Student Education Bulletin

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SEC/DigiFest 2018 review

The Vice-Chancellor formally opened this year’s Student Education Conference and Digital Festival, which took place over Thursday 4 and Friday 5 January this year.

Sir Alan Langlands informed nearly 400 delegates that he felt no other university in the UK could attract such numbers to an internal event of this nature. This year’s theme was The Co-creation of Education.

Digital education consultant Helen Beetham delivered the DigiFest keynote on Co-creation, Collaboration and Critical Pedagogy; and Joanne Shiel and Andy Kemp from the Faculty of Engineering delivered the SEC keynote. Their session Making International Co-creation Work reflected on their experiences of setting up the Southwest Jiaotong University and Leeds Joint School and the excitement and challenge of creating educational provision that links with Chinese curricula, staff and students.

The programme included a launch reception for the Digital Education Service, celebrating the team’s transition from project to business-as-usual status. Director of Digital Learning Neil Morris outlined the Service’s vision of providing learners with professional and educationally robust digital education.

Over the two days of the event, delegates were also able to attend a total of 35 parallel sessions and 18 workshops, and visit 18 exhibits. Feedback for the event was overwhelmingly positive. One delegate felt that “having people who believe in what they are doing and talking to others in a friendly way makes the event a success... I had the impression this was a good group of people who really care about students.”

The theme for SEC2019 will be Learning Spaces. To find out more and discover how you can get involved, turn to the call for papers on page 12 of this issue.

SEB21 is also available online at teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk
Student perspectives

Zaki Kaf Al-Ghazal  
LUU Education Officer

So much has been happening at LUU! Our Union upgrade has been completed, so we’ve all finally been able to use the building to its full potential. We have now so many new spaces for students, which really ties in with the joint Executive Objectives to “inspire students to enable students to engage”. In terms of engagement with LUU, I’ve had the opportunity to host great Education Assemblies where I’ve been able to keep the various School Reps in the loop over my activities, and they’ve had the chance to network and share best practice. We’ve been lucky enough to have Tom Ward speaking at one and Kelvin Tapley from LITE speak at another. One of my biggest aims over this year has been to diversify assessment methods and lead the shift away from an exam-heavy model; something which fits into my overall aim to ensure that students at the University of Leeds gain a holistic education during their time here that will prepare them for life at another. One of my biggest aims over this year has been to work with LITE in diversifying assessment structures and the curriculum – and ensuring that students have a say in this from a grass-roots level – is vital. As Education Officer there’s always a lot to do but the relationships I’ve formed as part of the role have been the highlight; and long may they continue!

Chloe Sparks  
LUU Welfare Officer

This session has flown by, so it’s nice to be able to take a bit of time to stop and reflect on my year in office. I’ve really enjoyed working in partnership with the University and think the continuing success of the Wellbeing Board gives students an important voice in their own welfare.

From the start, one of my priorities has been tackling hate crimes. I’m proud of the success we’ve had in gaining HEFCE funding for a hate-crime prevention project and shall really look forward to seeing LUU and the University work on this together to fulfill this.

Mental health is another crucial priority for us and, whilst the investment in things such as Big White Wall are great, there is definitely still room for improvement in student support. So many people across campus care about mental health and we can all move towards a more coherent effort to combat the mental health crisis on campus. I’ve been raising awareness of domestic abuse and working on how we prevent sexual harassment and violence. I’m also very excited to be the student voice on the Student Education Programme Board and have really enjoyed representing students this year!

Fitness to study for PGRs

Rebecca Dearden, Student Cases (Secretariat)

This issue of the Bulletin explores the different types of contribution postgraduate researchers (PGRs) make to the teaching and learning community at the University. Whether teaching, mentoring, supporting laboratory practicals, or engaging in other activities, PGRs share the same responsibilities we all face when taking part in such activities with our students, and taking on additional responsibilities can reveal underlying concerns about a PGR’s fitness to study. The University now has a procedure to support PGRs in this situation and address these concerns.

The Fitness to Study Procedure (the Procedure) – www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/documents/fitness_to_study_procedure.pdf – applies to both PGRs and undergraduate students and applies when any member of staff or student is concerned that a PGR or student’s health, wellbeing or behaviour suggests that they are not fit to study. This covers behaviour in a range of settings, including in LUU, a public place, the local community, on the premises of other educational institutions, when abroad as part of the requirement of a University course, undertaking fieldwork, and when in shared residential accommodation and on work placement. It is also aligned to the expectations of the Leeds Partnership and the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidatures; the University Values; and the University Policy on Dignity and Mutual Respect. The Procedure can help, for example:

• when it is known that a PGR or student is unwell and it is known that they are not taking action to seek help;
• when it is known that a PGR or student is unwell and they are receiving treatment, but their treatment does not appear to be conducive to study or is otherwise not allaying concerns;
• when a PGR or student’s behaviour in engaging with their studies, research or activities, or in engaging with University services suggests that the student is not fit to study;
• when it is reported to a member of the University community by someone outside the community (e.g. host institution, work placement) that a PGR or student appears to be or is unfit to study; or
• when a PGR or student’s health difficulties or behaviours are negatively impacting upon the wellbeing and health of others (PGRs, students and staff).

The Procedure sets out a framework for support in these situations. This includes School-level support meetings to agree action plans; cross-institutional case conferences; and if necessary action that can be taken by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies to require a student to temporarily or permanently withdraw from their studies.

The Procedure provides a transparent process for responding consistently to this situation and aims to ensure that students are informed and supported as they engage with the process, taking into consideration the challenges that their health, wellbeing, or behaviour may pose, and that they are aware they have a right of review.

Further information about the Procedure and the work of the Student Cases Team can be found at www.leeds.ac.uk/student_cases.html.
As my second year at Leeds reaches exam season, I’ll start by reiterating my thanks to everyone who works so hard contributing to our exceptional educational offer. While league tables are always problematic in their simplification of a rich and complex experience, it is pleasing to see that effort reflected in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide for 2018, and the Guardian League Table 2019.

Over the last few months we have said goodbye to Robert Partridge and Rafe Hallett. During Robert’s time here the scale, quality, and impact of student opportunities and the approach to student wellbeing have developed enormously. Rafe has taken the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence from an idea to a vibrant presence, a highly visible manifestation of our commitment to evidence-based excellence in education. We wish them well for their new lives at Glasgow and Keele respectively.

We also welcomed at the start of this academic year Sarah Lund, who has overseen the wrapping up of the first phase of the SE programme and the beginning of the major Student Life Cycle programme. Several items in this Bulletin discuss aspects of the special contribution that postgraduate researchers (PGRs) make to undergraduate education. The benefits of this involvement span much of what we are trying to do. PGRs are of course a vital part of our research power, and Leeds could not be the research powerhouse it is without their contribution.

PGRs’ involvement in education brings many different benefits and helps build demonstrable skills beyond their own research. Among many different events I have recently attended involving education at Leeds, I joined part of the Urban Impact Programme at the Civic Hall. This was part of Sociology in Action, with students from the School of Sociology and Social Policy engaging with the local community and third-sector organisations. This provides organisations doing work of great importance to the community with enthusiastic and talented student researchers, and allows the students to apply their skills in real-world settings. This programme started in 2013/14 with six students from SSP volunteering with CATCH (Community Action to Change Harehills), and it was good to hear from Leeds City Council Chief Executive Tom Riordan and the Leader of Council Judith Blake how much this link is valued. This is but one of many ways in which our students and staff ensure that the education we provide has an impact both on our students and on the wider world around them.

My own weekly ‘supervisions’ as an undergraduate mathematics student many years ago, led by several different patient PGRs, helped me navigate the difficult transition into university study – and some key threshold concepts in group theory and analysis – in ways different to other lectures and tutorials. Later, as a PGR myself, I found giving undergraduate supervisions enjoyable, and in hindsight they gave me enormously valuable experience – and, of course, helped pay the rent.

This year we have the Leeds Doctoral College in full operation, and I look forward to seeing that become a focal point for the support and enhancement opportunities available to PGRs. Some of this will be physically located in the Ziff Building, some will be virtual – but in both cases the college will build opportunities and communities beyond and complementary to PGRs’ individual departments. The College has been part of Claire Honess’s vision for how the PGR experience will develop, and it is good to see it become real. Claire reflects on this herself on page 10 of this issue.

Turning to undergraduate education, the 2017 National Student Survey saw the University of Leeds top the Russell Group in ‘teaching’ and ‘learning resources’, reflecting the huge commitment of everyone here to education.

After the excitement of the Teaching Excellence Framework announcements in the Summer, there has been a lot of noise about Higher Education in the press. Not all of this noise has been well informed, and the sector has not always responded with quite the calm and wisdom one might wish for.

Beneath the headlines, a few things of real substance seem to be emerging. One is an increased focus on the sustainability of the funding model, another an increased focus on the widening participation agenda, and a third is the potential for rapid change in governance arrangements as the Office for Students comes into full existence. We await developments on the third, but for the first two Leeds is well positioned. We can’t always influence national policy on how universities should be funded, but we can continue to ensure that a Leeds education is well worth the investment – wherever that investment comes from. The quality and diversity of the educational experience here empowers our students for the rest of their lives in ways that go far beyond narrow metrics. The Access to Leeds scheme – which in 2017 saw almost a thousand students enter the University – is just one of several programmes where Leeds is a leading player in expanding opportunities and supporting success for less advantaged students. Whatever happens to the regulatory environment, we can look with confidence to the future.

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PGRs’ involvement in education brings many different benefits. It certainly expands their own experience, helping them to build demonstrable skills beyond their own research. Most importantly, PGRs contribute in special ways to research-based learning. From first-year laboratory techniques to tutorials, to the general life of the department, seeing active researchers who often can find bridges to the undergraduate experience in ways different to the regular staff can be an important influence.

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Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) at Leeds contribute immensely to the richness and vibrancy of our academic communities. Whilst primarily engaged in research with a view to the award of a PhD, many of our PGRs are also involved in teaching. This might include delivering lectures, seminars, demonstrating in laboratories and supporting fieldwork. In recognition of the significant contribution that our PGRs make to the student education experience at Leeds, combined with an evolving national context including the Teaching Excellence Framework and the increasing scrutiny being applied to the overall quality of teaching in Higher Education, in 2017 it was felt timely to review and evaluate the support on offer to prepare PGRs who engage in teaching and support student education.

The University’s Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching requires that all PGRs with teaching responsibilities receive appropriate training and guidance to teach or support learning. For many years this has been provided by Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL) through a combination of bespoke provision for schools and faculties and a programme of workshops. These covered a wide range of student education topics, putting them into the context of the Leeds Curriculum. They were appropriate for staff new to teaching or with limited teaching responsibilities, including PGRs. Many Schools and Faculties also offer discipline-specific training provision and ongoing opportunities for PGRs to review and share practice.

A review of OD&PL support for PGRs revealed a degree of repetition between workshops as well as some variability in the bespoke provision and in the minimum expectations for PGRs before commencing their teaching. As a result, OD&PL is piloting a new full-day introductory ‘core’ event to prepare PGRs for their teaching whilst enhancing the baseline level of support provided and promoting a consistent and coherent approach. Named ‘Foundation in Teaching’ (FiT), the workshop adopts a more holistic approach to student education. Even small or specific PGR contributions (such as laboratory demonstrations), are part of the whole student education experience, so FiT focuses on situating each PGR’s teaching within the wider Leeds context. As such, FiT is discipline neutral, and is delivered to support participants to reflect on and locate their teaching practice within their specific environment.

The one-day FiT workshop focuses on the key features and underpinning principles of the Leeds Curriculum, most notably the core concept of research-based learning. Participants are then prepared for the planning and delivery of small-group teaching sessions through a combination of practical tools and frameworks, underpinning pedagogical theory, and an understanding of how students learn. The workshop also covers the importance of feedback in helping students make sense of their learning, as well as an overview of the role of technology in the context of the University’s Blended Learning Strategy. Participants are encouraged to consider how they can manage their own professional development, including the possibility of seeking Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) – now called Advance HE – if they have developed sufficient experience of teaching.

Launched in September 2017, the response from colleagues has been hugely encouraging and over 300 PGRs have since completed the FiT workshop. Initial evaluations have been very positive, with a large majority of participants agreeing that the session was engaging, relevant and useful. Inevitably there are areas for improvement: a key challenge is to find an appropriate balance between, on the one hand, the aim for a broadly-based overview centred on key educational principles with, on the other hand, participants’ need to apply these principles and see their relevance in the specific context of their disciplinary environment.

PGRs are encouraged to reflect on the workshop and take the tools and techniques back to their school to explore their student education practice with their mentor or the module leader.

Alongside FiT, a separate and complementary series of workshops has been launched under the title ‘First Steps in Student Education’. These cover the same broad areas as the FiT workshop, but explore them in more depth and also cover topics that would not normally fall within the scope of a PGR’s teaching responsibilities. So for example, researchers who are asked to provide lectures, contribute to the marking of formal assessments, or supervise student dissertations, should attend these sessions to ensure they are fully prepared.

One further outcome of OD&PL’s review into its provision is the adoption of a more blended approach to delivery, using Minerva and other online tools to extend learning beyond the seminar room. A Minerva organisation has been created and made available to all FiT participants to enhance and complement the face-to-face activities in the workshop. Not only does this offer an easy way to distribute resources and provide links to relevant research, case studies and online tools, but it also provides an online space where PGRs can share and reflect on their own experiences of teaching. In time, it is hoped that this could contribute to the establishment of a genuine community of practice among PGRs, particularly those wishing to develop an academic career.

PGRs who meet the requirements for Associate Fellowship of the HEA will be able to submit an application through the new PRiSE scheme. This internal scheme allows applicants to gain professional recognition for their student education work by drawing on their experience and demonstrating how it meets the relevant standards as defined in the UK Professional Standards Framework. PGRs with a minimum of one year’s teaching experience are eligible to apply, and are supported by briefing sessions and workshops led by OD&PL.

As always we welcome feedback on any aspect of our provision in OD&PL. If you have any comments or queries concerning our support for PGRs who teach, please contact academicdev@leeds.ac.uk
PGRs creating online resources for UG student education

with an introduction from Melanie Prideaux, School of PRHS

Jonathan Smith and Mark Dawson, two postgraduate researchers (PGRs) in Theology and Religious Studies, were appointed as educators on the online module Critical and Ethical Thinking. This module will form part of the University’s FutureLearn programme. Emma Tomalin, Professor of Religion and Public Life (and lead educator on the religion section of the course), felt that Jonathan and Mark’s involvement with the module could add real benefit. Their respective research interests have led them to shape case studies that illustrate some of the key areas of learning for the module.

Jonathan and Mark reflect here on their involvement in the process of constructing an online module.

My PhD research focuses on churchgoers who carry out action in the promotion of Fair Trade. Professor Emma Tomalin thought that it would provide a pertinent case study for the online module, as it explores the interface between the religious and the secular and speaks into the discourse of the ‘post-secular’ – key areas that Emma had identified for the religion section of the module to explore.

This was a great opportunity to use the work that I have carried out and in a manner that I did not anticipate. That said, it is a bit of a culture shock. The presentation of teaching and learning online certainly aims towards the succinct. For a PGR, counter-intuitive thinking is required to resist the temptation to expand on a point or offer a range of references and examples where one will suffice. Rather than focus on nuance, the task of producing the module content proved an exercise in boiling down the key points into their essential elements. The mode of communication, in the form of online teaching and learning, shaped the content to a far greater degree than I anticipated. The friendly advice of the IT-focused members of the module team has introduced to me a whole new way of looking at the presentation of teaching content.

Work on the module really came together for me when we embarked on filming. The nature of my contribution, in offering a case study, was made real when the film production team descended on the Horsforth area of Leeds. I had selected the Fair Trade activity in this area as an example of what happens when faith communities and other sectors of society come together to work on a social justice project. During the interviews, participants discussed some of the issues that I had raised in my textual content. The online presentation will bring my textual commentary (and the questions I pose to students) alongside this visual input featuring ‘real people’ in a ‘real life’ setting. The real-world connection of academic commentary being presented instantly.

Mark Dawson

A major focus of my research is how religious groups participate in humanitarian work in the Middle East. I have long been interested in online courses, occasionally dabbling in open online courses on environmental science and Arabic. I never thought that I would ever have the opportunity to help develop an online module at Leeds based on my field of research. That opportunity presented itself as a one-week section of the Critical and Ethical Thinking online module on the topic of Religion and Humanitarianism.

By joining the module development team, I had the opportunity to incorporate learning from my research into case studies for the online course. We interviewed a Muslim charity involved in working with Syrian refugees in the Middle East and developed videos from the interview to illustrate humanitarian work in practice. I had the opportunity to apply findings from my own research about humanitarian principles and religion directly into the module’s content.

The course is still under development, but I have already benefitted from being part of the process. I have gained valuable experience from being part of a dynamic team with other PGRs, lecturers and curriculum managers. Writing an online course for a broad audience requires a very different skill set from developing a lecture or running a seminar. Shrinking down a complex subject into a few hours of material that students can study online is challenging. It has been a good exercise to learn how to identify the key debates or issues that will help students engage with the material. Having a team with different viewpoints and expertise has been essential in making the content relevant to as broad an audience as possible.

Jonathan Smith

For both Jonathan and Mark, this insight into the world of digital teaching has provided the opportunity to develop new skills. It has encouraged a focus into means of presentation which are direct and concise and where ‘the visual’, rather than occupying a complementary role, is a central priority. Because the development of an online module requires such a range of expertise, it is very much a collaborative exercise. Team working extends beyond planning sessions, to almost every stage of the module development process. Ultimately, being involved in the development of an online module is not so much an opportunity to ‘adapt’ the presentation of one’s work, rather it is an immersion into ‘thinking digitally.’
Projects, projects, projects!
Kelvin Tapley, Interim Director, LITE

The original vision for the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (LITE) was "to establish the University of Leeds as an international leader in the pedagogy and scholarship of research-led education and research-based learning, and a centre for the development and dissemination of exciting and innovative teaching practice." We have been achieving this primarily through our projects and the main focus of this article will be to discuss those projects – past, present and future.

Up until now, two ways of conducting research have been available: either as a LITE Excellence and Innovation Fellow or a LITE Teaching Enhancement Project Leader (TEPL). Fellowshipships allow for secondment of staff at up to 1.0 FTE for one academic year, which can be shared amongst more than one member of staff. In comparison, TEPLs are seconded to LITE for 0.2 FTE for one calendar year, and again this can be shared. The project titles and their leaders are shown in the tables on page 7. Further details of individual projects are available at teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/projects/

Completed projects
The two initial LITE Excellence and Innovation Fellowship projects have been completed, reports produced, recommendations made and a wide range of dissemination and impacts achieved – further information about these is available at teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/projects/completed-lite-projects/

Reflections on one of these – Realising Resilience: An evidence-based approach to embedding resilience within the curriculum are provided as a separate article within this issue of the Bulletin (see page 10). The second, Understanding the Significant Role Language Plays in Shaping Discipline-specific Knowledge and Understanding; Smoothing international student transitions will be discussed in a future edition of the Bulletin. All the project areas remain very topical with further dissemination and implementation work ongoing.

The first cohort of Teaching Enhancement Project Leaders (TEPLs) have also completed their projects, or shall be doing so shortly. Their reports have been coming in and a number of dissemination activities are now happening to ensure the broadest impact possible for each project. Again, the tables on page 7 provide a list of the project areas, which generally have good alignment with Student Education Strategic Priorities, such as the Leeds Curriculum.

The dissemination strategy for LITE projects within the University is currently being reviewed, as is the relationship LITE has with its alumni. It is important that the reports, findings and recommendations reach the appropriate people – if you feel any of the subject areas are relevant to you or your faculty / service, please do contact the relevant author(s) or LITE for further information.

Current projects
Four Fellowship projects started in 2017/18. In the first semester, the internal Fellows were joined by Professor Peter Lennie as an International Visiting Fellow researching Learning Gain in different country settings. There are ten Teaching Enhancement Projects running in 2018, plus one postponed to January 2019. Major themes seen through these projects are the Leeds Curriculum, Assessment and Feedback, Digital, Employability, plus Access and Inclusion. Work in Progress (WiP) sessions have been delivered by Fellows and Project Leaders to the LITE community (and are open to all staff at the University). From these WPs it is clear that there is some very interesting and important work taking place with some very engaged audiences leading to plenty of interactions, feedback, ideas and motivation being shared, which bodes well for the ongoing work and its wider impact.

As well as the TEPLs coming from a range of areas across campus, the projects themselves are working across many research sites here at Leeds. Some link with external partners – this is an aspect that is likely to expand both in the current set of projects and, we hope, in future projects. Another pleasing aspect of some projects is the co-creation element. Some involve collaboration between academic and professional-services staff, some with students (and some with both), while others include student interns on the project teams. Again, these are areas where there appears to be even greater potential for the future.

Future projects
LITE has already started planning for our next cohort of projects. We will be launching the call for new project proposals at this year’s Teaching Scholarship Showcase, with the following priority areas are proposed (TBC by LITE board 27 June 2018):

- Inclusive curriculum / inclusive learning and teaching practices
- Interdisciplinarity
- Evaluating curriculum change
- Student co-creation of education
- Efficient / innovative assessment
- Learning analytics
- Student support and development
- Developing the digital offer
- Scalable delivery of student education to industry / business

Whilst opportunity for innovation and its evaluation are important, it is also critical that, where appropriate, LITE helps the University to
deliver its strategic priorities for student education. To this end, LITE will host a workshop during the summer, alongside several drop-in sessions with professional-service colleagues, for staff wishing to build a proposal for LITE project funding to commence either in January 2019 or the start of the 2019/20 session.

LITE will also host a planning workshop for colleagues who successfully secure funding that will cover, amongst other things, gaining ethics approval for your project, project-managing your project, recruiting student interns to work alongside you, plus an induction to the support and facilities available through LITE. The Institute is also keen to support greater immersion within the LITE community of both taught students and postgraduate researchers. New initiatives will be developed and piloted in 2018/19 linked to student affiliates and student-led projects, and to Postgraduate Researchers Enhancing Practice (PREP) in Student Education – there is also likely to be a parallel / combined scheme for Postdoctoral Researchers Enhancing Practice. This PREP scheme will contribute to the development and support of PGRs / PDs, especially those who wish to follow an academic career, at the same time as potentially enhancing the UG student experience.

Events and activities
Another important dimension of LITE’s work is its events and activities programme. Most colleagues will be aware of the Student Education Conference that LITE hosts every January to highlight innovation and good practice. Reflections on SEC2018 can be found on the front cover of this issue, while the call for papers for SEC2019 – the theme for which is Learning Spaces – is published on the back page. This March, LITE also hosted the Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching Conference, an international conference that welcomed over 100 delegates from several UK and European universities.

We are also currently working with the Academy of Innovation in LUBS to support the Festival of Teaching, which will feature a LITE writing retreat, the Teaching Scholarship Showcase and TEPL launch event, plus a LITE project sandpit. Further information about the Festival, which runs from 13 June to 21 September, can be found at teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/events/festival-of-teaching/

In addition to our Work in Progress and Masterclass programmes, we will also be piloting ad hoc Share, Adopt, Adapt workshops. Akin to internal Masterclasses, not only would these share good practice, but they would also help ensure that findings from LITE projects are shared and implemented either at school, faculty or institution level. Planning has also started on a refresh of the LITE facilities, with a number of changes and initiatives taking place over the coming months. It is certainly a stimulating and exciting time for student education and the LITE community.

2016/17 Fellows
Lydia Blesdale
Sarah Humphreys
Undergraduate resilience research project

Bee Bond
Understanding the intersection of language, disciplinary knowledge communication, and identity

2017/18 Fellows
Samantha Pugh
Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education: Learning from secondary education

Scott Palmer
Maria Kapsali
Digital creativity through mobile phone technologies

Jackie Houghton
Clare Gordon
Graham McLeod
The virtual landscapes project

2018/19 Fellows
Darren Trowsdale
Development of methods and processes to implement co-creation of HE learning

Helen Sadig
Cecile de Cal
Building a Civic Curriculum: Helping local schools support EAL children through enhanced student impact and teacher PDP

2017 TEPLs
Luke Burns
Meeting 21st Century Data Demands: The supply and demand of quantitative skills

Helen Durham
Enhancing Discipline-specific Skills in Taught Postgraduate Students: Evaluating the impact of a pilot transition resource on student experience

Brian Henson
Testing the internal construct validity of assessments of undergraduate engineering projects using the Rasch module

Nimesh Mistry
A strategy to enhance conceptual understanding using active learning

Bronwin Patrickson
Mobilising the curriculum at the University of Leeds

Caroline Campbell
Karen Llewellyn
Co-Discovery: A staff / student collaborative evaluation of the value of Broadening within the undergraduate student journey

Maria McKeever
Kevin Macnish
Teaching Research Ethics: A new resource for an old need

Alice Shepherd
Mark Sumner
Year In Industry Placements: Barriers, challenges and motivations

Clair Souler
Melissa Schuessler
Re-Entry and Post-Experience Learning: Supporting placements / study abroad students to enhance and articulate their experience

Lata Narayanawarroy
Exploring research partnerships with development NGOs to enhance student skill-building and future employability

2018 TEPLs
Polly Wilding
Cathy Coombs
Keeping Everybody Happy? Delivering interdisciplinary teaching and learning on a blended-learning module

David Lewis
Final-year Undergraduate Research Projects at a Research Intensify University: Student and staff expectations, outcomes and impact on employability

Kate Watkins
John Balfour
A Data Driven Approach to Understanding Non Engagement with Employability Initiatives: a cross-institutional perspective

Antonio Martinez-Abiokeda
Providing Feedback via Desktop Capture: To review use and encourage broader take-up

Eveline Anne Cade
Supporting Inclusivity and Widening Participation: Promoting HE as a viable pathway for people with convictions

Megan Kinne
Pathways to Success for PGTs: Online transition support resources for taught postgraduate students

Ruth Payne
Accessible Assessment: Producing an inclusivity toolkit for assessment design

Caitriona Dennis
Nancy Davies
Sharing and Enhancing Practice in Work Based Learning: Providing an excellent student experience on placement through focused faculty development activities

Tom Jackson
This project will produce an online resource gathering together best practice to assist students (and their supervisors) undertaking a practice-led PhD programme

Norma Martin
Clement
The use and impact of Collaborative Lecture Theatres
Supporting current PGRs; inspiring future PGRs
Claire Honess, Doctoral College

The Leeds Doctoral College was launched in October 2017, with the remit of helping the University of Leeds attract the best possible postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to support its Research and Innovation strategy, and of ensuring that the University’s PGRs receive the best possible support during their time here.

At the heart of any research degree lies the individual project – that specialised area in which the PGR will become truly expert. Across the University, our supervisors support their PGRs in developing their independence as researchers and as they push back the boundaries of knowledge in their own fields. But around that central core congregate a host of other activities and opportunities – training, work placements, language support, engagement with the broader University, and opportunities to teach – all of which enhance the PGR experience. And it is broadly with these that the Doctoral College concerns itself.

Dean of the Doctoral College, Professor Claire Honess, explains: “We have already started to provide new sources of support for our PGRs and are working to create a stronger sense of community and engagement in our PGR population. For example, we organise daily drop-in sessions, run by experts from Organisational Development and Professional Learning, the Language Centre, the Library, Careers, and others. We are also working to improve induction for new PGRs. And we are always looking for new ways to bring our PGRs together and celebrate the sheer range and diversity of what they contribute to the University of Leeds.”

A particularly popular activity has been the regular Research Nights event, which showcases postgraduate research in the informal setting of LUU’s Pyramid Canteen. Each month, three PGRs from different parts of the University present their research in an engaging and interactive way, inviting audience participation and active discussion along the way. These events are open to any member of the University community, from staff to undergraduates. The PGR speakers thus become ambassadors for postgraduate research, taking it out of the lab or library and sharing their stories with others.

And this is important. Postgraduate research does not exist in a vacuum, but is deeply connected both to the research being undertaken by staff across the University and to the emphasis on research-based learning which is central to the Leeds Curriculum and to the University’s whole approach to student education. PGRs can be role models for UG students, as they consider their final-year projects, and, in some cases, are subsequently inspired to embark on postgraduate research of their own.

This is also why the University values so strongly the role that PGRs play in the delivery of undergraduate teaching. PGRs support student education in the University in many ways, as demonstrators, module assistants, or seminar teachers. They provide fresh ways of looking at material and are often the first people that undergraduates turn to for accessible explanations of challenging material. Claire Honess says: “It was a great pleasure to present the award for a PGR involved in teaching at the recent Partnership Awards, and humbling to read the many nominations received from students.”

Partnership, in fact, is another key goal of the Doctoral College, which works closely with LUU to ensure that PGRs are represented within schools and on all relevant committees, including the Graduate Board. The Union hosts a termly open forum where PGRs can ask questions on any topic of the Dean of the Doctoral College and the LUU Education Officer.

As the Doctoral College moves into its second year of existence, its aim is to enhance the PGR experience still further by working to define those key areas of opportunity that might be seen as characterising the Leeds PhD. As is already the case with the Leeds Curriculum for undergraduates, the aim will be to ensure that Leeds’s PGR offering is seen as distinctive and coherent, and – most importantly – that it opens doors to the widest possible range of future opportunities.

Contact us
The Doctoral College is located on Level 12 of the Ziff Building in room 12.22a. You can also email us on doctoralcollege@leeds.ac.uk or call x36910 – or just come along between 12.30 and 13.30 to one of our daily drop-ins. Alternatively, join our Research Nights events – the next is scheduled for 24 July.
PGRs enhancing UG student education
Charlotte Tomlinson, School of History

I came to Leeds as an undergraduate in 2012 on the BA History programme. Six years later, I’m still here – but now I’m teaching on some of the modules I once took.

As an undergraduate student I chose a combination of traditional modules and more unusual options. I enjoyed compulsory modules covering historical literature and using primary sources, such as HIST1300 and HIST1055, as well as innovative modules such as FOAR2000, a second-year discovery module where students work in a team on an independent research placement.

Four years on from first arriving at Leeds, as an MA student in Modern History, I successfully applied for a job as Special Collections Intern in the School of History in 2016, a position I still hold. The role is focused on enhancing teaching and learning in the department through greater use of primary-source material in the archives and rare-book collections held here on campus, and the scope of the role means I’ve had the opportunity to contribute to a wide range of modules. At level one, I’ve been able to work with fellow postgraduates on the compulsory skills modules I once took, matching relevant archival collections to module content and co-creating activities and assessments. I’ve also designed and delivered skills sessions right up to MA level. This work has involved getting level-one students to do hands-on research in the archives right through to asking postgraduate groups to curate their own collections of contemporary newspaper articles.

I found my first taste of teaching challenging, rewarding and fulfilling. So in 2017 I was thrilled when I was invited to become a trainer on the Leeds Excellence in the Arts Programme (LEAP), a scheme ‘aimed at identifying the next generation of academics’. Within LEAP I designed, organised and delivered a session to 50 level-two students from across the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures, including students from the History modules I had taught and taken, but also from subjects I had very little experience of. The session was focused on using unusual primary sources and I had the pleasure of inviting speakers from Special Collections, the Marks and Spencer Company Archive, Leeds Local and Family History Library and the West Yorkshire Archive Service to join me in sharing tips on using weird and wonderful source material. Drawing on my professional and research skills, and networks I had developed with local archives in Leeds, I enjoyed delivering an innovative and engaging session to some of our more enthusiastic students.

Most recently, I have started the process of preparing to teach level-one students in the School of History. The School runs a brilliant scheme that offers formal opportunities for its postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to teach undergraduates in their first year of study. Within the skills modules HIST1300 and HIST1055, PGRs design their own strands of teaching based on elements of their research. I remember these modules fondly as my first experience of studying at Leeds, and it is exciting to be returning to them on the other side of the seminar room.

At the same time, the networks I have built over the last six years have led me to another opportunity to return to a module I once took, and one which probably formed my experience of undergraduate study and my academic ambitions more than any other. As an undergraduate on the FOAR2000 Research Placement module, I worked in a team at the Museum of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine to undertake independent research on their collections and create resources for students at secondary level. This placement set me on a course of further placements and internships across Yorkshire, which culminated in me independently creating and launching a heritage trail, The Hull Blitz Trail, last year as part of the Hull City of Culture 2017 celebrations. From September, I will be returning to FOAR2000 as a tutor, overseeing more than thirty students from across the Faculty as they embark on their own research projects. The appetite for research, engagement, and teaching that this module first offered me has therefore developed over the years and it will be a pleasure to pay back some of the advice and experience I have gained in the place where it all started.

As a postgraduate tutor I’ve been able to draw on a unique combination of skills and knowledge in the undergraduate teaching I’ve done so far. Some of this has come from my experience of undertaking research up to PhD level, both in the historical content I can deliver in the School, but also in the skills training I have delivered across the Faculty.

The teaching I have done has also been enhanced by the perspective I gained in my own studies here at Leeds, and the understanding of student needs that I possess as someone who completed my first degree not really all that long ago.

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The teaching I have done has also been enhanced by the perspective I gained in my own studies here at Leeds, and the understanding of student needs that I possess as someone who did my first degree not really all that long ago. In this first year of my PhD, I’ve managed to use all of this to gain more opportunities and a wider range of experience than most researchers at this stage of their careers, but I’ve also relied on a range of support, formal and informal, through my supervisors, former tutors and peers at Leeds. I firmly believe that there is much to be gained from PGRs teaching undergraduates, for both student and teacher.
Building resilience into the fabric of student life
Lydia Bleasdale and Sarah Humphreys, School of Law

The Undergraduate Resilience Project sought to understand more about existing levels of student resilience and how this might be supported within Higher Education.

Premised on the basis that resilience is a contextual, fluid concept (with the potential to be supported and undermined by internal and external factors), the research concluded that there are opportunities for students, and for HEIs, to further support resilience.

The project began with a literature review into the factors which can have a positive or negative influence upon an individual’s resilience, including: relationships with family, friends and other key figures; feelings of belonging; self-care strategies; and access to support.

The review helped to determine interview questions which were then asked of 35 members of staff and 55 second-year UG students across six disciplines (Biological Sciences, Geography, Law, Mechanical Engineering, Medicine, and Music). In addition, 185 students within those disciplines also completed a survey designed to measure existing levels of resilience.

Findings, recommendations and impacts
The project’s findings resulted in a number of recommendations, many of which have been acted upon – or further explored – by the authors, Schools and the University of Leeds as a whole:

- Existing levels of self-perceived resilience among the sample were in line with those reported for UG students. International and EU students were more likely to have higher levels of resilience than Home students, while students who declared a disability were more likely to have lower levels of resilience than those who reported having none. Nevertheless, existing literature points to the importance of providing specialised support to International and EU students, and to that end the authors have contributed significantly to a forthcoming online Mary Morris International Student Transition Guide.

- The relationships students hold with each other, with staff, and with family can be critical in helping students feel resilient in the face of challenges. In light of the importance of these relationships to the resilience of individuals, combined with the difficulties many students experienced in their transition into, and through, their first year of university, universities should pay particular close consideration to their personal tutoring model(s) and how regularly tutors and their personal tutees meet. Utilising group sessions, individual sessions, and online support, alongside investment in ongoing training for tutors, is particularly critical. Universities should also consider the extent to which accommodation, communal spaces and staff-student events foster and support such relationships (including through the development of equality, diversity and inclusion policies for societies, where these do not already exist).

Since concluding the research, the authors have influenced thinking in this area both at University and School level. In one School a new personal tutoring model is being trialled on a small-scale basis; and one of the authors is a member of the University’s Personal Tutoring Task and Finish Group.

- Similarities between students included: concerns around failure (academic or otherwise); challenges in adapting to the social and academic aspects of University life; concerns about group-work assessment; concerns about the personal tutoring model; their definition of ‘resilience;’ their understanding of self-care; and what they considered personal success to ‘look’ like. Differences between the cohorts included: the extent to which (and how) they compared themselves to, or competed with, fellow students; how (if at all) they structured their time away from academic matters; and their definition of academic success.

A number of recommendations were made, including the need for an agreed definition of resilience to be adopted; for resources around failure to be more widely integrated into University life (including in online resources explicitly tackling the subject); for Schools and the University to consider what academic and employability ‘success’ mean (and whether a sufficiently broad definition is conveyed to students); and for staff to better understand how to communicate the importance of self-care techniques to students.

The authors worked with the University’s Student Support team throughout the project and have continued to do so since its completion in order to ensure that as many of its recommendations as possible are implemented. The authors have also delivered multiple workshops with students at a range of institutions: these were designed not only to help those students, but also to give the authors greater insight into ‘what works’ as far as encouraging self-care amongst students is concerned.

Finally, the differences between the students highlights the importance of staff in specific disciplines understanding the particular ways in which their students typically present and operate. Such stored institutional knowledge can be preserved through measures designed – at an institutional level – to appropriately reward and promote student education services staff in particular.

Dissemination
In addition to this impact, the findings of the research have been widely disseminated. The authors have been commissioned to write a book chapter in an edited collection about law students’ wellbeing; have given fifteen presentations on the topic around the UK, thirteen of which were as invited speakers; and were interviewed by the Times Higher Education about the project. The findings have informed research on ‘Millennial Lawyers’ commissioned by Leeds Law Society, and the conference paper Contextualising undergraduate student resilience was awarded the Stan Marsh Best Paper Prize at the Association of Law Teachers Annual Conference.

Conclusion
In considering how best to prepare graduates to emerge into an uncertain world, and the educational and broader experiences students should have during their time as undergraduates, universities should reflect upon the question, “What needs to be difficult and why?” To be clear, this does not mean removing all challenges from the university experience – it should be a developmental challenge on both an academic and personal level – but rather considering whether any existing challenges are unnecessary and whether some challenges need to be created within the university environment.

Building and supporting the resilience of students ought not to be regarded as something which is achieved by sending students to one-off, stand-alone workshops – it requires an over-arching and integrated institutional approach.
Helping local schoolkids engage with STEM subjects
Kerry Baker (Faculty of Engineering) and Rose Bavage (Faculty of Biological Sciences)

The STEM Outreach Team is a group of people with a shared passion and interest in promoting, highlighting and demonstrating the amazing world of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to school pupils, teachers and the general public.

With so many topics to cover and so many people we would like to interact with, we know we can’t do it all ourselves so we enlist the help of a set of superb and enthusiastic postgraduates to help inspire and engage these audiences. Some of these postgraduates are in official roles, as Education Outreach Fellows, and some get involved in ad hoc activities if they have the time: it’s a flexible opportunity!

With a variety of introductory sessions, opportunities and methodologies, each of the four faculties covered by the STEM team do PG involvement slightly differently so below we’ve focused on two of them – Education Outreach Fellows in Biological Sciences and ad hoc PG engagement in Engineering.

The Faculty of Biological Sciences has been using Education Outreach Fellows roles since 2014, and now has a pool of six Fellows. The role asks for between 50-150 hours of work spread out annually, developing and delivering schools outreach activity in a structured and formal way, paid at Grade 6 level. Applicants have to undergo a full recruitment process (application and interview), with a limited number of posts available each year. Personal development is a key aspect of the scheme – in FBS we meet to discuss what the Fellow wants from the role and then catch up frequently to keep this development on track. In the past, Fellows have wanted to improve their communications skills (a given in this role), but also evidence project management, lesson planning, public engagement, events management and even funding-bid application experience. We act as referees for previous Fellows who have gone on to use the Fellowship as evidence in applications to jobs post-PhD, in some cases citing the Fellowship as a key reason they believe they ended up getting their future roles (which includes post-docs, NHS scientist training schemes and policy office work). A Fellowship does require a level of dedication in order to complete those hours over the course of a year, but has been a really fantastic way for PGRs to develop all sorts of transferable skills outside the laboratory, as well as have lots of fun doing so by working with young people and the public.

Within Engineering, a less formal method is used. PGRs within the Faculty’s Centre for Doctoral Training have the option of a two-hour public engagement / schools outreach training workshop delivered to each new cohort. Those that take it up are provided with the essentials of working in schools and working with the public, alongside some examples of activities and engagement methods that have worked previously. Some PGRs are working towards being involved in the Be Curious public engagement event each March, part of the Leeds Festival of Science, some find their own events to attend. Kerry Baker, the Outreach Officer for the Faculty of Engineering, delivers the training sessions and offers support and advice to groups and individuals wishing to get involved. Examples of support include the design of hands-on activities suitable for the general public, helping with logistics and health and safety for events, and reviewing posters and hand outs for suitable language and explanations. PGRs from the Faculty have attended events such as the Yorkshire Show, Otley Science Festival, Bristol Festival of Nature, Kirkstall Festival and Manchester Science Festival.

In terms of school outreach from the Faculty of Engineering, PGRs get involved in a number of ways. While the Faculty does not have Education Outreach Fellows, a small group of PGRs take part in a variety of schools events throughout the year whenever they are able. They might get involved in delivering labs and workshops for visiting school pupils, supporting the Outreach Officer out in secondary schools, and learning how to deliver these workshops themselves, sometimes conducting these activities in their old school, or schools local to the University.

It’s easy to get involved in STEM outreach activities, but it does take time, commitment, and – most importantly – enthusiasm to get the most out of the opportunity. If you want to inspire young people with your discipline or research, simply contact the Outreach Team through www.stem.leeds.ac.uk/volunteers/postgraduate/

"Pupils said it had made them want to study science more and to do science at university, which made me feel very happy!"
Chiara Naccarati, PGR

"Brilliant! Really motivational! And an excellent opportunity for pupils to meet real-world scientists!"
Local school teacher

"I enjoyed it so much – I really want to come back again!"
Local school pupil
SEC2019 call for papers – get involved!
Student Education Conference 2019 – Learning Spaces

We are inviting contributions for SEC2019. The theme – Learning Spaces – will examine the many arenas in which students can learn and develop, create and collaborate, forge partnerships with communities, or cross thresholds and take risks.

Such spaces can be found within the curriculum, they can be found in lecture theatres, on campus, or online. They can be safe spaces or spaces that allow risk, spaces in the local or global community or sites of student belonging and co-creation.

If you have been or are involved in a project, initiative or a programme design that has stretched what Learning Spaces means within your school or centre, or how you enhance student education by supporting staff or students through the use of technology, then we would like to hear from you.

Find out more
Visit teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk for more details on the theme and the sub-themes outlined above. We hope you will agree that there is something on this expanded list that will speak to all colleagues.

Guidance notes for submitting abstracts for snap sessions, parallel sessions, workshops and exhibits, along with a preliminary programme for the event, are also provided on the website.

Getting involved
If you would like to talk informally about your abstract and how best to align it to the overall theme before submission, please email Stephanie Stones on s.e.stones@adm.leeds.ac.uk or call x33186.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is Monday 10 September 2018. Abstracts must be submitted via the online form provided on the SEC2019 page at teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk

Abstracts are reviewed by a refereeing panel – applicants may also be invited to author articles based on their abstracts for the Student Education Bulletin.

Follow us
We'll be building up to SEC2019 on Twitter, so if you're not part of the conversation already, follow us on @leedsteaching and join in!

News and updates

From China to Leeds
The SWJTU-Leeds Joint School is currently recruiting its third cohort of students, meaning nearly 800 students will be studying at SWJTU for one of four Engineering programmes. Twenty students will come to Leeds to finish their programmes this year, rising to a projected 75 a year by 2020.

Although many Joint School students will study their entire programmes in Chengdu, they still get involved in life at Leeds and carve out what it means to be a Leeds student without physically being here. Several have been involved in the Intercultural Ambassadors Programme and have created links with Leeds through a postcard scheme. Shock Soc (Electronic and Electrical Engineering’s student society) have taken their Robot Fighting League out to Chengdu and the first robots are currently being built!

Alongside extra-curricular activities, students are studying hard for their degrees and results and feedback have been excellent so far (students at the Joint School sit their end-of-year exams concurrently with their Leeds counterparts). Much hard work has been undertaken by staff, both academic and SES, but this has enabled the four Schools involved to work together in a way that provides opportunities for all concerned.

PRISE and PGCAP at Leeds
In September 2017, OD&PL launched Professional Recognition in Student Education (PRISE) – the successor to UKPSF@Leeds. Accredited by the HEA (now Advance HE), PRISE allows us to award Associate Fellowship, Fellowship and Senior Fellowship of Advance HE. A category of Advance HE Fellowship provides recognition for student education practice, aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education. Since PRISE’s launch, we have awarded 66 fellowships across all three categories of award. We offer briefings, workshops and access to mentoring sessions to support applicants.

The team was also delighted when our new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) received approval through the University’s internal QA processes, as well as successfully achieving accreditation by Advance HE for the award Advance HE Fellowship. Comprising three modules that build towards the completion of an action research project, PGCAP is currently recruiting to its second cohort, which will start in February 2019.

To express an interest, contact us at academicdev@leeds.ac.uk

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