

Title: Student communications and the transition into Higher Education

Short description: This research project will look at the communication channels used by the University in the 'transition period' (i.e. in the lead up to, and during, Freshers' Week and the first term) and evaluating their effectiveness.

The project will evaluate which communication channels are appropriate for which audiences and make recommendations where certain channels are not currently in use, but perhaps should be.

The project will look at the use of paper-based communications as well as digital communications including traditional channels and more nascent technologies such as social media and mobile phone apps.

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Long description: The University's Working Group on Transitions into Higher Education has made initial inroads into documenting and evaluating the communications channels used by the University during the 'transitions period'. The hope is that this project will provide the University with a clear steer as to where it's efforts should be placed in order to ensure effective communications with new students.

The transition into Higher Education is a key time for new students and it is imperative that the University communicates effectively with those students. We are looking to investigate the different student communication channels on offer (both those currently in use and others we might want to adopt), to highlight where these work (or not) and to make recommendations for a future communications strategy.

Outcomes: A set of recommendations which will inform future student communications strategy

Tasks: You will be involved in all stages of the study, including background research, planning and preparation; conducting opening conversations, in-depth interviews and focus groups; collecting and recording information; analyzing survey results; and publishing reports aimed at different audiences and using a range of digital media.

Skills required: This placement is open to students from any discipline. We are looking for a digitally literate student who is personable, skilled in active listening, with an interest in people. You should be a good organizer, methodical and able to write well.

Any experience in interviewing, collecting, recording and analyzing survey results, report writing, and using social media would be an advantage but full training will be provided.

Skills developed: This project will allow you to interact with a range of different people, to practise and develop your interpersonal skills, to work in a team as well as independently, using your own initiative. You will gain valuable experience in all aspects of undertaking a research study, from the planning stage to the final report. The project will provide you with valuable insights into planning and evaluating communication strategy. It also presents an opportunity to develop your own communication and digital skills by engaging you with a range of digital media to further collect, record, share and publish information (such as online survey tools, websites, blogs and social media) and to develop a professional online presence to impress employers.

How to Apply

Please apply by email to Richard Sandford (r.j.sandford@reading.ac.uk) including a CV and cover letter.

Start Date: Start and end dates are negotiable. The placement will be split into three weeks full-time over the summer vacation and three weeks part-time equivalent over Freshers' Week and

the Autumn term. You must be available to conduct a survey during Freshers' Week.

End Date: Start and end dates are negotiable. The placement will be split into three weeks full-time over the summer vacation and three weeks part-time equivalent over Freshers' Week and the Autumn term. You must be available to conduct a survey during Freshers' Week.

Hours of Work

Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 17.00, 35 hours/week; 3 weeks full-time over the summer vacation plus part-time equivalent over Freshers' Week and the Autumn term.

Place of Work

Tbc

Access to facilities: ?

Inductor: Richard Sandford

Progress review: Richard Sandford and Orla Kennedy

Second supervisor: Orla Kennedy