

EDUCATION & THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The University recognises the academic potential of students as a resource precious to the individuals concerned, to their communities and to society at large. Its extensive investment in teaching and learning facilities, in training of staff, in widening participation and in technological innovation reflects the centrality to the University's mission of helping every student to fulfil his or her potential.

The University's priorities in this area are to:

- attract and retain academically gifted and highly motivated students from a wide range of backgrounds, creating a diverse and international University community;
- provide an education of the highest quality that is researched and focused on the needs and expectations of our students;
- ensure students have a fulfilling, demanding and intellectually stimulating experience while at University, that prepares them for employment and worldwide opportunities when they leave;
- provide effective and enabling educational leadership and structures that support educational enhancement;
- ensure that learning takes place within a high-quality environment that enables both students and staff to achieve their full academic potential.

Audit and survey: grounds for confidence

The results of an institutional audit of the University by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in April 2009 expressed 'confidence' in Bristol's academic standards and in the value of a Bristol degree.

It was also encouraging to note that some departments improved their National Student Survey scores over the past year. The Education Support Unit, along with other divisions of Support Services, is committed to working with academic departments and the Students' Union to ensure that the student experience at Bristol is as good as it can be within the resources available.

Student residences

In 2008/09, the University continued to develop its residential strategy. This is aimed at ensuring that halls of residence and other University homes offer students a choice of high-quality, affordable places to live with good facilities for living and learning, better transport links and improved safety and security. The strategy is not only about prioritising further capital investments in the residential estate, necessary though these will be; it is also about how to achieve residential communities that work for students – communities that support students' education as well as their social and welfare needs. Over the past year there has been widespread consultation and debate about these and related issues. The emerging strategy will be far stronger as a result.

Master's degree in Deafhood Studies – another first for Bristol

The University's Centre for Deaf Studies has launched the world's first Master's degree in Deafhood Studies, only five years after the

Centre's Dr Paddy Ladd and colleagues introduced the Deafhood concept (now adopted globally) to reflect the enormous changes in Deaf and hearing communities over the past 30 years. The course includes units on Deaf history, sign language literature and folklore, sign linguistics and Deaf culture.

Bristol to offer 75 new Humanities studentships

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has awarded the University £2.6 million to support postgraduate studentships in Arts and in Social Sciences and Law. The funds, which will come to Bristol under the AHRC's new Block Grant Partnership scheme, will provide 75 studentships over the next five years.

Fundraising professionals to train at Bristol

Bristol is one of 12 UK universities to offer a new, three-year graduate trainee programme aimed at increasing the number of fundraising professionals working in higher education. The programme is funded by CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Europe and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Widening participation

The Widening Participation Office exists to encourage and support people who have the ability, motivation and potential to thrive at university, but who come from groups that are currently under-represented in higher education. These include people from certain minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities, 'mature' candidates (people over the age of 25) and those from families who have little or no history of going to university.

The Office works in partnership with schools, other higher education institutions, Connexions, the Learning and Skills Council, the government's Aimhigher programme, further education colleges and the voluntary and community sector to raise aspirations and attainment with a view to increasing the numbers of people from under-represented groups attending and succeeding at university. The Office's busy programme includes taster days and residential summer schools to give young people an insight into university life; school visits and mentoring of pupils by student volunteers; and specialist masterclasses to help raise pupils' attainment in specific subjects.

In 2008/09, widening participation events included:

- Aimhigher-funded activities involving 57 local schools and colleges, during which the University worked with around 5,000 young people and 1,500 parents;
- outreach work targeted at mature students, young people and their parents, teachers and careers advisers, totalling some 9,000 people via schemes such as Access to Bristol, the Sutton Trust and higher education summer schools, and events in schools and colleges throughout the region.

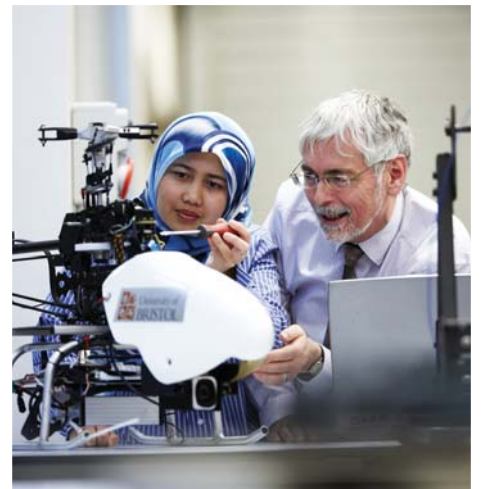
The profile of the student body has proved resistant to change, with the proportion of students from low-participation areas and from social classes 4 to 7 remaining stubbornly low at around 5.5 and 14.9 per cent respectively. The University cannot address this challenge alone, but it will continue to play a full part, both in the interests of fairness and in order to gain the benefits of having a student body that is uniformly strong in terms of academic ability and potential but more diverse in terms of background and experience.

Pastoral care: Student Counselling Service and the Multifaith Chaplaincy

The moral, spiritual and personal welfare of students is a concern shared throughout the network of student support services, which includes the Student Counselling Service and the Multifaith Chaplaincy.

The Student Counselling Service is staffed by a team of professionally trained and widely experienced counsellors accustomed to helping people from many backgrounds and cultures. Counselling is available free to all students at the University, including on-site counselling at Langford. In response to an escalation in the number of students requesting counselling in 2008/09, the Service extended its evening opening hours and appointed a new receptionist. It also joined forces with the Staff Counselling Service and the Access Unit to provide workshops on managing students in distress and crisis, available to all sectors of the University.

The Multifaith Chaplaincy maintains an active role in the spiritual and social welfare of the University community. There are currently 17 University chaplains, all appointed by faith communities in Bristol, and the Multifaith Chaplaincy Centre offers a range of quiet rooms and social spaces. In 2008/09, events organised by the Multifaith Chaplaincy included a lecture by Mona Siddiqui, Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding at Glasgow University, on Christian-Muslim relations (arranged as part of the University's centenary lecture series) and the annual thanksgiving service for those who bequeath their bodies to the Department of Anatomy.



Top: Undergraduates at Manor Hall, one of the University's halls of residence
Bottom: Dr Mike Barton, Senior Lecturer in Microelectronics, with a postgraduate student in the Dynamics Laboratory, Faculty of Engineering

EDUCATION & THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

Teaching prizes

In January, the University held its annual Learning and Teaching Exhibition and awarded prizes to members of academic and support staff across the University in recognition of their efforts in supporting the student learning experience. The event, organised by the Education Support Unit, included an exhibition of innovative learning and teaching practice from across the faculties, short talks on recent developments in learning and teaching, and a keynote presentation by Dr Nick Harris, a British Council-appointed UK Bologna Expert, on the implications of the Bologna Process for higher education.

During the evening, the 2008 awards were presented to the following people:

Teaching and Learning Prizes

Awarded to members of staff who show the characteristics of an excellent teacher.

Tricha Passes

Department of History of Art

Dr Martin Lings

Department of Civil Engineering

Dr Lynda Moore

Department of Clinical Veterinary Science

Dr Angela Hague

Department of Oral and Dental Science

Dr Andrew Blythe

Community-based Medicine

Dr Sean Collins

Department of Mathematics

Dr Tony Hoare

School of Geographical Sciences

Elisabeth Lazarus

Graduate School of Education

Rising Star Awards

For staff who have been teaching in higher education for less than five years and who show excellent potential through the quality of analysis and practice in teaching.

Dr Emma Hornby

Department of Music

Dr David Drury

Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Dr Emma Robinson

Department of Physiology and Pharmacology

Dr Andy Salmon

Clinical Science at North Bristol

Dr David Leslie

Department of Mathematics

Dr Jo Haynes

Department of Sociology

Awards Recognising Support for Teaching and Learning

Recognising outstanding contributions to education by members of support staff.

Paula Coonerty

Arts Faculty Office

Dr Evan Jones

Department of Historical Studies

Anne Thorpe, Gina Stuart, Martin Baker and Phil Wade

Faculty of Engineering

Ruth Batterham

Department of Biochemistry

Deborah Hawkings

Department of Social Medicine

Melanie Stodell

Community-based Medicine

Dr Tim Obey and Dr Tom Podesta

Chemistry

Janet Woolway-Allen

Department of Experimental Psychology

Kes O'Donnell

Social Sciences and Law Faculty Office

Engagement Awards

Recognising staff whose work in public engagement has been exceptional and/or innovative.

Lois Bibbings

(School of Law) and the Widening Participation Office Meriton Law Enrichment programme

Professor Jon Keating, Chrystal Cherniwchan and Azita Ghassemi

(Department of Mathematics) Mathematical Ethnographies project

Dr Caroline McKinnon

(Department of Biochemistry) Science Alive! initiative in Biochemistry

Dr Linda Sellou (School of Chemistry)

Bristol ChemLabS outreach programme

Tom Sperlinger (Department of English)

BA in English Literature and Community Engagement programme

e-Learning Awards

Recognising innovative and effective use of e-learning in the delivery of programmes and the support of staff and students.

Dr Martin Homer

Department of Engineering Mathematics

Dr Dominic O'Sullivan

Department of Oral and Dental Science

Dr Colin Western

School of Chemistry

Gervas Huxley

Department of Economics



Right: Postgraduates on the staircase inside the Wills Memorial Building

EDUCATION & THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

Statistics and commentary

Financial support to students

The University can provide financial support to students in the form of bursaries, scholarships and discretionary assistance from hardship funds. In 2008/09, the University disbursed the following amounts in these kinds of financial support:

	Bursaries £m	Scholarships £m	Hardship funds £m
Undergraduate	2.4	0.2	0.3
Postgraduate	0.1	2.0	0.1
Total	2.5	2.2	0.4

Total student numbers 2008/09

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research	Total
Arts	2,774 (83.81%)	248 (7.49%)	288 (8.70%)	3,310
Science	2,950 (81.16%)	87 (2.39%)	598 (16.45%)	3,635
Engineering	1,584 (67.84%)	424 (18.16%)	327 (14.0%)	2,335
Medical and Veterinary Sciences	1,414 (81.59%)	62 (3.58%)	257 (14.83%)	1,733
Medicine and Dentistry	1,658 (71.50%)	468 (20.18%)	193 (8.32%)	2,319
Social Sciences and Law	2,583 (53.68%)	1,501 (31.19%)	728 (15.13%)	4,812
Year total	12,963 (71.45%)	2,790 (15.38%)	2,391 (13.18%)	18,144

Total student numbers 2007/08

	Undergraduate	Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research	Total
Arts	2,644 (84.28%)	271 (8.64%)	222 (7.08%)	3,137
Science	2,876 (80.95%)	78 (2.20%)	599 (16.86%)	3,553
Engineering	1,555 (69.61%)	384 (17.19%)	295 (13.21%)	2,234
Medical and Veterinary Sciences	1,473 (83.65%)	61 (3.46%)	227 (12.89%)	1,761
Medicine and Dentistry	1,613 (69.89%)	524 (22.70%)	171 (7.41%)	2,308
Social Sciences and Law	2,355 (50.46%)	1,729 (37.05%)	583 (12.49%)	4,667
Year total	12,516 (70.87%)	3,047 (17.25%)	2,097 (11.87%)	17,660

Number of degrees awarded

	2008/09	2007/08
Undergraduate	3,471	3,309
Postgraduate taught	1,810	1,749
Postgraduate research	409	408

Graduate destinations

Every year, new graduates are asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their employment or study status. The resulting figures enable the University to build a year-on-year picture of the destinations of its graduates.

As might be expected, the most significant labour market trend during 2008/09 was the economic downturn and its impact on students and graduates – and on the level of employer activity on campus. The number of vacancies registered with the University's Careers Service fell by an unprecedented 33 per cent compared with the previous year.

In response to these conditions, and to student concern, the Careers Service implemented a series of measures:

- running a programme of 'Job hunting in a recession' workshops for current students;
- staying open throughout the summer to meet the increased demand from recent graduates;
- enhancing provision for Bristol graduates, including more access to online vacancies;
- running short courses for unemployed graduates and professionals in the region through Jobcentre Plus;
- offering a telephone helpline for graduates.

At the same time, the University approved a new Employability Strategy, reorganising the Careers Service to offer broader support to academic departments, introducing a new Bristol Plus Award recognising extra-curricular achievement by students and establishing a new, accredited, commercial-awareness module.

Graduate destinations 2008

Full-time paid work	51.0%
Part-time paid work	5.3%
Voluntary/unpaid work	1.8%
Work and further study	7.5%
Further study	22.0%
Assumed to be unemployed	5.4%
Not available for employment	4.9%
Other	0.7%
Explicit refusal	1.4%

Graduate destinations 2007

Full-time paid work	53.4%
Part-time paid work	4.3%
Voluntary/unpaid work	1.3%
Work and further study	8.8%
Further study	20.8%
Assumed to be unemployed	4.0%
Not available for employment	4.4%
Other	1.0%
Explicit refusal	1.8%