

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

INTRODUCTION

The 2008/09 academic year was particular busy for Student Guidance & Welfare and culminated in a change of title to the Department of Student Services which better reflects its broader remit. Some of the noticeable changes and activities include:

- The transfer of Loughborough Student Advice from LSU to the University on 1 August 2008.
- The merger of Loughborough Student Advice with the International Student Centre to establish the Student Support Centre.
- University funding to create a Muslim prayer room and three smaller prayer rooms in the Brockington Building to create the Centre for Faiths and Spirituality which incorporates the Christian Chaplaincy.
- Increased resources to deal with the demand for staff counselling appointments.
- A successful pilot of the Loughborough Employability Award.

The Director was involved in a number of university-wide initiatives, including:

- A group that reviewed the University induction process, collating information about what was provided and in what format and making recommendations for changes to the Student Experience Committee.
- Co-ordinating a group to evaluate the opportunities to create a University staff recruitment agency.
- Chairing a group with representation from Student Services, HR, Occupational Health and LSU to collect information about healthy living initiatives available to staff and students.

Annual Reports are produced throughout the year by each individual section of the Department of Student Services, with the exception of the Community Wardens and Wardens Service, and are presented to the Student Experience Team and summarised at the Student Experience Committee. Highlights from the individual reports are detailed below:

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CAREERS CENTRE

Background

Signs of a recession were evident from summer 2008 but it was from January 2009 that there was a dramatic change in the graduate recruitment market. Disillusionment set in quickly among finalists, influenced by media coverage of the worsening situation. While the vacancy supply from larger employers diminished, small and medium sized organisations continued to recruit at levels similar to the previous year.

The Centre compiled recession advice pages on its website and offered a range of services to its recent graduates who were still seeking work.

Overall levels of activity in all areas increased in 2008 – 2009 and it was pleasing to note that employer involvement at the University was sustained during this challenging period

Individual interviews

- Careers advisers undertook 1298 45 minute career consultations with clients, compared with 1198 in 07 – 08, an increase of 8%. Around 550 consultations took place in the period October – December when demand resulted in a waiting list of four – five weeks from the mid-point in the term. Overall student evaluation for career consultations was 3.7 on a scale of 1 (low) – 4 (high) – in line with the previous year.
- The total number of clients seen on Quick Advice Desk for 15 minute appointments was 3099 compared with 2620 the previous year – an increase of 18%. Overall evaluation for this services was 3.6 on a scale of 1(low) – 4 (high), again in line with the previous year.

Vacancy supply

- Not surprising vacancy supply was down on the previous year from approximately 2300 specific employer entries to 1500 for graduate level entry. Work experience opportunities fell from 850 to just over 700.
- Local vacancy supply was sustained at similar level to the previous year while that from the larger graduate recruiters showed a downturn of about 25 – 30%; this was especially noticeable from December 2008 onwards.

Skills courses

The Careers Centre again organised three skills courses in conjunction with employers.

- *Top Graduate Skills*: A series of five evening workshops aimed predominantly at final year students covering essential skills such as commercial awareness, negotiation and becoming an enterprising employee. Employers contributing included PwC, IBM, Rolls-Royce, Deloitte, Toyota and Accenture. Eighty students attended the autumn series and 40 took part in the spring.
- *Career Management Skills*: One hundred and thirty three students joined the series of talks and assignments and 110 participants completed the course. Overall 95% of students found the programme useful or very useful. Companies involved included Group GTI, Nomura, Deloitte, PA Consulting.
- *Insight into Management*: An annual three day course aimed at second year students where they experience a range of business games in a supportive and fun environment. Sixty-seven students took part and employers supporting the event included: Tenon, PwC, Barclays, Accenture, Centrica, Rolls-Royce, IBM and the Civil Service. 97% of student participants found the course very useful or useful.

Workshadowing

- The scheme provides second year students with the opportunity to undertake a workshadowing placement with a career professional. One hundred and fifty three students (against an initial target of 135) were placed, compared with 118 the previous year.
- Departments with the greatest numbers of participants included LUSAD, Sport and Exercise Sciences, English and Drama and Social Sciences. Fifty three companies supported the scheme, compared with 49 previously, and feedback was, as always, exceptionally good.

Loughborough Employability award

- The pilot scheme for the Loughborough Employability Award (LEA) was launched in October 2008 and during the year the three students who completed their awards, were presented with them by the Vice Chancellor.
- The full award programme was launched in October 2009 and 300 students are currently registered. Progress is monitored and managed through Learn. A further campaign to engage first years will be launched in early 2010.

Career development advisers

Two new part-time posts were established, to be based in the Careers Centre but with funding from the Graduate School and the Research Office, specifically to develop careers information, advice and guidance resources with research students and research staff respectively.

Employer mentoring

Mentoring schemes have been proved to support the development of career management skills in participants and the Careers Centre has developed a core model which has been successful adapted to meet the needs of three discrete groups.

- For black and minority ethnic students (BME). This programme is designed to enhance the employability skills and build the confidence of this group of second year, UK students. In 2008 – 2009 the scheme organisers succeeded in matching 28 pairs of mentors and mentees.
- For international students. This scheme was funded, for its pilot year, through the Director of Internationalisation's budget. Eight pairs of mentors/mentees were organised for this pilot year and the model used was based on that developed for the BME students with some minor adjustments.
- Research Staff. Another pilot scheme aimed at helping research staff to develop their own skills to manage their careers either within or outside academia. The scheme is run collaboratively between the Careers Centre, the Research Office and Staff Development. The pilot scheme was launched with 13 pairs of mentors/mentees against a target of 10.

Alumni development

- Loughborough alumni bring a wide range of benefits to the work of the Careers Centre in a number of areas. One example is the alumni careers mentors database which has grown to 410 careers mentors from a working total of around 200 previously.

Work with graduates

- In the worsening recruitment climate senior management, at the Vice Chancellor's suggestion, agreed to establish a graduate employment working group. Chaired by the director of the Careers Centre with representatives from the Development and Alumni Office, the Enterprise Office and the Business School, as well as other colleagues from the Careers Centre, the group provides a forum for information sharing.
- In addition a small budget was given to the Careers Centre on a one-off basis to fund additional support through email and face to face advice and guidance.

Placement support

- The worsening employment situation in 2008-09 resulted in some students on placement either having their 45 week contract shortened or facing redundancy.
- Anxiety on the part of the students concerned led the University to agree to a waiver to its regulations to allow for flexibility in terms of the affected students meeting the formal requirements for the award of diploma of professional/industrial studies.
- The Careers Centre has continued to provide support to placement tutors through organising meetings to discuss health and safety requirements and IT provision for the management of placements.

Talks and workshops

- Centrally organised talks offered students information on working in the public sector, in press and communications, advertising, marketing, publishing, the law and broadcasting and journalism.
- Workshops were held on job seeking strategies, disclosing a disability during the recruitment process, graduate entry into medicine and effective career networking, and for international students and graduates: finding a UK graduate job, finding work experience in the UK, writing UK style CVs and covering letters and working in the UK after your studies. Core workshops were offered on CVs, covering letters and
- Careers advisers ran a total of 115 sessions in departments – the greatest number to date, again indicating the growing cross-campus nature of the work undertaken.

- Careers advisers working with the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences organised talks around the theme of sports-related careers, using alumni and other specialists and overall 277 students attended.
- Careers advisers working with psychology students delivered a programme covering specific psychology-related career paths.
- The Design and Technology careers adviser has attended the annual design show for several years providing very timely advice and guidance to students at the event.
- CV and advice clinics in academic departments were run by advisers and proved very popular with students who would otherwise have found it difficult to call into the Careers Centre at appropriate times because of labs and heavy timetables.

Employer-related activities

- One hundred and two employers (the largest number so far reported) attended the autumn graduate recruitment and placement fair in October 2008, and more than 3000 students met with employers at the event.
- Sixty-one employers came onto campus for the second recruitment fair in March, and about 1,500 students attended this event. Both fairs received excellent feedback.
- It was especially pleasing in the challenging recruitment climate experienced from January 2009 to be able to organise such a positive second fair. The final fair of the year – Springboard – saw 44 organisations on campus for this alternative fair.
- Employer presentations held up well throughout the autumn term with 79 employers attending and an average of 37 students per event.
- The spring term saw a further 14 events. Overall the number of presentations held during the autumn was the highest ever.

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CENTRE FOR FAITHS AND SPIRITUALITY

- The Chaplaincy Centre has undergone some major reorientation and change in the last year not least with the completion of the new 'Centre for Faiths and Spirituality' (CFS) at the beginning of this academic year.

- For the first time in the history of this university, staff and student faith groups now have the opportunity to meet under one umbrella – the CFS. This includes the former Chaplaincy Centre but there is now a new Muslim Prayer Room to replace the one in James France and additional rooms and facilities that enable regular meetings of the Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and other faith groups, the 7 Christian groups on campus as well as meetings involving groups from the wider Loughborough community.
- Between 550-650 students use the facilities of the CFS at least once each week. One of its main benefits is that it gives opportunities for different groups to meet each other and, eventually, the CFS will be a forum when they will be able not only to meet but talk about faith and spirituality to each thereby dispelling myths and popular misconceptions that are so often the fuel for tension and unrest.
- In the autumn of this year there have been several events that have been promoted under the CFS as a precursor to more extensive programmes next year. Typically these involve partnerships between one or more faith groups, the Loughborough Council of Faiths and the Council for Racial Equality as well as Loughborough College on some occasions. The facility is one of the best in the country.
- The Chaplaincy played its part in the Centenary celebrations during 2009. ‘College Sunday’ was resurrected after a 40 year gap, special services were held in the Garden of Remembrance during the summer as part of the honorary degree congregations, two carol services were held this year instead of the normal one, a ‘special’ centenary meeting was held with the Loughborough Council of Faiths and CREC. All these were in addition to the regular events organised, hosted and led by the Chaplains throughout the year.
- The CFS continues to be supported by the Chaplains who remain committed to working with staff and students of any faith and none providing pastoral support as well as creating opportunities for spiritual formation, development and expression within the CFS as well as across the institution.
- The Chaplains are often called into the front end of crisis to provide sometimes long term care and support not least in tragic situations – there have been a number of these in the last year.
- The Leicester Diocese of the Church of England is reducing the number of its funded Chaplaincy posts from 1.5 fte to 1.0 fte. The staffing position at the end of this year will be that all Chaplains are part time with a maximum 50% of time spent in chaplaincy activity for two Chaplains and less for the remaining members of the staff team. Despite this the Chaplains still maintain a 24/7 service.

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COMMUNITY WARDENS SERVICE

- During academic year 08-09 there were 4600 students living in the five areas served by the community wardens team. Over 300 complaints of noise or poor student behaviour were referred to the team by Security.
- Each of these complaints was considered and appropriate action taken – sometimes it was dealt with by email, very often by means of a visit by warden or subwarden, and very occasionally the matter was allowed to drop through lack of evidence or clarity.
- During the year it became quite clear that students are going out to clubs and pubs later than in the past, and as they leave their homes around 11pm they can readily disturb local residents, often quite innocently. The community warden team continue to try to find an effective method of helping community students to understand how readily such disturbances can occur.
- At intervals throughout the year wardens and deputies sent an uncounted number of messages to students living in their areas. These messages were timed carefully to deal with issues of the moment, with topics including explanations of changes to the Council's rubbish recycling arrangements, reminders of the need to be particularly quiet at exam time, advice about car parking, and crime prevention.
- Wardens and deputies been regular attendees at local residents groups, and the Warden has attended meetings with police and council officers. This continued liaison is felt to be very valuable by all parties.

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DISABILITY AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS SERVICE

Usage of the service

The number of students accessing the service in 2008/9 was relatively stable compared to 2007/08. The table below shows the number of students registered with DANS by UCAS disability category. The figures for 2007/8 are included for comparative purposes.

UCAS Disability Code	2007/2008	2008/2009	%change
1. Specific Learning Difficulty	859	767	-10%
2. Blind/ partially sighted	26	27	+3%
3. Deaf/ hard of hearing	18	27	+50%
4. Wheelchair user/ mobility difficulty	17	18	+6%
5. Autistic Spectrum Disorder/ Aspergers Syndrome	8	19	137%
6. Mental Health Difficulties	343	248	-27%
7. Unseen disability (e.g. diabetes/ epilepsy)	106	119	+12%
8. Multiple Disabilities	63	174	+176%
9. Not listed above	119	119	0
Total	1559	1518	-2%

The apparent decrease in the number of dyslexic students can be attributed to a change in the point at which students were 'coded' as dyslexic on the system. A number of students who would previously have been coded as dyslexic, but for whom no evidence was obtained, now appear in the 'No known disability' category. Students will continue to be coded in this fashion in coming years. It is vital to note, however, that the demand for support for students with specific learning difficulties remains strong. The change in numbers shown above is therefore a coding issue rather than a decrease in need.

The apparent decrease in the number of students with mental health difficulties is misleading. A large number of students with mental health difficulties will also have had other disabilities and they are therefore included in the multiple disabilities category, which has shown a considerable increase. This is substantiated by the increasing numbers of students accessing mental health support. It is fair to assume that disclosure rates for mental health issues, while improving, are still low.

Main Activities

- DANS information was incorporated onto the LUSI database; this went live at the end of September 2009. This will ensure that academic departments have more flexible access to up to date information on student needs and adjustments.
- The Centre for Additional Learning Support (CALs) became part of DANS in August 2009. The benefits of this move are already being felt and it is anticipated that this will lead to greater consistency in approach and improved outcomes for students accessing support.
- The number of students accessing DANS continued to rise in 2008/9, with an +8% increase in the number of students registered with the service. There was significant growth in the numbers of students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders/ Asperger's Syndrome and in those with multiple disabilities. Both these areas will require consideration in terms of resourcing. This has been built into the action plan and will be reflected in the development plan.
- A new Mental Health Adviser post was created (0.33 FTE) and advertised. The position has now been filled, with the new adviser starting on the 19 November. This has provided greater capacity to meet the growing demand for mental health support.

The Mental Health Support Team saw a further growth in the number of students it supported in 2008/9, up from 343 to 407.

- The second annual Student Satisfaction Survey was undertaken. In broad terms, DANS received very positive feedback. The survey also provided useful qualitative data which will be used as the basis for service developments.
- The NNAC Assessment Centre underwent an audit and was successfully re-accredited by DSA-QAG (Disabled Students Allowance – Quality Assurance Group) in July 2008. The volume of assessments carried out by the NNAC assessment centre also rose slightly on the previous year (from 331 to 336).
- The University Admissions Policy was reviewed and revised by DANS in conjunction with the Academic Registry. This was identified as an area for action in the 2007/8 DANS Annual Report.
- Both the Disability Office and Dyslexia Adviser have increased their hours to provide better coverage for the service.
- The Disability Officer led a fundamental overhaul of the DANS Open Day display and staffing. This led to an increased profile for DANS at the last two Open Days (June and September).

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UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTRE

The practice has had a very busy term but is very pleased to be able to continue to provide a wide range of services to its practice population. Developments that have occurred during this term include:

Good Thinking – New IAPT (increasing access to psychological therapies) service

- ‘Good Thinking’ a new service which aims to support patients with mental health problems by providing access to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This service is being provided by a consortium of Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Rethink and Assura LLP.
- It is fair to say that the IAPT project team have experienced a number of challenges in setting up this service but it is finally starting to take shape. The practice now has two therapists providing weekly sessions:

Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) is providing two ‘low intensity’ CBT sessions per week, one session based at the Student’s Union and one based at the practice. In general, all new referrals are seen by the PWP in the first instance.

Primary Care Therapist is providing a weekly session of 'high intensity' CBT at the practice.

- Furthermore, as part of the new IAPT services, a *Mental Health Facilitator* will be working with the practice team from next term to help support the management of patients with stable but enduring mental health problems.

Physiotherapy

- In order to provide timely and adequate access to physiotherapy, the practice has gained approval from our Primary Care Trust (PCT) to commission a pilot to provide physiotherapy service under practice based commissioning (PBC).
- This service is currently being provided by 'Response Physiotherapy' based at Loughborough College. Twelve NHS physiotherapy appointments are available per week during term time in addition to the physiotherapy services available at Loughborough hospital. Feedback from the satisfaction survey demonstrates that patients are very happy with this new additional service.
- The pilot will be reviewed by the PCT at the end of March.

Extension to waiting area

- The practice is pleased to confirm that the University is currently in the tendering process for the waiting area extension.
- Work on site is due to begin at the end of December and the completion date is 31st March 2010.

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COUNSELLING SERVICE

- The Service supported more individual students, 633 clients, compared with last year and ran more groups with 336 participants. Loughborough was the top ranked counselling service in the recent Student Barometer report.

Individual counselling

- Representative proportions of international, mature, undergrads, taught post grads and research post grads arranged individual counselling appointments.
- The problems include homesickness, relationship or family issues, eating disorders, acute anxiety, clinical depression and mental health disorders. **89% said their problems affect their studies. 26% said counselling helped them to stay at University.**

- **5% of our student clients are suicidal and this reflects the norm in other universities.** These clients get much longer periods of counselling and support. The trend, also noted nationally, is far more students each year presenting with more severe problems. Counsellors are increasingly working at psychotherapeutic depth with these clients. **84% said their relationship with their counsellor was good to excellent.**

Liaison with academic departments

- The Service offers advice on pastoral matters and liaison with academic departments and other support services including NHS. **A total of 125 Impaired Performance and 31 professional assessment letters for Exam Boards and Appeals were provided this year.**
- Counselling staff's work covers a wide range of issues including procrastination, motivation, lack of confidence, blocks in creativity, worries about underperforming, perfectionism (preventing students from being able to hand anything in on time, loss of motivation, occasionally disillusionment with the course and frequently fear of giving presentations. A very significant issue is exam panic. Individual counselling, workshops, leaflets and a relaxation CD are offered to reduce panic attacks and aid sleep problems.

Workshops and groups

- A wide range of courses are offered including Life Coaching; Procrastination; Tackling Writing Blocks; Meditation; Don't Panic – managing anxiety and panic attacks; Self Esteem; Counselling Skills for Life.

Peer support

- The Service completed two highly successful TQEF funded projects on peer support. These were **Mentoring in the Wolfson School of Engineering** and **Buddying in the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering.**
- Senior students received training in order to help freshers to settle in and to engage with their departments. The senior students gained confidence and useful credits towards the Loughborough Award. The departments benefitted with student retention and student engagement. Unfortunately, additional funding was not secured in order to continue this work in other academic departments.

Preventative and departmental work

- A session was run for **International Students** on the Professional programme run by Student Support Centre. This is called **'Making Friends at Loughborough'** and explores cross cultural issues in building friendship networks here.
- Training and supervision continues to be provided for the email based student peer support scheme **'Student2Student'** run by LSU.

- The web pages were revamped and were well used. A section on **Self Help on the Web** was introduced listing reputable sites such as 'Living Life to the Full'.

Future Plans

- A great deal of preparatory work was carried out before launching a new **Online Counselling Service** in October 2009. This is a more time consuming mode of work but will reach clients who may not approach the Service for face to face work eg. Young males in the student age group are the highest risk of suicide in the UK and lowest users of traditional services.

Student feedback

The Counselling Service received positive feedback from many students, who had been supported over the year, including:

“It’s been massively useful to me.”

“Helped me communicate with my department a lot better and complete my course.”

“Very helpful. Helped me through severe depression.”

“My counsellor was amazing, warm and sensitive.”

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THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTRE

The Student Support Centre was established in March 2009, comprising the English Language Support Service and the Student Advice and Support Service. A new Head of Service, Liz Chahal, was appointed in March 2009, and an Office Manager was appointed in April 2009.

- The Student Support Centre’s remit is to provide English language support for international students and a confidential advice service for both home students and international students on issues such as finance, housing, immigration and legal matters.
- The Centre also provides additional support services to international students, including the international orientation programme and the administration of the HOST scheme.

English Language Support Service

Formerly part of the International Student Centre, the English Language Support Service has continued to provide support to international students in the areas of English language and study skills through a range of pre-sessional and in-sessional courses.

Pre-sessional courses

- A total of 373 international students attended pre-sessional courses run by the Student Support Centre in 2009.
- The majority of these students attended English language courses of 28 weeks, 19 weeks, 10 weeks or 5 weeks, in order to meet the English language requirements for admission to their academic programmes.
- Over 100 students chose to attend the optional two-week Study Skills programme or the one-week International Orientation programme.
- A new “traffic light” style system was introduced at the end of the 2009 pre-sessional course, in order to communicate the results of the end-of-course assessment more effectively to departments and to highlight the need for further language support where required.

In-sessional courses

- A wide range of in-sessional English language support classes were offered to international students in 2008/9, and these were attended by 566 international students. Some international staff and members of the local community also took advantage of the classes on offer.
- The English Language Support Service continued to provide some bespoke courses for academic departments, including a tailored course for international students in the Economics department designed to support the Research Communication module, and the delivery of a module for home students on the Science and Engineering Foundation Programme.
- A total of 231 students attended such closed group sessions in 2008/9.

Student Advice & Support Service

- The team of welfare advisers formerly based at Loughborough Student Advice in the LSU became employees of the University in August 2008, following a TUPE agreement. Initially, services continued to be provided from the existing LSU premises, but the team moved into the Student Support Centre (Angela Marmont Building) in March 2009, joining the International Student Adviser who was previously based in the International Student Centre.
- The Student Advice and Support Service provides a confidential, free advice to both home students and international students on a range of welfare issues, including student finance, housing, immigration and legal matters. It is estimated that one-to-one advice was given to approximately 2000 students in 2008/9, with many more students attending workshops and/or obtaining more general assistance from front-line staff.

- The Student Support Centre also administers the Access to Learning Fund and the University's Emergency Hardship Loans. A range of additional services is offered to international students, including help with police registration, the visa batch scheme, the Schools Liaison Scheme and the HOST Scheme, which gives international students the opportunity to visit other parts of the UK and stay with British families.
- More than 100 students took advantage of this opportunity in 2008/9. The Student Support Centre has also provided practical and financial support for activities such as the LSU International Day and the LSU's Going Global Awards.

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WARDENS SERVICE

- The past academic year saw major changes to the provision of student accommodation on campus with the completion of the first phases of the Village park development and closure of our longest-standing and largest hall, Elvyn Richards.
- Three of the four new halls came into operation during this academic year. The John Philips name moved to a newly built hall and received its first intake at the start of the academic year, joining the neighbouring under graduates resident in the new Hazelrigg Rutland Hall. John Philips was initially opened as a fully post-graduate hall without a warden. This has subsequently been reviewed with Hazelrigg Rutland warden, Dr Paul Leaney, taking on this responsibility.
- Subsequently, the students in the old Elvyn Richards transferred into the new Elvyn Richards blocks on their return after the Christmas closure.
- The 2009 New Year also saw the recruitment and appointment of Dr Laura Justham as the warden for Robert Bakewell Hall, the last of the Village park development halls to be commissioned. Whilst not occupied during this academic year, Dr Justham was appointed in good time to prepare for returning students applying in the Spring term and for the recruitment of both a sub-warden team and, with the assistance of the Hall Students Federation, a new hall committee.
- It is a credit to the combined team of Wardens, imago and UPP staff that such a major change in our student hall provision ran so smoothly.

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