A GUIDE TO THE CULTURAL INSTITUTE

Cultural Institute

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Today we take the next significant step in strengthening our position as a global centre of research and teaching excellence in the study and creation of cultural activity, harnessing the power of partnership in a city and region rich in artistic innovation and cultural aspiration.

The Cultural Institute has three main aims: to increase pioneering research collaborations with our partners, to widen cultural engagement and participation, and to create more opportunities for – and build the skills of – our students.

First, it will help generate radical interdisciplinary research that will play an essential role in addressing some of the complex global challenges posed by social, economic, ecological and political change. The Cultural Institute will broker conversations between academics and the creative and cultural sector, strengthening existing partnerships and acting as a catalyst for new ones. Through a single gateway, it will offer information, support and practical advice to connect external partners with world-leading researchers across all disciplines, inviting them to contribute new ideas and expertise to projects from their inception, right through to the bids for external funding that will drive them forward and generate real impact.

Secondly, the Cultural Institute will promote and integrate the University’s wide array of outstanding creative facilities, treasures, and performance and exhibition spaces. Our campus is alive with cultural expression and replete with unique and diverse archives and special collections which enrich the social and intellectual life and wellbeing of our students and staff, as well as the diverse public audiences to whom we open our doors. Our aspiration is to animate the creative and cultural life of the city, region and nation, working collaboratively with other organisations to shape and strengthen relationships and connections between people and places.

Thirdly, the Cultural Institute will enhance the learning experience and life chances of our students by connecting them with the most creative and curious minds in the network of partnerships we are building. It will offer our present and future partners in the cultural sector a single point of entry to build mutually-beneficial volunteering, placement and internship opportunities, developing the knowledge and skills that can benefit the regional and national creative economy and contribute to innovation, investment and growth.

This will enable our students and staff to make an even greater contribution to the UK’s rapidly expanding creative and cultural industries. These are already the largest in the world relative to GDP, generating £10 million an hour to our country’s coffers. The creative sector fosters creativity and technological innovation, drives forward economic regeneration and prosperity, while enhancing education, health and wellbeing. Little wonder that this national success story is widely recognised as a significant factor in public policy.

Our new Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures is one of the largest of its kind in the country, and we are distinctive among the UK’s research-intensive universities for the breadth of our scholarship and practice in the creative and performing arts. Building on these strong foundations, the Cultural Institute’s ambitions to boost engagement and collaboration with our research and students – and with the vibrant cultural life of our campus – will enable the University of Leeds to contribute its distinctive expertise to this broad and exciting agenda for transformation and change.

Frank Finlay
Dean, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures
University of Leeds
PIONEERING RESEARCH WITH OUR PARTNERS

The University of Leeds is at the leading edge in the creation and exchange of knowledge within and across disciplines. The Cultural Institute nurtures new collaborations between world-leading researchers from across the University and professional partners in the cultural and creative industries to seek out solutions to the complex challenges facing our world, most of which have a cultural dimension. Collaborative research projects with partners and policy makers can lead to important new breakthroughs with global reach and benefit. The following examples illustrate how we work with the cultural sector at home and abroad.

Performing the Jewish Archive is a major international project funded under the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s ‘Care for the Future’ theme. It draws together researchers and arts practitioners from the UK, the USA and Australia alongside some twenty-five organisations around the world, including museums in Johannesburg and Prague. Collectively the academics and their cultural partners seek out, recover and perform Jewish music, theatre and artworks forgotten or assumed lost because of the Holocaust. At the same time, the project re-examines the very nature of ‘the archive’ itself, especially the problems of dealing with one so fragmented and dispersed as ‘the Jewish Archive’. A distinctive feature is extensive public engagement in the form of performances and exhibitions at five festivals on four continents, coupled with community projects. Among the many questions raised and responses evaluated are the audiences’ and performers’ preconceptions of suffering, resilience, tragedy, comedy, culture, and heritage.

“It was amazing. It was very challenging. [...] we were all quite affected by the knowledge that art saved these people to some extent and it allowed them to crawl under their humanity. I think that is the biggest thing that I learned and I think that I’ll carry that with me for the rest of my life.”

Performer
Harlequin in the Ghetto, Madison USA, May 2016

Closer to home, Dancing in Time is an interdisciplinary project which brought together Yorkshire Dance and researchers from our Faculty of Biological Sciences. They demonstrated that participation in contemporary dance can improve the health and wellbeing of older people, helping to mitigate risk factors in order to prevent the injuries caused by falls which can so often lead to further health complications. The research was funded by Leeds Public Health and realised its ambition to investigate the feasibility of implementing a dance programme with a health focus. It now has the potential to run on a long-term basis and to impact public health commissioning.

“Working on a national research programme with the University of Leeds was hugely influential to our organisation for reputational, creative, developmental and sustainability reasons. This was made possible by the excellent researcher who worked for both organisations and who was able to provide essential knowledge, understanding and reflection, as well as exemplary professional commitment.”

Woke Kranga
Artsitic Director, Yorkshire Dance

Our extensive and unique collections and archives provide a rich resource for our scholars, students and the general public. The Liddle Collection, for example, includes the personal papers of well over 4,000 people who lived through the First World War. Using the collection as their starting-point, researchers on the Legacies of War programme worked with community groups to explore and commemorate the War’s multiple historical, cultural and social legacies. Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the AHRC, different aspects of the research are being shared in a series of events and activities across the city and region throughout the four-year commemoration period, in theatres, cinemas, museums, galleries and at the University.

“Researchers and communities are interested in all areas of the First World War. Arts and Humanities researchers can open up its lesser known aspects. We have been investigating its impact on new technologies, industry, women’s experiences and medical advances as well as commemorating the affect it had on families and communities.”

Professor Alison Foll
Professor of French Cultural History and Chair, Legacies of War Programme

Leeds Creative Labs is a special ‘blue-skies’ programme of the Cultural Institute which has been designed to spark collaborations between academics and innovators by matching University researchers with arts and culture professionals. Each Lab provides funding, inspiration, opportunities and above all, the co-creative ‘space’ to explore, innovate and take risks, with the benefits flowing in both directions. Pilot projects have already produced an astonishing diversity of ideas from an equally diverse array of talents.

Examples include a videogame on the ethics of drone warfare developed with digital artists, Invisible Flock; Smartphone tools for training actors with Cursor Ltd; and an immunology and public education project with Phoenix Dance Theatre. A notable success of the partnerships which the Labs have brokered has been the creation of Yarn, a digital, community-based storytelling platform which led to a new start-up, Carbon Imagineering. The project has now gone on to attract substantial AHRC funding under its ‘Connected Communities’ theme. It is being developed as Parachute: Open Access Community Storytelling and the Digital Archive, with the ambitious aim to provide resources that will have long-lasting and wide-reaching consequences for the way we exchange ideas, tell stories and communicate.

“The Labs are a unique opportunity to just see what the possibilities are in terms of the world of science, the world of academia, and the world of the arts and creativity.”

Wendy Harris
Artistic Director, Tutti-frutti Children’s Theatre who worked with Dr Stephanie Steels and Dr Helen Albertson, School of Healthcare, to explore creative techniques for patient care research and teaching.
WIDENING CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The University of Leeds has a wealth of renowned cultural attractions ranging from galleries, special collections and archives to performance venues, museums and public art. We also co-host the world-famous Leeds International Piano Competition, and the International Medieval Congress, the largest annual gathering of its kind in Europe.

The Cultural Institute aims to boost the ways in which wider audiences can engage with our cultural treasures, as a few examples of some of our recent work demonstrate. The ambition is to transform our unique campus with its Victorian red-brick buildings, iconic Parkinson Tower, major Modernist architecture and exciting new 21st Century spaces, such as the Laidlaw Library, into a vibrant cultural destination for all.

Our rich cultural collections inspire innovative inter-disciplinary research and teaching, while our exhibitions, readings by visiting writers, theatrical performances, concerts, lectures, workshops and tours of our outdoor art engage with the public beyond the campus. We also participate in annual national festivals such as Being Human, Operation North, Arts Council England’s Art and Theatre programme. It is an excellent example of how the arts and cultural sector, local authorities, higher education and the private sector can come together to create a wide variety of experiences for both the local audience and visitors. I look forward to seeing how the work progresses.”

Michelle Dickson, Director North, Arts Council England

Our outstanding University Art Collection is housed in The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery which boasts impressive works from the Bloomsbury Group by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Roger Fry. The gallery runs a changing programme of temporary exhibitions with guest curators and makes regular loans to exhibitions, regionally, nationally and internationally. A new Public Art Trail is attracting first-time visitors and with Leeds Museums & Galleries, runs a changing programme of temporary exhibitions which are one of its distinctive features. We work with partners such as Heritage England to raise the profile of our public art, and with Leeds Museums & Galleries to secure significant loans to further enhance our open spaces, such as Dual Form by Barbara Hepworth.

The new Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, showcases significant items from Leeds University Library’s remarkable Special Collections.

New research, cultural partnerships, new art, and a similarly connected series of public engagement events are also defining features of the Cultural Institute’s Yorkshire Year of the Textile programme. This initiative won generous support from Arts Council England and takes its inspiration from the region’s rich textile heritage, the wool trade and the synthetic fibres revolution in which the University of Leeds played such an important part.

“China and the UK can join in celebrating the legacies of these two literary giants, to promote interpersonal dialogue and deepen mutual understanding.”

Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China

Working with partners across the region the project will feature textile and public art interventions, literary and performance stands with textiles as their theme, and events aimed at all ages and open to all.

Important public exhibitions provide the programme with its historical and social context. The Synthetics Revolution exhibition explored man-made fibres and everyday fashion through the collections of the School of Design’s Yorkshire Fashion Archive and the University of Leeds International Textile Archive. It showcases major new research on the fashion business which is based in our School of History and involves a pan-European project funded by the Humanities in the European Research Area programme (HERA).

The 60th anniversary of Mitzi Cunliffe’s Man-Made Fibres sculpture has been at the heart of the programming of Yorkshire Year of the Textile, inspiring an exhibition Sculputor Behind the Mask at the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, artistic responses from performances by TureyJorld Dance Company, to pavement public art by Sue Lawty, in collaboration with our Douglas Coster Cultural Fellow, the poet Helen Mort. A number of talks alighted on aspects of Cunliffe’s biography to explore contemporary concerns faced by sufferers of arthritis and Alzheimer’s Disease.

A similar approach was taken by the AHRC-funded Electrifying the Country House project. This helped heritage visitors to engage with the history and aesthetics of electrical technologies and pioneering innovative developments in the electrification of country houses such as Ongarole, Chatsworth and Lotherton Hall. Bespoke learning resources have been developed by our researchers in collaboration with our partners, as well as tailored events. Using artefacts from our Museum of the History of Science, Medicine and Technology, interactive ‘hands-on’ performances narrated the rich and varied stories of electrification in such houses and introduced wider audiences to the research at events such as Heritage Open Days.

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CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILDING SKILLS

A large number of our alumni have made a major contribution to the national and international cultural landscape, including Literary Nobel Prize Laureate, Wole Soyinka, musician Corrine Bailey Rae, screenwriter Peter Morgan, Turner Prize-winning artist, Elisabeth Price, and the choreographer Wayne McGregor.

Northern Ballet invited a group of six MBA students from Leeds University Business School to consult on its digital marketing and communications strategy, with a view to increasing ticket sales and revenue. The fact that all were overseas students with no previous work experience in arts organisations was particularly attractive to the dance company because of the fresh perspective they brought with them. The students offered a broad skill set including financial and consultancy experience, and in one instance six years’ experience in digital marketing. The work had benefits on both sides; the students are considering starting a consultancy practice, while Northern Ballet have been inspired by the positive experience and “the team’s best idea, an app”, according to Lorraine Penson, Head of Communications.

Brand and communications designers WPA Pinfold have had an internship from the University of Leeds each year, for the last four years.

“The internship programme has worked very well for us by providing students of a very high calibre who have proved a real asset to our business. The University seems to have the ability to develop well-grounded students who are flexible and dedicated – and able to think on their feet.”

Stefania Nistri, Business Support Executive, WPA Pinfold

CO-DELIVERY OF COURSES

By engaging and consulting with our cultural and creative partners we will be increasing the number of our co-created and co-delivered courses to ensure that they are relevant and informed and refreshed by the latest thinking and practice in the sector.

Currently we offer an MA in Writing for Performance and Publication through the School of Performance and Cultural Industries in partnership with West Yorkshire Playhouse, one of the UK’s leading theatres, which provides a link to the Playhouse’s exciting new writing schemes. Directors and associate artists from the Playhouse regularly run workshops and masterclasses for us, and we collaborate with the theatre on joint projects, such as new writing events and festivals. We wish to build on this work, and will be working with partners to identify modules and taught programmes that ensure we equip our students with the skills that will be needed to secure the future growth of the cultural and creative sector.

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR SECTOR PROFESSIONALS

The Cultural Institute runs the acclaimed National Arts Fundraising and Leadership Summer School, in partnership with Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy. The Summer School is part of a national arts and philanthropy training programme funded by a £2 million Arts Council grant. This highly innovative, week-long residential course for arts managers and fundraisers is led by renowned academics and senior arts professionals. It offers a breadth of insight, ideas, as well as skills in how to lead arts organisations and achieve long-term fundraising success in ever more challenging economic times. The Summer School offers time out for reflection, intensive study, as well as a range of practical activities. Successful completion of the Summer School and a 12 month work-based distance learning assessment results in a postgraduate certificate in Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy, the very first of its kind in Europe. We will build on this pioneering and successful model for the creation and delivery of relevant continuing professional development for the sector, and we wish to develop new programmes in collaboration with our partners in response to the sector’s skills needs.

“Today there are 32,000 students at the University of Leeds from well over a hundred countries of the world. The Cultural Institute offers a single entry point for cultural and creative organisations who might wish to work with them, whatever their academic discipline, and we can broker contacts and opportunities for our cultural partners across the whole institution.

Many of our students are interested in finding a bridge to the world of work through placements, internships and volunteering with cultural and creative organisations in Leeds and beyond, while employers appreciate the wide variety of skills and perspectives that students of all disciplines can bring to their organisations. Our students are offered exciting opportunities for innovative learning experiences and ideas in new environments and benefit hugely in terms of developing employability skills, finding inspiration for their own research and creative projects, and contributing to wider society.

Opera North has welcomed over twenty five undergraduate interns through the DARE partnership with the University, with students working at the heart of departments from publishing, operations and marketing, to fundraising, music and HR. Not only has the opportunity provided students with career-focused practice-based learning, Opera North has benefited from their energy and new approaches.

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“This year has been another side to what I’ve known before at university – everything I was learning about, whether that be cultural diplomacy or leadership styles was contextualising my day job, something which has been of immeasurable benefit.”

Clare McCullagh, Arts Fundraising Fellow for Canterbury Festival, Summer School 2016 participant
Cultural Institute

THE TEAM

FRANK FINLAY
DEAN, FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND CULTURES
Frank is Professor of German Language and Literature with research and teaching interests in contemporary drama and fiction and has held senior roles in professional associations. He has occupied a number of leadership positions at the University of Leeds for well over a decade, and led the development of the Cultural Institute as a member of the University’s Executive Group.

SUE HATTON
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Sue has enhanced and built the University’s relationships with external creative sector partners, and devised innovative approaches that facilitate cross-domain working at Leeds. She joined the University following a successful career in the creative and cultural sector spanning visual, performing arts and heritage, and has initiated research into creative knowledge transfer, exploring the role of artist as researcher.

ERICA RAMSAY
PROJECT MANAGER
Erica has worked on a number of projects at Leeds, including the creation and management of Impact in 5, the Ignite grant scheme, and a programme of researcher development focused on generating research impact. Previously, Erica worked in the cultural and creative sector in Yorkshire, chiefly in museums, focusing on audience development and participation, and developing projects with partner organisations.

LIZ HARROP
PROJECT MANAGER
Liz has significant experience in developing cross-sectoral partnerships and models of participation and co-creation. At Leeds Liz has led the evaluation of the national Arts Council Funded Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy Programme and developed the DARE edition of the Creative Labs programme connecting academics with leading performing arts organisations from across the North. Before joining the University of Leeds, Liz worked for the civil service, local authorities and national charities.

NICHOLAS CASSE
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

JENNIFER OWEN
CLERICAL OFFICER

STEERING GROUP

YVIVEN JONES
CHAIR, CULTURAL INSTITUTE STEERING GROUP
Viven is Professor of Eighteenth-Century Gender and Culture in the School of English at Leeds. From 2006 to 2016 she was Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Education, leading a number of major innovative projects. She has held roles in various national subject associations and was a member of the RAE2008 and REF2014 English subject panels. Her research and teaching interests are in the literary and social history of gender, particularly in fiction and popular cultural texts, and early feminism.

STELLA BUTLER – UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN AND KEEPER OF THE BROTHERTON COLLECTION

MATT BUSWELL – UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC FELLOW IN DIGITAL MEMORY & IMPACT

STELLA BUTLER – UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN AND KEEPER OF THE BROTHERTON COLLECTION

MICHELLE CALVERT – DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

MARK DEYANE – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

ANDY GOULDSON – ASSOCIATE PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

DOMINIC GRAY – PROJECTS DIRECTOR, OPERA NORTH

ALISON HOUSTON – HEAD OF M&S COMPANY ARCHIVE AND UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS PARTNERSHIP MARKS & SPENCER

JOHN LADBURY – DEAN, FACULTY OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

GREG MILLER – HEAD OF STUDENT PLACEMENTS

PETER MOIZER – DEAN OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL

ALECE O’GRADY – HEAD OF SCHOOL, SCHOOL OF PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

GREGORY RADICK – DIRECTOR, LEEDS HUMANITIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

JOHN WHALE – CO-DIRECTOR, LEEDS UNIVERSITY POETRY CENTRE

LUKE WINDSOR – DEPUTY DEAN, FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & CULTURES

The steering group steers and advises on our strategic objectives and priorities and their implementation, and approves future developments.

CONTACT US

For more information contact culturalinstitute@leeds.ac.uk or visit www.leeds.ac.uk/culturalinstitute

@UniLeedsCulture

OUR PARTNERS

Partnerships are crucial for the realisation of our cultural vision and, through the Cultural Institute, we will be working closely with our institutional, core partners and others on collaborative research, innovative public programming and creative skills development.

The University of Leeds has established unique, institutional collaborations with Opera North (through DARE) and the M&S Company Archive.

DARE
We combine the very best of both the University of Leeds and Opera North to deliver the outstanding and challenging DARE programme, which leads cultural thought, learning and practice. Over 150 projects have been initiated since the creation of DARE in 2006, engaging practitioners, academics, students and audiences. Through the DARE Academy practice-based learning is devised to develop skills, knowledge and expertise. DARE Connect promotes lectures, conferences and debates that challenge perceptions, including the annual Liberty Lecture series. DARE Create instigates new work, research and publications that inspire, inform and engage. Through DARE we are managing Culture Forum North, an Arts Council funded open network of partnerships between higher education and cultural organisations across the North.

M&S COMPANY ARCHIVE
The University of Leeds’ partnership with Marks & Spencer was founded on the relocation of the M&S Company Archive to a permanent home on campus in 2012. For the University it offers opportunities for student placements, careers support and co-curricular skills development, academic research, consultancy and continued professional development. The partnership has enabled M&S to use academic expertise to inform business decisions in a variety of different areas. Open to the public, the archive contains more than 70,000 items dating from 1884, when M&S was established in Leeds market, to the present day.

M&S COMPANY ARCHIVE

Top: Inside the M&S Company Archive
Bottom: Union d’amour 01 by Opera North Chorus, 2016 (photo credit: Robert Workman)

With thanks to our Cultural Institute core partners, funders and supporters. We welcome approaches from all organisations.

THE BUSINESS CONFUCIOUS INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
EAST STREET ARTS
THE HENRY WOODS INSTITUTE
THE NEXTHORPE WAKEFIELD
LEEDS CARNIVAL
LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
LEEDS INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION
LEEDS MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES
LEEDS PARTICIPATION, CULTURE AND VALUE NETWORK
NATIONAL MEDIA MUSEUM
THE NORTHERN TRUST
NORTHERN BALLET
PHOENIX DANCE THEATRE
ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM
SOUTH AFRICAN HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE FOUNDATION
THE TETLEY
THACRACY MEDICAL MUSEUM
WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE
YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK
YORKSHIRE DANCE

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Above: A community-knitted canopy for Yorkshire Year of the Textile, installed in the Colour Garden, Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills