



Access Success

The University's Access to Leeds scheme continues to thrive.

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A fairer share for all

A project funded by the Worldwide Universities Network aims to bring vital services and systems to disadvantaged people.

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'Spotlight' series highlights teaching and research

A new series of videos and articles showcases innovative activities in student education and research.

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Calling the past, supporting the future

The University is employing students who are re-connecting with Leeds alumni, talking to them about memories of their time here and encouraging them to support the students of today – and tomorrow.

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Leader column

Higher education and the global opportunities offered by MOOCs

If proof were needed of the huge impact that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are already having on the world of higher education, it came when Futurelearn – the UK's first provider of free, open online courses from top-ranking institutions – announced that ourselves and 11 other universities who signed up to Futurelearn in January have already been joined by the British Library and a further five universities, bringing the total number to 17.

On an international level, MOOCs were the number one issue the Indian education delegation wanted to talk about during a recent UK India Education and Research Initiative event. Just imagine it, you're a country with 1.2 billion people and only a tiny percentage of your 18-year-olds can access higher education. Suddenly, providing they have the technology, they can access some of the best lectures and content in the world – and for free!*

You can see the excitement but, as usual, it's not as simple as that. If we put our content online, can students in the remotest parts of the world become Leeds graduates? Absolutely not, or at least not yet! They may see some of our content but they won't have had the full experience that is the University of Leeds. Online, you can't create the environment, the research-led teaching, the experience of guided problem solving and critical independent learning or the full-on intellectual space that is a university. There are other aspects, too; volunteering, internship opportunities, societies, the Students Union, meeting new friends and being part of the University community – you can't get much of that very easily online. It's all those things, and more, from which our students derive value.

Whether we like it or not, MOOCs are going to be an important part of the future, so my message is to take a proper look at them,



think about how they relate to what you do, and how the University can benefit from the combination of our knowledge and skills with this massive opportunity to put ourselves on the global stage to showcase our content and quality. We've already been working on our own blended learning to improve our online content for current students. Our aim now is to use this existing talent in the University to put together a pilot of perhaps just two courses for Futurelearn by the autumn, so it's vital we get involved and that our initial efforts are of the very highest quality.

In terms of our immediate recruitment for 2013 entry the pressure is still on, but the early signs are encouraging. At the moment, we're ahead of our competitors in the percentages of students predicted to get ABB and where we were on conversion last year. We're also ahead on conversion in comparison with peers, but I must emphasise that it's still early days. All the extra work that people are doing is greatly appreciated but conversion is critically important and we must not be complacent. It's a highly competitive market that, these days, is never over until the student is registered and here on census day. We can lose students at every stage of the process, so we have to convince them that Leeds is the best place for them.

Leeds University Union have been incredibly responsive and helpful in supporting our recruitment efforts. They're helping tailor our message so it chimes with 18-year-olds and are providing student ambassadors who talk to prospective students about Leeds, which is a very powerful message. Of course, LUU itself is a great draw, with the facilities they offer and the opportunities they create, and their 90% score in the National Student Survey. A massive thank you from me to them – we are



very fortunate to have such a dedicated LUU leadership team.

We recently had our first dedicated open day for postgraduate taught students (PGTs) and postgraduate researchers (PGRs). It aimed to boost PG numbers and also make it completely clear to current UGs that we value them and would like them to stay with us. Of course, we also want UGs from other institutions to come and see what Leeds has to offer. PGT applications and acceptances are already significantly better this year and it looks as though there's a recovery in numbers under way.

International UG recruitment was actually up last year and there's ongoing work, led by the International Office, to look at where we might recruit increased numbers of international UGs. This is nothing more than focusing on effective implementation of the existing internationalisation strategy and developing a clearer operational plan for what we will do and how we will do it for international UG recruitment.

International PGT applications were down last year and there's been a lot of effort to address this. As a result, we have streamlined communications with our agents and international offices, and have a much better link to the Language Centre for students who need pre-session language training. Again, initial figures look as though we're already doing better this year. We need to keep an eye on this – and all other recruitment areas – during the coming weeks and months but it's pleasing that, so far, all our hard work is paying off and that things are going in the right direction.

*Harvard's provider, Coursera, has just started charging for an accredited module.

News

Get involved in Equality & Inclusion

Colleagues are invited to be involved in progressing equality and inclusion at the University.

A new Equality & Inclusion (E&I) strategy has been developed with input from key stakeholders, including the Equality Service, campus unions and Leeds University Union (LUU), and we're now moving to the next phase. The new strategy outlines the University's commitment to equality and the key role that equality and inclusion will play in helping us achieve our strategic objectives. We now want to share the strategy with staff and students to develop action plans and priorities.

As well as meeting its statutory obligations, the E&I strategy shows how the University aims to translate its value of inclusiveness throughout its strategy, business and day-to-day organisational practice. The four priority areas are to:

- develop a culture that promotes equality and inclusion
- integrate and embed quality into all aspects of our business
- attract, retain, support and develop an excellent workforce from across the world
- ensure a world-class student experience through inclusion and academic excellence.



Progressing equality (l-r): Maria Pervaiz, Ian Turnpenny, Kathy Aveyard and Angie O'Keefe.

Professor Dawn Freshwater, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Staff and Organisational Effectiveness, comments: "At Leeds we passionately believe in delivering an inclusive experience for staff and students which we aim to achieve through equality of opportunity and experience within a sustainable and supportive environment. Diversity in our staff and student population plays a key part in our current success and will enable us to deliver our future strategic priorities."

A series of workshops is being held in April, where staff and students will be able to contribute to the development of E&I priorities and actions. Further details will be available shortly on the For Staff intranet, through LUU or by contacting equality@leeds.ac.uk

News

Athena SWAN appointments

Dr Jane Cahill (School of Healthcare) has been appointed Athena SWAN project officer for a period of three years. Dr Cahill is already meeting with representatives from schools across the University, advising them about Athena SWAN submission requirements and helping to further embed the Athena SWAN principles within the University. From March, she will be joined by Athena SWAN Support Officer Zarina Sutton.

Athena SWAN is an organisation that aims to promote the role of women working in the sciences, engineering and technology. The Athena SWAN principles will help ensure policies enable our female colleagues to make a contribution to the management of the University, and also encourage greater representation.

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About the Reporter

The Reporter is the University of Leeds' staff magazine, produced eight times a year. Over 8,500 copies are distributed to our staff and stakeholders. The Reporter is produced by the Communications team.

If you have an idea for a story, have any comments about this edition or would like to voice your opinion about University matters, please get in touch:

Email: the.reporter@leeds.ac.uk
Tel: (0113) 343 6699
Web: <http://reporter.leeds.ac.uk>

Front cover shows Stephanie Taiwo (2nd year Geography and Mathematics) working in our Alumni call centre. Photo by Adam Robinson Photography.

Valuing our people

HR Excellence in Research Award retained

The University has successfully retained the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission. The Award demonstrates a university's commitment to improving the working conditions and career development for research staff, which will in turn improve the quantity, quality and impact of research for the benefit of UK society and the economy.

"This is great news for us, and reflects all the hard work done by Dr Odette Dewhurst," says the Staff and Departmental Development Unit's Dr Jim Baxter.

"We undertook an internal review to assess progress against strategy and implementation plan. We also set out the University's priorities for the future and how we will measure success in another two years time. These were reviewed by a panel of experts to confirm that we retain the Award."

Based on our two-year progress report and updated and new action plans, the panel found our self-assessment and Concordat implementation plan updates to be fully in line with step four of the 'Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the Charter and Code'.

More details about the University's support for research staff can be found at <http://goo.gl/WOd2Z>

Valuing our people

Health and Safety winners' lasting legacy



"A lasting achievement that will affect hundreds of people," is how Professor Michael Arthur described the project that he chose as the winner of the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Health and Safety 2012.

The winning project was a great example of team work, being put together by 14 people involved in planning and supervising work experience for schoolchildren within the Faculty of Engineering. They devised a new approach to managing the week-long work experience programme, making sure it includes exciting and safe activities. Co-ordinated by the faculty safety office, and supported by academic and technical teams, the children go through a series of half-day or full-day activities in the faculty. They even have training in occupational health and safety principles, giving them a nationally-recognised qualification to put on their CVs.

The Faculty of Engineering's work experience participants team received their award from the Vice-Chancellor.

"There were so many excellent contributions that it was a nearly impossible task to decide the overall winner," said Professor Arthur. "However, this project relates to our aim to bring people into the University. It's fantastic for our reputation and will have a lasting impact on many people – it really will have a positive effect on our future."

The Vice-Chancellor also praised the way that a health and safety culture is now truly embedded in the University: "Our performance is now dramatically better than it was and I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has helped us achieve our current high standard."

Valuing our people

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption leave survey for academic and research staff

The University is considering how best to support our academic and research staff whose careers are temporarily interrupted by periods of extended absence as a result of maternity, adoption or extended paternity leave.

If you have taken this type of leave since January 2009, we would be grateful if you would complete a short survey about the type of support you received and/or would have liked to receive before, during and after your leave.

"The responses we receive will help us to decide what arrangements to put in place so that appropriate support is available to people in future," says Equality Service's Kathy Aveyard.

The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete and can be accessed from the following link <http://goo.gl/GdWMw>

Valuing our people

Team Talk – Waterside Café



Melinda Edmeade and Josie Hudson in the Waterside Café.

What does the café team do?

We provide a catering service to students, staff and visitors at Waterside. We are one of many across campus.

Who's in the team and what are their roles?

There are just two of us; Josie, who is team leader, and Melinda. We both do very much the same as each other. On a morning we set the café up so everything is ready to provide an efficient service and through the day we are replenishing stock, cleaning, doing orders, taking temperatures and receiving deliveries.

The café was refurbished recently – how has that made a difference?

We only came to Waterside after it was refurbished so the only difference we know is the feedback we are getting from the customers. A lot of people have said how nice it is, they love the way it's set up and the way it overlooks the pond and fountains. It seems to be a place where people enjoy being.

Tell us about some of the team's future plans for the café.

We want to bring in more custom and are really looking forward to the summer. Our fabulous setting in the Roger Stevens building will hopefully do this, and we've now got outside seating so it will be a lovely place to sit.

What are the most rewarding things about being in your team?

We both enjoy what we do. The feedback we get from our customers is very rewarding.

And some of the most difficult?

We don't really have any difficulties, as we pull together and get on with our work the best way we can.

Who do you work with across the University?

We work with lots of other departments, but mainly cleaning and Estates Services.

Tell us something about your work that would surprise people.

We are just one of many outlets across campus and we all try to help each other out if we can. We work for the University, not an outside company.

What would you say to people thinking about visiting the café?

Come and see for yourself as it's the place to be at the moment where you can relax and enjoy a nice coffee and cake. You'll never know until you try it yourself, so see you soon!

Inspire our students

Green light for new library

Designs for our new 'flagship' library have been finally approved by city planners. Work on the site is scheduled to begin in July, with a view to the library opening its doors to students in early 2015.

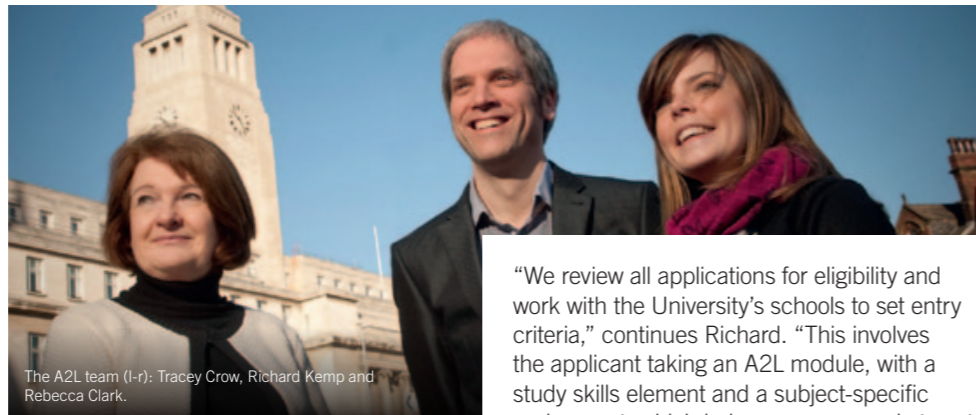
Day-to-day building progress is hard to predict. However staff and students will of course be notified in advance if work is likely to disrupt routes and/or access.

The new building will enhance the University's current library provision – already amongst the best in the country – by providing a highly IT-enabled space, flexible group study areas, well-equipped training rooms, a LeedsforLife zone, and a world-class, modern design. The end result will be a stunning, visible sign of our commitment to invest in the student experience.



Inspire our students

Access Success



The A2L team (l-r): Tracey Crow, Richard Kemp and Rebecca Clark.

More than 420 students entered the University via the Access to Leeds (A2L) scheme in 2012 – an increase of some 92% on the previous year.

"We're absolutely delighted that the scheme is continuing to thrive and grow," says Richard Kemp, from Access and Community Engagement. "We've put a lot of effort into increasing our outreach activities over the past few years. For example, five years ago we were involved with around 50 schools, nearly all in Yorkshire; now A2L is a national scheme with contacts in more than 300 schools across the UK".

Candidates meet certain criteria, such as coming from a low income background, being the first generation of a family to apply to University or studying at a low-achieving school or college. The scheme received around 3,200 applications for 2012.

"We review all applications for eligibility and work with the University's schools to set entry criteria," continues Richard. "This involves the applicant taking an A2L module, with a study skills element and a subject-specific assignment, which helps prepare people to get the most out of their University course. We also promote the scholarships that are available, so that people know how and where financial support is available.

"When students achieve the required results and have their place confirmed, they are invited to a pre-Freshers' Week welcome event. All this careful preparation helps to ensure that A2L students go on to achieve good results; our research shows that A2L students' achievements are just as good as their peers."

The A2L team is constantly trying to improve the scheme and an independent review is currently being carried out into the positive impacts that it has on participants and the University. They are also investigating the possibility of an online application system to speed up the process, and using postcode data to help target appropriate students.

National Student Survey now open

The 2013 National Student Survey (NSS) is now live and will remain open for eligible undergraduate students until the end of April.

The annual student experience survey of undergraduates, normally in their final year, has been conducted since 2005. It aims to gather feedback from students on the quality of their educational experience. This is then used internally as part of our ongoing review of our provision and externally to help inform the choices of future applicants to higher education.

The University takes responses to the NSS and to all student surveys very seriously and schools and faculties compile action plans in response to student feedback. Action plans can be viewed at www.its.leeds.ac.uk/respondingtoyourfeedback

Students can access the survey on www.thestudentsurvey.leeds.ac.uk and will receive 100 free printer credits for their participation. The questionnaire remains fundamentally the same as in previous years,

asking students the extent to which they agree with a series of statements about their course. There is also a question about the students' union. Results will be available in September.

A promotional campaign is being rolled out across campus to encourage students to take part. For further information about the NSS contact Anja Simpson at a.simpson@adm.leeds.ac.uk

International

A fairer share for all

Access to important services and systems such as water, telephony, electricity and even roads, is being denied to some of the world's poorest people – a problem which a new project led by Professor Jon Lovett (School of Geography) is seeking to address.

The project – *Structural reinforcement of inequality* – brings together experts in politics, human rights law, cities, energy and water. Funded by the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), the project involves the universities of Penn State, Western Australia and York, as well as external organisations Engineers Without Borders, Practical Action and WaterAid.

"Although equality may exist in law, in practice inequalities can be systematically reinforced by the planning and development of basic services and facilities," says Professor Lovett, who took up the leadership Chair in Global Challenges last year (See Reporter 568).

"Using case studies, we want to explore how this happens and the different perspectives that exist. For example, the viewpoints of water or energy engineers may differ markedly from those of human rights lawyers: efficient, cost-effective delivery of services that benefit society may be at odds with individual rights and freedoms and vice versa. Ultimately, our aim is to propose solutions to the practical problems identified in the case studies, and present these to policy-makers and implementing agencies."

Initial case studies will look at: irrigation systems in Nepal and the role of formal and informal controls in creating and overcoming inequality; how communities in rural Ghana and Tanzania cope with social, political and environmental change; and analysis of housing exclusion and disparity in areas of inner city Leeds and Pittsburgh.

"This project is a great example of how our leadership chairs are already contributing to the University, bringing learning and teaching together with research and working collaboratively across disciplines and institutions," says Professor Dawn Freshwater, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staff and Organisational Effectiveness). *Structural reinforcement of inequality* is one of several projects which received modest 'pump priming' awards from the WUN Research Development Fund.



Professor Lovett in Nepal. Photo taken by Tom Lovett.

As well as leading on two projects – Professor Lovett's and a further project being led by Dr Helen Elsey, Nuffield Centre for International Health & Development – we join a further 10 collaborations with WUN partners.

"These projects are relatively small scale, but have potential to have a massive impact and create opportunities for longer term funding by addressing the WUN's Global Challenges," says Louise Heery, International Networks and Collaborations Manager. "They bring excellent research-led teaching to our students and an opportunity for us to build sustainable partnerships through research with universities overseas."

The next round of WUN funding allocation is in autumn 2013. Full guidelines of how to apply can be found at www.leeds.ac.uk/wun



Irrigation systems in Nepal. The photo was taken by Bishnu Pariyar, one of Professor Lovett's PhD students.

Maastricht University joins WUN

The Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) has welcomed Maastricht University to become the 19th member of the global network.

Maastricht University is the Netherlands' most international university and is renowned for its forward-thinking approach to education.

Chief Executive of WUN Professor John Hearn, welcomed Maastricht University to the network, saying: "We are delighted that Maastricht University has joined the WUN family. Its innovative internationalisation strategy and reputation as a leading global university in Europe makes it a perfect match for WUN."

President of Maastricht University Professor Dr Martin Paul said: "It gives us a unique opportunity to connect with a selected number of international network universities who share our vision on research and education, while at the same time staying connected to their own region. The research focus of WUN matches very well with the strategic themes of Maastricht University enhancing a content-guided cooperation with our network partners."



Sustainability

Calling the past, supporting the future

“Hello, I’m calling from the University of Leeds...”

Tucked away in the bowels of the EC Stoner Building, students are re-connecting with Leeds alumni, talking to them about their memories of University and encouraging them to support the students of today – and tomorrow.

Just after 5.30pm the call room becomes abuzz with conversation, as up to 20 students at a time make calls to their counterparts of years past. As in commercial call centres, they sit in booths, wearing headsets, but there the similarity ends; the students make their own calls and rather than stick slavishly to a script, they are encouraged to engage the alumni in conversation.

It’s then that the magic starts to happen. “When we say we’re from the University, a lot of the alumni really want to chat,” says caller Philippa Plant, a second year English student. “They’ll talk about the Bodington Bus or getting lost on campus. But they’re also interested in us – what we’re studying and where we are living.”

As well as earning a little extra money through the work, the callers are adding to their CVs, growing in confidence – and gaining inspiration from the life stories of former students.

A typical call lasts 20 minutes, and a memory board in the call room is pasted up with comments made by the alumni remembering their time at Leeds. Many are about members of staff or halls of residence, or the lifelong friends they made at University. “Often it’s the pubs they remember – and especially the Otley Run,” says fourth year Law and Accountancy student Rachel O’Connor, who has graduated from caller to supervisor, her job now being to ensure the shift runs smoothly, to monitor the gifts which are coming in and to keep the team motivated.

Not that motivation seems to be a problem: “It gives you such a buzz to know that by talking to these people and getting their donations you are making a difference,” says Philippa. “There are students who wouldn’t be able to come to University without this help and that makes you want to keep going.”

It’s a tremendous success. An eight-week call campaign before Christmas secured gifts

and pledges totalling over £225,000; after the first three weeks of the current campaign, the students were on target to raise even more. Since calling began in 2004, the total is over £2.5m.

These gifts support a range of initiatives: scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, travel bursaries for student projects, community initiatives, internships, support for sports clubs, student well-being and counselling services – and the digitization of library texts. One of the callers on tonight’s shift, fourth year medical student Lucy Owen has actually benefited herself, through a scholarship which enabled her to spend a year intercalating in Primary Care.

“By getting in touch with our former students we are enabling them to support both current students and the future students who are still working hard to get here,” says Social Policy third year Adam Palmer. “It’s one big happy circle.”



It’s their call (l-r): Supervisor Rachael O’Connor (3rd year Law) and callers Alex Bull (2nd year Aviation Technology with Pilot Studies) and Stephanie Taiwo (2nd year Geography and Mathematics). © Adam Robinson Photography

Sustainability

Recycling brings rewards

A new contract awarded last year is ensuring that, for the very first time, none of the University’s campus waste now goes to landfill.

“This is a major achievement for us, and was made possible by the new Waste Management Contract,” says Janet Willis, Cleaning Services Manager. “This brought the collection and treatment of all general waste and recyclables under the management of one company – Premier Waste – and has produced considerable cost savings already. Our recycling rate for 2012 was 94%, and we’re aiming to increase this in 2013.

“All our waste goes to a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), a specialised plant that receives, separates and prepares recyclable materials for sale. A clean MRF takes materials that have been separated at source from the general waste – paper, cardboard, plastics, cans and glass – and sorts, bales, crushes or compacts it for onward shipment. The University now receives an income for some of these waste streams.

“A dirty MRF takes all our general waste and separates recyclables through manual and mechanical sorting. This MRF recycles approximately 89% of waste and the 11% that



Waste savers: Louise Ellis, student Claire Blissett, Janet Willis, Sarah Burdall, Kevin Banks, and students Victoria Burton and James Stevens.

can’t be reused goes to energy recovery, so none of the waste produced on campus goes to landfill.

“I’d like to thank everyone who’s helped us get to where we are now, and ask for their continuing support to increase our recycling rates even further.”

How different waste is used

Paper	Produce rolls of paper for newsprint	Batteries	Cadmium, nickel and silver are recovered and used in the steel industry
Cardboard	Manufacture of new cardboard or combined with other paper pulp to make hand towel and toilet tissue. Also used in cat litter	Fluorescent light tubes	Glass is used in loft insulation, the mercury phosphor powder is distilled and used to produce pure mercury
Plastics	Makes plastic bottles/trays, drainage pipes, fencing, polyester fleece clothing, filling for duvets	Toner cartridges	Branded cartridges are refilled. Cheaper ones are reground to make low-quality items such as wheelie bins
Glass	Made into new glass products. Low grades are used in road construction	Waste electrical and electronic equipment	Precious and non-ferrous metals are recovered and sent to steel works
Aluminium cans	Used to manufacture other aluminium products	Cooking oil	Processed into green biofuel
Food waste	Composted and used as soil improver for the agricultural industry		

Sustainability

New Elms for Oxley

Three new disease-resistant English Elm trees have been planted at Oxley Residences, acknowledging the property’s original name of The Elms.

Oxley Hall was sold to the University by the Oxley family in the 1900s, and adapted as a hall of residence for women students in 1921. As well as the heritage of the site, the new planting contributes to the University’s Biodiversity Action Plan.



Tree time (l-r): Mike Leonard, Residential Property Manager; Neil Hollindrake, Oxley Residences and Neil Whitaker, Aire Valley Tree Services Ltd.

Research and Innovation

Futuristic training helps dental students brush up on skills



Students using the new dental trainers.

Dental students at the University's Leeds Dental Institute (LDI) will be the first in the UK to cut their teeth on new simulation technology, allowing them to hone their drilling skills on virtual patients.

The next generation of dentists, dental hygienists and dental therapists are being presented with virtual 3D mouths to explore, where they can practise using drills to remove tooth decay. The technology will help students bridge the gap between learning the theory of dentistry and the moment they face a real patient for the first time.

The virtual mouth uses haptic technology, similar to that used in hand-held controllers that vibrate in computer games. It gives students tactile feedback so they can experience the difference between drilling into healthy enamel or decaying teeth. This sensation of resistance helps students learn how much pressure to use when drilling.

With 32 Moog Simodont Dental Trainers, the University is the first UK institution to invest in enough equipment for every student on its courses to regularly experience the virtual world of dentistry.

Director of Student Education at the LDI, Professor Paul Brunton, believes this technology will create a new 'virtual' standard of dentistry training, build confidence in dental students and go a long way to relieve patient anxieties: "Until now, students have practised using a 'phantom head', which is a life-sized model head with teeth. These help you get to grips with what it's like to have a real patient in front of you, but it's still a big step to then drill into someone's teeth for the first time. Dentistry is all about skill, dexterity and most importantly,

practise, so having a virtual mouth to test and perfect your skills on, time and time again, means our students are going to be very well practised before they treat a patient."

The virtual environment also allows dental students to play back what they've done, examine their technique, analyse how successful they were and identify areas for improvement. It prepares students for a wider range of more complex dental procedures, such as tackling decay on a single tooth through to opening teeth for root canal treatment.



Software Repository update

Please note that the website address for the Software Repository is <http://software.engineering.leeds.ac.uk/index.php>

Research and Innovation

'Spotlight' series highlights teaching and research

Spotlight – a series of videos and articles put together by the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) – is showcasing new and innovative activities in student education and research at the University.

"The series aims to highlight a variety of approaches and technologies adopted by colleagues to achieve their academic goals, together with information and guidance for those who want to learn more," says SDDU's Jane O'Neill.

"Spotlight will focus on a different topic every few weeks. Each week during that time, a different colleague will share their thoughts and practice, so it's definitely worth checking the site on a regular basis."

Spotlight has already covered the topic of open educational resources (OERs), with contributions from Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student Education Professor Viv Jones, and Dr Neil Morris, Chair of the Blended Learning and



Learning Technology Innovations Group.

It has also included case studies of creating and using OERs from Antonio Martínez-Arboleda (School of Modern Languages and Cultures), PhD student Carole Kirk and the School of Biomedical Sciences' Dr Dave Lewis and Dr James Pickering. In addition, there are links to guidance on using and creating OERs.

In March Spotlight is highlighting social media and how it is being used in both student education and research.

Visit Spotlight at <http://goo.gl/AjnI>

Research and Innovation

Universities Minister tours chemical labs

The University's chemistry and chemical engineering facilities were showcased when the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, paid a visit to the Institute of Process Research and Development (iPRD).

The Minister was shown state-of-the-art continuous processing equipment as well as a batch reactor that was recently donated to the University by a major pharmaceutical company to replicate processing used by industry. These will allow academics to work at industrially-relevant scales in developing

the next generation of drugs and provide postgraduate students with the skills and experience of working with equipment they may encounter in their future careers.

David Willetts said: "We have an excellent science and research base in the UK, but we need to connect this scientific expertise with commercial applications. It is great to see a facility such as this one here at Leeds which is bridging that gap and bringing the benefits of fundamental research to the pharmaceutical and chemical industries."

Sustainability

New research ethics policy agreed



The University's Research Ethics Policy was approved by Council in January 2013. The policy sets out a framework of good conduct and legislative compliance for researchers, research participants and the University.

"The policy applies to all types of research whether it's internally funded research, a research grant or a student research project, including undergraduate dissertations," says Jennifer Blaikie, Senior Research Ethics Administrator. "It applies to all research involving human subjects or their data; research with the potential to adversely impact on the physical environment; and to research with any other significant ethical dimensions.

"The principles of good research practice encourage our researchers to think about the wider consequences of their research, and engage with practical, ethical and intellectual challenges inherent in high-quality research."

Separate University processes exist for reviewing research involving human tissue, clinical trials or animals.

Further information and the research ethics policy are available at www.leeds.ac.uk/ethics. Researchers can contact Jennifer Blaikie – J.M.Blaikie@leeds.ac.uk or (0113) 343 4873 – for advice.

In the news

There was much media interest in research co-led by Professor Piers Forster (School of Earth and Environment), which revealed that **black carbon**, or soot, ranks as the second-largest human contributor to climate change, and that it has twice as much of an impact as had been previously thought. The research findings were reported by *BBC News*, the *Independent*, *Guardian*, *The Economist*, *National Geographic*, *Washington Post*, *Globo* (Brazil), and *Terra* (Brazil).



Further activity in the School of Earth and Environment made the news when Dr Kelly Baustian's account of her travels to Iceland to learn how dust particles affect **cloud formation** appeared in the *Scientific American journal*.



The influence of environmental conditions on the **domestic lives of bats** was the subject of discussion on BBC Radio 4's *Today* and *Saving Species* programmes and on the *Discovery Channel News*, and was reported by the *Daily Express*, and *Yahoo! News*. A study – co-authored by Professor John Altringham and Dr Ruth Angell (School of Biology) and Professor Roger Butlin of Sheffield University – has found that, along a 50km stretch of Wharfedale, the only place where male and female bats cohabit is at Grassington. Professor Altringham explained, "Females may roost as high up the dale as Grassington because they have these warm, cuddly males to bunk up with ... In these marginal conditions, they may just tolerate a few males to keep them warm. Otherwise they kick them out."

Dr Anita Glover (School of Biology) also appeared on the BBC programme *Wild Britain with Ray Mears* to talk about the Dales bats.

Professor Derek Scott (School of Music) took part in a discussion on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Something Understood* of the appeal of **national anthems** and their purpose in fostering patriotism.

Wide coverage was given to a study by Dr Andrew Hill (School of Biomedical Sciences) into the pressures faced by **elite young footballers**. Dr Hill's work has shown that some players at football academies show signs of 'burning out' as they try to meet the high expectations they and others have of them. The issue was reported by BBC Radio 5Live's *Victoria Derbyshire*, *ITV News*, *MSN News*, the *Daily Mail*, *Brisbane Times*, *Straits Times*, *Bangkok Post*, and *MSN Sports China*.

Channel 4 News sought expert opinion from Professor Peter Mackie (Institute for Transport Studies), who commented on the UK's need for the extra rail capacity which will be created by the new lines for **High Speed 2** (HS2). "A dedicated high-speed line ... is the way to go," he noted.



Dr Judi Atkins (School of Politics and International Studies) was interviewed for *BBC News* about her research looking at how politicians use anecdotes about ordinary people in their **party conference speeches**.

Professor John Corner (Institute of Communications Studies) also commented on **politicians' speeches** in an article for the *Times Higher Education*. Examining Nick Clegg's party political broadcast in which he apologised for the raising of university tuition fees, Professor Corner noted, "The stating of the obvious as if listeners were idiots, together with a sense of righteousness that has more than a whiff of the pulpit about it, plus a delivery so intent on conveying "sincerity" that it begins to hint at precisely the opposite."

There has been worldwide media interest in research led by Professor Nigel Hooper (School of Molecular and Cellular Biology) into the possible role of molecules found in **green tea and red wine** in helping to prevent the progression of Alzheimer's disease.



Professor Hooper appeared on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme to discuss the research, and the findings were also reported in the *Telegraph*, *Express*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Times of India*, *El Economista* (Spain), *ABC News* (Spain), *BBC Mundo*, *Le Figaro*, the *Huffington Post*, and last, but not least, by Richard and Judy in the *Express*.

Mr Aidan Foster-Carter (School of Sociology and Social Policy) appeared on the *Jeremy Vine* programme on *BBC Radio 2*, and wrote in the *Telegraph* and *Guardian* to explain how **North Korea** is viewed by other states, particularly in light of its latest nuclear test.

Concerns over the risk to patients from **faulty antibiotic test kits** were expressed by Professor Mark Wilcox (Leeds Institute of Molecular Medicine, School of Medicine) in the *Independent* and in an editorial in the *British Medical Journal*.

Our people / Honours



The University welcomes **Professor Julia Barrow** to the School of History as Director of the Institute for Medieval Studies.

Previously a Reader in Medieval Church History at the University of Nottingham, Professor Barrow's research interests lie chiefly in church history c700-c1300, especially English episcopal charters and administration c1000-c1300, and the career structure of the medieval clergy in Western Europe c800-c1250.

A developing area of interest is the concept of 'reform' and the extent to which this term can be applied in approaching the history of the Western church in the 10th-12th centuries. Professor Barrow's publications include *English Episcopal Acta, 35: Hereford 1234-1275* (Oxford, 2009) and *St Wulfstan and his World*, ed. Julia Barrow and Nicholas Brooks (Aldershot, 2005).

The **Library** has won a prestigious Bronze Design Effectiveness Award from the Design Business Association for its new visual identity and its application to printed material and website design.

Working with local design company WPA Pinfold, the Library redesigned the look and feel of its print and website information to project a bright, modern and engaging image, to better communicate with staff and students. The colours and iconography creates a consistent identity without paying for external design and production, saving money and staff time.

The awards recognise the return on investment that a coherent, well-thought-out and professionally executed design strategy can achieve. The judging panel consisted of senior marketers from brands such as Santander, TFL, John Lewis, Magner's, Oxfam and British Airways.

Our people / Honours

Spin-out Company of the Year award

Tracsis plc, which started out as a University spin-out, won Company of the Year in the mid-sized category at the Growing Business Awards which recognise high-growth, high-quality, world-class independent UK companies.

Tracsis provides the transportation industry with tools to control and optimise critical aspects of resource optimisation and delivery with the ultimate goal of increasing efficiency, reducing cost and improving performance. The business has contracts with every major train operating company in the UK and is expanding internationally.

The judges commented: "We were delighted by the success of Tracsis, a one-time Leeds University spin-out, which has come to dominate its particular niche in the rail industry...It's a model company that many other university spin-outs should admire and learn from."

For more visit www.tracsis.com

Professor Julia Barrow

Professor Terry Wilkins (Nanomanufacturing Institute, Faculty of Engineering) attended the Grenoble summit, held between the Ministers of Science and Industry from the UK, Germany, France Italy and Spain, to help shape the seven-year Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

Professor Wilkins attended in his capacity as Chair of the European Commission's Expert Advisory Group for Nano-, Materials- and Production –Technologies Research & Innovation Programme. The Grenoble summit announced a unanimous agreement by all member states on the €6.7bn Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) pillar in the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. These technologies are: Biotechnology, Micro- and nano-electronics; photonics, Nanotechnologies, Advanced materials, Advanced manufacturing and processing, and Space technologies.

Development of these six technologies requires a multi-disciplinary knowledge and capital-intensive approach. The Ministers were united in their view that these technologies are core to building economic growth through re-industrialisation of the manufacturing base.

The University's first Thesis Twitter Conference was won by **Alexander Wright** (Schools of Medicine and Computing) with his paper 'Automatically improving patient selection for chemotherapy'. The conference, which ran during the Postgraduate Researcher Conference, attracted 50 participants and showcased much of the excellent research being conducted at Leeds.

Runner-up was **Cassey McRae** (Schools of Chemistry and Physics and Astronomy) with a paper on 'Improving the success rates of *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF): Can we predict the best eggs to fertilise?'

The winning entry was selected by audience vote, after voters were asked to consider whether the thesis was communicated so that it was understood by a non-specialist audience and if it left the audience wanting to know more.

News

The Staff Communications Survey – you said it!

The majority of University colleagues are broadly satisfied with staff communications but there's plenty of room for improvement, according to the initial results of the recent Staff Communications Survey.

"We had a good response to the survey, so the results give us a pretty trustworthy picture of opinion across our staff," says Isabel Hunt, Director of Communications. "This is underlined by the breadth and consistency of responses across job types, length of service, faculty and services."

The aims of the Survey were to find out how effective current University communications are, how satisfied people are with them and to identify areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement.

Nearly 76% of colleagues said they are satisfied or very satisfied with staff communications, and 82% said they have relatively good access to a broad range of information. However, although strategic messages are mostly being received, there is some dissatisfaction around the quality, openness and timing of communications around change and strategic performance, with 54% saying they don't have enough chance to give their opinions on the University's strategic direction. Staff are also keen to meet

and talk to each other, with 57% wanting more opportunities to get together with colleagues from other areas.

"Overall, three main areas stood out where we need to make improvements: the amount and flow of information; colleagues' involvement in key decisions; and contact with senior managers," continues Isabel.

"There are some changes that we can begin to implement immediately, such as updates to the For Staff website and the distribution of the *Reporter*. We'll also be seeking to produce a communications guide which clarifies the role of the central Communications team, the purpose of our central communications channels and best practice guidelines for

faculties, schools and services.

"We want, too, to find ways of increasing the accessibility of our senior managers, so that more people feel they can have their say about important issues. We'll be working with HR and, where appropriate, other services, to clarify responsibilities for cascading information, and review training to ensure that a communications element is built in to – or increased within – courses."

More detailed results of the survey – including a breakdown of responses to the questions – will be made available via For Staff in the next few weeks. You can also contact the Communications team at internalcomms@leeds.ac.uk



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Events

Healthy Week 22-26 April

This year's Healthy Week is all about making a pledge to improve your health. You might wish to sleep better, lose weight, learn to swim, feel energised, run a 5k, do a triathlon, eat less fat...

During Healthy Week we're encouraging students and staff find out how to use the expertise and services within the University to set and reach their health goals. Throughout the week there will be lots of workshops, events, activities to help you.

Visit www.leeds.ac.uk/healthyweek to find out more.

You can also look out for further details on For Staff and in the April edition of the staff e-newsletter. Students will be able to get details via LUU and the Portal.



Helping you to get more for your money

The ever-popular **Staff Benefits Fair** is back on **20 March 2013**. Come along and find out about the wide range of staff benefits available to you as a member of staff.

Our new voluntary benefits provider, Wider Wallet, will be attending the fair. Find out what discounts and cash back you can get when you shop via their scheme.

Now the weather is getting better, what about buying a bike under the cycle to work scheme? As this is via a salary sacrifice scheme you will make considerable savings.

If fitness is your goal, come and find out about membership of the Edge, again if you take out membership via salary sacrifice you will make savings on your monthly membership.

Pension auto-enrolment will impact on anyone not currently in a University pension scheme. Talk to the pensions team and see how it will affect you.

The Fair will be held in Parkinson Court from 11am to 3pm.

Come along, get a **complimentary cup of tea or coffee**, speak to all our benefits providers and find out what we have to offer and what savings you can make.

stage@leeds season

Why not discover stage@leeds this spring and summer? An exciting programme includes new work from established artists (Mad Dogs Dance Theatre present *Dogs Land*) and premieres by emerging artists such as Magpies Three (presenting *To Do*) and Gavin Leonard (Space: Needed).

With a venue in the centre of the campus, reasonable prices and varied productions, stage@leeds is an excellent night out. Full details of the programme can be found at www.stage.leeds.ac.uk

Staff Festival – 5 July

This year's Staff Festival has been confirmed to take place on Friday 5 July. Full details have yet to be announced but photography and kids' art competitions have been confirmed, as has a special University Challenge! We're also looking for people who are willing to run workshops and demonstrations, help out with fairground games or just join in stewarding duties.

Email if you think you can lend a hand stafffestival@leeds.ac.uk



FAQs

Axel Müller, International Medieval Congress Director

The annual International Medieval Congress (IMC) – which you and your team organise – is moving to the main campus this year. How did that come about?

Leeds has a very strong tradition in Medieval Studies, and has hosted the International Medieval Congress since its inception in 1994 at Bodington and Weetwood. We have now outgrown the original setting and moving to the main campus is a natural progression and inevitable for securing a longer-term future for the Congress.

What are the advantages of bringing the IMC to campus?

The main campus is more suitable for us with much better facilities and closer to the city centre. Now we have an opportunity to impress our delegates with the highlights of the Campus – the Parkinson Building, the Great Hall, Brotherton Library and many more.

And the biggest challenges?

Moving an established event is always risky. We aim to retain the Congress' familiar feel that the previous setting offered, making sure that delegates get the personal service that they are used to, while ensuring that all parts of the University work together to give the best possible experience for what is the biggest annual conference in any subject in the country.

The theme this year is 'Pleasure' – what sort of subjects will people be talking about?

Pleasure is a universal human experience, which can be brought on by sensory stimulation, aesthetic appreciation, practising an activity, sharing a common experience – or even all of these together. Our delegates will present papers on spiritual and physical pleasure, joyful dying and living, from the medieval weapons of Buffy the



Vampire Slayer to erotic violence, marital pleasure, communal vices, the proximity of pleasure to pain, and many other facets of this vast field.

Can colleagues and members of the public get involved with the IMC?

Absolutely. We would love for people to be involved in the Congress. We are working on a public events programme, including special staff opening hours for the bookfair, as well as a 'Making Leeds Medieval' event on Thursday 4 July.

Tell us about your own research and how you became interested in it.

Currently I am involved in a project on origins of firepower, looking at the later medieval development of artillery and explosives, its uses and contributions to changes in society. It's a fascinating mix between history, archaeology, history of science and technology, and also linguistics.

Like many children, I was also enthralled with the legends and myths about King Arthur and Robin Hood. As a child I was taken to visit medieval castles and cathedrals and they were shown to me as sites of achievement ("Isn't it amazing what great things people managed to achieve with so few skills"). Over the years I have learnt that there is much more to medieval technology, and I continue to be amazed and fascinated by the subject.

Which four people – dead or alive – would you invite for dinner?

There are a number of occasions in the past that I'd like to have been a fly on the wall at crucial events and among key people – Richard III, Roger Bacon, Bede, Robin Hood (if he ever existed) – but I am not sure how many would be good dinner guests. My ideal dinner party would include my friends, Barbara, Peter, Andrew, and Iona.

What's your most frequently asked question?

Were the Middle Ages all dark and dirty? And, why are you not dressed up in medieval costume?

Which medieval mystery would you most like to solve and why?

To me, studying the past is not always about solving mysteries. There is usually not one answer, but many possible answers. Still, I'd be intrigued to know what the living conditions were really like in, say, 15th-century Leeds – walking around, what did it sound and smell like, and how busy/quiet was it really. For me, it's not about the big mysteries but about smaller occurrences of everyday living.

You can find out more about this year's Congress at <http://goo.gl/IT30A>