal, Dudley College) and Geraldine Bolton (Chief Executive, Confederation of British Metalforming)

British Metalforming, Institute of Cast Metals Engineers and In-Comm Training.

Ian Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive at the ECMS, said: "It's well known that the manufacturing industry has an ageing workforce and that bespoke training courses matching industry requirements can be difficult to source.

"We have listened carefully to what industry needs and, together with our partners, we have designed manufacturing facilities equipped with world-class equipment; where world-class training will be delivered by some of the finest

technical experts in the business.

"Our aim at the ECMS is to give our learners a clear line of sight and a career pathway from Levels 2, 3 and 4, through to Higher National Certificate and Diploma and then Degree Apprenticeships, offering a complete or bespoke training package for the manufacturing sector through both practical and theoretical learning."

Apprentices learn on the job at the ECMS training hub or one of the spokes – equipped with new training rooms, metallurgy and metrology labs – with access to partner training centres and state-of-the-art engineering

facilities. All apprenticeships meet the New Apprenticeship Standards, with a variety of delivery models available.

With employer input, courses have been developed in casting, toolmaking, pattern making, metalforming and foundry training, as well as mechatronics, product design and development and advanced computer numerical control.

The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership approved £8.5m for the project, while the partners have invested £4m.

For more information, visit <http://www.theecms.co.uk>

Is HE doing enough for Gen Z mental health?

Generation Z let down by employers and universities over mental health support, new study shows

Young people are being let down by employers and universities when it comes to their mental health, a study by Business Disability Forum and Youthsight has found.

The study of one thousand 16–24-year-olds revealed that while the vast majority had both a strong understanding of mental health and a desire to see it talked about more prominently, very few felt able to address the issue at their workplace or university.

As many as a third of university students and young graduates (under the age of 24) said that they had either considered dropping out themselves due to a lack of mental health support, or knew someone else who had considered leaving, meaning many thousands of students could be considered at risk.

In addition, most felt the support available for their mental health did not reflect the issues they faced in reality.

High expectations

The study found that the vast majority of 16–24-year-olds, regardless of their work or educational status, saw mental health both as a topic that needed to be talked about more and as something that university and employers needed to take more seriously.

Furthermore, 16–24-year-olds were found to take an empowered stance when it came to employers, with a majority saying they would consider leaving if not supported at work.

- 91% of 16–24-year-olds feel we should all be talking more about mental health.
- 91% feel it is the responsibility of an employer to support good mental health and

wellbeing of employees, and 89% of students and graduates feel a university has this responsibility to its students.

- 84% expect employers to be able to spot the signs of poor mental health.
- 65% of young people would consider leaving a job if their employer didn't support their mental health.

Young people let down by higher education institutions

However, many young people found that their desire for more openness and support was unfulfilled once they reached the worlds of higher education and work.

For example:

- Only 55% of students or graduates feel their university supports their good mental health and wellbeing.
- 63% of students or graduates would not be comfortable talking about their mental health at university or work with someone they don't know well. This raises particular concerns around new students failing to seek the support they need.
- 34% have either considered leaving university, or knew someone who has, due to a lack of mental health support.

These figures are particularly striking in the context that almost six in ten (57%) young people in general agreed that the way people talk about mental health and wellbeing does not reflect the issues they face in reality.

Business Disability Forum's advice to employers and universities

Business Disability Forum

cited the results as compelling evidence that more needed to be done to meet the expectations of 'Generation Z' (young people aged 24 and under) and to ensure appropriate support is on offer.

In particular, Business Disability Forum called on universities to:

- Offer training to all staff on how to recognise the signs of poor mental health among students and how to signpost students to support available.
- Provide line-manager training to ensure staff have access to support for their own mental wellbeing, as

they, in turn, support others.

- Encourage open communication and make sure support services and academic staff share information about students' mental wellbeing.
- Work to end any stigma associated with talking about mental health.

Business Disability Forum also called on all employers to take measures around mental health awareness and support, pointing to its '10-point strategy' to reduce workplace stress, released earlier this year.

Diane Lightfoot, Chief

"Generation Z recognises the importance of good mental wellbeing and expects universities and employers to ensure their needs are met"



Images © de postphotos.com



Executive Officer at Business Disability Forum, said: “The message from this survey is clear. Generation Z recognises the importance of good mental wellbeing and expects universities and employers to ensure their needs are met. But they are being let down by a culture in which talking about mental health is still seen as a taboo, and staff feel ill-equipped to spot the signs and offer support.

“Add concerns over mental health support to the high debts incurred from university and a fluid job market, and you have an entire cohort of people who will readily walk away from organisations that do not actively support their mental health. Our findings suggest that thousands of young people are already considering leaving their universities or workplaces over a lack of mental health support; many more could follow if organisations do not approach mental health differently with a

potentially devastating impact on our future workforce.

“But all is by no means lost. Other studies have suggested that Generation Z feel great loyalty to institutions who reflect their values and attitudes, so there are big rewards for employers and universities who get it right on mental health.

Josephine Hansom, Head of Youth Research and Insight at YouthSight, added that the findings clearly show that Generation Z have strong views about the role of employers and universities in society.

Josephine said: “Young people are clear that mental health is a priority, both in and outside of the workplace. The challenge for employers and institutions alike is to meet these new expectations. Many Millennials (aged 25–30) and Generation Z (16–24) have already demonstrated that they will not settle for less, moving jobs far more quickly

than previous generations and letting a strong sense of social justice inform their spending and career choices.

“To make the most of this optimistic and highly-connected new generation of young people, employers and universities must demonstrate that they reflect this generation’s values. An enlightened approach to safeguarding and managing mental health is one of the foremost of these values, as the results show, which should be a clear incentive for organisations to evolve and change.”

Business Disability Forum is conducting further research into the experiences and expectations of young people and the role that employers and universities play in supporting mental wellbeing. A full report on all findings will be available early in 2019.

For further information email samuelb@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

91% of 16-24-year-olds feel we should all be talking more about mental health

Only 55% of students or graduates feel their university supports their good mental health and wellbeing

34% have either considered leaving university, or knew someone who has, due to a lack of mental health support



Alastair Stewart with University of Winchester journalism students and lecturers

Winchester newsroom opened by ITN's Alastair Stewart

Journalist and broadcaster Alastair Stewart formally opens newsroom at University of Winchester

Veteran ITN journalist and broadcaster Alastair Stewart OBE has formally opened the University of Winchester's purpose-built, industry-standard newsroom.

Alastair toured the newsroom – part of the 24-hour Multimedia Centre which also includes a TV and radio studio, computerised radio station and facilities for multi-track audio recording – and met BA (Hons) Journalism students and teaching staff before a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The fully-equipped newsroom offers students the

opportunity to gain practical experience working as a reporter in a simulated newsroom environment. It also serves as the hub for the University's Winchester News Online website, which showcases independent journalism by Winchester students.

Speaking at the opening, Professor Joy Carter CBE, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winchester, said: "In this era of fake news, the sustainability of intelligent, reliable journalism is more crucial than ever in underpinning democratic

freedoms and social justice. The University of Winchester believes that it is essential to our mission and our values to invest in the future of high-quality journalism education."

At the forefront of British journalism for more than four decades, Alastair presents one

it's important that student journalists get the best chance of employment. Anyone who wants to work in television journalism, output or input, has got to feel the space and the facilities I have opened today will help Winchester students feel the space of the newsroom."

"In this era of fake news, the sustainability of intelligent, reliable journalism is more crucial than ever in underpinning democratic freedoms and social justice"

of the country's most iconic news programmes, *News at Ten*. He is a good friend of the University and has hosted Winchester students at ITN HQ in London. He currently works at ITN with a number of Winchester graduates who have successfully transferred their skills from the University newsroom to his, on a national and international level.

Alastair Stewart said: "I think these facilities are absolutely brilliant, because they look and feel like the real thing. As well as academic excellence,

The University's BA (Hons) Journalism programme has had accreditation from the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) for almost 10 years. The University has also boosted its teaching team with the appointment of Joe Michalczuk from *Good Morning Britain*, who has previously reported for Sky News. Joe joins former BBC journalist Brian Thornton's team, alongside beIN SPORTS' Angus Scott, award-winning documentary film-maker Shira Pinczuk and media technologist Tom Tlaim.



Professor Joy Carter and Alastair Stewart

GRADUATING WITH DISTINCTION IN CLEANING STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

GreenTeck Global offers an innovative solution to keeping student accommodation in tip-top condition

Dealing with the management and maintenance of student accommodation is a problem as old as universities themselves. But an Oxford-based company has come up with an innovative 21st-century solution that is 'green', clean and cost-effective.

GreenTeck Global makes a range of trioxygen equipment that uses ozone to eliminate odours, attack mould and other pathogens, disinfects and can even play a significant role in eliminating odour from smoke damage.

Ozone (or O₃) occurs naturally in the atmosphere – at high altitude, the Ozone Layer prevents ultra-violet radiation reaching the Earth's surface – and is produced by lightning. GreenTeck Global's range of products uses the same ultra-violet light to artificially produce this ozone.

Ozone is the world's most powerful natural disinfectant. One atom of oxygen detaches itself from each O₃ or trioxygen molecule and it is this that deodourises, attacks mould and attaches to smoke particles, neutralising them.

No other aggressive and expensive chemicals are required and all that is left at the end of the day is pure, natural, oxygen (as O₂ molecules).

CASE STUDY

Some time ago, Oxford Brookes University had been talking to David Thurston, GreenTeck Global's head, about the application of the company's trioxygen equipment. It had just opened its new Engineering Block when, unfortunately, it suffered a fire in the carpentry shop which, in turn, caused substantial smoke-damage to the whole of the building.



GreenTeck Global was able to bring its trioxygen equipment within 24 hours of the fire and after an extensive clean-up operation – but which only lasted a further couple of days – the results even surprised Harmohinder Bahl, the Oxford Brookes Deputy Director of Facilities and commercial services.

"I've been fascinated by the versatility and application of Ozone," he said. "Equally, the creative and wide spectrum of solutions GreenTeck Global has provided has been particularly welcome as has the collaborative and 'can-do' working approach from the team."

The college was so impressed with the results that when the mother of one of their students complained her son was suffering respiratory problems directly as a result of unacceptably high levels of moisture and mould in his accommodation, GreenTeck Global was invited back to undertake another

capability field-trial focusing on this specific problem.

Once again it proved to be a stunning success, so much so that Oxford Brookes has now purchased trioxygen equipment from GreenTeck Global and is using it, as and when necessary, across its student accommodation estate for both the eradication of mould and odour control.

Success followed success and GreenTeck Global has just undertaken another similar installation at Leeds University, field trials are currently underway at both Cardiff and Manchester

Universities, detailed discussions are taking place with Imperial College London and Warwick University, and there are exploratory talks with a number of other universities and FE colleges.

David Thurston explained: "We have a family of products and believe there is one for every location. They are very simple and safe to use and we can provide full training, operation and maintenance as required.

"The units themselves are very compact and robust and really are a very efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly way to tackle a wide range of problems."

For further information about the product range, please contact David Thurston, GreenTeck Global, 42 St Mary Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0EU, Tel: 0208 150622. Email: david@greenteckglobal.com Web: www.greenteckglobal.com

The GreenTeck Global product range includes:

- **GreenTeck Global Gteck 5000P & Gteck 1664P** Portable Trioxygen Generators: powerful and ideal for 'shock treatments' where urgent and effective action is called for, such as the removal of odours and destroying mould spores. Particularly suitable for student accommodation.
- **GreenTeck Global Gteck Air Free Destruct** Designed to be used alongside

the generators – and can be connected to them using a connecting interlock, so the destruct turns on automatically once the generator's programme has finished.

- **Aura Wall-Mounted Trioxygen Generator** A highly compact unit used for tackling ambient smells and odour control in both residential and commercial settings where it eliminates almost all stubborn odours

and 99.5% of bacteria and viruses. Wall-mounted and therefore designed to be used in occupied areas.

- **GreenTeck Global Plug In Trioxygen Generator** A palm-sized generator that plugs directly into a standard electrical socket and can be used constantly or on a timer. Used to neutralise ambient smells in communal/residential areas or offices.

Balancing performance with user comfort

– Passivhaus as a living case study

From a green wall featuring 75,000 individual plants to CTB blinds that track the sun and automatically close to prevent solar gain, Willmott Dixon tell us more about the University of Leicester’s multi-million-pound George Davies Centre

The George Davies Centre (formerly Centre for Medicine) at University of Leicester – the largest non-residential Passivhaus building in the UK – has continued to scoop awards for its size and complexity, being recognised across the higher education sector and the UK as a whole.

Developed in Germany during the early 1990s, Passivhaus is the world’s leading fabric-first approach to low-energy buildings. Its excellent thermal performance has reduced the University’s energy bill for its new teaching and medical research facility. However, “With great performance comes great responsibility,” claims Willmott Dixon’s James Elliment who worked on the project.

He said: “This pioneering project for the higher education sector has attracted the attention of a number of institutions around the country as they are continually



“It’s been a learning curve for the whole project team, as we are working with a living and breathing building, which supports and underpins the work of so many people”

challenged to reduce their environmental impact. Achieving Passivhaus standard is not easy and it requires absolute buy-in from the customer, but the benefits of adopting it are significant.

“At Willmott Dixon we have been working with University of Leicester to deliver a three-year soft landings programme for George Davies Centre. A year after the project’s completion we achieved an A-rated DEC, showcasing just how effective the building’s credentials have been in action.”

From a green wall featuring 75,000 individual plants to CTB blinds that track the sun and automatically close to prevent

solar gain, this highly intelligent building presented very real challenges to the team that delivered it. For example, the industry standard for air tightness is 5m³/hr/m², but Passivhaus requires five times less than that.

PASSIVHAUS AS A SOLUTION TO THE PERFORMANCE GAP

“Despite many buildings achieving high energy performance ratings the reality can be quite unpredictable, as day-to-day usage is very different to that laid out in tests – sometimes as much as 200% to 500% according to CIBSE’s Zero Carbon Hub.

“As part of the soft landings process we

are actively monitoring and tracking energy usage, taking corrective action, such as for controls and equipment, carrying out reviews with the customer ahead of full occupation, and conducting workshops with buildings’ users to further reduce energy and close the performance gap of the building. It’s been a learning curve for the whole project team, as we are working with a living and breathing building, which supports and underpins the work of so many people.”

With state-of-the-art heating, cooling and ventilation systems, the building’s intelligent energy efficiencies include a ground-to-air heat exchange system, external blinds for active solar shading and embedded soffit cooling. With Passivhaus only being previously applied to domestic buildings, sourcing air-handling units (AHUs) that met the needs of a building of this size and complexity, as well as Passivhaus requirements, was challenging. Working jointly with the mechanical and electrical services contractor, Willmott

Dixon created 10 fully bespoke AHUs, which were BSRIA-tested to ensure certification to the required standards.

Speaking of the project's success, James said: "Gaining the Passivhaus certification is so challenging that many buildings aim to achieve it but fall slightly short due its finer complexities. However, as George Davies Centre shows, the environmental benefits are outstanding and worth perseverance and dedication.

"In fact, George Davies Centre is over five times more energy efficient when compared with other higher education buildings, as its total energy consumption per annum has been 61.2 kWh/m² and has a DEC rating of 59, while the higher education sector average is at 320 kWh/m² (according to DEC data*).

"The efficiencies in George Davies Centre's design have allowed the University to close old and inefficient buildings earlier and extend the hours of usage at George Davies Centre beyond its usual operating hours. This has reduced carbon emissions across the campus and means users get access to a more comfortable environment."

STRIKING A BALANCE

"Through the three-year soft landings process, we have been able to really understand how to use the building as efficiently as possible. Part of this has involved working very closely with the building's users to educate them about how the building functions – explaining why the lights automatically dim, how the radiators know when it is too cold and when blinds close themselves, so that the building can perform to its optimum levels. Without this education the performance gap and payback period grow, which is something we have worked to avoid.

"The real challenge for our team has been finding the balance between efficiencies and comfort for the building's users. For example, the ultra-intelligent lighting system, which monitors natural sunlight in the building and adjusts the lighting accordingly, has presented a conflict for some users. Many people want their lights on regardless of the sunlight available, so we have had to work with them to strike a balance in how much control they can have, and how this impacts the building's performance.

"Another similar issue is regarding heating throughout the building, as many users are used to hotter working temperatures or prefer cooler climates. This has required us to constantly evaluate the usage and adapt the building's heating to ensure its performance isn't drastically affected and that it still offers users a comfortable environment," James said.

Through the soft landings process,



Willmott Dixon has worked closely with the University to ensure George Davies Centre continues to bridge its performance gap, with phenomenal results and careful consideration of user needs.

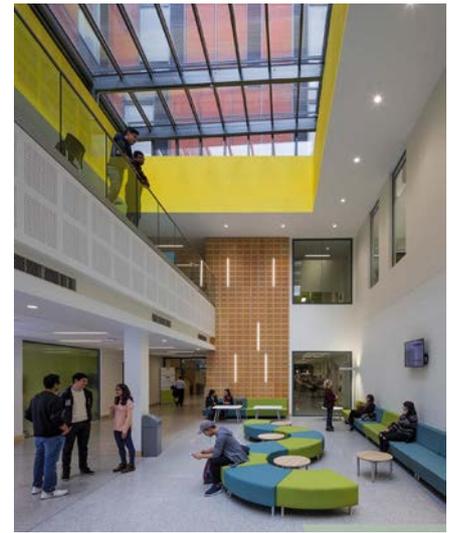
"The building management system continually monitors CO₂ levels in each room and communicates with AHUs to increase or decrease the level of fresh air supply to each room. The CO₂ levels have been kept under 500ppm for the majority of spaces and have very rarely exceeded 1,000ppm in both winter and summer, and the same statement is true about internal temperatures, which have remained comfortable throughout the year.

"We have designed a summer thermal comfort strategy to minimise the number of hours when the temperature exceeds 25°C. In fact, the strategy gives priority to passive measures such as automatic external shading blinds, openable insulated panels for natural ventilation, roof lights with external shading and exposed thermal mass. Only when all these measures fail does it bring in mechanically cooled air from chillers," said James.

EVOLVING AND ADAPTING

James went on to say: "Overall, working with the University to monitor the building's usage and its performance has been incredibly informative; showcasing how performance and user comfort can co-exist with the ongoing support of our team. To date, the soft landings process has enabled us to provide benefits to the customer and the building's users in understanding how to use the building and why certain measures exist within Passivhaus.

"As George Davies Centre continues to be used and enjoyed by the University, it will continually need to develop and alter its usage. Changes, such as opening hours, will



potentially have an impact on the building's performance, so we are working with the University to ensure they are implemented in the best possible way, still allowing the building to deliver the criteria it was designed to meet. We learned that designing for low energy does not necessarily mean that building users will use it that way. Training during the handover has been key, alongside repeated messages on how the building is to be used throughout the soft landings process.

"George Davies Centre is one of the lowest energy facilities of its kind in the country and has illustrated beyond doubt that it is possible to meet the challenges of energy reduction while developing an estate, and highlighted the importance of working with users throughout the process. This project is exemplar and a benchmark for developments of this scale. It continues to turn heads across both the higher education and construction sectors."

Speaking of the project, Chrispal Anand, Carbon and Energy Manager at the University, said: "The George Davies Centre has provided our medical students with a state-of-the-art environment in which to study medicine in the UK. It has created a long-lasting legacy for the University and will continue to act as an energy-efficient hub for studying; providing comfort for staff, students and visitors from the local community. Willmott Dixon has been extremely supportive throughout the soft landings programme, allowing our teams to flag concerns and ask questions when necessary." 

Contractor Willmott Dixon worked alongside Associated Architects, Bidwells, Gleeds, Ramboll and Couch Perry Wilkes, to deliver this eco-friendly building.



Anna Watts Building (Experimental Psychology)



Outside Biochemistry teaching laboratory

SPECIALIST MODULAR LABORATORIES DELIVERED BY MARKET LEADER PORTAKABIN

Portakabin, the UK's market leader in offsite construction, is continuing to unlock the potential of modular architecture and design with the completion of three separate buildings for the University of Oxford

Traditionally associated with temporary classrooms, Portakabin specialises not only in creating contemporary learning spaces but is also challenging the status quo of traditional building. On average, a Portakabin building takes 50% less time to build and install than its counterpart 'traditional' builds.

Lee Connolly, Head of Project Design & Engineering for Portakabin, explains: "Commonly held perceptions of modular or temporary buildings are quickly being eradicated by the approach to design we are taking. A 4,200m² specialist hospital, an 8,700m² award-winning UTC, the largest free school in the country to have been built offsite, a 7,500m² school in nine weeks – Portakabin is leaving traditional building in its dust with head-turning design and turnaround times on a knife edge."

With scope to deliver buildings for the Zoology, Experimental Psychology and Biochemistry departments at the University of Oxford, Portakabin designers and engineers approached the design pragmatically. The Tinbergen Building had been providing an academic learning environment for the University since the '70s and supplied over 22,000m² of viable space. It was important that the relocation of over 750 students and University employees could be delivered within an incredibly tight timeframe while upholding and maintaining the University's ambition to lead the world in research and education.

The design and construction of the buildings involved elements of complexity

from either an acoustic, building climate or mechanical and electrical (M&E) perspective and all ran simultaneously beside each other. The first building was completed in just under a year from the initial engagement in March 2017, at which point even the location for the buildings was unknown.

Anna Sutherland, who led the Arup M&E team assisting Portakabin, explains, "To ensure a successful project, it was essential to quickly understand the complex servicing requirements associated with the laboratory buildings. The fast turnaround for the facilities demanded that the briefing

and approvals processes were streamlined. Therefore, throughout the project, clarity and transparency were of utmost importance. Arup's wealth of experience in laboratory and higher education facilities expedited this, enabling the Portakabin team to work collaboratively with the University, ensuring their aspirations and high-quality expectations were realised."

Adrian Yap, Principal at ffmt studio, explains their involvement in the design: "As part of the decant for the Tinbergen Building, ffmt studio were commissioned to design three modular



Biochemistry teaching laboratories



EEG study booths

laboratory buildings in collaboration with Portakabin. Although only intended to provide temporary accommodation for a period of up to five years, the modular laboratories still needed to provide state-of-the-art facilities for the world-leading departments. These facilities ranged from Cat 2 wet laboratories and constant temperature rooms to over 50 specialist testing booths, some electromagnetically shielded to enable EEG studies.”

Over 200 individual modules provide almost 7,000m² of research and learning space across three buildings and include specialist zoological and biomedical laboratories, academic offices and teaching space.

The first building to be handed over was on the university’s sports field and it has over 1,550m² of specialist teaching laboratories, used by undergraduate students. The labs are modern, open-plan learning environments replicating the learning environments that had been provided in the Tinbergen Building. Portakabin designers have well-honed experience in producing the same exacting standards for this build as it does for hospital wards and surgical theatres.

Throughout the project there was an additional requirement for a watching brief for archaeological finds due to its close proximity to previous find sites.

Lee continues: “Due to the interim nature of the building, the client requested using minimal cladding details and finishes. We suggested a warm grey colour to the exterior as it is both complementary to the existing material palette on the buildings around the site but will also recede into the background. This will ensure there are no negative effects of glare or reflections to users of the football pitch. When we make design proposals, we take a 360 view on the impact of our buildings and consider both their function and aesthetics.”

A further two buildings were added to the portfolio and included experimental



Biological science teaching laboratory

“Portakabin is leaving traditional building in its dust with head-turning design and turnaround times on a knife edge”

psychology accommodation with specialist acoustic separation over two floors for research programmes.

In the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Portakabin designed and engineered a two-storey building, providing over 2,650m² of space specifically for testing facilities and office accommodation for the Departments of Experimental Psychology. It will accommodate over 100 university employees and over 80 potential test participants.

“The footprint for this building was very specific and had to be carefully controlled. Designers had to take into account how people flow through the building in order to maintain separation between various groups of test subjects and researchers. Maintaining confidentiality for this sensitive work was key,” said Lee.

Scientifically, the rooms had to be able to uphold conditions for delicate audiometric testing facilities, which included temperature monitoring, humidity control and isolated acoustics.

The third and final building has been built over two storeys, plus a plant room on the roof covering over 3,250m². The building is rectangular, ensuring maximum efficiency of shared spaces and facilities, thanks to consolidating requirements and reducing internal circulation. Simple techniques such as positioning rooms that benefit from natural light around the perimeter of the building, with spaces not requiring natural light located in the deep plan part of the building, helped shape the building’s functional footprint.

Lee explains: “The most challenging M&E aspect was the temperature-controlled rooms, required to provide a range of conditions between 4 and 37 degrees Celsius. Working closely with both the University and the supply chain, supported by Arup, our team could rationalise and agree the brief for these specialist spaces. Additionally, we installed specialist ventilation and gas detection systems, specifically to enable the use of liquid nitrogen within the respective laboratories. The plethora of high-quality activity at the University, including niche projects such as researching delicate spider webs, requires these specialist facilities and systems to complement the work.

“As the pioneers of off-site construction, Portakabin has the design, engineering and project management expertise to construct buildings of any size. The buildings we are currently engineering are challenging traditional builds’ flexibility and potential. It’s time to sit up and take notice. Portakabin offers the flexibility to adapt high-specification internal space to replicate traditionally built rooms without any compromise on quality.

“We have the capability to deliver accommodation ranging from a single interim classroom through to award-winning architectural schemes as well as hybrid buildings using advanced off-site technology for primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. It’s an exciting time to be part of Portakabin.”

For further information about Portakabin, please visit portakabin.co.uk



University of Lincoln Library

Universities invest £3bn in estates

University estates invest over £3bn in new buildings as performance reaches a peak

The Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) has published its annual *Estates Management Report* (EMR), developed in collaboration with global real estate advisor CBRE.

After gathering and analysing data reflecting the key activities and targets of estates management teams in more than 160-member universities across the UK, it is evident that the overall performance level of university estates is better than ever. With almost 1.7 million students now dependent on the quality of their learning environments, we should aim at nothing less.

AUDE's established KPIs measure efficiency, quality, value and sustainability to give member institutions a rounded view, and the picture is of strong and responsible management. And that's important – not just to the universities themselves but to the entire economy.

As the report highlights, universities now spend more than £3bn a year on capital projects as well as a similar figure on repairs, maintenance, energy, cleaning and security. Such a large spend can come as a surprise to those not familiar with the sector, but this kind of ongoing investment in the higher education estate creates a positive ripple effect around localities from Falmouth in



Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building

the south-west to Inverness in the north. The value of this investment to the local and national economy is truly significant – and not just in the construction phase. Universities are increasingly significant generators of economic activity above and beyond the teaching and research that they undertake. To this end this level of investment is a hugely important aspect of the country's economic prosperity.

The *Estates Management Report* benchmarks universities against each other and enables comparisons to be drawn with similar institutions – whether by size or research/teaching focus. It throws a spotlight across many of the big themes that universities and estates teams are considering in 2018. These include: student experience, from learning spaces

to residential accommodation through student wellbeing provision; quality vs cost within a framework of compliance – the daily juggling act for AUDE members at a time of continuing downward pressure on costs; and the role of the estate as a physical environment – in staff attraction and retention at a time of increasing international competition.

Jane White, AUDE's Executive Director, commented: "The EMR gives the sector hard facts and accurate data at a time of real uncertainty. It provides the information background to help the sector make strategic decisions in estates management. This year's report makes it clear that the performance of the university estate is as strong as it has ever been, and we should recognise and acknowledge the immense efforts of AUDE member teams across the country in delivering that."

George Griffith, Head of University Consulting at CBRE, who co-authored the report with AUDE, said: "The university sector is a largely hidden gem within the UK property industry. Across the sector, over £3bn has been invested in the last year in new buildings, with a similar amount spent annually on running the estate. This looks set to continue, providing

improving estates across the country. The insights in the report highlight how university estate continues to improve in quality, and how investment is broadly spread across UK cities."

Keith Lilley, AUDE Chair and Director of Estates, Facilities Management and IT at the University of Sheffield, added: "AUDE creates an environment for its members in which estates professionals can ponder complexity and develop the right solutions, and work such as our annual *Estates Management Report* is part of that professional service. It is an essential tool within the full range of support that AUDE offers to its members. The AUDE Annual Conference and Big Conversation events are unmissable parts of the HE estates management calendar, while AUDE's Sustainability Leadership Scorecard helps senior leadership teams understand the multi-faceted challenge of delivering against the sustainability agenda in their university."



The AUDE report in numbers...

Large research institutions have seen their capital expenditure grow from

£1.25BN TO £1.35BN

Teaching institutions and research-intensive institutions have all seen their levels of capital expenditure **REDUCE**

SIX INSTITUTIONS

spent more than

£100M

last year, with 12 spending between £50m and £100m.

The median expenditure is a more modest

£10M



Large research institutions spend more on their estate, at

£103/M² ...

...contrasting to small teaching institutions at

£76/M²

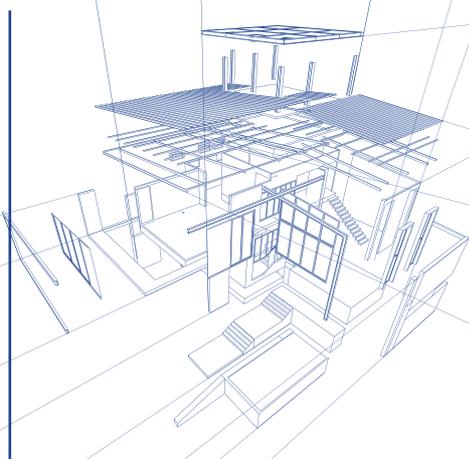
Of the 20 institutions which generate the highest income per m²,

16 OF THESE ARE IN LONDON

Institutions are investing between

4% & 5.5%

of the insurance replacement value of their estate each year



In terms of the age of the estate,

32%

of the HE estate was built during the great expansion experienced during the

1960S & 1970S

28%

of the estate has been built since 2000

Liverpool opens £81m Materials Innovation Factory

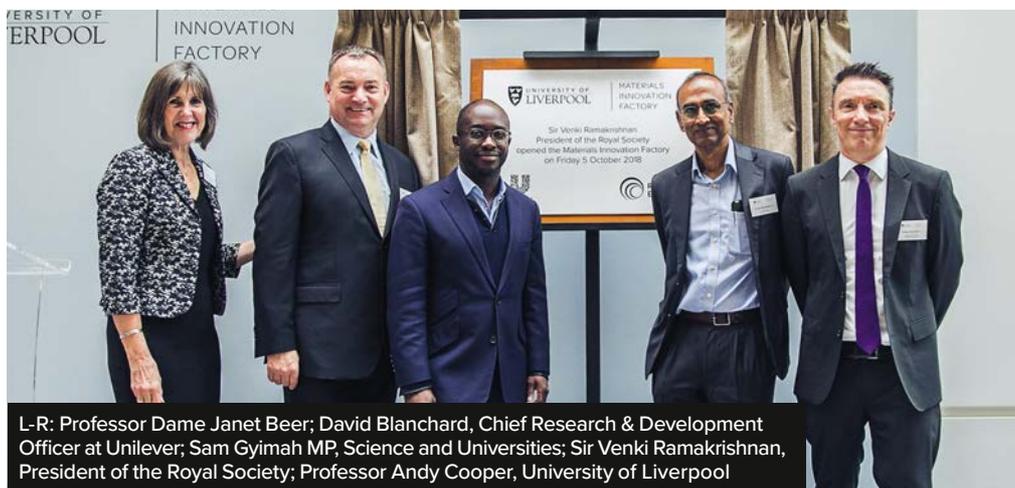
A collaboration between the University and Unilever, the Materials Innovation Factory brings together materials chemistry expertise with the latest computational and robotic equipment

The University of Liverpool's Materials Innovation Factory, an £81m facility dedicated to the research and development of advanced materials, has been officially opened by the President of the Royal Society and Nobel Laureate, Sir Venki Ramakrishnan.

A collaboration between the University and Unilever, the Materials Innovation Factory brings together materials chemistry expertise with the latest computational and robotic equipment to accelerate research and reduce the time it takes to develop new products which have the potential to address a range of societal challenges.

The 11,600m² state-of-the-art facility represents a 21st-century research environment, providing laboratory and office space for University researchers and Unilever scientists from the global Research and Development (R&D) Centre for Home Care and Personal Care products in Port Sunlight.

In addition, the facility, which boasts one of the highest-concentrations of materials science automation robotics in the world, can accommodate other academic or industrial users on a flexible, open-access basis to facilitate cross-disciplinary



L-R: Professor Dame Janet Beer; David Blanchard, Chief Research & Development Officer at Unilever; Sam Gyimah MP, Science and Universities; Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society; Professor Andy Cooper, University of Liverpool

collaborations, innovation and knowledge exchange.

Sir Venki Ramakrishnan, President of the Royal Society and Nobel Laureate, said: "The strength of material science in the North West is, to a great extent, built on the collaboration between academia and industry, which is so well embodied in the Materials Innovation Factory.

"Whether it is human health, sustainability or a range of other areas, advanced materials offer tools by which we can tackle some of the big challenges we face on the global stage. The range of expertise here in Liverpool can make a big contribution to meeting those challenges and to driving economic growth."

Professor Dame Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, said: "The opening of the Materials Innovation Factory is an important milestone for the University of Liverpool. The institution is known for its world-class research in advanced materials and these impressive new facilities will serve to further accelerate progress.

"The applications for our research in this area are truly exciting, with the potential to answer some of the greatest challenges facing the world today in fields such as sustainable energy, healthcare and manufacturing."

Sam Gyimah MP, Science and Universities minister, said: "This inspiring facility brings together some of the UK's most talented scientists and academics, with cutting-edge robots and computers, to meet the future challenges our society will face.

"I want to see the UK continue to grow its reputation as an innovation superpower and, with Government and private sector investment in new research facilities like this one in Liverpool, we are striving towards our ambition for 2.4% of GDP to be spent on research and innovation by 2027."

Located in the heart of the city's Knowledge Quarter, the Materials Innovation Factory was awarded £11m through the Government's UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF), a programme administered by

Research England (formerly HEFCE), which helped secure significant private co-investment towards the project.

It also houses the Liverpool contribution to the Henry Royce Institute, a national institute for materials science research and innovation.

Research activity in the Materials Innovation Factory spans the fields of organic materials, inorganic materials, nanomedicines, sustainability, genomic sequencing and high throughput formulation.

In particular, two world-leading research groups, led by Professors Andy Cooper FRS and Matt Rosseinsky FRS, are creating innovative new materials with a range of uses: from porous molecular organic solids and liquids which can capture harmful pollutants to new materials for the harvesting, storage and conversion of low-carbon energy.

The Leverhulme Research Centre for Functional Materials Design, created to drive a design revolution for functional materials at the atomic scale, is also located in the facility.

The Materials Innovation Factory



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Sensory garden opens at Leeds

A two-year project to create a sensory garden on campus is now in full bloom

Director of Human Resources Francesca Fowler performed the ceremonial honours on Monday 24 September, with the colourful horticultural creation basked in glorious autumnal sunshine.

Designed on the principle of access for all, the two-year project – located outside Charles Morris Hall – has really begun to blossom. In addition to an imaginative planting scheme, which offers year-round interest, the garden features wheelchair access and guides for both the visually

impaired and blind visitors.

Plants were specially selected to assist those registered on the autism spectrum as well as people who suffer from a mental health condition to enjoy an area of peace and tranquillity away from the hubbub of University life elsewhere on campus.

Francesca said: “It really is my pleasure to open this garden. I like the fact that while a tremendous amount of effort has gone into this garden to make sure it is inclusive and accessible, it’s a garden that anyone can come and see and enjoy, which is what I think

inclusivity is really about.

“This is an excellent event to start National Inclusion Week. Those who have worked on the project should be exceptionally proud of what they have achieved, and I hope lots of people enjoy it.”

Making Leeds a beacon of excellence for equality and inclusion in the higher education sector is the vision for the University, which it

aimed to show through its packed programme of events celebrating National Inclusion Week in September.

Staff and students attended a wide range of activities on offer, which highlighted the University’s distinctively international and diverse community.

Sabiha Patel, Head of Equality and Inclusion in the Equality Policy Unit (EPU),

“Staff and students attended a wide range of activities on offer, which highlighted the University’s distinctively international and diverse community”



Designed to give access to all



The garden can be enjoyed all year round

said: “We value your support in making this week a success.

“It’s your opportunity to step out from your familiar environment and team to meet other colleagues or students with different experiences and perspectives that add to our

rich campus environment. It’s also a chance to reflect on your own experiences and how your everyday work can enhance equality and inclusion.”

This year’s theme was ‘Renewing our commitment to everyday inclusion’. And the

event has received high praise from its visitors. “The most impressive aspect of my visit was the provision of Braille on the wooden information plaque. It is also very accessible for disabled students and visitors. I found it very peaceful,”

few moments of serenity and a space to clear their minds and improve their mood during a busy programme.

“The families from our sister organisation, 1Voice, enjoy the aromas and colours of plants and flowers, which provide a stimulating interactive sensory experience and an opportunity to explore the environment and learn about their senses and nature.”

Bee-friendly plants also feature in the design. These were monitored by a PhD student during the summer, who has identified six species of bee and bumblebee in the garden.

The project received specific mention during the Yorkshire in Bloom visit to campus last year. It was also singled out for further praise at the 2018 Awards ceremony in York on Tuesday 11 September, when the University campus received a Silver Gilt.

The Awards report stated: “The newly installed Charles Morris Sensory Garden is well planned and executed to provide plants for pollinators, tactile plants and others that smell to ensure inclusivity for the many groups who are able to access the area.”

“It’s a garden that anyone can come and see and enjoy, which is what I think inclusivity is really about”

said Alem Tamirat, a mature blind student from Ethiopia, who was resident at Charles Morris Hall during 2017/18.

Ruth McMorrnan and Toby Hewson, Co-Chairs of Communication Matters, a charity for the verbally impaired, including those affected by either a stroke or cerebral palsy, has also been impressed by the project. They said: “We were delighted to see the outdoor space at Charles Morris Court had been redesigned as a beautiful new sensory garden.

“Many of our members and conference delegates are wheelchair users and they really appreciate this accessible garden, which offers them a



Enjoying the new sensory garden



Francesca Fowler performed the honours

Work starts on Leeds Beckett's £45m sports research facility

The state-of-the-art teaching and research building – at the University's Headingley Campus – will be home to students and academics from the Carnegie School of Sport



Work has begun on Leeds Beckett University's new £45m sports development, which will give students access to a host of world-class facilities.

Undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes will use the Carnegie Teaching and Research building as a base, while elite athletes will be able to use its outstanding sports science and performance facilities.

The building's most striking features include an indoor sprint track – cantilevered over the roof – and one of the country's largest climatic chambers, which can mimic different altitudes and environments.

Professor Peter Slee, Vice Chancellor of Leeds Beckett University, said: "This world-class facility will underline our global reputation for delivering high-impact sports teaching and research. It is part of a wider £200m programme of investment across our campuses,

which will further increase the positive contribution we make to our city region and beyond."

Pete Mackreth, Dean of the Carnegie School of Sport, added: "Many of our academics are international leaders in their field, from anti-doping policy and gender equality in sport to obesity prevention and sports performance. This

"This world-class facility will underline our global reputation for delivering high-impact sports teaching and research"

outstanding new facility will help to ensure that our University continues to attract the most talented students and staff to further enhance our reputation for world-leading research in sport."

The new facility will further strengthen the University's relationships with the city's top sports clubs and enhance the impact that the school's research



can have on their performance.

Mackreth continued: "We have strong partnerships with all four of the major sports teams in Leeds, with many of our alumni employed in influential positions. Our students benefit from real-world experiences as part of their learning, and our research programmes are designed with the clubs to improve their performances both on and off the field."

The building, which has been

designed by architects Sheppard Robson, is being delivered by Galiford Try and will be complete in November 2019.

It follows the start of work on a new creative arts building at the University's city campus earlier this year. The £80m facility will be home to the school of film, music and performing arts, and fashion, and will feature a 200-seat theatre and Dolby Atmos movie cinema.



UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENT

Andrew Wilkinson, Sodexo CEO for Schools and Universities in UK and Ireland, talks about the importance of understanding the student

The higher education landscape is shifting, driven by social, economic, digital and cultural forces that are impacting students globally.

In addition to this, the demographics, needs, expectations and behaviours of university students are continually evolving and, along with them, the university environment.

Drawing on insight from a panel of leading higher education experts, as well as our own experience of providing services to 700 universities globally, we have identified five interrelated topics, with a core focus on the changing role of universities, and what they must do to engage with a new generation of students.

The first trend we identified, 'beyond academics', was around the need to prepare students to thrive in a complex world. Rapidly changing economic, political, social, technological, cultural and environmental forces are reshaping young people's daily lives and their futures, and in this context 'preparing students' takes on a hugely expanded mandate beyond academic education.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

The pressure to reach perfection in academia can negatively impact the psychological and emotional wellbeing of all students. UK universities have seen a 53% rise in the number of students seeking help for their mental health and, in response, we are seeing initiatives such as the Office for Students' (OfS) *Achieving a step change in mental health outcomes for all students*, a competition inviting higher education providers to deliver new and innovative approaches to improving mental health outcomes for students.

In this context, universities must increase efforts to ensure that adequate resource and expertise is in place and accessible to meet the rising demand for



student mental health services. Clearly, there is a role for service providers like Sodexo, who have daily touch points with students, to be part of the solution.

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE

At Northumbria University, where we are responsible for looking after the 3,126 students who live in University accommodation, the team is hugely focused on creating an environment that supports students, provides a safe and inclusive environment and where support services and pastoral care are clearly signposted.

Our staff, usually the closest to students outside of the academic environs, are often the first to see a student experiencing difficulties or loneliness, which is why we ensure that all our staff receive mental health first-aid training to identify the signs of mental health crisis and how best to escalate such issues with the student and University support system. The team also delivers social activities designed to encourage students to interact and make connections.

Students, today, are typically reliant on digital, particularly social media, as a means of communicating, which is why we believe that encouraging face-to-face interaction and providing creative

social spaces is crucial for a student's mental health and wellbeing.

At Coventry University, we interviewed 300 students to find out about their lives on campus, looking at how food plays a role in more flexible and collaborative working and social spaces. This research helped us redesign the food offer for the University's 30,000 students and 5,000 staff. So, in addition to a food truck being introduced – giving students a great food-to-go option – we are designing and building a new café in the University's 24-hour library and a new courtyard café, all of which will help fuel collaboration on campus.

More than ever the headwinds of technological, economic and cultural change are impacting the way students learn and develop. With this rapid change upon us, it is important for university stakeholders – public authorities, parents, partners and suppliers such as ourselves – to work together to contribute to a successful on-campus experience, and transition from the comfort and security of home to live as independent adults. The result: a safe and comfortable environment for preparing the next-generation workforce.

For more information on *Sodexo University Trends Report 2018* or to download the full report, please go to <https://uk.sodexo.com/unitrends>





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Luxury, security, identity

student accommodation expectations

Kim Renfrew looks at how demands are changing in residential choices, from en-suite facilities and onsite cinemas to a craving for community and belonging →

Every generation of student has sought a place to call home away from home. Until recently, accommodation fell into two camps of basic-but-functional halls or multiple-occupation houses of wildly differing quality, but today students demand choice and variety. This desire is partly driven by cost: according to the National Student Survey 2018, average UK student rent is £130.59 a week, peaking at £222 in London. Financial commitment also comes with emotional investment, with students usually living independently for the first time, needing home comforts, whether in rented houses or in university or private halls of residence. For this level of outlay, students also demand bangs for their bucks, so facilities like gym access, streaming-enabled TVs and cinemas that were once the preserve of luxury lets or en-suite rooms are now becoming standard.

Review website the StudentCrowd's 2018 survey of university-run halls provides

insight into what students cannot currently live without. After consulting nearly 18,000 respondents, they reveal that, while leisure-orientated factors such as social experience and location are valued, more quotidian aspects, including management and cleanliness also figure large in student satisfaction. 2018's overall winner is Loughborough, which collaborates with its Students' Union and Executive and Hall Committees to deliver what residents want. They believe success rests in provision of choice for every budget – notably, Falkner Eggington Hall, voted top residence in 2017's survey, is a low-cost offering.

"It's a good standard of build, offering a good standard of budget accommodation.

It has shared facilities which are maintained to a high standard with daily cleaning services," says Kevin Walmsley, Head of Campus Services. He says there is still significant demand for high-end, self-contained studios, so, in 2019, the University will open Claudia Parsons Hall: 617 mostly en-suite, self-catered rooms.

Security is also vital to students' experiences. At Loughborough, every residence operates a Hall Warden system, with Warden Teams working with Campus Services accommodation teams to give 24/7 cover. This, in turn, contributes a welcoming atmosphere: the teams are supported by Hall Committees and returning students "who keep the hall spirit alive", say Walmsley.

“Facilities like gym access, streaming-enabled TVs and cinemas that were once the preserve of luxury lets or en-suite rooms are now becoming standard”



“When coming to Loughborough, you quickly experience the unique community that is termed the ‘Loughborough Family’.”

Another priority in students’ demands is dealing with repair problems swiftly, according to the National Student Survey, which notes, “One in three students are still left waiting up to a month for maintenance issues to be fixed.”

And behind-the-scenes automation is one growing development among property managers, who can now approach tasks the same way as their residents – using apps. Chapps and Arthur Online are two businesses leading this charge.

Arthur provides cloud-based software for student property portfolios. Spokesperson Mona Badralishah notes that “as property managers become more tech-savvy, there’s a growing demand for the next new thing and a willingness to adopt new technology”. This allows managers to keep pace with residents’ own tech-centred approach, with its concomitant



Loughborough's Falkner-Eggington Hall is the University's top-rated budget offering

“ Security is vital to students’ experiences. At Loughborough, every residence operates a Hall Warden system, with Warden Teams working with Campus Services accommodation teams to give 24/7 cover ”

expectation that every problem can be solved with a finger-swipe across a screen.

The benefit to property teams of a centralised platform is clear: they can manage all aspects of multi-site portfolios in a single place, tracking payments, moving dates, outstanding maintenance issues and tenancy agreements, reducing paperwork and permitting access to parties from contractors to accountants. Students, meanwhile, relax in the knowledge that interaction with landlords is conducted on their own terms, through the medium of a screen. “Such technology encourages them into communicating with owners better,” says Badralishah, as tenants perform commitments including raising maintenance problems and storing contracts digitally. The knock-on effect for managers is staying on top of tenancies, despite chaotic student lifestyles – notifications can be pushed to tenants’ phones to say rent is owed or remind them to put out refuse.

Chapps, meanwhile, offers four phone- and tablet-compatible tools to make student rentals smoother, meaning property managers can abandon spreadsheets, hard-copy contracts and admin-related

paperwork, consolidating everything in one fully GDPR-compliant place.

Dorm Inspector allows checklist-driven property inspections that all parties sign on the spot, including condition reports, resident lists and an editable photo app for highlighting problems. Floor Inspector lets resident assistants record issues in shared areas, perform check-in/out and inspect rooms. Chapps also offers a Dorm Maintenance App for assigning repairs quickly, plus the top-level Dorm Manager.

As student numbers increase, keeping track of comings and goings becomes more complex, and the suite helps facilities teams, managers and inspectors collaborate to allocate resources, keep on top of multiple residences, see overviews of occupancy, and execute necessary checks. “You can perform periodical health, safety and security checks. This is becoming an important aspect when managing your student housing, especially with increased legislation. But we also provide housing staff and property managers with a tool [which lets them] quickly yet efficiently perform detailed move-in/out or even intermediate inspections,” says Chapps’ Marie-Catherine Loecx.

For students themselves, the Residents’ Web App gives an overview of their own accommodation, enabling problems to be highlighted and communication with landlords to be carried out with minimal face-to-face interaction. As Loecx advises, “You need to modernise; it’s the only way to move forward.”

Lucinda Hannington from Sodexo, which provides accommodation through university partnerships and its own Student Living offering, observes: “Generation Z are very digitally minded and communicate primarily via social media.” While recognising this →





Image © depositphotos.com

is now embedded behaviour, Sodexo says environments that encourage face-to-face interaction in halls are vital to students' wellbeing. This can be achieved through creative living-cum-study spaces that use 'living learning zones' to facilitate academia's move from traditional classroom-based teaching to flipped learning environments.

Accommodation can meet these needs through study booths, recreational and relaxation areas, and cinemas that can also be used for educational purposes. Mixing different environments and letting students personalise their space encourages them to take ownership and increase respect for accommodation. A recent refurbishment in partnership with Northumbria University now sees previously underutilised areas heavily in use by students.

Sodexo, itself, tracks trends in accommodation through its International University Lifestyle and Global University Trends surveys. One notable development that Hannington highlights is a shift from single-occupancy studios (which previously accounted for 40%–50% of accommodation but now stands at around 10%–20%) to shared accommodation with communal

“Despite chaotic student lifestyles – notifications can be pushed to tenants’ phones to say rent is owed or remind them to put out refuse”

facilities – even bedrooms – and social spaces within cluster flats, promoting a sense of community and belonging, thereby engendering good mental health.

An emphasis on belonging is one development in student living that is certainly in the ascendant, as students demonstrate they don't just demand material pleasures but also less-tangible comforts, including the freedom to be themselves. As identity politics becomes increasingly foregrounded among student populations, LGBT+ accommodation – not uncommon in the USA – is now making waves here. For accommodation providers, the challenge this poses comes less from the type of built environment that needs to be supplied and more from a shift in attitude and perception.

Originally mooted by Birmingham University in 2016 (although it never materialised through apparent lack of uptake), there were press reports that same year of calls from students at the Universities of York and Central Lancashire for designated LGBT+ undergraduate accommodation – which again did not come to fruition. Move forward two years and Sheffield University has just unlocked the doors of its first LGBT+ specific flats to residents, in a pilot scheme that will be trialled over three years, in response to student demand.

Developed in consultation with Students' Union officers and the LGBT+

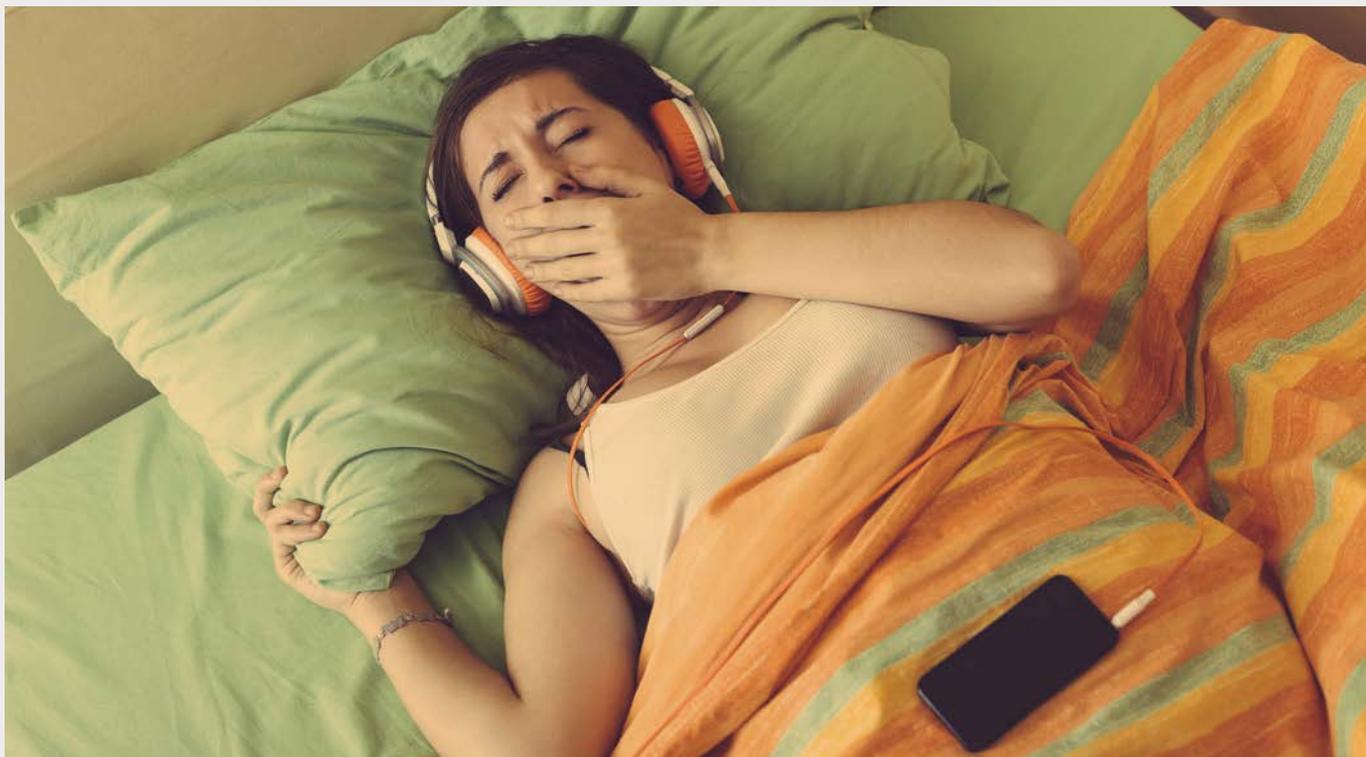
Committee, the accommodation attracted controversy when it was announced this summer, with one criticism of the apartments being that they would segregate residents from the rest of university life. However, Sheffield's LGBT+ accommodation is not standalone but arranged in flats located across campus, including Ranmoor Village and the city centre. Students who choose these flats are encouraged to integrate into the student community through activities offered by the Residence Life Programme, Students' Union and their academic departments.

With campaigning group Stonewall's 2018 *University Report* stating that 42% of students “hid or disguised that they are LGBT at university in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination”, Sheffield's accommodation meets a recognised safety and security need. This is borne out by figures: demand has outstripped supply nearly threefold. The University's Head of Accommodation Services Ian Jones said: “We actively champion equality, diversity and inclusion, which has helped us to create an open, inclusive environment for everyone, including LGBT+ staff and students. The pilot scheme was met with a positive response from our students and prospective students. We initially opened 12 rooms but this quickly booked up and we increased this due to demand. We have 34 rooms this academic year.” 

Artist's impression of Loughborough's Claudia Parsons building, due to open in 2019



A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENTFM



When StudentFM was founded in 2004, the UK student accommodation market consisted almost entirely of low-budget dormitories. Students could choose either to rent a small room or opt for a shared dorm, offering little space for privacy or quiet study.

StudentFM was among the first developers to realise there was a need for higher living standards for students – and among the first to enter the PBSA market and offer high-quality student accommodation at a price accessible to most students.

Stephen Murphy and Martin Joyce, founders of StudentFM, both have over 25 years of experience in the construction and property development sector. In 1999, they were among the founding fathers of the PBSA industry in Liverpool, which eventually led to them founding StudentFM a few years later.

StudentFM's all-inclusive business model made it stand out right from the start. This groundbreaking way of renting out luxury student accommodation enabled students to rent a larger space, despite being on a small budget.

When renting a room, studio or apartment in one of StudentFM's developments, students only have to pay rent: everything from utility bills, basic content insurance, high-speed broadband connection to TV is included in the rent.

Not only does this approach make it significantly easier for students to predict and budget their expenses, when living away from home for the first time, but it also allows StudentFM, as facility managers, to negotiate the best prices with insurance companies and utility and internet providers, to keep living costs low for their tenants.

This way of offering student accommodation was an instant success because students could afford accommodation, at affordable prices, close to their university—which traditionally are located in otherwise expensive city centres. Plus, students no longer have to worry about bills, yearly recalculations, and finding the ideal utility providers themselves.

HIGH QUALITY AT A FAIR PRICE

Since 2004, StudentFM's dedication to the provision of high-quality student accommodation at a fair price, with easy-to-budget terms, has enabled StudentFM to expand to prime locations in key UK university cities. Today, they offer accommodation within walking distance of major British universities, in Chester, Leicester, Manchester, Preston and Sheffield.

All their properties are newly built or have been restored to modern high-spec properties – specifically with the student in mind. All rentals, from rooms and studios to apartments, offer features as standard

which traditionally were considered a luxury for student accommodation, such as fully equipped kitchens, en-suite bathrooms, three-quarter to full-size beds, 40" TVs, and much more. In other words, student accommodation no longer just offers a place to sleep; it comes fully furnished with areas for studying and a comfortable private space for students in the midst of a hectic university life.

Today, the daily management of StudentFM is led by associate director Rachel Withers, who oversees the commercial aspects of the business, including mobilisation and site acquisition. Under her capable management, StudentFM has expanded its operation across the UK to include more than 1,500 beds. But regardless of the success and growth of the business, StudentFM's commitment to providing high-end student accommodation on a budget has remained unchanged.

StudentFM is now on a mission to expand quality student living at affordable prices to more university locations across the UK. So, future students might soon see roof-top gardens, on-site gyms, cinemas and other luxuries as common rather than exceptional aspects of student living.

For more information, visit www.studentfm.co.uk

Student accommodation trends

The cumulative value transactions in the student accommodation sector in 2017 was £4.07bn, a

£1bn RISE OVER 2016.

In 2018, it is projected to be £4.5bn.

Source: <https://united-kingdom.taylorwessing.com/en/news/2018-trends-in-the-purpose-built-student-accommodation-sector>

Knight Frank estimates the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) sector to be worth

£50bn

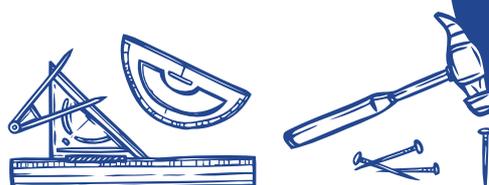
by 2019

Source: <https://united-kingdom.taylorwessing.com/en/news/2018-trends-in-the-purpose-built-student-accommodation-sector>

Guidance issued by the Mayor of London holds developers to considering affordability in their plans.

The current price for **'AFFORDABILITY'** holds at £159 per week for a 38-week contract; or **£639 A MONTH**

Source: <https://united-kingdom.taylorwessing.com/en/news/2018-trends-in-the-purpose-built-student-accommodation-sector>



MANY DEVELOPERS ARE TURNING TO MODULAR CONSTRUCTION

– where elements are prefabricated off-site – to mitigate against rising costs. In 2017, the building cost index rose 4.2% and the mechanical cost by 4%.

Source: <https://united-kingdom.taylorwessing.com/en/news/2018-trends-in-the-purpose-built-student-accommodation-sector>

UK universities are going to international students: 45 have set up branch campuses in other countries, predominantly Asian ones.

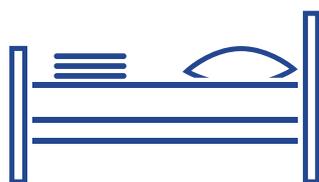
INTERNATIONAL BRANCH CAMPUSES HAVE GROWN BY 57% SINCE 2010

Source: https://www.savills.co.uk/research_articles/229130/220702-0

Headline rental growth for PBSA increased by 2.26% for the 2018/19 academic year,

DOWN FROM 2.55% IN 2017/18

Source: Knight Frank, UK Student Housing: Rental Update 2018/19



4' BEDS

are the new norm; and more 4'6 beds are being requested

Source: http://www.jtellis.co.uk/viewcontent/88/1506/student_accommodation_trends

Students want **MORE RELAXED SEATING** and social/study spaces at the **EXPENSE OF COOKING SPACE**

There were **602,000** purpose-built bed spaces available to students for the 2017/18 academic year

87%

of the new bed spaces for 2017/18 were delivered by the **PRIVATE SECTOR**

Source: <http://www.cushmanwakefield.co.uk/en-gb/research-and-insight/2017/uk-student-accommodation-report-2017>



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Millennium View, Coventry University

Constructing HE

Alison Snee discusses how growing competition between higher education institutions is impacting the construction industry

Higher education is one of the fastest-growing and rapidly evolving markets within construction. The need to offer the best possible experience to students and be innovative more often than not results in the most interesting and exciting briefs.

For instance, at the 2018 Student Housing Conference, pollution-reducing paint, running tracks on rooftops, and evolving construction methods were just a few of the fascinating topics up for discussion. This is set against the background of a thriving market; at the start of the year James Pullen, Head of Student Property at Knight Frank, predicted that the number of UK students entering higher education would grow from 36% to 41% by 2025.

Furthermore, five million students are currently studying outside their home country, with the number set to grow to eight million by 2025. The UK is well positioned to attract these globally mobile students, and indeed 19% of students currently attending UK universities are international.

Whilst only time will tell how Brexit might impact this upward trajectory of student numbers, it's predicted that even if interest from EU locations declines, there will still be a wider international pull, as well as a continued preference from UK students to go into higher-education.

This rise in international student numbers is incredibly relevant to the built-environment industry as the availability and quality of accommodation on campus is integral to their acclimatisation to a new country. It offers a guaranteed standard of living and safety that are arguably even more important to those parents who aren't in close proximity to solve any problems.

An ongoing topic for debate is affordability; there is an ever-present challenge of striking a balance between accommodations that is at the right price-point for the target market and providing high-quality living spaces that not only meet the growing expectations of students,

“Five million students are currently studying outside their home country, with the number set to grow to eight million by 2025”

but give the educational institution an attractive edge. This can be where consultants are squeezed in terms of budget and expectations; because of this, a common challenge is to provide solutions which improve efficiency while delivering the same high level of service.

As an innovative sector, there are solutions being explored and proposed. These ideas include modular construction and offsite manufacturing which deliver increased efficiencies and speed. It's encouraging that these techniques are no longer being applied to solely forward-thinking projects, given that engineers have invested in developing expertise in designing student housing for modular construction.

Curtins Modular can also assist with another crucial consideration; the ultimate use of internal space. Maximising space is crucial for the educational institution to get the most value out of their investment in accommodation and keeping prices competitive. For instance, the common model a few decades ago was a large, shared bathroom that would serve individual bedrooms with separate communal areas. The norm is now en-suite rooms that provide students with a more independence and privacy.

The built environment must seriously consider how accommodation naturally integrates into the surrounding infrastructure and the wider campus. To be considered a success, accommodation must achieve a balance with the educational and social facilities which a modern campus must offer to encourage inclusivity and be attractive to students as well as maximising the opportunity for them to stay on site and spend their money.

Planning and consulting in this sector is a delicate balance of many ever-moving parts. While meeting the needs of the end-user and multiple stakeholders, education establishments are often in challenging positions. Balancing affordability and quality within student housing is the main challenge that the sector will continue to face. However, with this challenge comes the opportunity to collaborate and introduce new, innovative and effective design solutions that meet the needs of the market. **UB**

Alison Snee is business development manager for the West Midlands office of built-environment consultants Curtins.

W: www.curtins.com

STUDENT LIVING TRENDS

Ben Etherington, Managing Director at Rosehill FF&E Ltd, discusses what today's students want from their accommodation



Understanding that today's students require a home away from home, a space to call their own, which provides a comfortable and functional living space is essential. Injecting colour into rooms through simplistic design can add warmth to the space while still allowing a blank canvas for the student to make their own. You can customise student space by doing away with traditional closed door storage and offering floating shelving solutions and open boxed headboards, enabling students to utilise this additional surface area for interior furnishings and accessories.

Students now want larger beds, bigger wardrobes and more amenities in their rooms so, with a premium on space,



spatial planning is imperative. With correct engagement, you can integrate services into furniture – for example, you can incorporate lighting schemes, wireless charging surfaces and USB power ports into space-saving furniture.

Creating bespoke solutions for each space can often add value to a room; full height, open storage units and shelving created to fill voids within a build design can create added benefits to complicated room shapes and service voids.

With studio living being on trend, a fully functioning studio kitchenette is a must. Often the specifications now required are similar to high-end residential developments because students demand the utilities and freedom to cater for themselves privately and for others. Tech and utilities are everything to the modern student: high speed WiFi, excellent quality appliances and smart TVs are all expected when looking to create the 'home away from home' appeal.

In communal kitchens catering for numerous students, personal storage is important but creating a social space where students can study, socialise and treat as the heart of their home is vital to adding to the student experience. This can be achieved through both the careful use of high quality social space furniture and the kitchen design including

breakfast bar areas instead of traditional space-sapping dining table solutions.

Social spaces available for free communal use or for private hire are becoming more common place to ensure student satisfaction. The hire of the kitchen area to host a dinner party or a communal area for a gaming session perhaps offer students unique experiences and a different dimension to 'traditional dorm living'. Optimisation of this space through use of the most appropriate furniture, fittings and equipment is imperative to make these spaces engaging to students and their guests.

Engaging with specialists when creating a student accommodation experience is crucial to develop best use of space and, at Rosehill FF&E, we utilise our in-house design team with years of interior and furniture design experience to ensure that both student experience and optimisation of space are at the heart of our brief when engaged to design, manufacture and install a student accommodation project.

Ben Etherington is the Managing Director at Rosehill FF&E Ltd, a leading provider of student accommodation fit-out/project management solutions. Please feel free to get in touch with the team to discuss your next project at Estimating@rosehill.co.uk

20 years of rising tuition fees: the impact on student choices

Analytics firm Exasol has released new analysis into the number of graduates leaving university, taken from the last 20 years of HESA data from 1997–2017, since tuition fees were introduced. Exasol looked at the data to see what impact this has had on the subjects students are studying and into data around the STEM gender gap. Here are some of the key findings:

1,597,825

students graduated from their first degree in 2017 compared to 255,620 in 1997,

A SIX-FOLD INCREASE



44.5%

of students graduated with a science degree in 2017, compared to **34.7%** in 1997 – an increase of almost a third

50% OF WOMEN

took up a STEM degree in 2017 compared to 39% in 1997, an increase of 27%



Women now completely **DOMINATE** medicine and related subjects, up from 64% female in 1997 to 75% female in 2017



A staggering **86% INCREASE**

above the proportional expectations of students studying 'subjects allied to medicine' in 2017, closely followed by biological sciences (85%)



The biggest decrease proportionally is in education

DOWN 34.5%

on expected entries for 2017, based on the six-fold increase of students

Agriculture is up from 54% female to **70% FEMALE**, while architecture is up from 21% female to **36% FEMALE**



Engineering & technology degrees remain **MALE DOMINATED** with 84% male in 2017, compared to 86% in 1997

Mathematical sciences and informatics (computer science) remains **78% MALE DOMINATED** in 2017 as per 1997

Ambitious plans for CUBO in 2019

At a time of growth and strategic development, CUBO has embarked upon an ambitious plan to deliver greater value for members and raise its profile in the sector

CUBO is a small but aspirational association, representing an extensively skilled group of professionals within higher education. Offering networking, knowledge exchange and skills development, CUBO makes a difference for its members and the sector.

Building on the 2016 strategic review, CUBO is working hard to support its members, build sector profile and improve value for money. 2018 was a busy year: CUBO increased the number of partnerships with trusted suppliers fourfold; increased the number of training events, alongside running its two annual conferences and the CUBO Awards, which gained record entries; and launched the Residence Assistants Awards to complement a growing programme of work on residence life.

Most significantly in 2018, CUBO launched a new digital platform – a public and members’ website with integrated social media, special interest groups, resource libraries and administrative management. The new site facilitates member-networking and association management and gives better visibility to partners, enabling members to link up with suppliers.

“Members’ responsibilities are really diverse – beyond accommodation, catering, conferencing and retail. Some run nurseries, tourist attractions and arts venues, or have responsibility for sport, security, cleaning, print and design and other aspects of the estate. Connecting with colleagues who manage similar services is a key benefit, and our new platform will make that much easier,” says Jan Capper, CUBO Chief Executive.

With the new platform and a permanent staff base in place, the foundations are established to deliver the next set of key activities for members. Over the next two years, CUBO will invest significantly in research to benefit members and the sector as a whole. A study into the impact of campus services on the student experience aims to quantify the added value of campus services, identify gaps and share learning for improvement. CUBO will also relaunch its annual benchmarking exercise to provide better data for members, and will scope out a piece of research investigating accommodation supply and demand.

The established CUBO sub-groups for marketing and finance staff continue to grow, with each holding two meetings per year. Through the new platform, CUBO will develop new online special interest groups according to member interest. In the area of housing, CUBO continues to carry out vital work administering the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice which maintains standards for student accommodation.

On the training front, CUBO’s partnership with UHS is now in its third year. Courses are developed using member feedback and offered to members and partners at a 25% discount. 2019 will see the CUBO



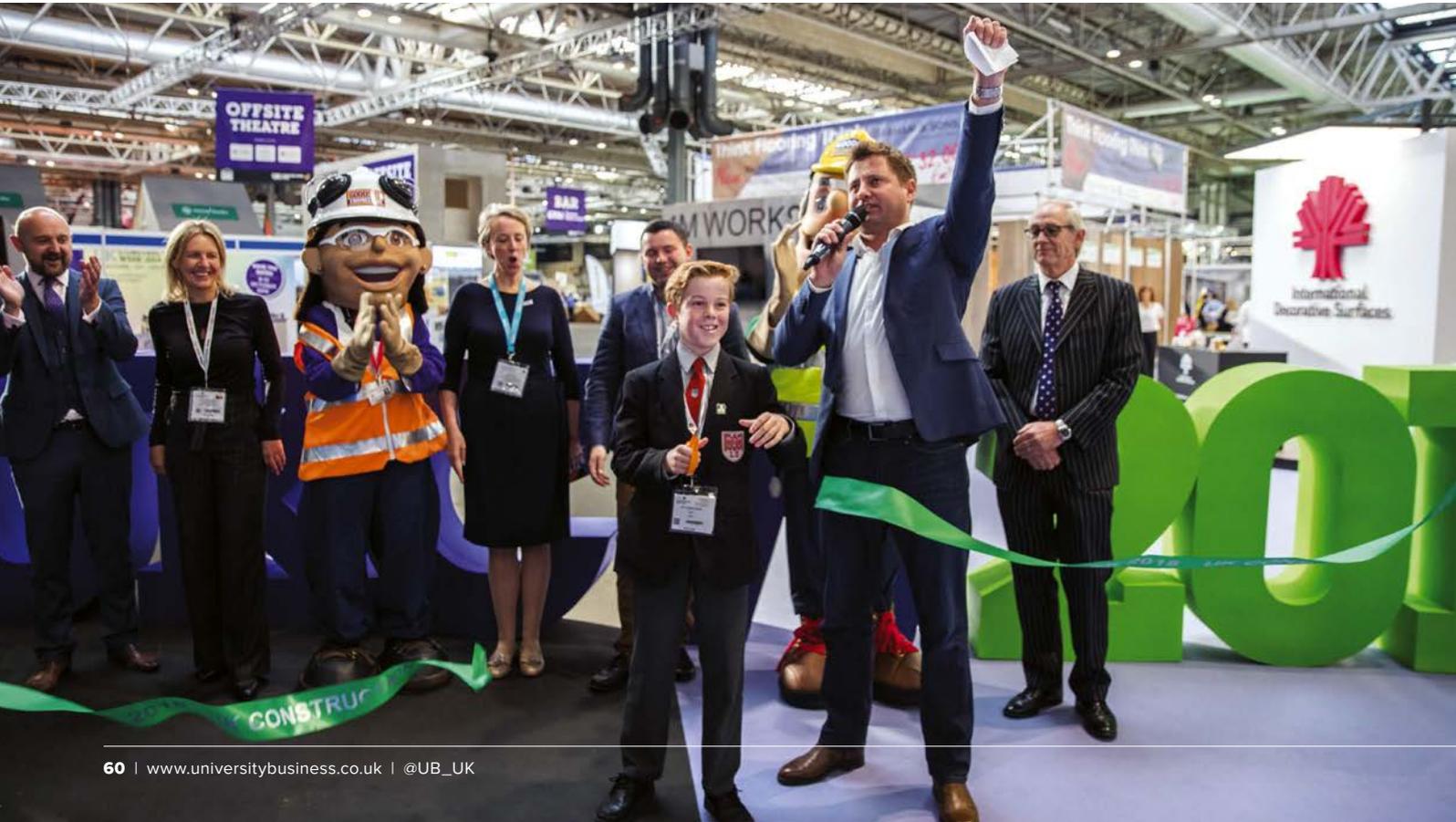
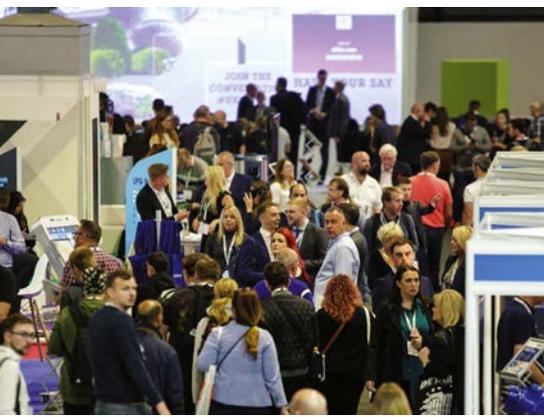
– Acuo-I Residence Life Masterclass become a full conference reflecting the growth in interest in this field.

Stewart Ross, Chair of CUBO, commented: “We are delighted with the progress we are making in transforming CUBO and lifting our game for our members. There has never been a more important time than now for CUBO to support members in driving value and efficiency from their activities evidencing their impact and celebrating their contribution.”

For CUBO members, connecting with trusted suppliers helps clarify needs and improve service delivery. With the new corporate partners scheme in its second year, CUBO will continue to bring members and partners together to build relationships and share knowledge.

2019 also sees CUBO embark on a proactive programme of PR to widen awareness of the importance of commercial and campus services within universities. Combined with greater insight from research, members and partners, CUBO’s ambitious aim is to bring the value of commercial and campus services to the top of the HE agenda. **UB**

CUBO (College and University Business Officers) is the professional association for senior managers of commercial and campus services in higher education. Visit www.cubo.org.uk





Strong student presence at UK Construction Week

For three days a year the construction industry comes together at UK Construction Week (UKCW), held at Birmingham's NEC. This year the theme was the 'Future of Construction' and to support that future, a comprehensive student programme was put in place. The programme was a success with a large influx of students from across the country attending and learning about what construction has to offer as a career.

WHAT WAS ON OFFER?

Architect and TV presenter George Clarke presented the Ministry of Building Innovation and Education (MOBIE). The aim of MOBIE is to inspire younger generations to define how they want to live now and in the future. At UKCW, groups of students were challenged to design their home of the future. This process started by making structures out of paper, pencil sketching, then transferring to an iPad and finally modelling it in CAD. As well as being creative with their designs, students were also to consider the materials they would use, building methods they might employ, and any other factors they felt would be important to homes of the future.

Make:it_Brum was another initiative aimed at Year 9 and 10 students. This was a collaboration between Intervention Architecture and Arup who held a workshop to design a pavilion, which would then be built and displayed at UKCW. The students presented their concepts and the winning design, which was named the 'Screw' after Birmingham's manufacturing heritage, appeared as a bright red structure at UKCW.

The Finishes and Interiors sector also ran the #iBuiltThis2018 photography

competition. This involved students taking photos of themselves in front of their favourite building or something they built themselves. The winners were Hollie Baynes for her House of Horrors, Naomi Hamilton for An Arch and Jamie Hubbard for The Ivy House.

OTHER CONCEPTS

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) set up a challenge to Save Civil City. This was to show students exactly what sort of projects civil engineers are involved in by describing them as invisible superheroes. The three challenges were balancing bridges, fight the flood, and propping up Pisa, all of which posed real-life civil engineering situations. Their stand attracted a large number of students from Newcastle to Yeovil.

Student accommodation was also part of the offering in the offsite construction area. Modular building specialist Vision Built installed a two-storey house and student apartment for all to experience. The structure is now on its way to its final location in Suffolk.

MENTORS OF THE FUTURE

To increase diversity, equality and inclusion in construction and to encourage young people to consider it as a career opportunity, UKCW launched the Role Models initiative in March 2018.

After tough consideration, the judges shortlisted 36 professionals from more than 130 high-quality entries. This year's winner, Arleta Andreasik-Paton, a construction project manager at Aecom, was recognised for her passion for inspiring the next generation into construction. Arleta was presented with her award by Steph McGovern, journalist at BBC

Breakfast, and Barbara Res, the female engineer behind Trump Tower.

Judged by Nottingham Academy for Girls, the students awarded Arleta for her determination to strive within the construction industry and were entertained by her own inspiration – wanting to build her own house after watching her dad and grandad build an extension.

Arleta said: "When Steph started talking and I realised I had won, I got quite emotional. It means so much that the students chose me and could identify with my story. I'm not from a construction background, but I moved into the industry with transferrable skills, studied while on the job and here I am now. It's a privilege to be able to become a role model for other talented young people who can find wonderful careers in construction."

Nathan Garnett, UKCW event director, said: "Our role models initiative aims to encourage new talent into the industry, and this campaign gave us a fantastic opportunity to work with Nottingham Academy for Girls. We have loved hearing directly from the students about what inspires them.

"There can, of course, only be one winner, but all those shortlisted can be proud of the hard work, dedication and, ultimately, the change that they are bringing to the construction industry."

Arleta and all of the shortlisted role models will continue to take part in activities with schools and colleges to break down barriers and stereotypes associated with construction. [UK](#)

Next year's UKCW will run from 8–10 October 2019 at Birmingham's NEC. To book tickets, visit www.ukconstructionweek.com



ASRA Accommodation Review



Karen Burke, ASRA Chair, looks back at the current year intake and questions how effectively it has been delivered and measured

During the run-up to Christmas, there are many things going through our minds as student accommodation professionals. Firstly, how effectively have we reviewed student intake and have we considered measures to improve our service offer next academic year? Are we listening to our students? Really listening? What is their feedback telling us about their experiences?

Very often the end of intake is met with feelings of relief and slaps on the back for effort, but how would our students (and their parents) rate their welcome experience? It's important that we established effective feedback mechanisms to monitor this.

Are we reviewing our retention figures and considering trends? Health and wellbeing continues to be an area of concern, but are we spotting new and emerging issues and responding appropriately? How can we strive to ensure that we're offering continued support to students, which meets their individual needs within an accommodation setting?

I'm probably not the only person who feels that students have had just minutes to settle in before the onslaught of private providers and private sector landlords bombard them with leaflets, offers, sign-early campaigns and cries of "if you don't sign today, the best properties will have gone". All this, and it's only October!

Housing fairs have been and gone. 'Don't Let Yet' campaigns have not had the effect that was expected. Students signing up early to tenancies can often lead to a host of issues, such as friendship groups breaking down, drifting apart, and so on. We hear many such stories and these give our colleagues on the frontline and students' unions plenty of problems to help try and resolve.

Now what are the other areas that we are reviewing and planning for?

The ASRA mail base is a forum routinely used to exchange knowledge, share ideas and ask for advice. Some of the key queries relate to empty bed spaces, effective

allocation systems, and discussions about the most effective incentives to encourage greater retention rates.

And, of course, after an exhausting summer period, we go into the Open Day season and turn on the charm for all our prospective students for 2019. Did I really say 2019 intake? On a personal level, we might be asking ourselves the following questions:

- Where did 2018 go?
- Is it me getting older or the students getting younger? By the way, the answer is, of course, both!
- Can I keep doing this for the next x years?
- Are there any other jobs going?

I hear from many colleagues across the sector who feel like this after such an intense period.

Then we settle down, have a cuppa and think... we love, love, love the buzz and busyness; we thrive on it! Working alongside students is such a unique experience that constantly presents us as officers with the opportunities to meet such a wide range of interesting people from diverse backgrounds. Sometimes I meet one or two who remind me of my own daughter and I think I'm lucky enough to be playing a part in helping shape this person for the rest of their life. Our roles will help be the making of them. I haven't been invited to a wedding yet but I bet that one of you out there has!

Many universities are also going through major reviews and periods of change and I feel for you all as the day job continues and we get right back on it.

So, with reviews still churning in our minds and the next semester approaching fast, we head back to checking bed availability, allocations, answering queries and awaiting the arrival of our next cohort of students. With all this in mind, we work tirelessly to ensure this welcome is as warm as the September one.

So onwards and upwards and a new set of challenges – roll on 2019! 

Revolutionary Student Furniture

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The Universal StudyBed is designed specifically for students - combining a large desk, full size bed and storage all in the same compact footprint.

Installing StudyBeds can:

- Make small rooms more usable and desirable
- Enable a single room to incorporate an en-suite
- Allow single rooms to be converted to twins
- Improve the layout and functionality in a dormitory

Case Study - Falmouth University

As a rapidly expanding university, Falmouth had been seeking to increase their bed spaces whilst offering a more flexible choice for students. In the summer of 2014 they installed 96 StudyBeds on a twinning basis.

The rooms had previously been used for sole occupancy and this strategy not only resolved their bed space shortfall issue, but allowed for increased revenues from the same space whilst giving students the opportunity to rent their rooms for less. A real WIN-WIN scenario!

Such was the success and popularity of this installation that in 2015 117 more StudyBeds were installed followed by a further 416 in 2016.

"The feedback we've received from students using the StudyBeds has been very positive."

Oliver Lane, Accommodation Services Manager



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Nutrition and Anxiety



Professor David Russell explores the relationship between nutrition and anxiety

According to Young Minds, a UK-based charity supporting young people with mental health challenges, one in ten children has a diagnosable mental health disorder – that’s roughly three children in every classroom. This figure rises in adolescence, where one in five young adults has a diagnosable mental health disorder.

What’s fuelling this rise? Theories range from increased reporting and diagnostic improvements to social media, vaccinations, increased life pressures and financial struggles. Whatever the reason, it’s clear that mental health challenges are omnipresent in today’s society and particularly prevalent in our classrooms and lecture theatres.

So, what can we do to help?

Nutrition may not be the natural first step that comes to mind, but research is emerging that

suggests a nutrient-dense plate could support those with mental health issues, especially anxiety and depression. We’ll explore just one parameter of this idea today: blood sugar levels.

Observational evidence suggests that a relationship may exist between high glycemic index (GI) diets and the development of anxiety and depression symptoms

Observational evidence suggests that a relationship may exist between high glycemic index (GI) diets and the development of anxiety and depression symptoms, according to a study within the *Case Reports in Psychiatry Journal*. High GI foods are commonly known as refined carbohydrates, or food that spikes blood sugar rapidly. The article discusses how high GI foods result in an increase in blood glucose levels and a corresponding drop in blood sugar. This drop is associated with an acute increase in

adrenaline which contributes to neuropsychiatric symptoms – including anxiety. The Harvard Medical School blog agree that low blood sugar can precipitate or mimic symptoms

of anxiety, and therefore it is important that enduring blood sugar levels are kept stable.

There are many other studies suggesting nutritional interventions to support anxiety. Our recommendations are: green vegetables, oily fish, eggs,

lean meats, root vegetables, wholegrains, low-sugar fruits (berries, apples, pears), full-fat dairy, pulses, legumes, nuts and seeds. We’d also recommend opting for three main meals which contain protein, fibre and fat, as opposed to regular snacking. We’ll explore this another time...

To finish, we want to highlight the importance of professional therapies, social support and stress management when dealing with mental health. Nutrition is by no means a catch-all solution but is a supportive aide in managing mental health challenges.

www.russellpartnership.com

Further reading:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4963565/>
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/eating-well-to-help-manage-anxiety-your-questions-answered-2018031413460>

Craft Guild of Chefs delivers Universal Cookery & Food Festival

The Craft Guild of Chefs brought Universal Cookery & Food Festival 2018 to Westlands, in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside.

Previously held at River Cottage, Vallum Farm, Laverstoke Park and Padstow, this year the Guild carefully selected a venue that is a seasoned producer with a 60-year lineage of British produce including traditional, plant propagation and speciality to give visitors an authentic festival experience within one of their exclusive glasshouses.

Established in 2012, Maycock started the festival with Ian Nottage and John Feeney, all Guild committee members at the time, making it a Craft Guild of Chefs event.

In the past six years, the festival has included an eclectic mix of demonstrations, workshops, in-land and coastal foraging, farm tours and live debates that have tackled current issues, trends and forecasts for the future such as farming for chefs, health

versus taste and the futuristic kitchen. The day's programme offered numerous influential speakers, hosted on the main stage by Nigel Barden, food and drink broadcaster and food correspondent for BBC London.

Nigel Barden commented: "The Craft Guild of Chefs are the ones that put the meals on tables quietly in many ways and they're the real ambassadors for the chef trail in Britain. It's a long-established institution but it's one to be nurtured, cherished and looked after."

The first presentation of the day was given by chef Gerry Ludwig, who gave delegates an insight into his methods of creating trends-based menu solutions.

Later that morning, Robert Ortiz, head chef at Michelin-starred restaurant Lima, delivered his presentation with Chef Alan Murchison. Together they spoke about how you can be creative with menus by using plants from root to flower. Ortiz praised the Craft Guild of Chefs by saying: "It's an amazing organisation; I



think the way they are engaging with the younger generation; the way they are adding value to us and recognising the industry makes a difference."

During the day, Tom Beeston, a livestock farmer by trade, who has an HND in agriculture and an MSc in food policy, was involved in sharing his knowledge with delegates during a debate about the rise of vegetarian and vegan dining in the UK and what this means for chefs, butchers and fishmongers.

Additional speakers of the

day included Eddie Shepherd, Andrew Dargue, Chris Greenacre, Will Matier, Jen Elford, Chris Chinn, Lee DeSanges, Richard Cook, Brad Carter, Steve Scuffell, Gareth Ward and Alyn Williams. These all gave either a presentation, were involved in a live debate, or demonstrated some excellent cooking ideas.

For more information about the Craft Guild of Chefs or to become a member, visit www.craftguildofchefs.org

A real achievement for TUCO



By Matthew White, Chair of The University Caterers

Organisation (TUCO) and Director of Campus Commerce at University of Reading

Now in my third year as TUCO Chair, I'm extremely proud to see the TUCO team continue to grow from strength to strength and what a year it's been! Back in April our Academy won the Cost Sector Catering training and development award and, in October, the procurement team won a Foodservice Catey for procurement team of the year.

In 2018, we saw the launch of several new procurement services, including our further competition service and TUCO local. We also saw the launch of TUCO's Master's degree in hospitality leadership in universities and the public sector, which is due to start in the New Year.

The degree is the result of a two-year collaboration between TUCO and London South Bank University. The course consists of six modules, namely: leadership; strategy; marketing; product development; sustainable operations; and a bespoke comparative study field trip.

While on the course, our

Academy will offer access to resources, such as its commissioned research and mentoring to members, as well as financial support for fees for TUCO members.

This year, there was one lifetime experience I will never forget. Mike Haslin and I travelled to Malawi to see first-hand how our members' generous donations have positively affected school children. The trip was taken in conjunction with Mary's Meals, a charity providing life-changing meals to children every school day. We have proudly donated enough funds to ensure Mlambe Primary School and Milare Primary

School can provide a meal every school day to its children until 2020. Going forward, we pledge to set higher donation targets for coming years and extend the partnership.

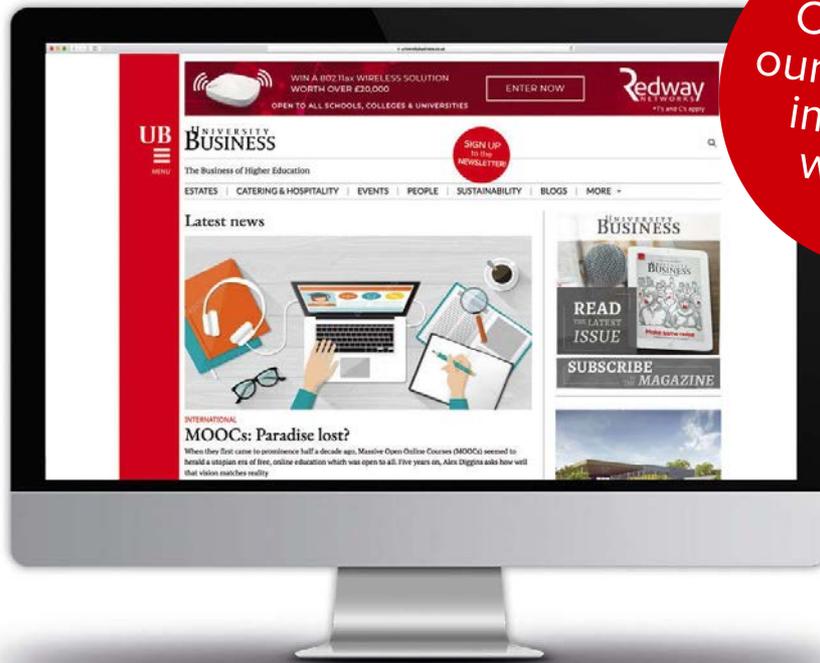
Looking ahead, our next major event is TUCO Competitions at the University of Warwick, on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 March. This is our annual skills competitions, which sees more than 50 of our members and 150 delegates compete against each other in a wide range of activities. Entry is open now so get your applications in.

For more information, visit www.tuco.ac.uk

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EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

COVERING ALL THE TOPICS IN THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR THIS MONTH

Award win for Learning Labs' e-learning portal

The company's online tutorials, helping students with learning difficulties, headed the 'Tech for Good' category at Dynamites 18

An e-learning portal developed by Learning Labs has been named 'Tech for Good' winner at Dynamites 18, the North East's IT and technology awards. Ten hopefuls entered the category – 'recognising an organisation that uses digital technology to improve the lives of others and make the world a better place' – with only four applicants shortlisted.

Learning Labs' work is reported to have helped improve educational experiences for students with learning difficulties across the country and reduce dropout rates. Based in Tyne and Wear and with remote workers across the UK, the company supplies online tutorials to help those supported with access to assistive software via Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Programmes can include anything from grammar corrections and read-aloud tools – for students with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia – to mind-mapping and organisational software, for those with anxiety or memory difficulties.

The CEO of Learning Labs, Chris Quickfall, said: "I was last in my class to spell my name, learn the alphabet and tell the time. I was the best at maths, but the system's incorrect assumptions discouraged me from performing where I was strongest. I wasn't identified



BT's Simon Yellowley with the Learning Labs team including systems architect Lewis Jackson, marketing manager Bryony Steventon, general manager Andy Gough, multimedia resource developer Liam Robinson and internal sales consultant Emma Sheakey.

as having dyslexia until the age of 21, while studying at Northumbria University.

"Had I been identified and received appropriate support earlier, my experience of education would have been much more positive and my achievements could have been far greater.

"I became passionate about improving processes and services for DSA students. I wanted to create a good company that does good."

Chris started with his first company, an assistive technology supplier known as Invate, straight out of university in 2006. This was followed by launching e-Quality Learning in 2010, an assistive technology training provider. Then, in

2013, he began Learning Labs. Leading neuroscientists, including Dr Chris Wood at Newcastle University and Dr John Welch of Newcastle Hospitals, were instrumental in Learning Labs' development. Content design was led by neurodiversity expert, chartered psychologist and head of e-assessment at the International Baccalaureate, Dr Sue Wilkinson.

"Every tutorial or 'Lab' is created with the option to read text, watch video and do an interactive version, in both Mac and Windows," said Chris. "This neuroscience-influenced, digital learning design was created to support visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles.

"From understanding how sentence structure and short-term memory can affect people's ability to read, to understanding how the brain uses visual references when recalling video tutorials, our team is at the forefront of digital technology for neurodiverse learning.

"My aim has always been to build services and digital solutions that help make the world more inclusive. Learning Labs is a source of continuous support for disabled students that helps reduce dropout rates and improves chances at education, and in life. Creating 'tech for good' is at the heart of our group mission and I am very proud of our team for delivering a solution that is recognised for the good that it does."



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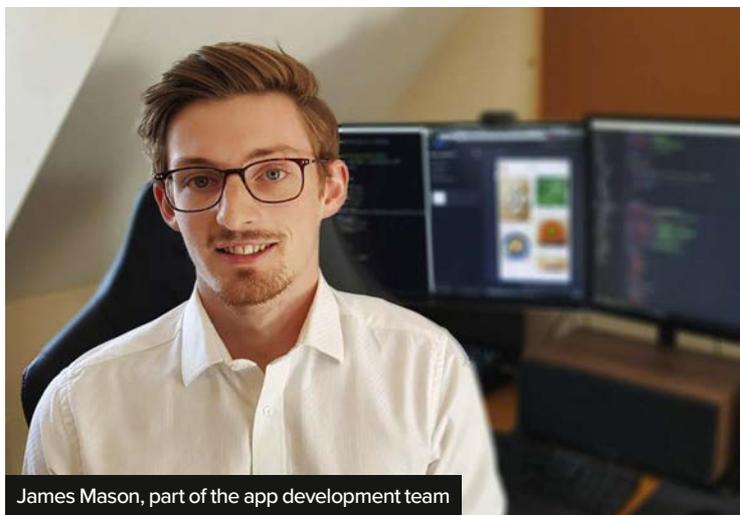
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UEA students create wellbeing app



James Mason, part of the app development team

Students from The University of East Anglia have launched a first-of-its-kind wellbeing app to help their peers understand their emotions, develop coping strategies and access support.

The app, OpenUpUEA, features a mood tracker to help students understand their fluctuating emotions by noting them through nine emojis, with relevant services highlighted according to their responses.

Also included is an A-Z of support services offered by UEA and the Students' Union, as well as other local organisations, along with a help button for direct access to the police, Samaritans, GP services, Nightline or campus security.

It's thought to be the first app launched by a UK university that combines a mood tracker with details of the services on offer, and the team is interested in working with other universities. There is scope for the app to be adapted for high schools and colleges, too.

The students, from the UEA's School of Computer Sciences, School of Psychology and the Norwich Business School, worked with psychology experts Dr Laura Biggart and Dr Kamena Henshaw to develop and test the app.

James Mason, part of the development team, commented: "Universities need to consider that

some students are less likely to seek face-to-face support in this digital age and more likely to use online tools. Digital services should be expanded and made available alongside current systems, reaching out to as many students as possible."

The app has been funded by UEA's Research and Innovation app development competition, enabling students to develop their own or their academic's app ideas.

The app has undergone rigorous testing by students, who were asked to download and use it before completing a questionnaire and taking part in focus groups to provide feedback on usability and suggested features.

UEA students will continue to develop the app, with the potential for budgeting and planning advice, emotional resilience and study support to be added, as well as advice around students' future plans for when they graduate.

The app is an additional tool to that which Student Support Services already provide, which includes wellbeing advice sessions, an exercise referral scheme, resilience and wellbeing workshops and talking therapies.

The app has primarily been aimed at students, but is also available to staff to enable them to have information about UEA support at their fingertips.



Pupils at Newbattle High School in Mid Lothian took part in an Internet of Things workshop on Friday 21 September, to mark the launch of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Data-Driven Innovation initiative

Universities unveil City Region Deal plan to tackle digital skills gap

The University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University will work together to train 100,000 people in data skills and help 1,000 organisations through data

The University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University have launched a major initiative that includes plans to improve digital skills across South East Scotland. The new venture aims “to transform Edinburgh and its surrounding area into the data capital of Europe”.

The £661m Data-Driven Innovation initiative is a key part of the recently announced

extra workers with data skills as the workplace is transformed. The Scottish Government’s Digital Strategy, published in 2017, included plans to tackle this digital skills gap while growing the Scottish economy.

Together, the two universities will increase the provision of data science teaching for their students, and support schools and colleges across the region in providing digital skills teaching

“This exciting project – backed by £270m of UK Government investment – will ensure that the UK leads the world in technologies of the future and benefits from the economic growth opportunities this brings”

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. It aims to train 100,000 people in data skills over the next decade, from computer science specialists to traditional jobs that will increasingly use data.

It is estimated that Scotland annually needs around 13,000

and training. The region’s supercomputing capabilities will also be strengthened with investment in a data analysis facility, which will help 1,000 organisations use data to innovate within their sectors.

David Mundell, Secretary of State for Scotland, said:

“This exciting project – backed by £270m of UK Government investment – will ensure that the UK leads the world in technologies of the future and benefits from the economic growth opportunities that this brings.”

Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice Principal, University of Edinburgh, added: “Perhaps the most important part of the deal is our commitment to ensuring people in the region can build the skills to flourish in the data-driven economy.

“So we are working not just in our universities, but also with schools, colleges and businesses, so people have the opportunities to develop data skills across their life-course. This could include young people about to enter the workforce, women returning after career breaks, or people looking to reskill in mid-career. We know that data-driven innovation will bring economic growth – we want that growth

to be inclusive and open to all.”

Jarmo Eskelinen has been appointed to lead the Data-Driven Innovation initiative. He comes to Edinburgh from his previous role as Chief Innovation and Technology Officer of the London-based Future Cities Catapult initiative. He said: “Data is the new soil and collaboration the seeds.

The Data-Driven Innovation initiative is unique in its ambition and scale. It’s been designed to reach out to the whole City Region, so we can develop and test new services to meet the needs of our citizens.”

The £1.3bn Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal was announced by the Prime Minister and First Minister at the University of Edinburgh on 7 August. It aims to drive growth for everyone across the area, and includes investment in transport, housing, culture and skills and employability.

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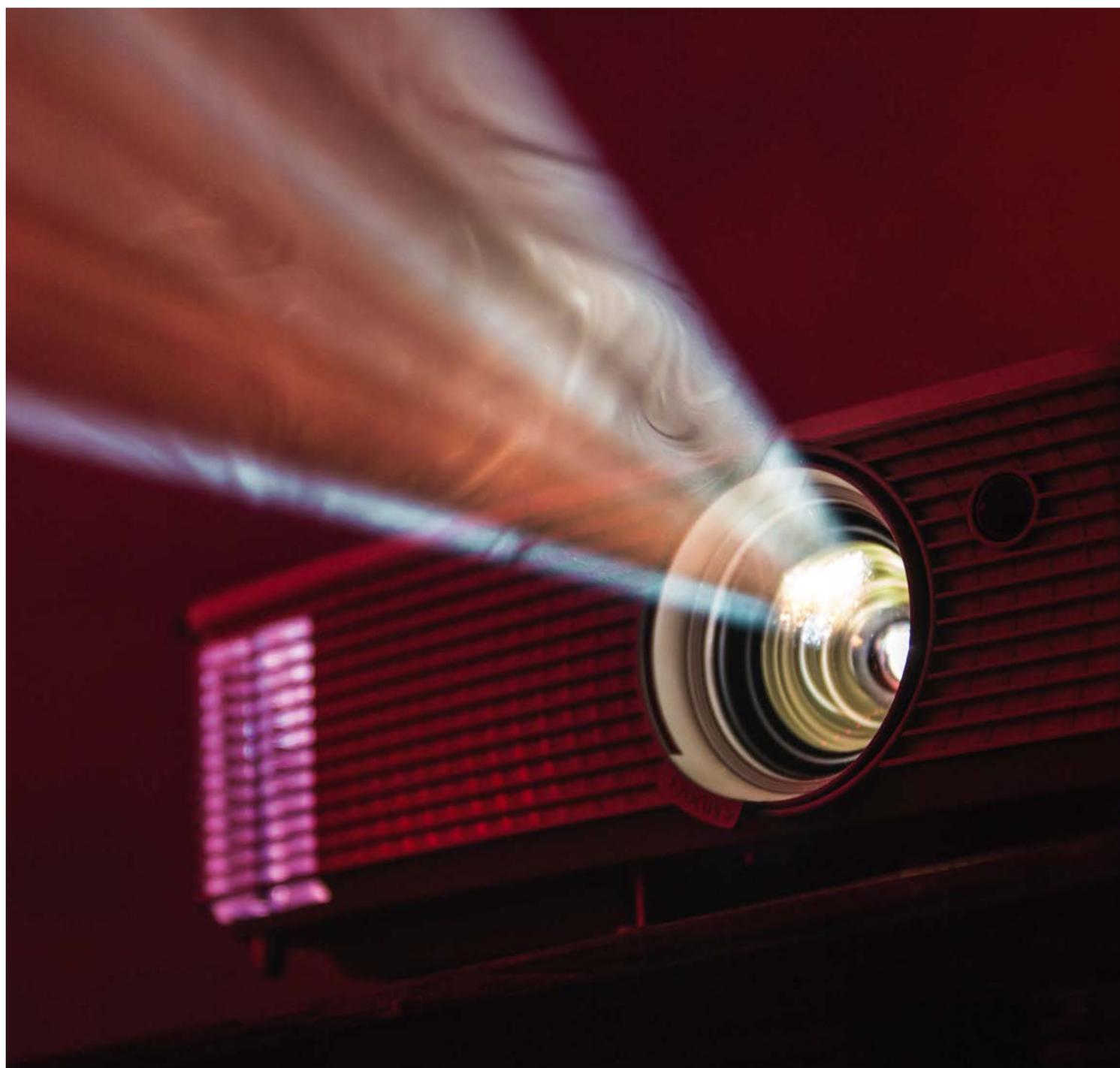
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AV Technology: Transforming Higher Education



Carl Sheen, head of training and development at Genee World, explores the way AV technology has transformed the HE sector →



The evolution of technology has been a catalyst for effective teaching and learning. For the higher education (HE) sector, technology is at the heart of the curriculum, aiming to prepare learners for their future careers.

Audio visual (AV) technology has become an intrinsic and vital part of delivering an effective HE course, and it plays an essential role for students who want to unlock the door to true success.

The variety of options for teachers and learners to generate ideas, boost collaboration and streamline processes are extensive and far reaching and are an essential part of learning today. AV technology gives everyone in HE a host of new options that they can utilise to take their work to the next level. The technology provides an important opportunity to improve meetings, bolster group work through collaborative software and step-up organisation and note-taking skills with solutions that store ideas and information all in one place.

Helping staff to help the students

We're often told that HE staff have ever-increasing 'to-do' lists. Tasks such as preparation for lectures, marking and data assessment can build quickly, and it can be challenging to prioritise workloads. Having the right AV software and edtech tools can help to alleviate this and, crucially, it can make lesson delivery a lot more effective for both staff and students.

At the forefront for any education provider is the importance of the student experience. Increasingly, technology is embedded in the curriculum to heighten, emphasise and improve the learning experience of every student, and this is most true at HE level. Students expect a certain amount of technology now. It

permeates their day-to-day life, so it's important for education providers to deliver an 'all accessible' experience for students.

When identifying the software and tools that would be most valuable for an HE environment, it's important to consider what is going to have an impact on teaching and learning, as well as streamlining processes. For example, by using cloud-based software and virtual learning environments (VLEs), teachers can share classroom material online, giving themselves and students the ability to access work wherever and whenever they need to.

Software that assists lecturers and teachers with their lesson delivery has huge and wide-ranging benefits with different functionalities addressing any specific problems they may encounter.

When it comes to delivering lessons and lectures, AV technology helps to facilitate much greater interactivity and collaboration. This kind of software offers a

in a way that not only caters for multiple learning styles, but also engages audiences, AV technology can be invaluable. For instance, using tablet devices or interactive screens can provide an array of opportunities for tasks to be tackled in different ways, at different levels according to a student's understanding; if a learner needs to present what they learnt during work experience or placements, some may wish to document this as a video while others might prefer to take images and write-up their experience.

Using software like this will streamline planning, support students' learning styles and abilities and ensure the whole lesson delivery process is more efficient.

Giving students the best chances possible

It is important, of course, for lecturers to be given the best resources possible but it is equally important, if not more so, for students to have all the resources they

“What can really make a difference to students' learning is software that allows them to collaborate, share work and connect with peers to learn and create shared projects”

new way for educators to create and present lessons, makes it easier for work to be sent directly to students' devices, introduces the potential for new activities in teaching, and facilitates easier teacher-student communication. Equally, hardware like interactive screens can be used to deliver team presentations and group work.

Not only is this a more fun and engaging route for learners, but it also gives educators the opportunity to track progression and understanding. If there's a learner who perhaps isn't quite getting the same answers as everyone else in the class, teachers can discreetly monitor and address the issue to prevent complete disengagement with a subject.

Personalising learning

Teachers and lecturers also now recognise the need to differentiate learning. It is, of course, important in HE for educators to ensure that all students are performing to the best of their abilities and that lesson content is targeted to students' individual needs and learning styles, as well as addressing the wider needs of the curriculum. It is also extremely important to ensure that students understand all the concepts and ideas they are being taught before moving on to other topics. To achieve this, and to deliver lessons

need to be successful. What can really make a difference to students' learning is software that allows them to collaborate, share work and connect with peers (both within their university and from others across the world) to learn and create shared projects. This presents students with a different style of learning and develops skills including teamwork, as well as making learning and studying more convenient for those who might need encouragement.

Interactive, innovative teaching tools give students the opportunity to get hands on, helping them to become more engaged with activities and cementing modules and concepts more deeply. These tools also enable students to learn from places other than the lecture hall. For example, students who struggle to attend lectures because of physical or social differences now have the option to engage with the class as if they are actually in the room. Students can also take part in study groups from various locations and continue to learn around the clock in a way that suits them most effectively.

The HE sector requires technology that is user-friendly, highly scalable, flexible and able to cope with the intense and varied demands that an ever-growing number of learners has to throw at it. Most of these learners will digest information





Image © depositphotos.com

best when they are having a discussion and talking through difficult concepts and subjects rather than listening to one person talking about the subject. AV hardware and software creates an open dialogue and helps explore challenging topics in a more visually appealing way – for example in live video discussions, interactive quizzes and audio clips.

Having the right hardware to complement software

Today's students are also consumers, so technology providers are having to offer the best service, facilities and – most importantly – resources possible, to attract the very best students. Universities need to be able to offer them the same thing. And while having all the right software is important, so is having the right hardware to complement it.

Interactive touchscreens are an essential part of classroom teaching and lectures. Lecturers often have a huge volume of information that needs to be conveyed and, for most learners, some visual representation of this information will be essential. There is a variety of ways lecturers can use their hardware, whether they are using a presentation, creating mind maps with the group's help, or playing videos to explain a point. However, the hardware should

be top quality; 4k screens that are as clear for those at the back of the lecture hall as they are for those sitting in the front row.

Similarly, the use of tablets and interactive audience response systems is a key tool to bring another important dimension to teaching in seminars or lecture halls. Audience response systems are a great way to make lectures and presentations more interactive and are a useful tool to gather a collective audience opinion.

Looking forward

Looking at the future of the HE sector and the role technology will play, many experts would like to see technology completely embedded within the wider structure of each institution or university. Looking beyond the role of technology solely within teaching and learning, it can also prove a useful way for educators to collate, retain and distribute information.

Using technology within the classroom is now vital to encourage the development of key skills needed for the future. Students don't just appreciate technology in the classroom; it is now becoming a necessity! Not only is it fun and engaging, but it provides learners with the ability to tailor their learning to what works best for them, anytime, anywhere. 

Tips for investing in AV

When confronted with a huge selection of AV technology, there are a few things to consider before investing all that money...

- The biggest challenge is knowing when to invest and take the plunge. If you are experiencing difficulty and find yourself moaning about the performance of your tech, it is quite likely that it is time to invest in something new and revitalise your working environment.
- Think about what you really need. Make a list of all the different things you want it to do and ensure that what you buy fulfils all these needs. Remember that the right technology is subjective; the wrong technology isn't. Slow, difficult to use and overly complex resources will be a hindrance rather than being helpful.
- Go for something that is modern and fits the infrastructure of your institution! This year's cohort of students are the first generation that were born into a fully digital world. They did not have to deal with slow dial-up internet and they have come to expect state-of-the-art tech. Therefore, universities should be making clever choices to invest in up-to-date tech that will last and stay relevant and useful for a good amount of time.
- Finally, make sure you are getting a good deal. Some companies will offer you a year's free subscription to their software when you buy their hardware. This is a great way of testing out new things and getting a little extra bang for your buck!



SOCIAL LEARNING SPACES FOR EVERY STUDENT

How higher education institutions can turn our digitally connected world to their advantage

Technology is driving change, but we're still social creatures. The two can work together to create a completely new way to communicate – social networking and always-on conversations have become second nature, especially to today's students.

In higher education, the social learning space draws on this nature. Collaboration, creativity and discussion are championed. These spaces exist all around the campus, and beyond it, too. More than 50% of higher education student learning takes place outside the traditional learning space¹. These spaces not only satisfy students, but support a progressive image for the institution. By providing spaces to suit a range of learning styles, institutions can maximise their appeal and build a competitive edge.

To encourage social learning, higher education technology needs to go beyond the provision of traditional teaching facilities to deliver experiences that inspire individual students to develop social and digital skills. Interacting with both technology and people can have a huge impact on students' attainment through increased engagement during the course of learning. Importantly, it can also provide them with solid foundations for the future, particularly when entering the workforce.

Dedicated spaces already exist – and structural changes are not necessary. Therefore, there is a real opportunity for higher education institutions to move beyond one-way dialogue and

allow their physical learning spaces to take on a more flexible form.

If you would like to create your own highly effective social learning spaces, you need AV technology that inspires smaller workgroups, allows them to create and share a variety of content no matter their device, and supports collaboration and discovery with external organisations and other universities.

As a starting point, consider the following for your social learning spaces:

HUMAN CENTRIC

Learning environments should be designed around the way students want to learn – and we all do that differently. Give them options: make it simple to connect any device, display content clearly and get them hands on with touchscreen annotation and feedback. This will allow spaces to be more interactive and group-led, while encouraging students to evaluate information, think critically, make informed decisions and discuss them together.

INFORMAL HUBS

We have social brains. With more opportunities for informal communication and collaboration, students become more confident in their ability to learn, interact and share. Invite students to utilise communal spaces beyond the classroom to develop their debating, reasoning and presentation skills. All they'll need

is a quick and simple way to connect and share their own materials to a group.

GROUP VERSUS INDEPENDENT LEARNING

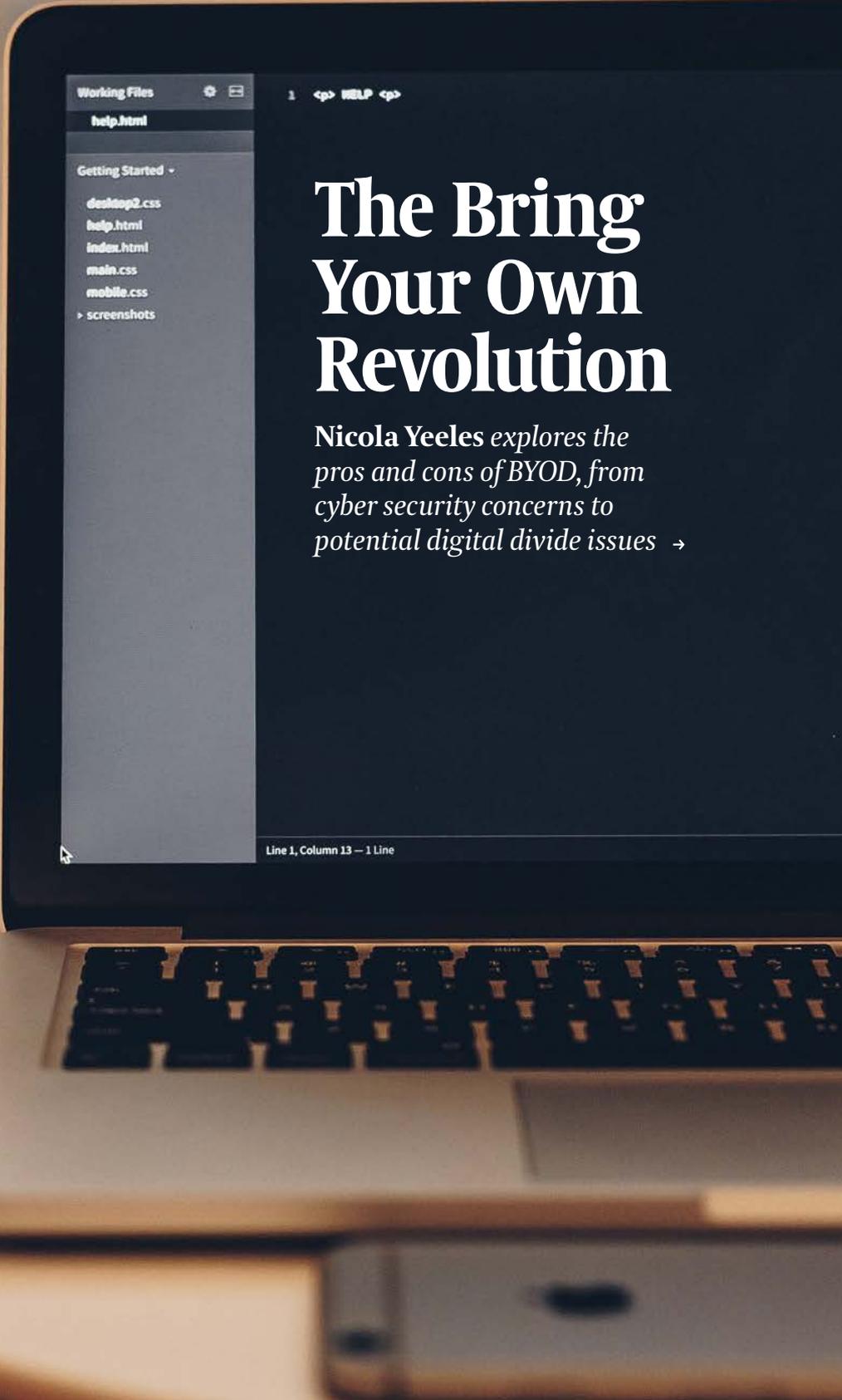
With students having different learning preferences, there will always be those whose learning is more individual. Capturing lectures and making them available online not only provides students wishing to work more collaboratively with discussion materials, but it also supports the more independent student to revisit content alone outside the classroom. With useful tools such as in-built polls and question functions, they can still interact with the materials and benefit from their peers at distance.

ACTIVE LEARNING WITHIN MODERATION

It's important that lecturers continue to provide structure and guidance around self-discovery spaces with the ability to act as moderators. To do this, they require the ability to review workgroup progress on their own display and allow students to share centrally their findings to a wider audience. Sony's Vision Exchange connects student groups to a centralised hub in formal and informal working situations, streamlining group projects and helping educators stay on top of multiple work groups learning at one time.

Find out more about Vision Exchange at pro.sony/active-learning

¹ College: *The Undergraduate Experience in America* by Ernest L. Boyer



The Bring Your Own Revolution

Nicola Yeeles explores the pros and cons of BYOD, from cyber security concerns to potential digital divide issues →

Jisc's annual survey of more than 37,000 students found that an impressive 96% of higher education students feel supported to 'bring their own devices', using their own phones and computers to access university services such as Wi-Fi and apps. It's clear that higher education is still a front-runner in bring your own device support, or BYOD.

But there are challenges, not least in finding the balance between supporting access and keeping students safe, and this means that many universities are erring on the side of caution. As a result, according to Sarah Knight of Jisc, access to university services is not yet ubiquitous: "Most students now bring their own devices for learning, but many can't use them to access subject-specialist software and online content."

Bucking the trend

But some providers are bucking the trend – take the University of Surrey, where since 2012 students have been able to download a range of applications completely free of charge for the duration of their time there. James Pickett, principal end user computing engineer at the University, explains, "For the last five years, Surrey Software has replaced long queues for CDs and USB sticks at IT Services with a self-service store, where students can easily download applications to their own computers from anywhere. To-date, over 150,000 copies have been downloaded, which is the equivalent of a 180-metre tall stack of CDs!"

The applications include the entire Microsoft Office suite and popular Windows Apps, such as the calculation package MATLAB and the statistical software SPSS.

To begin with, of course, institutions need a robust computer infrastructure to enable them to support BYOD. James Breakell, UK managing director of the library security systems supplier D-Tech International, says, "The main challenges are the network being overloaded with more devices connecting to Wi-Fi and so on; internet security; and IT support being bombarded with access problems and forgotten passwords."



Sarah Knight

Virus protection

Universities need to consider security protection against malware or virus attacks coming through or affecting students' devices, as well as data protection, with the new Data Protection Act 2018 imposing huge fines for loss of sensitive data. Another consideration is adequate connectivity at all hours of the day. Continued investment in these areas remains crucial.

Once the technical considerations can be managed, Knight points out that organisations also need to ensure students have the right digital skills to make use of the apps on offer. She says, "As our report recommends, clear signposting to digital training and helpdesks could be a great start. It's also important to ensure students know what support is available

to them when they start their course and this is reiterated throughout their study."

At Surrey, IT Services have their own YouTube channel full of help videos, and they also provide students and staff with access to the Microsoft Imagine Academy, which offers online training on the Microsoft suite. Debbie Exley of LapSafe adds that all staff also need to be trained in how to use the devices to deliver learning effectively and to provide best practice models to students.

Keeping it secure

If students bring high-value computing equipment on to campus, hardware security is another issue. By providing a safe environment for students to store and charge their mobile tech, provider LapSafe argues that universities can encourage students to



Photo by NEC Corporation of America

Photo by Maurizio Pesce



Westminster Kingsway College



“BYOD can increase the digital divide, frustrating students who aren’t fortunate enough to have their own laptop or tablet”

use their own equipment while removing the concern of items being left randomly in public areas on the assumption that it is the university’s responsibility. Many universities are choosing high-traffic areas such as libraries but also social areas like cafés in which to provide such storage. Universities such as Heriot-Watt have installed 72 of these bays, while the University of Galway went for 36 bays in their main library.

Another option is to provide devices for students to borrow rather than enabling BYOD as such. The argument here is that students, particularly those travelling from outside campus, don’t want to carry their own heavy devices around, preferring the space-saving and more flexible option of laptops to desktops. LapSafe estimates that about half of UK universities have

now automated their manual laptop loans service and this is increasing dramatically. Over 50% of universities in the capital are now giving students individual access to securely stored and charged laptops or tablets using the company’s intelligent access control system. Each loaned laptop can link directly into the University’s existing library management system or work standalone. Behind the scenes, the lockers enable staff to track and monitor equipment use and save resources. You can find this system at universities such as Kings College London, UCL and Imperial College.

Breakell of Supplier D-Tech International agrees that BYOD provision “has dropped off in terms of providing a laptop self-service solution,” with most universities opting instead for a system “that dispenses →

devices supplied by the university where they can manage the devices more securely and ensure that applications that cause a higher security threat are disabled”.

Minimising the digital divide

Nevertheless, in the Jisc survey, only 7.9% of students surveyed used smartphones provided by institutions to support their work, so it could be beneficial for universities to look into providing not just laptops but also smartphones or tablets for students who can't afford their own. Debbie Exley at LapSafe warns: “BYOD can increase the digital divide, frustrating students who aren't fortunate enough to have their own laptop or tablet.”

As a result, Knight says, “It is essential that universities are aware of where possible digital divides exist so that all students have equitable access to the technology they need to support their learning.” However, there is a caveat: 88% of students rated their organisation's digital provision as above average, so students are clearly increasingly satisfied with what's on offer.

The most forward-thinking universities

will use students' access via their own devices to drive better student services. Canterbury Christ Church University is taking the blended learning agenda forward in a way that works for their students. Knight explains how they have used the results of the Jisc survey to make improvements: firstly, by redesigning virtual learning environment templates to make navigation via mobile devices easier and more consistent. Secondly, the university is fast-tracking the introduction of a new lecture capture recording system. Knight says, “The approach taken by Canterbury Christ Church University is ensuring the democratic student voice is heard in full – all students on all campuses have the opportunity to let the university know about their needs and expectations and how well these are being met.”

It's clear that universities are going in the right direction towards providing the best technology to support their students. But Jisc's insights survey shows that only 41% of students in higher education agree that their course prepares them for the digital workplace and, what's more, only about

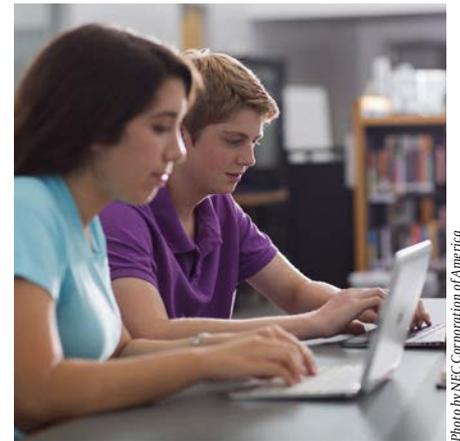


Photo by NEC Corporation of America

a third of students agree they were told which digital skills they would need before starting their course. Universities could perhaps make more of the opportunity to push training and digital support to their students through whatever devices they are using. By doing so, they could play an even more significant role in enabling students to work independently in the professional digital environments they will be encountering in the future. **UB**



University of Sussex



Bett: The hub for inspirational practice in higher education

Get ready for Bett 2019, where you can touch and see the latest edtech!

We're living in a period of rapid change, and the role of education has never been more important. According to a report by the World Economic Forum, in many industries and countries, the most in-demand occupations or current specialties did not exist 10 or even 5 years ago. Popular estimates, meanwhile, suggest the jobs that 65% of children entering primary school today will work in don't even exist yet.

Preparing pupils for this sort of unknown future is challenging and exciting for educators, and it's one of the primary reasons that the education community gathers each January at Bett: to discuss education, its challenges and the different ways in which educators are rising to meet them. The role of technology, meanwhile, is changing just as rapidly as our economies are. No longer a separate part of the curriculum and no longer used in prescribed ways, edtech can be used to break down the many barriers that higher education pupils often face. From tools to recruit and retain students to improving graduate employability, technology and effective practice is key for meeting the needs of all pupils, and for managing data, workload and assessment. But changes in the ways we teach, learn and consume information are combined with the rising importance of skills such as resilience, collaboration and problem-solving. The value in coming together to explore these changes and share the ways in which education institutions are navigating them has never been higher.

What's on at Bett

A range of higher education suppliers will be showcasing their latest products across four days at Bett 2019, offering visitors the opportunity to touch, test and evaluate vital resources. These specialist suppliers join over 800 education suppliers, from global technology giants to exciting edtech start-ups. The opportunity

to trial and test resources is perhaps one of the most valuable features of Bett, particularly when purchases need to demonstrate clear value to universities for whom budgets are under pressure. One of the more organic benefits of time at the event, meanwhile, is the opportunity to meet other education professionals. These opportunities enable visitors to find out more about the practicalities and realities of meeting the needs of all pupils and build meaningful relationships with other establishments among the thriving Bett community.

Our Post 16 Theatre will host essential sessions curated for leaders and educators within the higher education sector, addressing the current challenges being faced by the sector. Sessions will be delivered by leading practitioners and education experts, and to give you the most valuable information, we've conducted market research to really get under the skin of higher education needs and challenges, to help us shape and inform our content. We'll share best practice and inspiring stories to help improve knowledge and learning of teachers, leaders and support staff.

Bett's mission is to bring together people, ideas, practices and technologies so that educators and learners can fulfil their potential. Bett 2019 is future focused in many ways; it's bringing the future of learning to life, with all its excitement and vibrancy, to help educators not just imagine the upcoming careers of all their pupils, but really get to grips with how to get them there. Underpinning it all is the belief that everyone has a role to play in transforming education, and that education should be accessible and exciting for each and every student. **UB**

Bett 2019 will run over four days, from 23 to 26 January 2019 at ExCeL London. For more information and to register for your free pass, visit www.bettshow.com



CONQUERING THE CHALLENGE OF LAPTOP LOANS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME

James Breakell, UK MD of D-Tech International, looks at the company's involvement in the computer lab refurbishment at the prestigious European university

When we were asked to provide a space-saving IT solution that would enable the American University of Rome (AUR) to loan laptops to its students from a secure unit that would facilitate loans using AUR ID cards we knew that our ComputeIT cabinet would be perfect.

Founded in 1969, the American University of Rome (AUR) is situated within walking distance of Rome's historic centre. Focusing on blending the liberal arts with career preparation and elements of the Italian/European classical tradition of the humanities, AUR is home to students from over 40 countries. We were delighted to be part of the refurbishment project and to receive such positive feedback from the students and staff at the University.



THE CHALLENGE

During the summer of 2017, AUR refurbished its main computer lab removing over 55 workstations to provide a multi-functional study/social space for students. By changing the nature and use of this space, the number of student computers on campus was reduced significantly. AUR needed to find a solution to provide students with alternative computer access without disrupting the new space design. A space-saving alternative was needed. AUR wanted a solution that would allow students to check out laptops using their AUR ID card.

THE SOLUTION

D-Tech offered a compact laptop check out unit with card reader and advanced system integration functionality. D-Tech supplied and installed a 12 locker ComputeIT cabinet in steel grey which is housed in a purpose-built recess inside the lounge. Fully integrated with the University's network user account system, the students can check out laptops using their AUR ID card. A web-based portal allows the Office of Computer Service to monitor laptops and loans.

THE RESULTS

- **EXPANDED SERVICES** Faster access to laptops which can be used anywhere within the building

- **IMPROVED SERVICES**
Improved use of staff resources
- **IMPROVED STUDENT EXPERIENCE** Easy-to-use, rapid laptop deployment

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

Rosa Fusco, Director of Computer Services, AUR, said: "With the refurbishment of the old computer lab, we converted the area into a modern, versatile lounge for informal student gatherings, social events and study groups. We were worried that by removing the desktop computers, this would impact computer access for students on campus. The self-service laptop unit was the ideal solution.

"We chose D-Tech because they offered a solution that would allow us to use our ID cards and integrate with our network user account system. Another challenge was finding a unit that could be easily shipped. Many self-service laptop units are designed and shipped from the US so finding D-Tech in the UK was certainly a bonus.

"Students are very happy with the unit; it allows them to check out university laptops autonomously without having to come to the IT office and to return them after office hours. Our reports show that 80% of the laptops are checked out daily."

Safe and Secure

Keri Beckingham *takes a look at the latest campus security developments across the UK*

There's no denying that today's universities are aware of the key responsibility they have regarding student safety on campus. For example, The University of Northampton has just announced that it is going to pay £774,027 over three academic years for six police officers to patrol its new Waterside Campus amid fears over central funding cuts in the local area. But when it comes to ensuring the safety of students in 2018, what are institutions' current concerns and what technology is being used on campus to improve security? →



SECURITY STRATEGY

Mike Davies is Senior Consultant at Blackstone Consultancy, providers of bespoke, discreet and exceptionally vigilant security arrangements to individuals and companies. He believes that a safe school environment is critical to the education process, and that universities need to incorporate security and multi-disciplinary approaches within their campuses to deter criminal behaviour, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). In addition, he thinks that institutions should look at their existing security systems to conduct the required vulnerability assessment, and then determine whether the facilities, processes and policies meet industry standards and guidance as part of an overall security strategy.

Discussing the idea of security strategy further, he said: “As well as protecting the campus, protecting the individual is equally important. Open and easy access reporting processes and confidence in the reporting system are imperative post-event but the individual can ensure that they minimise

danger to themselves by carrying out actions such as keeping belongings safe, keeping accommodation secure and reporting any strange sights while on campus.

“Blackstone Consultancy would recommend that universities pass on this information to students as part of their overall security strategy, to empower students with the knowledge of how to enjoy their university experience safely.”

CURRENT CONCERNS

Jason Boyce is Strategic Business Development Manager at Gallagher Security (Europe) Ltd, providers of security solutions to education providers across the UK. He thinks that universities definitely recognise security as a key priority for two main reasons – firstly because they are ranked on how safe they are, and secondly because of the current threat landscape in the UK.

Summarising his thoughts, he said: “Many universities have a counter-terror policy and invacuation process, which ensures that security is a key priority.

“Security concerns are different for all



universities. For instance, those based in the heart of a city, such as King’s College London, need to take into account the threat of terrorism after previous attacks have taken place outside a campus.”

FUTURE-PROOFING

The safety of students and staff should be paramount to institutions. Andy Wray, General Manager SME at leading security and life safety systems provider STANLEY Security, explained that a university’s reputation could be damaged by incidents on campus. He commented: “Overall, universities recognise security as being important but many institutions are constrained by budgets and have to use →

“ Safe school environment is critical to the education process... universities need to incorporate security and multi-disciplinary approaches within their campuses to deter criminal behaviour ”



CASE STUDY: Solent University

Bryan Carroll is Deputy Director of Solent University's Estates and Facilities department. Here, he discusses the security technology that is used on campus as part of an ongoing programme of measures designed to enhance security. He also explains how the University has considered all risks and concerns to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its staff, students and visitors.

“Solent University continues to invest in a variety of systems and hardware solutions to enhance campus security. This includes external lighting, access control, intruder alarm systems, ANPR and CCTV provision across its main city centre East Park Terrace campus.

“Projects delivered during the summer of 2018 resulted in the installation of an additional 300 access control locks, bringing the total across the academic and residential estate to nearly 2,000.

“The infrastructure is now in place for a more flexible approach to campus security, enabling the University to adapt its security measures, better reflect the location of buildings, and set access times appropriate with the level of risk and activity. The technology has also allowed us to reduce the number of alternative entrances to buildings as a means of reducing risk, while retaining emergency exits.

“The predominantly city centre campus poses a number of specific safety and security challenges. We continually work with external agencies to identify, mitigate and manage these risks.”



disparate ‘cost-effective’ security systems that have been built up over a number of years.

“These are rapidly becoming out of date and offer limited scope for future integration, which is important as it allows one single front-end which makes for simple system management.”

Andy Wray also believes that most campuses have some way to go with their security solutions because of legacy systems that are already in place. Furthermore, he thinks that future-proofing is key when it comes to the design of campus new builds, adding: “Retrospectively installing integrated systems then comes at a significant cost and institutions end up paying twice.”

TECHNOLOGY

So, what technology is available to universities who are looking to improve security on campus and what solutions

do our experts think are particularly effective? Jason Boyce has seen access control systems also act as the student ID card, in addition to offering admission to accommodation and libraries.

Elaborating further on the benefits of this, he said: “Security staff can also be given mobile readers so that they can carry out spot checks to ensure anyone using someone else’s ID card can be removed.”

Similarly, he has seen mobile phones utilised as access cards, providing an extra layer of security through dual factor authentication. He adds: “The access credential on the mobile phone can also be used to allocate lockers, book rooms, control lights and so on.”

Andy Wray has started to see a range of new technology being used on campus, from body worn cameras that are able to live stream, to campus lockdown systems that can be activated from a smart device or pager, and even cashless vending.

Commenting further, he said:

“Where we are seeing a major change is in the integration of all these disciplines; primarily access control, CCTV, door entry and intercoms, and fire.

“Furthermore, the use of cloud-based solutions is becoming increasingly popular as often existing IT systems are unable to host these security systems locally and it would be cost-prohibitive to upgrade the network.” 



Jason Boyce, Strategic Business Development Manager at Gallagher Security (Europe) Ltd

CASE STUDY: University Quarter



Richard Stott is Managing Director of Hull’s University Quarter, a student housing project creating 200 new homes and two refurbished halls of residence in the city. Developed by a partnership between the University of Hull and student accommodation provider Kexgill, security has been a key consideration of the project. Here, Richard discusses the technology that is being used on site to keep students safe.

“We’ve installed night-vision CCTV cameras covering the University Quarter that is surrounding the campus. Dusk-to-

dawn lighting is installed to the rear of all refurbished properties highlighting amenity social spaces. The installation of external lighting is part of the University campus’s illumination strategy, promoting a safer and positive environment.

“Dark, unsupported streets are off-putting for student tenants. Students need to feel safe leaving the University library at 1.00am walking to their accommodation. If all accommodation is less than a three-minute walk away, with CCTV this certainly creates a feeling of wellbeing.”

GET READY FOR ENROLMENT

Providing students with a secure learning environment

With January enrolment coming up, universities across the UK are preparing ID cards for thousands of new students. At Essentra Security, we have supplied the education sector for over 20 years with a range of expert ID solutions. We make the enrolment period easy for you, taking care of the whole end-to-end process from installing your system to supporting you with experienced technical support.

Working in partnership with leading manufacturer Entrust Datacard, a pioneer of ID card printing technologies, we have just announced the CD815 Smart Card Printer. This desktop printer can print cards compatible with access control and time management systems, complete with full colour photo, a signature, a barcode and smart chip for electronic security. This gives you the flexibility to create high-quality IDs tailored to your needs.

While student ID cards are used for visual identification purposes they can also be seen on campus today being used for a variety of applications, including:



- access control – authorise who can go where and manage access to restricted areas
- attendance monitoring – record attendance using a clock-in and clock-out system and collect data to save time on reporting
- cashless vending – make payments at the library, cafeteria, photocopier or on public transport using a card pre-loaded with credit or linked to an account
- faster processing – instantly replace lost or damaged badges quickly and efficiently.

The ability to issue ID cards quickly is a fast and effective way to make sure all students and staff have the proper identification from enrolment onwards. With everything you need including software and accessories, save time and start the new year with a trusted ID solution in place.



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NMiTE: Getting engineers ready for the technological age



Dr David Langley, Chief Partnerships Officer of the New Model in Technology & Engineering, discusses the NMiTE practical learning programme

In 2015, the Government set out plans to open the higher education sector to new providers. New institutions, it said, were needed to provide a broader choice and deliver better value for money for undergraduates.

Fast-forward to 2019 and Hereford will become home to the first future university in the UK in four decades.

The New Model in Engineering and Technology (NMiTE), which has received £23m in Government funding as well as support from a range of businesses, will be pioneering the most modern and radical engineering curriculum in the world.

It is no secret that the UK has a shortage of skilled engineers. Demand for talent has soared. Engineering UK claims a further 1.8 million new engineers and technicians are needed by 2025.

Our future engineers need to deal with the monumental challenges facing our world, whether that is helping tackle global food production as our population continues to grow to 8 billion and beyond, or ensuring the transport, heat and entertainment we use as part of our daily lives is not causing harmful climate change.

We are changing how we recruit young students into the profession. The sector demographics are appalling, with the latest research showing that just 11% of the engineering workforce is female. The result is a huge loss of talent, ideas and creativity. The sector knows it has a gender problem but attempts to create balance have so far failed.

NMiTE is starting afresh by setting out its stall from the get go, laying down the target of a 50:50 gender balance from the outset.

The first step to achieving this is to drop dogmatic demands for all applicants to have maths and physics A-levels, which we see as one of the biggest hurdles for young women wanting to start an engineering degree.

The figures speak for themselves: Engineering UK's Brand Monitor (EBM) survey found that while more than 59% of 11–14-year-olds would consider a career in engineering, by the age of 19 that number fell to 39%. There is little understanding of how to become an engineer or what a career might entail. We want to change that.

At NMiTE we have adopted a practical learning programme to give engineering a much broader appeal and to capture the interest of those students who may not have considered engineering before.

Our curriculum will be almost entirely challenge-based, through projects developed in intimate partnership with companies, communities



and other organisations. This will help ensure NMiTE maintains cutting-edge relevance.

Our students will work in teams to learn how to cope with real-life challenges and commercial uncertainties, so they develop the integrated work-ready skills employers tell us they need.

The programme will provide our learners with the necessary theory they need to underpin their knowledge. They will study a liberal curriculum and develop skills such as communication and project management.

The course is currently going through the validation process with Warwick University, our delivery partner, and should be accredited by IET – enabling the professional recognition our graduates will need.

We are looking for creative and inquisitive minds. Knowing engineering and having a strong technical knowledge does not make an engineer. Being an engineer is more a state of mind, and an approach to life. We want people who can solve a problem that they have never seen before, and be ready to apply their skillset in the workplace and society.

We want to change the student experience and make NMiTE an inspirational place to come, learn and be dynamic. To that end, we have brought in 25 adults to take part in our Design Cohort. Over the next year, they will have a say on creating everything from the facilities to the student experience.

Future engineers have a promising career ahead of them, working with cutting-edge technologies that will shape the way we live and work. If you are interested in learning more about NMiTE and how we are building a curriculum that inspires undergraduates and works directly with employers, then please get in touch as I would welcome the chance to tell you more at www.nmite.org.uk. 



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