



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Departmental Student Engagement Plan [Lincoln School of Media]

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Agreed by: [departmental committee / meeting name]

Introducing the department

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Overview of the remit / provision:

The School of Media provides two Undergraduate Programmes:

BA (Hons) Media Production
BA (Hons) Film & Television
BA (Hons) Audio Production

Postgraduate Provision is as follows:

MA Media, Film & TV Production
MA Digital Media
MA Photography
MA Studies in Media & Culture
MPhil/PhD Media & Cultural Studies

How does the department impact on the student experience?

The School of Media is fully committed to the student experience through its provision of high quality degrees in media production: BA Media Production was the first of its kind in the UK (launched in 1994), a broad based degree that offers the chance for specialism in the final year as well as a strong strand of skills development and vocational opportunity alongside rigorous critical study and reflection. From this base, which has consistently attracted 200 undergraduate students each year, has come two further undergraduate degrees and a suite of Masters programmes that are distinctive through their inter and cross-disciplinary structures, environment and resources (staff and material).

The School is supported in physical terms by a suite of digital media labs and studios on the ground and second floors of the MHT Building, and top class screening facilities in the EMMTEC centre. These state-of-the-art facilities provide students with the opportunity to link their learning experience with high levels of professional practice. Our aim is to provide students with the space, tools and freedom to pursue their own creative ideas and ambitions, with guidance and support at every stage.

We firmly believe that this cross-disciplinary media environment is what makes our provision unique and gives the students the best possible chance, not only of becoming successful in media employment, but also in carving out new models for success in media and in making a social difference with their work. This is evidenced most recently by the phenomenal work of youtubers Tom 'Tomska' Ridgewell (grad of 2010) and Jack Howard (2013) who have shaken up the traditional media landscape, appealed to new audiences through their comedy work, and used their profile to draw attention to important campaigns for charities such as Oxfam and Cancer Research.

The School's vision for student engagement

Our School student engagement plan guides us in contributing to the University's overall vision and strategy for student engagement. From the University vision, we have developed our own vision for student engagement in 2016 which informs and shapes this plan.

The University's Vision

The university will be a collaborative endeavour where students are personally engaged in, satisfied with and proud of their time at Lincoln because they have been producers of their own and their

The Department's Vision

Having fully engaged and committed students is at the heart of the School of Media. The School's vision is to produce students who through their individual and

collaborative endeavours at Lincoln can go out into the world secure in knowledge and confident in their practice as artists. Our aim is to have students fully equipped for the workplace in both a scholarly and practical sense and through their endeavours encourage potential applicants in the future.

Current State of Play

Actions taken to engage students in the departments' work over the last year:

- **Monthly 'tea' meetings** with course reps, programme leaders, year tutors, student engagement champion, School administrator and Head of School to discuss issues, suggestions, ideas, grumbles.
- More formal **staff-student [course rep] forum** which is minuted and which feeds into Subject Committee notes, Annual Monitoring and other reports. The meeting includes workshop style, themed discussion on a topic. All students receive copies of these minutes. Course reps also attend the Subject Committees.
- New ways of feeding back have been developed – e.g. by production of a hard copy **newsletter** each semester highlighting new initiatives for/by students, new investments and projects; and via **posters** highlighting significant updates and events. Students help with the design, content and distribution of these.
- The **School blog** has been opened up to student contributors as well as graduates, with several new entries from students since Sept 2013: Our alumni are an incredibly important part of the schools history and future, and their involvement with the blog acts as a repository and portal for both our undergrads and the outside world. Sharing success stories, promoting current practice, and acting as an ever growing positive profile of LSM, all members of our alumni are encouraged to be part of the site with our **Alumni Network** growing year on year. **'Meet the Grads'** is an annual event where significant members of our alumni return to LSM for a Q&A panel / networking day. Students are able to interact with alumni on a one to one basis, hearing personal accounts of experiences of the degree programmes and life after Lincoln. This year (2014) the event is bigger than ever as the school celebrates it's 20th anniversary
- Students are very active in our Open Days and we have a very active LSM Ambassador group. They provide tours, Q&As and lead practical activities for prospective students in each of the media labs and studios. They have been praised in University of Lincoln Open Days' feedback for their professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication.
- At the end of each year our **LSM Degree Show** acts as a celebration and sharing of all the outputs from the final year of our BA programmes. Each year the show is organised and run by a student committee who assign roles and responsibilities themselves. It's their show so the responsibility is in their hands as to how they wish to present their work to the public.
- We established a graduate-led social enterprise linking external clients with media needs to students in search of paid work experience to add to portfolios. **New Media Lincs** is supported by HEIF funding and provides mentoring for students in the development of their business as well as their creative skills as they complete client-led commissions according to professional conditions and briefs.
- We actively support the spirit of cultural entrepreneurship and the creation of student-led projects and companies, in collaboration with colleagues in Careers and Enterprise, e.g. GS Productions; *We Blew It*; *Invasion*, etc. [more] helping the students form connections with outside parties and by sharing and promoting these endeavours with the rest of the student body.
- We actively support – through staff time/expertise, funding, guest speaker input and facilities - the creation and development of student-led media initiatives such as **Brayford Radio** and **Linc TV**.
- Graduate film production projects such *Lancaster* and *The Drift* have given students (along with staff) the opportunity to engage in high profile externally funded projects which have benefited the School and the University in a national arena.
- A newly proposed venture **'Facilities Ambassadors'**, initially came from the student reps themselves, the idea being to assign experienced students to particular specialised teaching spaces, to act as monitors, in regards to health and safety, best practice and advice. The majority of our students recognise the value and importance of these spaces and the equipment within, and want to aid us in the upkeep and provision of these spaces.
- The school runs a day long event which serves as an icebreaker for our new intake of students across the school which takes place on one day during induction week called **Lincdog**. Now in it's 4th year, the event is orchestrated by LSM Engagement Champion Graham Cooper, where he along with a great number of the LSM team challenge the students, in teams of 5, to make a 60 second film using their mobile phones. A brief is set in the morning, tutorials take place around lunchtime, the students shoot and edit in the afternoon, and then the days efforts are screened in the evening. The main aim of this event is not about the practice itself, but as a means for the students to introduce themselves to each other by throwing them into the activity together.
- **MC2020** is an Erasmus IP, built from a partnership of 5 universities across Europe. Tamk (Finland), HKU (Netherlands), Vic (Catalonia), MPLab (Latvia) and the University of Lincoln. The programme has run twice in the past 12 months, each time taking 10 students from each institution, bringing them together to form cross nation teams, to work on conceptual projects within the realm of prediction and future gazing of the media landscape of the year 2020. Part 1 took place in Tampere Finland in April 2013, part 2 in Liepaja, Latvia in October 2013.
- **Frequency** the biennial Digital Arts Festival has a strong and vibrant connection with LSM students, with a large number of volunteers and festival supporters coming from with the school. In the 2 instances of the festival so far, our students have engaged with the local community by sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm of the event to the public. Also students have requested specific artists and practitioners to be invited to the school as guest lecturers, for talks and workshops that reflect and support their studies. The festival supported one of our level 3 students to exhibit some of his work as part of the festival programme, which resulted in that student being invited by the festival organisers to work as a mentor on some community projects as a mentor and local artist.
- BFI Film Academy: LSM students as mentors for 16-19 year old participants
- International exchange activity – student-led briefing sessions and feedback
- Students play an important part in our staff research. Many of our school research projects are direct products of direct engagement with students. We have been successful in the last year with bids for 2 new FED projects, funded as part of the

'Student-as-Producer' initiative. **co_LAB** encourages inter-collage collaboration based on the pedagogical framework of the MC2020 project. The IP will bring students from schools across the college, MP, AP, FTV, CLM and Interaction to develop concepts and projects in conjunction with the 'As above, so below' colloquium taking place in May 2014.

- Establishment of the LSM Academy, as a virtual space where students can come together to network, share work and form collaboration teams. Currently this has taken the form of a blackboard site and Facebook group, with a bespoke website under development.
- New and refurbished facilities [edit suites, Adobe software, radio drama studio, TV studios; camera kit; multitrack] – direct result of student feedback; students engaged in design and logistics, and kept involved through social media campaign during the various refurbishments and works, creating a highly positive sense of achievement for all.
- Further development of exhibition and critical sessions, including cross-year activity, especially within the Photography, Digital and Design strands.

How have you communicated the impact of students' engagement and / or feedback to students and staff?

- Welcome back/start of year talks (including student –led news)
- Monthly tea meetings
- Social events designed to gather feedback on more informal basis (eg Level 3 drinks receptions)
- Staff-student [course rep] meetings each semester (minutes)
- Subject Committees (minutes, AMRs)
- Newsletter, poster, blog
- LSM Academy – social media, Bb – with website in development
- School twitter and FB sites
- Email/Bb announcements
- Staff meetings

Where possible solutions are provided. The School invites students to be actively engaged in providing their own solution to problems they might have posed, for example through organising own trips and initiatives (with funding/support from School).

Key activity this coming year where students could shape the outcomes

[Please detail major strands of recurring, periodic or ad hoc work that will impact on the student experience as detailed in your department plan, quality assurance documents or student feedback action plans. Against these, please indicate the actions you will take to engage students in shaping and implementing the outcomes, with indicators of success.]

Further develop **key projects** to develop LSM as top university for employability and opportunity, with full student engagement at all levels, including initiatives such as:

Twickenham Project

New Media Lincs

The LSM Academy

Cross Disciplinary Working within the University

The School of Media already engages in cross disciplinary working with colleagues and students across the University and in the wider community of Lincoln, especially through our newly established social enterprise, New Media Lincs.

The School is currently working with colleagues in xxx and through New Media Lincs to find ways of formalising these kinds of projects and contacts. Students from the School of Performing Arts (through the Student Rep network), the School of Media (through New Media Lincs) and Contemporary Lens Media (through the Programme Leader) are being invited to form a network and an evening of social interaction in Spring 2014. It is hoped that through this networking event, specific projects will arise which promote such cross disciplinary working even further.

The FED project 'co_LAB' is an IP that has cross-disciplinary working at its heart. One of the key aims of the initiative is to create a process that can be used as a case study and shared with the rest of the college / university as a whole as a potential 'best practice' mode of engagement and production.

Sustainable Engagement Initiatives

[In addition to engaging students in immediate areas of work as detailed above, you are encouraged to think about longer term, more sustainable ways of encouraging or enabling student engagement. For example, this might include directly involving students on a regular basis in service development through an advisory panel of students; it could include transforming the way you develop staff within or outside of your team such as through ADA / PDR; or perhaps it might focus on better supporting students who already engage through an enhanced induction. These could be new initiatives or they could be existing ones that you are building on.]

Consistent feedback and communication loops

We will continue to build on our good practice in timely feedback and communication through the traditional and formal channels, such as making sure students are engaged in Subject Boards and formal Year Group meetings. The feedback week which has been developed by the school in the last academic year is proving worthy of development and given that Assessment and Feedback is a key area in the NSS, this initiative would be prime for expansion.

Further development of our graduate Network

- Blog, event, mentoring, advisory

It is important that our current and prospective students are knowledgeable about the destinations of former graduates from the School. The employability prospects are key factors in the delivery of our Q&A on Open Days for example. Whilst the University has an established alumni department and produces a detailed Destination of Leavers Report, the idea that the School itself has a detailed

knowledge of its graduates is a key asset. The University prides itself, quite rightly on being a community/family, something that is always foregrounded by Vice Chancellor's addresses as Graduation. The School of Media encourages that community feel and has a very good working knowledge of destinations of its Graduates. In addition, the School is actively engaged with providing data for the annual Destination of Leavers Report. It demonstrates, the diversity of career opportunities available on completion of the study of a degree in the Performing Arts.

Institutional Priority Actions

The University's Student Engagement Strategy 2012-16 sets a broad framework for developing student engagement across all areas of the University. From time to time during the strategy's lifespan a handful of priority actions will be set that help achieve a joined-up approach to development – this should complement and be embedded within the individual efforts of departments.

- 01** Empower Student Engagement Champions to lead change within every school and professional support department

Action: Embed the Student Engagement Strategy in all areas of the School
Indicator of Success: Continued improvement in the National Student Survey Results. The School has a good record of improvement in the NSS and with a concrete Student Engagement Plan, this will continue.
- 02** Embed regular, productive engagement with elected Student Reps and SU Officers into the annual planning and evaluation cycle of each department

Action: Continued good practice with regard to the engagement of Student Reps in Subject Boards and specific projects that directly affect the delivery of the programmes in the School.
Indicator of Success: Improvement in the continued score in specific areas of the NSS.
- 03** Increase engagement with priority groups of students: mature students and international students

Action: The School will continue to encourage diversity as much as possible. The School welcomes applications from this diverse range of students. As School we would be keen to see a rise in applications from both mature and international students, and improved feedback from those students.
Indicator of Success: Increased rise in applications from both mature and international students by 2016, and improvement in feedback from them.
- 04** Report back to students and staff of the impact of student engagement with tangible and meaningful examples of change

Action: The School already has a policy of effective communication with regard to Student Engagement. Students are invited to report back both mid year and end of module on areas for improvement or new initiatives that could enhance the positive running of modules. The Student Engagement Plan will form a key part of all School Meetings.
Indicator of Success: Positive feedback in Meetings and that students see their suggestions, where applicable, integrated in further refinement of the Degree Structures and external opportunities by 2016.
- 05** Systematically make best use of student survey data that we collect to inform the development of the University

Action: Consolidate student survey data from the NSS, continuous in house student feedback and also the face to face communication that we receive from students on a daily basis.
Indicator of Success: That students see the immediate effects of their feedback as quickly as possible where possible. Furthermore, that students feedback on modules is fed into end of year module reports and is enacted upon for the following academic year. Ongoing.

Implementation and Evaluation

Mechanisms for driving and monitoring the implementation of the plan within the department:

The Student Engagement Champion is fully committed to driving the plan forward with the support of colleagues in the School and the well-established Student Reps system. The Student Engagement Champion is fully prepared to arrange a regular system of meetings with the student reps to discuss the plan. Furthermore, the plan will be embedded in regular School meetings.

Key points for evaluating and developing the plan:

As above

Strategies for communicating the plan to staff in the department and involving them in delivering it:

As above

