Goodbye... and Hello!

Congratulations to 2013’s graduates, and welcome to all our new students.

Behind the Scenes
Everything you need to know about the Accommodation and Residences teams

Co-Innovate
How Brunel’s facilities and research are benefitting local small businesses
Brunel still one of London’s top five universities for student satisfaction

Brunel held its position as one of London’s top five universities for student satisfaction after another consistent year in the National Student Survey. 87% of Brunel students were satisfied overall with their experience here, up 1% for the second year running and marking a third year of consistently strong results within a highly competitive sector.

Demonstrating the broad-based quality that Brunel now offers, over 90% of students in English, Anthropology, History, Politics, Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Biosciences and Mathematics and Statistics were satisfied with their courses, with all of these subjects appearing in the upper quartile nationally. In Physiotherapy, 100% of students were satisfied with their courses, making the University top in the UK for this subject. English and Creative Writing showed particular improvement since last year, following high profile appointments including Professors Benjamin Zephaniah and Will Self. English jumped to sixth place nationally, driven by a 20% rise in students’ satisfaction with assessment and feedback.

Physiotherapy and History maintained top ten positions in the national rankings for the third year in a row, and were joined by Anthropology, Film and Television Studies and Politics at the top of the rankings among universities in London. Across the University, students were particularly satisfied with the learning resources available to them, including the Library, IT and other equipment, an area which has seen significant investment over recent years. More than 90% expressed their satisfaction with Brunel’s facilities, making the University second in London and eighth in the UK in this category.

In addition, for the second year running, Brunel’s students are the most satisfied in London with the work of their Students’ Union. Vice-Chancellor Professor Julia Buckingham said: “This year’s National Student Survey emphasises the breadth of our subject portfolio and the quality of our provision across the board. We remain committed to improving our students’ experience and to raising standards, and we hope to build on the strong base of the last three years in 2014.”

Transforming Brunel – project update

Project leader Paul Thomas explains how the transformation project is moving forward as planned.

“The past three months have seen substantial progress in our planning for the transformation of Brunel. The Colleges and Institutes Groups have refined their initial ideas about how teaching and research structures should change, and the Administration Group is preparing for the complex task of shaping an administration function suitable for the new organisation.

In her address on 2 September, the Vice-Chancellor spoke of the need to improve our long-term sustainability by raising teaching standards and focusing resources on areas of research where we are, or can be, world class. Marketing needs to be more effective and our administration more efficient. The intended outcome is that Brunel is consistently in the top 25% of UK universities, recognised as a centre of first rate research and with a thriving student intake and an enviable programme of professional staff development.

The College Group has considered various configurations of departments, in three colleges. After extensive consultation, the preferred option comprises:

- a College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences, incorporating departments of: Electronic and Electrical Engineering; Mechanical and Civil Engineering; Mathematics; Computer Science; and Design;
- a College of Health and Life Sciences, incorporating departments of: Life Sciences (Biosciences, Psychology and Sport and Exercise Sciences); and Clinical Sciences (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Community Health Nursing and Health Studies, Social Work and Youth and Community);
- a College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences, incorporating departments of: Arts and Humanities; Media, Communications and Social Sciences; Economics and Finance; Education; Politics, History and Law School; and the Business School.

The Institutes Group has refined an initial 17 research themes down to three: Energy Futures; Materials and Manufacturing; and Environment, Health and Societies. Each meets the key criteria of significant funding, recognition through grants and awards, a high profile, clear public benefit, and a unique ability within Brunel to carry out leading research.

These firm proposals were put to Council for consideration on 12 September. If they are agreed, we will work hard to fill in the details in time for final approval on 13 December. Then begins the process of implementation, which will take us through to September 2014. We have detailed plans in place for communication and consultation throughout the project, and will do our best to keep everyone informed at every stage.”
What’s on
Alongside this term’s fireworks extravaganza and Winter Graduation ceremonies, make sure you add the following dates to your diary.

Inaugural Lecture Series
When? October – December, 5.30pm – 6.45pm (see dates below)
Where? Eastern Gateway Building Auditorium
Booking? events@brunel.ac.uk or 01895 266451 – all events are free
What is it? This series of four public lectures aims to promote the work of Brunel’s Professors and give students, staff and the public the opportunity to experience Brunel’s research.

- **1 October:** Professor Mark Williams, School of Sport and Education; ‘Expertise and its acquisition across domains: implications for training and performance enhancement’
- **31 October:** Professor Andreas Kortenkamp, Institute for the Environment; ‘Multiple chemical exposures and the rise in male reproductive disorders – is there a link or are we facing an explanation gap?’
- **13 November:** Professor Arturo Sala, School of Health Sciences and Social Care; ‘The Emperor of all childhood maladies: a brief biography of neuroblastoma’
- **3 December:** Professor Peter Brett, Brunel Institute for Bioengineering; title to be confirmed

Brunel Music Theatre Workshop presents
*The Producers*

When? 28, 29 and 30 November, 7.30pm
Where? Howell Theatre
Booking? Tickets – £8, Brunel students – £5, Arts Centre Friends – free; available from the Arts Centre, artscentre@brunel.ac.uk, www.brunel.ac.uk/artscentre
What is it? Adaptation of Mel Brooks’ record-breaking 2001 film *The Producers*. The musical’s huge success was such that it in turn became a film in 2005!

Fireworks 2013: tickets on sale soon

Brunel will host its annual bonfire and fireworks display on Tuesday 5 November 2013, on the Cemetery Pitches on Kingston Lane, from 6pm.

Over 3,000 students, staff and members of the local community attended last year’s event, enjoying spectacular fireworks co-ordinated with some film theme music classics.

Attendees this year can enjoy food and drink stalls and even more entertainment, as well as a fantastic fireworks display lasting around fifteen minutes.

Tickets will be available from mid October and may sell out quickly – details of how to buy tickets will be made available on IntraBrunel nearer the time.

For further information about the event or if you are interested in volunteering please contact events@brunel.ac.uk or call 01895 267593.

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Photos from 2012’s display are available on Flickr via www.flickr.com/bruneluniversity or view the set directly at http://bit.ly/2012nov5pics

Winter Graduation ceremonies to be held this December

Following feedback from students, Brunel will be holding two Winter Graduation ceremonies this December for postgraduate taught and research students.

This will enable our postgraduate students, including international students, to attend a ceremony shortly after recommendations for award have been made by Exam Boards. In the past all students – undergraduate and postgraduate – have been invited to attend a July ceremony irrespective of when their degree was awarded during the year.

The ceremonies will be held on Thursday 19 December 2013, at 10.30am and 3.00pm, at Central Hall Westminster, London, SW1H 9NH. Central Hall is located across the road from Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament.

For full details visit the Winter Graduation web pages at www.brunel.ac.uk/news-and-events/winter-graduation-2013

Next summer’s Graduation ceremonies will be held on campus as usual during the week commencing 14 July 2014.
Mo Farah Foundation to encourage home-grown sporting talent at Brunel with new Mo Farah Academy

The Mo Farah Foundation (MFF) has announced the launch of the Mo Farah Academy, its first initiative in the UK, designed to encourage home-grown sporting talent whilst building on the Olympic Legacy.

The Academy will provide financial and technical support for the elite sports training programmes at St Mary’s University College, Twickenham, and at Brunel. Both have been selected as dedicated centres of sporting excellence with a solid track record of sporting success.

The selection process for the scholarships will be rigorous, with applicants expected to demonstrate the potential to compete at international level. Priority will be given to athletes from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Following the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the London 2012 Olympic Games, the defining moment in Mo Farah’s own sporting career, this new scheme is intended to build on that legacy and to provide promising young British athletes with the combination of advice, guidance and practical support that they need to fulfil their potential.

Paul Dimmock, Director of Sport at Brunel University said: “It is a real honour for us to be selected to work with the Mo Farah Academy. The package of technical assistance, access to world class coaching, and valuable financial support that the Academy offers will make a significant difference to the quality of the training we can offer.”

Andrew Reid-Smith, Director of Sport at St Mary’s University College said: “Mo started at St Mary’s in 2001 as the first student of the Endurance Performance and Coaching Centre (EPACC). We are very proud of Mo’s incredible London 2012 achievements and St Mary’s is delighted to be part of the Mo Farah Academy to help support the next generation of sporting talent.”

The first Academy students will start at Brunel and St Mary’s this September.

Brunel Sport Scholars Jo Rowland and Ashley Wright (pictured left) met Mo Farah after the World Athletics Championships in Moscow in August, where Mo won gold in both the 5,000m and 10,000m.
Graduation 2013

This year’s Graduation Ceremonies caught the end of July’s heat wave, and the campus looked its best as over 3,000 students celebrated the culmination of their time at Brunel.

With the Indoor Athletics Centre transformed into a huge theatre, the east side of campus enjoyed a festival atmosphere throughout the week. Graduating students and their guests were entertained by birds of prey, live bands and food and drinks stalls, and the living IKB statue was on hand to fascinate – or terrify – passers-by!

As always, the Events team and all the staff and students that supported them made sure everything ran smoothly.

These pages give you a flavour of Graduation 2013, as well as introducing this year’s Honorary Graduates and Fellows.
Graduation 2013: Honorary Graduates and Fellows

As well as celebrating the achievements of our students, graduation week gives us the opportunity to recognise others who have made outstanding contributions to the community or to the University.

Honorary Graduates

Brunel awards Honorary Doctorates in recognition of outstanding scholarly achievement, service to the local, national or international community, or service to the University.

Professor Nicholas Collings

Nick was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering for his work on internal combustion engines, gas sensors and emissions as Professor of Applied Thermodynamics at the University of Cambridge.

Barbara Jenks

Alongside her work as a therapeutic counsellor, Barbara’s support for Brunel started when her husband was appointed Vice-Chancellor in 2006. She took a very active part in University life and was an outstanding ambassador for the University.

David Riley

Appointed Brunel’s Entrepreneur-in-Residence in 2010, David has been involved in advice sessions, masterclasses, the Dragons’ Den competition and Brunel Entrepreneurs Society. He has also employed Brunel graduates and interns and is a committed ambassador for Brunel.

Dr Mike Short CBE

Currently Telefónica Europe’s Vice-President of Public Affairs, Mike’s career spans 39 years in electronics and telecommunications. Mike has supported Brunel for many years, including giving lectures, serving on an Industrial Advisory Panel, event sponsorship and collaborative projects.

As well as our Honorary Graduates and Fellows, a number of VIPs and dignitaries enjoyed Graduation Week as they watched friends or family collect their Brunel degrees.

Prince Abdul Fattaah of Brunei, the nephew of the Sultan of Brunei, received his PhD in Human Resource Management for his research addressing HR management in domestic and multinational enterprise in Brunei. Prince Abdul Farraah is pictured with his father Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, the Sultan’s brother and Brunei’s Foreign Minister (inset, right), and his supervisor Dr Satwinder Singh.

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Honorary Fellows

Honorary Fellowships are awarded to local people or others who have established a close working relationship with the University, making a significant contribution to its development.

Kevin Ambrose
As Vice-President responsible for metal packaging at Crown Technology, Kevin has actively supported Crown Packaging’s training programmes for young engineers and bursary awards to Brunel students over the past three years. The company employs over 50 Brunel graduates.

John Churchley
In the course of his roles at Severn Trent Water and WatStech Ltd John has worked closely with staff in Brunel’s Institute for the Environment on a number of projects concerning water treatment.

Christine Craik
Christine retired as Director of Occupational Therapy in 2009 after more than 14 years’ service. She was responsible for establishing the Centre for Professional Practice Research at Brunel, and still acts as a mentor for doctoral candidates.

Dr Ray Holland
A Brunel PhD alumnus, Ray was Director of Brunel’s postgraduate Design Strategy courses between 2000 and his retirement in 2011. He is now an Associate Professor and acts as an ambassador for Asia from his new home in Thailand.

John Langdon
Having joined Brunel’s Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1969, John rose to the position of Supervisory Chief Technician, helping create laboratories for biomedical engineering, civil engineering, motorsport and aerodynamics, including the flight simulator.

Cllr Mary O’Connor MBE
Following a career in nursing which saw her awarded an MBE in 2000, Mary was elected Mayor of Hillingdon in 2011. She used her time in office to raise local awareness of a number of mental health charities.

Gareth Williams
Gareth became CEO of Interoute in 2007, working to strengthen the company’s position as a major Cloud services provider. Interoute has recruited Brunel placement student and graduates exclusively for the last four years and Gareth has championed this ongoing working relationship.

Natasha Baker (pictured above)
Natasha is the reigning double Paralympic Dressage Champion. She lives on the family farm near Uxbridge.

Natasha’s background is horses – she first sat on one at six months, before she could walk. At two, Natasha contracted a virus, Transverse Myelitis, which affects communication between the spinal nerves and the rest of the body, leaving her with a permanent disability.

Natasha hasn’t let her disability hold her back. Her competitive riding career started at the age of nine when she won the Riding for the Disabled Association National Championships. In 2002 she was invited to join the World Class Programme which provides Lottery funding and a professional support network. Her first dressage horse took her onto the international stage and several horses later she bought Cabral (known as JP). In 2011 Natasha and JP were unbeaten, winning two Gold medals at the European Championships and two National titles.

At the London 2012 Paralympics Natasha recorded three Personal Bests and three Paralympic records as well as her two Gold Medals.
Learn a modern foreign language for free this September

Brunel students can learn a modern foreign language for free as classes begin at the International Pathways and Language Centre.

The Modern Foreign Languages team offers courses in the following languages: Modern Standard Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Classes start in the week commencing 30 September 2013.

The classes are taught by qualified, native speakers. Upon successful completion of the course, students will receive a Certificate of Achievement. Learning a language can help you open doors to new cultures, expand your communication skills, develop an international network, gain a competitive advantage in the job market, and gain entry to the global marketplace.

Student Jenny Garson said: “Japanese was a lot of fun and a great learning experience. Sensei is a fantastic teacher and keeps the course interesting and fun, even when the content is difficult. I learned a lot about Japanese language and culture during this course and am disappointed I’m a postgrad since I would love to take the post-beginners’ course if I were going to be here next year!”

Booking opens at 10am on Wednesday 18 September. All bookings should be made online at www.brunel.ac.uk/international/foreignlanguages

Classes are also open to Brunel staff and alumni. There are two free staff places on each course – once free places have been allocated, the remaining staff applicants and alumni will be offered a discount.

For more information email karin.hayes@brunel.ac.uk, Head of Modern Foreign Languages.

Opera composed by Brunel alumnus performed by the Greek National Opera in Athens

The Darkness of Mistico, an opera written by 2012 Brunel alumnus Gregory Emfietzis, was performed by the Greek National Opera in June as part of a Contemporary Opera programme.

The production, staged at the National Opera House, Athens and with a libretto written by Gregory’s frequent collaborator Myrto Loulaki, is based upon the story of the Greek mythological figure Orpheus. It explores specific dramatic concepts such as myth and reality, mysticism, and the musicians themselves as leading participants in the production.

Gregory graduated from Brunel in 2012 with a PhD in Music Composition, supervised by Professor Christopher Fox, Dr Jennifer Walshe and Richard Barrett. He describes his music as exploring “the drama, psychology and ritualism of public performance. Reaching far beyond sound alone it embraces staging, lighting, dramaturgy, costume design and more”. This complexity made the premiere of his opera a real learning experience: “Due to the nature of opera, the number of people involved in the production, and the efforts and synchronisation required from everyone involved, this has been an extremely valuable lesson for any future engagement,” he said.

Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, Gregory is himself a violinist and singer who has performed in international festivals, concerts and operas. Following his first degree in Music Science and Art at the University of Macedonia, he moved to the UK in 2004 to study for an MA in Contemporary Music and Composition before enrolling for a PhD at Brunel.

Gregory’s music has been performed by leading ensembles across Europe and North America. He has worked with groups including Asamisimasa (Norway), the London Contemporary Orchestra (UK), Okeanos Ensemble (UK), Orkest de Ereprijs (Netherlands) and the Sonic Inertia Performance Group (USA). In 2013 he created Music Impossible, a shadow music theatre project supported by the Arts Council and the London Symphony Orchestra as part of the LSO’s Soundhub Scheme. He is currently developing a new work for the LSO.

For more information about Gregory’s music, to hear samples and view video clips of his performances, please view his personal webpage: www.emfietzis.com
At the time of writing the Students’ Union’s RAG team is embarking on their annual adventure to climb Mount Kilimanjaro for the Childreach International, with the V2C bike ride from Vietnam to Cambodia due to commence in early September. MA Media and Public Relations student Lisa Boles is currently the highest student fundraiser for the international development charity, with the chance to win an internship at one of Childreach International’s offices.

Dates for the summer 2014 Graduation Ceremonies have now been confirmed – the ceremonies will be held during the week commencing 14 July 2014. More information will follow in due course. For information on the 2013 winter graduation ceremonies for postgraduates, see page 4.

Rent a car on campus for only £5.50 an hour

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Once you’ve signed up, you can book the cars online, over the phone or by using your smart phone. The cars can be accessed at any time of the day or night, and if you only need a car for an hour or two, then that’s all you need to book one for.

Cars such as a brand new Ford Fiesta or Ford Focus are available to hire, and are located behind the Medical Centre and on West Spur Road.

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All members must hold a full valid driving licence and credit card or Visa debit card.

To register today for free, please visit the Hertz website – www.hertz247.com/london

Please quote promotion code 1085 to ensure free membership. As an added bonus, Hertz will also add £10 free driving credit to your account to help get you started.

Author and Creative Writing PhD student Liesel Schwarz celebrated the launch of her second Steampunk novel A Clockwork Heart at the Forbidden Planet London Megastore in August. The novel follows her debut A Conspiracy of Alchemists in The Chronicles of Light and Shadow series, and Liesel is now writing the third instalment, entitled Sky Pirates, due for release in summer 2014.

Alumni Perri Shakes-Drayton and Ashley Bryant were both selected for the 2013 Athletics World Championships in Moscow, although both sadly saw their campaigns ended by injury. 2013 graduate Ashley was unable to make his senior world debut in the decathlon due to a hamstring tear, while Perri made impressive progress through the rounds of the 400m hurdles before being hampered by a knee injury in the final.

Brunel held its first alumni event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in July. A Brunel delegation led by the Vice-Chancellor met alumni, some of whom graduated as long ago as the early 70s, and updated them on developments at the University. Former students who attended included Professor Hassan Said, now Vice-Chancellor of Taylor’s University in Malaysia, and recently married Farahiyah Binti Wan Yunus and Mohammed Romli who were both MSc Occupational Therapy students.

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Please quote promotion code 1085 to ensure free membership. As an added bonus, Hertz will also add £10 free driving credit to your account to help get you started.
This September, the University will pilot a new approach to developing highly valuable, work-related skills in our first year students with the launch of a special study programme over terms 1 and 2.

The Ready for Work, Ready for Life graduate attributes programme invites up to 200 students in term one and a further 200 in term 2 to undertake a 10-week course for two hours per week, in addition to their normal studies.

The University is highly regarded for its relationships with industry and with employers, and the programme will exploit these strengths. Professor Zahir Irani explains the ethos behind the scheme: “We want all our students to be work ready by the time they leave Brunel. Initiatives like the ‘Ready’ programme will help them stand out from others and be best placed to secure graduate employment when leaving University. It’s no longer good enough to be like others – you need to be different and have an edge.”

Although the programme is not credit-bearing, its curriculum will not only enhance the employability of the students involved but will also positively impact on the participants’ wider studies, whatever their course.

Successful participants will be presented with certificates and ‘Ready’ will appear on their achievement record. It should also be a valuable addition to students’ CVs.

The course is designed to help students develop the following eight core attributes, beyond those employability skills embedded within the curriculum:

- Communication
- Data analysis skills
- Personal resilience
- Teamwork
- Commercial awareness
- Organisation and planning
- Problem solving
- Time management

These attributes will be developed by exploring core themes in small teams, led by academics and professional staff, and with the active participation of high level guest speakers from local businesses and the community.

The themes have been taken from the University’s current strategic plan, and give the programme a distinct ‘Brunel’ flavour. These themes are:

- Community engagement: projects of interest to our local community, bringing social and economic benefits;
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship: projects that focus on developing innovative products or services;
- Global challenges: projects that research and analyse issues that have world-wide importance;
- Social responsibility: projects that analyse the balance between economic development and societal and environmental welfare.

Professor Irani added: “The skills we are fostering in this course have been chosen specifically to meet Brunel’s aim of helping students to become employable. But they are also the personal attributes that students need to be successful in their university life. This course is going to be fun, challenging, and extremely useful for anyone lucky enough to win a place.”

Places on the course are strictly limited but will be drawn from across all subjects at Brunel, and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. New students wanting to reserve a place should contact their School straight away or email the Ready team at: ready@brunel.ac.uk
Sarah Rourke, a Careers Consultant at the Placement and Careers Centre, and Simon Kent, Director of Undergraduate Studies in the School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics, were part of the team that developed the Ready programme’s Enterprise and Entrepreneurship theme. They explain the value of the programme from their perspectives.

Sarah Rourke

“Staff from across the University volunteered to take part in Theme Teams. We were given the task of coming up with a project for the students to work on which would help them develop the theme of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship but also develop core attributes and skills.

Each of the Theme Teams formulated not just a project outline but also a set of resources for each attribute – my group were looking at Teamwork. These resources will be available to all candidates so they can use them at the appropriate point of their project – for example for Teamwork, at the beginning of the project they can set up their teams based on the different strengths of each member.

As a careers consultant, I talk to employers a lot. Part of what employers are saying is that they want graduates not just to be academically sound, but also to have real life skills that they can take straight into the workplace. The key for me is the early stage of intervention – someone can come to me in their final year and say, ‘What can I do to get this role?’ The real question is what should they have been doing?

This programme will get students into the right mindset to know what they’ll need to do to apply for jobs in final year but also for placements in second year. It will make it much easier for them to deal with questions like, ‘When have you developed commercial awareness?’ They can answer, ‘In my first year, I worked on a business plan and developed a business!’ This is especially important if they don’t have a part-time job or work experience.”

Simon Kent

“Graduates are entering an ever more competitive job market and will apply the skills and knowledge gained during their university education in an ever wider range of roles. The projects that students on the Ready for Work programme will participate in are aligned with four broad themes which represent the diversity of the modern workplace.

The projects are varied and are designed to challenge multi-disciplinary teams of students and take them outside the comfort of their academic programmes.

Employers and society now place demands on graduates well outside the confines of their degrees – we hope to address this with the Ready programme.”
Behind the Scenes at... Accommodation and Residences

Express spent an afternoon with the Accommodation and Residences teams just before the start of the Autumn Term.

The Accommodation Office, located next to the Medical Centre, is very busy when we visit – five staff members in the reception area are on hand to answer students’ questions and explain what to do next, taking phone calls and speaking to students in person.

While every stage of the accommodation procedure – from initial application to room allocation – can be performed online, Head of Accommodation Barbara Lockhart’s department still enjoys a lot of direct contact with students, who value speaking with a member of staff. As a result, the reception area has recently been refurbished, brightening the space and creating more room; in addition, the Office now has two computer kiosks that enable students to perform standard actions such as requesting accommodation, making payments and asking for a room exchange with the Customer Services team on hand to assist with problems.

Students who do prefer to ask questions online can now use a facility with a special tracking system that allows requests and queries to be accurately monitored.

The Residences Department provides a similarly face-to-face service for students who need help with any concern relating to maintenance and general housekeeping, as well as any issues that affect their quality of life on campus. As Residential Services Manager Becky Brooks explains, the department aims to provide value for money, as well as safe, secure and clean accommodation in which all University residents can live and study.

A key part of the pastoral element of their work is performed by the Residences Mentors, a team of 40 students who work in conjunction with other support services on campus. Becky explains: “The Mentors are students themselves so they have first-hand experience of life at Brunel.” As well as providing peer support, Mentors act as a communication channel between students and the University, as well as contributing to the overall development of our community.

“As well as practical help with rooms and flats,” Becky adds, “Residences offer help and assistance with all aspects of living on campus. We understand that living away from home can bring unexpected challenges.”
If you are a Fresher living in halls of residence this year, the Accommodation Office will have been one of your first points of contact with the University.

The Accommodation and Residences teams, part of Brunel’s new Commercial Services department, allocate and maintain the halls of residence for all Brunel students. Express spoke with members of both teams to find out how each service can help students who live on campus, and to get a sneak peek of what happens behind the scenes.

Which is which?

Many students – and staff – confuse the services of the Residences Office and Accommodation Office, as well as the Housing Office which helps students who plan to live off campus in the local area.

The Accommodation team is responsible for helping students find somewhere to live, while Residences, run by Janet Bryan, is responsible for maintaining the day-to-day running of the 33 halls of residence on campus.

**Accommodation Office**
- Allocating all 4,531 rooms
- Producing and issuing student room contracts and finance invoices
- Communicating effectively regarding student accommodation issues

**Residences Office**
- Maintaining the facilities across all 33 halls
- Running the Residences Student Mentor scheme
- Supporting staff and residents to create a more sustainable and environmentally focused community

**Housing Office**
Students often decide to live off campus before or after first year. There is a wide choice of housing near Brunel, and it is usually reasonably priced for the London area.

The Housing Office is dedicated to students’ needs and does not charge for its services, unlike most agencies. They run a number of schemes to help you find a great place to live, including the Brunel Student Homes website where you can search for available properties.
Accommodation and Residences: Who’s Who?

Lina Brazyte, Customer Services Supervisor, Accommodation Office

“The most important part of my role is teamwork. I help out my staff when they need it, and help students with any aspect of room allocation and queries about room changes and the costs of accommodation.

Today, I started by checking who has been overstaying their accommodation contracts! Then I searched the list to find students whose contracts are ending and contacted them to remind them to get their contracts extended and avoid paying an overstay fee. We don’t like charging for overstays!

I often help out at reception, guiding new or temporary staff. We can never send a student away empty handed, so we have to find the right answer for them, which can take time. Whatever they ask – about their keys, or even their course – we phone round to the right department. We try to be as helpful as possible so that students don’t need to wander around the campus.

The most satisfying part of the job is speaking with international students and helping them to understand regulations and conditions which may be different to those in their country. I like the moment when you can see that they understand, and that you have communicated the message effectively. They are happy then, and so am I!

Sometimes students are demanding, and we have to work out if those demands are fair. That’s not easy. You have to think professionally, not personally, about what’s best. It’s satisfying if they then send a positive email later, when the situation has been resolved.”

Josie Mangan, Residences Administrator

“I can be found in the Bishop Complex in the Bishop, Lancaster and Faraday Residences Office. Here we have 13 halls of residence, and we look after 2,126 students. I handle the reception area and post room office, and deal with telephone queries.

The first day of the academic year – 15 September this year – is our best day. We’re very busy welcoming all our new students, issuing them keys, making sure they have the correct access on their ID cards, and generally making their first day as special as we can. The year passes by so fast; the next crazy day is in May when all our students move out!

Today began with a staff huddle, then I opened up one of the flats for viewing – I arrange viewings for open days for the Marketing department and Brunel International. Then I organised the post, writing out collection slips and emailing students to collect large parcels. Each day I report any maintenance issues and defects to our in-house maintenance team or to the Estates Department. Later, some students came in to book the camp bed that we provide, to accommodate their friends visiting.

My favourite part of the job is interacting with students and being able to answer their questions. Providing the information they need gives me a strong sense of achievement. What I find most challenging is trying to get everything done in a day. With students constantly coming and going, it’s sometimes hard to finish what you started!”
Meet some of the staff who keep Accommodation and Residences running smoothly

Iram Ahmed, Allocations Officer, Accommodation Office

“My role involves processing applications and allocating rooms. During this summer we have found rooms for pre-sessional English students, and we’ve been liaising with the Disability and Dyslexia Service to prepare rooms for students with particular medical needs. We have to check that each room is fit for their criteria.

To apply for a room, students download an application form and submit it. I email them a very detailed confirmation email, edited for each student to confirm the kind of room they have and when it’s available. We explain all the costs, how to pay the deposit and what happens when they arrive. Once they pay, I can allocate their room.

During term time, we’re busy filling rooms that haven’t been filled. We get intakes of pre-sessional English students throughout the year.

The most satisfying part of the role is seeing students pass and get through their studies. I remember speaking to one international undergraduate who went on to do a PhD here – he remembered arranging his first room with me on the phone!

Sometimes my job can be difficult – we have had situations where a student turns up to reception on their first day without having arranged a room, and we have make sure that they find somewhere to live. I also have to work with students who are having difficulty paying their room fees. But I enjoy solving problems – every day is different!”

Becky Brooks, Residential Services Manager

“I have worked in Residences for 18 years, including 10 years in my current role. I report to Janet Bryan, Head of Residences, and alongside my colleague Melissa Ryan, we are responsible for the overall management of the four Residential Complexes on campus – 4,643 beds in total. My main area of responsibility is the Isambard Complex and Mill, Fleming and Galbraith Complex.

Along with general day-to-day management tasks, student issues and customer feedback, Melissa and I also have responsibility for ensuring that the residences are compliant with all aspects of Health and Safety. A great deal of my time is taken up on waste and environmental issues, making sure that the Residences Department adheres not only to University policies and procedures, but also the UUK Code of Practice and government legislation.

Today, I have been busy preparing for the Resident Student Mentor Training Week which takes place prior to Freshers arriving. This is a vital week as the Mentors receive training from support services within the University as well as training on mediation, waste and environmental issues. I have also been preparing for the upcoming Open Days, ensuring that the Residences Department is well represented at their stand, and that we have sufficient rooms available for prospective students and their families to view.

Working in such a busy department, I like the fact that no two days are the same – the variety of issues that crop up on a daily basis can be both challenging and rewarding.”
STARTERS AND LEAVERS

Express welcomes some new faces and says goodbye to some of our colleagues who left Brunel in June and July 2013.

Welcome to...
Dr Lucia Garrido Lecturer in Psychology • David Meier Lecturer in Mathematical Sciences • Dr Caroline Ruddell Lecturer in Media • Jennifer Ryan Lecturer in Physiotherapy • Dr Stuart Stevenson Lecturer in Social Work • Rebekah Watson Undergraduate Programmes Administrator, School of Social Sciences

Farewell to...
Dr Mohamed Badar Senior Lecturer in Law • Carey Clifford Records Manager • Dr Christopher Eskiw Lecturer in Biosciences • Professor Graeme Evans Chair in Design • Professor Tanya Krzywinska Professor of Screen Studies • Dr David Machin Reader in Journalism • Professor TC Melewar Professor of Marketing and Strategy • Julian Savage Lecturer in Media • Pauline Seston Entrepreneurship and Employability Consultant, Placement and Careers Centre

At the end of July, Brunel also said goodbye to Professor Ian Campbell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience and Staff Development, who has taken up the post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Hertfordshire.

Ian joined Brunel in 2005 and worked in a variety of roles including Head of Sport Sciences and Deputy Head of the School of Sport and Education. He took on the role of Vice-Chancellor in 2008, and will be most warmly remembered for his commitment to building good relationships between staff and students and for his part in making Brunel part of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Car parking spaces on campus redistributed

Parking arrangements on campus have changed over the summer following the relocation of many staff to the eastern end of campus.

The pay and display area previously located behind Elliott Jaques has moved to the more prominent car park in front of the building. Students can also use this area by pay and display or by showing a valid parking permit. The existing parking area at the far rear of Elliott Jaques, previously used by external tenants, has been converted to red dot spaces.

The temporary grassed area red dot bays on the North Loop road to the rear of Heinz Wolff have been removed as these spaces were not part of the University’s planning agreement and are causing damage to tree roots.

University wins Healthy Workplace Award 2013

Brunel has been commended for demonstrating its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its employees by receiving the Simplyhealth Healthy Workplace award 2013. The University’s wellbeing strategies such as Well@Brunel contributed to this success, with initiatives including the NHS health checks, live cooking demonstrations and awareness campaigns. Brunel was also commended for the opportunities offered to employees by HR.

The Healthy Workplace awards recognise the contribution that UK organisations make to employee welfare. Winners demonstrated a range of initiatives that help to keep their workforce motivated and healthy.
Interactive digital book extends Brunel University art exhibition into virtual spaces

An interactive digital book which extends a physical art exhibition held in the Beldam Gallery into virtual space is now available for free download from the iBookstore. Suspense was inspired by an exhibition of artist Jayne Wilton’s work, curated by George Mogg, which was held at the Beldam Gallery between January and March 2013. The iBook, created by Digital Technologist Malcolm Zammit, explores a different way of presenting the body of work exhibited: using emerging multimedia technology, the original viewing experience is not only preserved but also augmented, at the same time making it accessible to new audiences.

The iBook features a 360° panorama of the original exhibition that enables viewers either to explore the space themselves by ‘walking’ from sculpture to print to etching, zooming in and out and swivelling around the gallery, or to be guided through automatically. Both options can be accompanied by music created by Professor Peter Wiegold especially for the exhibition. Viewers can also see an ‘ant’s eye view’ of one of the exhibits, exploring it from a perspective which would be difficult to gain in person.

As Leverhulme Trust Artist in Residence at Brunel, Jayne produced a series of collaborative projects with, among others, Peter Hobson and fellow particle physicist Akram Khan, composer Peter Wiegold, poet Benjamin Zephaniah and novelist Will Self. Her work is an investigation of the breath as a fundamental unit of exchange between people and their environments. Using a host of innovative scientific techniques, such as Schlieren imaging, rapid prototype printing and digital holography, universal breathing gestures such as the sigh, the laugh and the gasp were translated into an intriguing series of images and objects. ‘Suspense’ can be viewed using iBooks 3.0 or later on an iPad. iOS 5.1 or later is required. Apple, iBooks, iPad, are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. iBookstore is a service mark of Apple Inc.

Dr Ian Dear appointed Dean of Students

Dr Ian Dear, Head of Electronic and Computer Engineering in the School of Engineering and Design, has been appointed the University’s new Dean of Students.

Ian will oversee all matters concerning the student experience across the University, focusing on improving students’ educational and social experience at Brunel, developing academic and non-academic pastoral care, facilitating student engagement and fostering good relations between staff and the student body.

As a Brunel alumni who graduated with a PhD in 1991, Ian’s broad perspective on Brunel and its people makes him ideally placed to support all students and improve staff and student interactions. “I enjoyed my time as a PhD student so much that I decided to stay!” he explains.

“I am keen to develop student-led societies, support students in their development, and ensure they are lifelong members of the Brunel community – I believe that Brunel is what it is today because of our excellent, dynamic and highly motivated students.”

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised Ian’s outstanding credentials for the role: “Ian was recognised for his outstanding contribution to teaching and student services in the 2011 STAR Awards and is therefore perfectly placed to ensure that all our students benefit from the best practice in learning and teaching and realise their potential to be truly global citizens.”

Ian will take up his new appointment on 1 September for a period of six months.
Brunel launches new MSc in Sustainability, Entrepreneurship and Design

A new interdisciplinary MSc which aims to instil a commitment to sustainability in the business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future opens this September.

The MSc in Sustainability, Entrepreneurship and Innovation takes an environmental approach to business to ensure that issues of sustainability are at the heart of all new enterprises. Building on the expertise of the world-leading Institute for the Environment, alongside Brunel Business School and the School of Engineering and Design, the programme offers core modules in strategic sustainable development, sustainable design, business planning and entrepreneurship, and professional design skills. Students can then study a range of related subjects including clean technology, sustainable supply chain management, and international business strategy.

Programme Director Dr Edwin Routledge said: “Businesses all over the world are now recognising that environmental credibility is a big part of their branding so it doesn’t make business sense to ignore it. We want to make sure that the business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future have the skills and knowledge to include sustainability at the heart of a business right from the outset.”

Quarterly report reveals huge increase in research funding during 2012/13

Grants and contracts awarded to the University over the period 1 May 2013 to 31 July 2013 amounted to £4,278,100, bringing Brunel's total research funding for the year to £37,487,792 – more than double last year’s figure of £17,935,102.

The news, announced in a report summarising funding activity for the fourth quarter of the academic year, was described by the Vice-Chancellor as “a stellar achievement”.

The total value of proposals submitted was £23,433,209 for the quarter, bringing the total for the year to £135,226,637, compared to £113,868,155 last year. An impressive 27.7% of grants submitted were awarded.

Successes highlighted in the report include:

- a European Commission award of £385,457 to Dr Habin Lee and Professor Zahir Irani from Brunel Business School for the PolicyCompass project, which will develop a visual, intuitive tool for social networks and eParticipation platforms;
- £240,003 from the ESRC to Dr Gemma Derrick from the Health Economics Research Group, for a project entitled “Understanding the ‘impact’ of health research: Lessons from the REF2014”;
- £582,939 funding from EPSRC for the School of Engineering and Design’s Professor Hamid Bahai, Dr Giulio Alfano and Dr Jan Wissink to support their project on “Vortex induced vibration and structural integrity of deep-water flexible risers”;
- three major awards in the School of Health Sciences and Social Care, including £529,860 from the BBSRC to Dr Paola Vagnarelli for her project entitled “Protein Phosphatase 1 (PP1) in the regulation of mitotic exit and nuclear organisation.”

Study shows how genome duplication can threaten chromosome integrity

Research by Dr Christian Rudolph from Brunel’s School of Health Sciences and Social Care and Professor Robert Lloyd FRS from the University of Nottingham has shown that the cell’s own machinery for duplicating chromosomes can threaten chromosome integrity – a characteristic of many cancers.

For each cell division, millions of DNA base pairs must be copied. Two ‘replication forks’ are assembled at defined starting points and they move along the DNA in opposite directions, copying each strand, until they collide with another fork coming the opposite way. It was assumed that the forks simply stopped at this stage, enabling the cell to put the finishing touches on the copied DNA.

However, the team’s research, published in August in Nature, shows that, in the bacterium Escherichia coli, fork collisions often generate structures that can trigger the assembly of new replication forks which over-replicate the chromosome. This over-replication is normally limited by the actions of RecG protein and enzymes that digest single-stranded DNA by eliminating the structures formed before new forks can be established.

It is important to investigate whether fork collisions can have similar consequences in human cells, which initiate replication at hundreds of initiation sites, leading to hundreds of fork collisions.

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It is important to investigate whether fork collisions can have similar consequences in human cells, which initiate replication at hundreds of initiation sites, leading to hundreds of fork collisions.
New research facility at Brunel to deliver revolutionary manufacturing methods for UK carmakers

Car makers in Britain will be the first to benefit from revolutionary new metal casting techniques developed at Brunel, thanks to a Government-supported programme to take laboratory discoveries and upscale them for industry.

The £14 million Advanced Metal Casting Centre (AMCC), which will be housed in a purpose-built 1000m² laboratory on campus, will bridge the gap between fundamental research and full-scale industrial trials. It is jointly funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the aluminium automotive sheet and extrusions solutions provider Constellium, Brunel, and a major luxury car manufacturer.

The new facility will draw on the work done by Professor Zhongyun Fan and his team at the Brunel Centre for Advanced Solidification Technology (BCAST) to improve the recyclability of metals.

“Our long term aim,” said Professor Fan, “is to reduce the amount of new metal mined from the ground to a minimum, by finding ways to make high quality parts and materials from metal that has already been used at least once.

“In the UK alone we send around 300,000 tonnes of aluminium to landfill every year. That is a direct economic loss of nearly £800 million and a further loss of around 11 million barrels of oil, representing the energy used to make that amount of aluminium. Clearly, there are many environmental and economic benefits to be gained from reusing that material.”

One project that will be pursued in the AMCC is the replacement of the hundreds of registered aluminium alloys currently in commercial use with around 10 highly versatile alloys that can be used over and over again. Another is to develop efficient techniques for purifying and conditioning liquid metal into reliable industrial processes, which can be used to make high quality castings for cars and other applications.

“Every failed casting represents a huge waste of energy, time and money,” said Professor Fan. “We know that our new techniques can reliably create first class components from recycled metal. Our challenge now is to scale these methods up for commercial use and to show that they can reduce cost, improve quality, and conserve natural resources.”

Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts said: “For Britain to get ahead in the global race we have to back emerging technologies and ensure our universities have the latest equipment. This capital investment will help scientists make new discoveries and take their research through to commercial success.”

IN BRIEF

The Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) launches on 9 October, bringing together leading academics and writers in a number of fields, including media and communications, psychology, theatre, film and television, creative writing and social work. The Centre will consider the production, content, reception and socio-political implications of comedy in a variety of formats, and is supported by four high profile ambassadors, including Brunel alumna Jo Brand. She said: “As an ex Brunel student it’s great to see that comedy is being taken seriously by the institution that provided me with many big laughs when I was there. I wish the Centre good luck for its future and apologise that there is no punchline to this.”

Four Brunel researchers have been awarded fellowships by the Experimental Techniques Centre (ETC) giving them privileged access to the ETC’s expertise and equipment. Helen Foster and Beatrice Nal-Rogier from the School of Health Sciences and Social Care, Brian McKay from BCAST and Timothy Minton from the School of Engineering and Design will use the new specially configured £1.7m Field Emission Gun Transmission Electron Microscope (FEG TEM), one of only two so designed in the world. ETC Director Professor Ian Boyd commented: “We initially planned to offer just three fellowships, but the quality of the proposals presented was so high that we gladly increased them to four. I am especially pleased that we have two excellent projects from our Biosciences colleagues. This is just the sort of innovative collaboration that I want to encourage at ETC and throughout Brunel.”

The new National Centre for Sustainable Energy Use in Food Chains launched at Brunel on 5 September. Led by Professor Savvas Tassou, Head of the School of Engineering and Design and an expert in refrigeration and energy research, the new Centre will establish a cross-disciplinary hub of engineers, scientists and industry experts to develop energy-efficient manufacturing, distribution and retail systems. The Centre is a partnership between Brunel, Birmingham and Manchester Universities.
Brunel co-innovates with local SMEs

Developing a small or medium sized business (SME) in London can be a daunting and challenging experience. It can be difficult to gain access to facilities housed in specialist institutions, or to speak with experts who can share their advice and experience, and opportunities for funding may be difficult to locate.

The programme is designed to provide a number of benefits to the enterprises involved. Primarily, membership of Co-Innovate provides SMEs with access to a wide-range of knowledge and expertise from key areas of the University, including direct input from relevant academics and PhD researchers. The programme also offers access to specialist facilities provided by the University, such as materials testing, rapid-prototyping, engineering workshops and test facilities.

Co-Innovate is an exciting two year programme designed to provide support for SMEs in the London region, helping them to overcome the challenges that they may face with product and service innovation. Jointly funded by Brunel and the European Regional Development Fund, the project will support 150 SMEs by introducing a dynamic range of activities to support their development, leading to business growth for the participating companies as well as economic and employment benefits for the region.

The Co-Innovate team is also working with the Placement and Careers Centre to help create student placements for companies involved in the programme, as well as opportunities to get involved in collaborative student projects. 2013 Industrial Design graduate Tahir Shab worked in collaboration with Custom Creams for his final year major project to create an improved liquid nitrogen ice cream machine – the project was well received and Custom Creams are now in conversation with Co-Innovate to arrange further collaboration with Brunel.

Since the project started Co-Innovate has reached over 100 businesses through workshops and events, and is currently in discussion with over 30 SMEs about how the project can support them. These companies are from a range of industry sectors, such as lighting, food, manufacturing and gaming. The range of companies seeking support may require resources found across the University, such as academic input or access to specialist facilities – the needs of a small games company looking for a student collaborative project, for example, will differ significantly to those of a company looking for research into acoustics and detailed engineering support.
Co-Innovate workshops: encouraging industry-University collaboration

As an integral part of the programme, Co-Innovate is running a series of workshops, designed to bring together academics, industry leaders, local authorities, charities, students and graduates to share ideas and knowledge, as well as encourage potential industry-University collaborations. The first workshop, entitled ‘Open design and the digital economy’, was held in December 2012. It focused on the idea of ‘Open design’ and invited an “active and dynamic community of makers, DIYers, product hackers and lead users who make, invent, manufacture new products, and modify and appropriate existing products, and use social media channels to freely share their products and designs”.

Subsequent events have covered a wide range of topics, including ‘Cycling to success’ and ‘Independent living’, through which Co-Innovate has built relationships with a range of organisations, including Brompton Bikes and Arthritis Research UK.

Attendee David Hurst, Director of Development and Commercialisation at Newton Innovations, said: “I thought the workshop was useful and informative. It was good to see and hear what Brunel is doing, and some of the research information that was shared was challenging. I hope that the next one builds on the last in terms of content and connections.”

The fifth workshop on ‘Food and packaging innovation’ will be held on 18 September at the Old Vinyl Factory in Hayes, and will present the background to open innovation and consumer engagement in the food, packaging, and related manufacturing and supply chain sectors, as well as exploring crowdsourcing platforms for open food and design packaging. For more information contact sophie.richards@brunel.ac.uk, or for details of future workshops see www.co-innovatebrunel.org.uk

Who’s who?

The Co-Innovate and supporting Designplus teams combine extensive business experience with strong connections to maximise the resources of the University, dedicating themselves to the principles of collaborative working and providing a high quality experience for the SMEs involved in their project.

The Co-Innovate Team consists of:
- Programme Leader Stephen Green
- Operations Manager Paul Davies
- Project co-ordinators Katalin Rakoczy and Sophie Richards
- Innovation Directors Ian Ferris and James Duguid

It is supported by the Designplus Team, Paula Neal and Amanda Baker.

The Innovation Directors’ role is to conduct an initial diagnostic with the participating company to explore their particular innovation challenges, advise on potential sources of Brunel support and, where support is feasible, capture this in a series of recommendations for action.

Ian Ferris is a design and product innovation specialist who works with organisations to help them translate early stage business ideas, technology innovations or fledgling product or service concepts into marketable propositions. His approach centres on linking customer insight, strategic thinking and creative design methods, helping clients make pragmatic plans to define and develop new offers that are relevant to the market and are valued by customers.

James Duguid is a specialist business advisor working in the UK’s small business sector. James specialises in providing realistic client-focused and creative business advice and coaching, focused mainly on commercial innovation, design and sustainable businesses. He concentrates on helping companies find creative but realistic ways of achieving business growth by successfully deploying design through every aspect of their enterprises. James continues his role at the Design Council as Design Associate for the Design Leadership Programme.

Academics wanted!

Do you think you have skills and experience that you could bring to the Co-Innovate project? There are still opportunities for Brunel academics from across the University to become involved. Co-Innovate works with SMEs from a wide range of industry sectors, and they have differing needs from materials science to occupational therapy, and engineering to sport sciences. If you want to learn more about how collaborating with Co-Innovate could benefit you and help link your research or interests with industry, particularly small and medium enterprises, please register your interest with sophie.richards@brunel.ac.uk
See your photos here!

Want to see your images published in Express? Submit your best pictures of anything Brunel and you could see them in the Express gallery. Email your high resolution photos (ideally 1MB+) to communications@brunel.ac.uk or submit them on Brunel’s Flickr or Facebook pages.