



DEAN'S WELCOME

Professor Rob Burroughs

Thank you for reading the Winter 2025 edition of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences newsletter.

The newsletter allows us to share a sample of the teaching and research activities that bring us together as a school and give us pride in our work. This edition features: updates from our on-site Speech and Language Therapy clinic; insights from a final-year Media student, Chelsea, into a prestigious work placement at The Financial Times; a report on our pioneering partnership to deliver education in a prison, HMP Full Sutton; and an account of our inaugural school postgraduate research conference, besides more. If colleagues or students would like to suggest features for future editions of the newsletter then please [contact us](#). If you are interested in joining us to begin your studies or continue your studies in postgraduate qualifications then please, as a next step, explore the options available on our [webpages](#).

GETTING TO KNOW THE SCHOOL AND ITS RESEARCH CENTRES

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences offers courses in Criminology, Creative Writing, English, History, Media, Politics and International Relations, Psychology, Sociology, and Speech and Language Therapy. We're based at City Campus and are home to around 3,000 students and 170 staff.

Our teaching is informed by our internationally recognised research within our three centres, exploring topics such as postcolonial literature, peace, conflict and human rights, environmental history, gender and sexuality, online racism in football, crime, justice and society, and more.

Studying here means using your critical thinking and creativity to explore key issues that shape culture, society and what it means to be human.

Find out more about our subjects, events, research projects and community on our [School webpages](#). You can also explore the latest newsletters from our research centres:

- Centre for Psychological Research ([PsyCen](#))
- Centre for Applied Social Research ([CeASR](#))
- Centre for Culture and Humanities ([CCH](#))

Stay connected with us on social media for updates, opportunities and student stories on our [LinkedIn](#) and [Bluesky](#) pages.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF: OUR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY CLINIC



Our on-site clinic, which opened in March 2023, offers specialised support for adults with communication disorders. Since then, we've been working hard to

create meaningful learning opportunities for students while delivering high-quality therapy for our clients.

The clinic welcomes referrals for individuals aged 18 and over who are living with an acquired communication disorder, often due to neurological conditions like stroke, head injuries and Parkinson's disease. We accept referrals from clients, carers, and speech and language therapists. We are here to offer support and work alongside any existing NHS or private therapy services to ensure the best possible care for clients.

What makes our clinic extra special is the chance it provides for students to gain hands-on experience in a real-world setting, all while receiving the best training and guidance. We're proud to offer therapy that complements and enhances any existing care our clients may be receiving, and we're always striving to make a positive impact on both our clients' lives and the development of future therapists.

Creative Writing students, Cyrus and Sophie, tell us about their placement experiences in their blogs:



"Over the course of the last few weeks, I have had the amazing opportunity of doing a placement with the Speech and Language department at Leeds Beckett University. As an English & Creative Writing student at the university, I had been initially apprehensive

about this type of work experience as it is like nothing I have ever attempted before, but I am glad to say that with the support of my colleagues and mentor, this has blossomed into an experience I couldn't imagine living without. This placement has easily become a work experience that I thoroughly enjoy and wish to pursue further into an active career. Fashioning creative writing workshops and sessions for individual need has been a comforting, yet engaging experience for me, and it has been a pleasure taking part in the growth of a community and engaging within this setting that would otherwise be cut off to me." ([read Cyrus's full blog HERE](#))

"The part that stood out to me most during this placement is the power of creativity in communication therapy. Writing creatively offers clients a sense of achievement and authorship. It allows them to practice language in a creative way where they can express their own ideas and thoughts. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to contribute to the client's communication journey and see the progress they made each week with the tasks I gave them. This experience overall has strengthened my understanding of how creativity can enhance speech and language in a new way." ([Sophie's full blog can be found HERE](#))

STUDENT FOCUS

CHELSEA ABILI, FINAL YEAR MEDIA COMMUNICATION CULTURES STUDENT

If someone had told me a year ago that I'd spend my summer as a student working with the Financial Times, I probably wouldn't have believed them. Yet, last summer, I found myself doing exactly that.



From June to August, after graduating from The FT News School, I completed an internship at the Financial Times, working with the FT Studio, a commercial sector within the publication that brings editorial storytelling to life through brand partnerships and strategic campaigns. My internship gave me invaluable insight into how one of the world's most respected and successful media companies operates behind the scenes. It was one of the best summers of my life, to say the least. My placement opened my eyes to a side of journalism

that I didn't even know existed. I wasn't just reading stories, but I was mastering the craft, learning the art behind them and witnessing them unfold firsthand. From researching potential interviewees for clients like Charlotte Tilbury and Formula 1, to sitting in meetings with art directors, strategists and producers - this experience allowed me to observe how my academic training here at university can be applied in the real working world.

I've always been drawn to communication in every form: from writing, to speaking, to content creation and editorial production, and through this internship, I've realised that pursuing a career in journalism isn't just limited to mastering one skill, but it's a combination of utilising all the transferrable abilities that I've built over time.

I'm so grateful that the Financial Times took a chance on me, and that they are breaking barriers within the industry through gender inclusion and diversity across the organisation. As a young Black woman navigating the media industry, seeing how much they value inclusion gives me hope for the next generation of storytellers.

Leeds Beckett University has helped to shape my interests in journalism in many ways! Through my degree, I've had opportunities to work with companies that vary from Sky News to ITV, experimenting across broadcast, print, and digital platforms. This university has continually encouraged me to think deeply about the power of media and how it isn't just a form of entertainment but a tool for social change.

To any student thinking of applying for internships or struggling to kickstart their career, if there's one piece of advice I'd give, I'd say that it's incredibly important to take risks that make you grow. Nothing good ever comes from your comfort zone. Apply for roles that scare you. Say yes before you feel ready. You might just surprise yourself with how far you'll go! You don't have to have everything figured out - most people don't, but it's important to discover what you're passionate about, master that skill, and show your potential to employers. My manager told me I was the "most engaged and enthusiastic intern" they'd ever had, and that meant so much to me!

Like I said, if you had told me last year that I'd be spending my summer working with The Financial Times, brainstorming ideas for luxury campaigns and sitting in editorial meetings with creative producers - I would've laughed in disbelief. Yet, that's exactly what happened. And it can happen to you, too.

[Chelsea's blog can be found on our webpages.](#)

WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

LEAF

LBU is one of 19 further and higher education providers to win a prestigious Queen Elizabeth Prize for Higher and Further Education. Prizes are awarded every two years and are part of the national honour system. We have been awarded the prize for extraordinary work in prison education in partnership with HMP Full Sutton, a maximum security prison near York. Our work was led by criminologists Dr Bill Davies ([who has also been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship for his work in this context](#)) and Dr Alexandria Bradley. The award will be conferred by His Majesty the King at St James' Palace in February next year. It is an exemplar of our stated purpose, to make a positive and decisive difference to people, organisations and communities. [You can read more about their work here.](#)

The unique prison education offer, known as the Leeds Beckett Educational Alliance with HMP Full Sutton (LEAF), sits within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. HMP Full Sutton is a Category A and B prison which is a long-term high secure men's prison. The LEAF provision is grounded in a determination to provide meaningful education in hard to reach and deprived environments/communities. The passion from the staff is led by a combination of lived experience of incarceration, trauma-informed practitioner experience and research-led best practice approaches, to support people within the Criminal Justice System to flourish and enhance their lives. LEAF is supported school-wide by senior academics and specialists who have delivered one-off workshops within the prison around topics such as food and culture, sleep and stress, the criminology of tattooing, paranormal activity, men, masculinity and body image, as well as creative zine workshops for wellbeing and non-verbal expression. The collegiality, generosity and school-wide buy in is essential to diversify the educational offer of the provision.

The partnership with HMP Full Sutton is 10 years old in 2026, and a lot of this has been developed by the leaders who have created long-lasting relationships with prison staff, educational governors and the Full Sutton based learners. Within this environment, educational progression is at a slow pace and nearly half of people in prison struggled to access the limited offer (HMIP, 2024). Prison education cuts have devastated the prison service, making it more difficult for prison learners to access the transformative powers of education. Penal politicians and leaders consistently stress the importance of the redemptive and rehabilitative powers of education in



LEAF

LEEDS BECKETT
EDUCATIONAL
ALLIANCE WITH
HMP FULL
SUTTON

prison. This reinforces the importance of the commitment to provide a nourishing and inspiring educational setting and experience within a consistently disadvantaged group. It is estimated that nearly 60% of prison learners do not have the educational and reading abilities of an average 11 year old. In addition, over half of adult learners in prison have unsupported and unidentified neurodiverse learning needs. This highlights the extent of educational trauma, exclusion from learning and state failures within the educational experiences of the men who may access the LEAF provision. Men who are 6 years away from release, can access funding for higher education. For the remaining long-term sentenced men, the higher education offer is non-existent. LEAF provides the only bridge to this higher education disadvantage. The leaders have worked with prison education to create a nurturing learning environment which is led by the learners, inclusive, and unconditionally supportive, in order to change and enhance the educational experiences people in prison hold.

LEAF has advanced over the last year within the prison, to provide monthly full day workshops to prison learners, as well as advancing the educational offer to prison staff through the funding and supervision of 2 Masters by Research (MRes) within the school. This is something the school is very proud to support, to enhance the neurodiversity support for learners in prison and to enhance purposeful activity within HMP Full Sutton.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COMMUNITY PCR CONFERENCE

On Tuesday, June 17th, 2025, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences hosted its inaugural Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student Conference at the Rose Bowl building. The event brought together researchers from the school's three centres; the Centre for Applied Social Research, the Centre for Psychological Research, and the Centre for Culture and Humanities, providing a vibrant platform for students to showcase their work, foster connections, and engage in dynamic academic exchange.



Behind that simple goal was six months of intense preparation. We, the four organisers, co organised the event, meeting weekly and often several times a week as the date drew closer. We planned everything from scratch: the conference theme, the call for abstracts, a conference Gmail account, a "Magic spreadsheet," a shared drive, an Eventbrite registration system, Qualtrics forms for submissions, and a carefully structured programme that accommodated 43 presenters.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT JOURNEY

Visit leedsbeckett.ac.uk/student-information to access a range of support and advice

STUDENT SUPPORT

Every detail, from the big decisions to the smallest logistics, was the product of teamwork, determination, and a generous supply of caffeine.

Of course, not everything went according to plan. Coordinating an event that brought together such a wide range of disciplines came with a few last-minute challenges and logistical surprises. Some adjustments had to be made along the way, but the team stayed focused and adaptable. We managed to resolve everything in time, refine the schedule, and keep the day running smoothly. For everything else, we stayed flexible and kept the energy positive throughout.

And it paid off. The event drew more than 100 attendees, with 31 oral presentations across two lecture theatres and 12 posters on display. The day wrapped up with a lively drinks reception, where the school's Director of Research awarded six prizes to outstanding speakers and poster presenters from each centre. For us organisers, the day was a mix of nerves, adrenaline, and quiet hope that it would all go to plan. Many of the presenters were sharing their research publicly for the first time, and we watched them step up, take questions, and leave with new confidence. It was a privilege to help create that space.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees appreciated the warm welcome slides for each speaker, the accessible layout with clear wayfinding and seat reservations, and the smooth coordination across two parallel programmes. Even practical touches, like reusable name tags and signs reminding speakers of their time limits, made a difference. None of it would have happened without the generous support and guidance of staff mentors, and the helping hands of other students who turned up early to assist with setup.

We laughed, we stressed, we problem-solved, and we pulled it off. But more than anything, we enjoyed ourselves, just like everyone else. And in the end, that was the real success.

STUDENT WELLBEING AND SUPPORT COURSE CONTACTS

Do you have questions about your studies or need help? Your Course Administrator is one of your key contacts at university. Their purpose is to ensure that you have the smoothest possible student experience, so if you have a question about your course or if you experience any problems, they are the best person to ask first, including if you need help with the following:

- If you need help submitting your assignments;
- If you need an extension;
- If you need a referral to teaching staff or specialist professional services

Your Course Admin Team can be emailed at one of the following addresses:

Media

mediaadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Politics and International Relations

padmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Sociology

sociologyadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

English

englishadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

History

historyadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Speech and Language Therapy

sltadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Psychology

UG: hss-admin-socialsciences@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

PG: PGPsychologyAdmin@Leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Criminology

crimeadmin@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Your Academic Advisor is here to support your academic development and will provide advice on how to get the most out of your learning experience. To find out who your Academic Advisor is please ask your Course Administrator. Course Administrators are based in PD315 and office opening hours are 10:00-16:00.

WELLBEING

If you are looking for any ongoing support please make a self-referral to [Student Wellbeing](#).

If you feel you are in crisis or out of hours please contact 999 or visit our [out of hours support and emergency information webpage](#).

For support over the Christmas break:

Mind

[Mindwell Leeds](#)

[Student Space](#)

[Leeds Beckett global buddies](#)

A community for estranged students - [All of Us](#)

The University is also running Purple Wednesdays events!



Each event will have a festival feel, packed with sport, atmosphere, and student energy, building momentum throughout the year with Varsity as the big season finale. The next fixture will be on 28 January 2026, scan the QR code for details.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." - often attributed to Carl Jung