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At the University

Support for students

Library Subject Advisors are able to provide help, advice, training, support and documentation to students undertaking their dissertations. The summer term is often a busy time with Subject Advisors offering both workshops and individual support for those working on dissertations. This can be undergraduate students looking to get an early start on finding the information for their dissertation or masters students completing the whole process from starting to find information for their topics to creating their reference lists. If you would like us to deliver a workshop for students in your subject area, please contact the Subject Advisor for your School directly. If you have a students who you feel would benefit from extra guidance on finding materials or referencing, support is also provided for all subjects in the form of one-to-one appointments or virtual online help via Skype.

The Academic Skills Centre (based on the first floor at the rear of the Main Library) helps undergraduate students to develop their academic, mathematical and writing skills. This support is provided via generic workshops, individual appointments, and some discipline-specific sessions. They are currently offering a programme of workshops to help students with revision and exam skills. This includes sessions on ‘Practical Revision and Exam Strategies,’ ‘Memory Techniques for Effective Revision,’ and ‘Coping with the Exam Period.’ Details and booking forms can be found on the ASC website. Students can also benefit from individual appointments with our Learning Skills Advisors, for personalised support with revision, time management, exam skills, or writing skills. These can be booked by e-mailing the ASC.

New Library
Integrated Timetabling Space Management Project (ITSMP)

Background
In November 2010 UEB considered the outcomes of a study into timetabling and space management across the institution and approved its recommendations, which included implementation of a common University timetabling platform, integrated with key University business systems, and a coherent approach to space management.

The Integrated Timetabling and Space Management Project (ITSMP) will be delivered over three stages:

- Stage 1: Installation
- Stage 2: Rollout
- Stage 3: Assisted Timetabling

Stages 1 and 2
The Enterprise Timetabler software has been used by the Timetabling Team within CLAD & Learning Spaces since 2012. With the system in place the ITSMP Team have been rolling-out the software and associated training to Timetablers across the University, allowing users to develop timetables for the 2014-15 academic year within the system.

The Web Room Booking Service has been live since October 2012 and this has been well received with positive feedback about the layout and ease of use, with almost 5000 ad hoc bookings being made throughout the 2012-13 academic year.

A comprehensive online timetable is currently available to staff where they can view activities in University managed rooms. A pilot of personalised timetables through the portal was carried out in the spring term with third year Electronic and Engineering Students. Feedback received has been positive and will inform the delivery of personalised timetables to a wider group of students from the start of the 2014-15 academic year.

Stage 3 will commence in the 2014-15 academic year. More details can be found on the ITSMP intranet page.

Key Processes Primer

A Key Processes Primer has been produced to help to guide staff through the main University Regulations, Codes of Practice, Policies, Guidance and other documents that exist to support key academic processes. It is hoped that it will serve as a useful prompt to support staff through some of the complexities of University Legislation.

Workshop - Diversity in the Curriculum: Gender and Sexual Diversity Good Practice

Evidence from the Equality Challenge Unit, Stonewall and the National Union of Students demonstrates the importance of understanding the needs of LGBT students and making university a positive experience. One way of doing this is to ensure the curriculum reflects and values their experiences.

Following on from a successful LGBT History Month Event, and as part of wider...
work across the university to consider ‘Diversity in the Curriculum’, this workshop will focus on identifying good practice in relation to Gender and Sexual Diversity.

Tuesday 6th May – 1.30 – 4.00
Room 429 Muirhead Tower

The aim of this workshop is to come together to share our thoughts and ideas about LGBT issues in the curriculum, to gather case studies based on your experiences, and from this to begin to develop good practice.

The workshop is open to any member of staff from across the University, though we particularly want to encourage participation from those disciplines where it may be harder to embed diversity issues within teaching.

This is an open event but it would be helpful, for catering purposes, if you would contact Jane Tope to let us know if you are planning to attend.

Nicola Gale, Health Services Management Centre
Nicki Ward, Institute of Applied Social Sciences
Jane Tope, Equality and Diversity Adviser for Students

External news

New panel established to look at current student funding system

Universities UK announced on 24 April the establishment of a new Student Funding Panel to consider the design of the current student fees and loans system in England, and to make recommendations on its future development.

The panel will review the system’s ability to deliver value for money for students, be financially sustainable for government and provide a long term stable funding environment to support high quality teaching and an outstanding learning experience.

The panel will consider a broad range of ideas and evidence. It will look in particular at how the cost of providing tuition fee and maintenance loans can be reduced, including new analysis published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). This estimates that, for each £1 loaned out by the government to cover the costs of tuition and maintenance, the long-run cost (the government ‘subsidy’) is 43.3p.

See the Universities UK website for more information.

State of the Relationship

One year on from its launch the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) has released its first annual ‘State of the Relationship 2014’ report of collaboration between universities and businesses.

The report contains expert views from NCUB staff and representatives of Cambridge Judge Business School, Research Councils UK, Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and Nesta, among others, as well as nearly forty case-studies from Rolls Royce, Unilever, AstraZeneca, Northumbria University, King’s College London, University of Glasgow, and many others.

Find the information source and full report on the NCUB website.

National strategy for access and student success

In May 2012, ministers wrote to the director of Fair Access and HEFCE’s chief executive asking them to develop a shared strategy on higher education access and student success. They were asked to consider how the investment in this area
from government, institutions and HEFCE might be best targeted, with an
evidence-based assessment of what works.

This final report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills sets out
what OFFA and HEFCE will do to carry out the strategy.

Report by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the
Office for Fair Access (OFFA). Find the information source and policy paper on the
Government website.

Education Matters
www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/educationmatters

Please contact Dr C Teeling for information.