



Student newsletter London Connection

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www.londonexternal.ac.uk

The triple life of Christine

Raising children and teaching music by day, poring over Baudelaire and linguistics by night. How a close affinity with France, and a huge dose of self-discipline, led one graduate to success.



school after A levels, believing at the time that I was incapable of studying at that level, especially as no-one in my family had ever been to university. The children were now both at senior school and needing me a little less. It was the right time and I had something to prove to myself."

To be able to fit her study around family and work commitments, Christine developed a strict routine, to the extent that she timed all her study hours on a desktop stopwatch. "It sounds very disciplined, almost obsessive probably, but time was in short supply. After a while it became a habit and I ended up timing myself throughout the whole degree. But it was also a comfort as it allowed me to plan and pace my study. On average, I think I only did two and a half hours a day, but that's a 7 day week. Some days the

weighting for the degree is greater, I gave up teaching." The good news is that the blood, sweat and tears paid off in the end: Christine is now Journals Assistant at the academic publisher Palgrave Macmillan.

"I'm proud of myself. I got a 2:1 by home studying. Not only that but I got a full-time job within six months of finishing. Not bad for a 46 year old who had been out of the workplace for 22 years. My degree was my passport into full-time employment. I hadn't been out to work since I moved to France in 1984, so I think you can see the value of my degree not only as an academic qualification in itself but also as proof of skills that you learn by studying – discipline, the power of analysis, prioritizing etc. After five years of living with my precious books and studying some of the world's best literature I feel I'm very lucky to be in an academic environment now."

You might be forgiven for thinking that bringing up two young children (aged 13 and 11) while holding down a part-time job teaching music would be enough to keep the most energetic person busy. Spare a thought, then, for Christine Long. In between the scales and arpeggios on the one hand, and the pressing demands of a teenager and younger sibling on the other – a lifestyle which she sums up rather neatly in a single word: hectic – Christine took the bold step of registering for a BA French degree through the External System.

"A French degree was a natural progression for me since I'd lived in France for four years and both my children were born there. I'd left

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hours would fly by, some days I would struggle to get an hour on the clock. Some days, if I felt like it (or didn't feel like it!) I would do less but then I would see the overall hours drop and I would be spurred on to catch up. In the last year, when the

Adult Learners' Week Awards 2007

Are you an adult learner whose success could inspire others? The Adult Learners' Week Awards provide a platform for celebrating outstanding adult learners. Everyone nominated receives a Certificate of Achievement, and winners will be invited to a ceremony in London and receive a learning voucher. Closing date for nominations is Friday 19 January 2007.

Please note that entry is open to learners living in England only. Further information and nomination forms can be found at: www.niace.org.uk/alw/2007/ If you would like to be nominated please contact us at: newsletter@london.ac.uk

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Interview with Sandra Tury, Head of Online Services

Launched five years ago, initially as a ground-breaking project to support students taking LSE-led and Laws programmes, the Online Library (OLL) has seen enormous growth over the past two years. With the number of users increasing from 6,400 to just under 12,000, the OLL is now trying to extend support to all of the programmes offered through the External System.

"It's a great service but it's currently limited to particular courses" states Sandra Tury, Head of the Online Services Team. "My view is that every student who needs support should get support. We have specialist databases such as LexisNexis and Westlaw for Law students, Euromonitor for EMFSS students, and other multidisciplinary databases such as Academic Search Premier which covers a range of subjects, and Science Direct which supports groups from the sciences, humanities and social sciences. The problem that I'm grappling with at the moment is how to encourage use and be able to cope with the increased number of enquiries."

The recent appointment of a dedicated Law Librarian, a subject specialist, is already proving invaluable. Her role is not just to support LLB students, but every subject that has law-related content. "Long-term, we're looking towards having access to a group of subject specialists. I do realise that to support students properly you have to have

closer working relationships with academics, so that we know what's being taught and they know what the OLL has – to be able to plan modules relating to what we have."

"One really important thing that needs to happen is for academics to establish what resources are available through the OLL at

'A major development this year has seen the revamping of the OLL website to make it more user-friendly and accessible. This is a continuous process and we'd like as much feedback as possible from students'

the early stages of planning a course. This would ensure that the library finds the necessary resources and, in cases where resources cannot be obtained, it might be useful for the course readings to be changed to reflect what's available. The library staff and academics need to work as a team."

A major development this year has seen the revamping of the OLL website to make it more user-friendly and accessible. This, according to Sandra, is "a continuous process and we'd like as much feedback as possible from students to be able to incorporate it into any redevelopment. We're also adding more interactive support."

Another key initiative that Sandra is instigating is a research project entitled 'Reading for a degree', an Information-Seeking Behaviour study which will attempt to understand how External students use information resources. "We've been given £5,000 to undertake a pilot study centering around Law students. We'll be aiming to find out what difficulties our students face when trying to obtain information resources to complete their degree. We hope to find out what resources they need, what libraries they use and, most importantly, how useful they find the OLL service. We will be keen to speak to those who have passed their exams without ever using the library resources."

"These are the kind of things that you can only uncover in an empirical study. We hope that this pilot project will test methodology, and enable us to draw some useful conclusions which will be constructive when undertaking a wider-scale study. Law students have been chosen for this study because of the dynamic, information-rich environment in which they work, requiring knowledge of statutes, legislation and other legal material that requires to be analysed and critiqued. Understanding our students' information needs is absolutely vital to developing a library service that meets those needs."



Online Library homepage



Online Library resources page

How to access library resources

- You must first register for an Athens account.
- From the OLL homepage (<http://www.external.shl.lon.ac.uk>) click on 'Register' in the top left-hand corner and complete the online form.

Alternatively:

Email: onlinelibrary@shl.lon.ac.uk

- giving your full name,
- 9-digit student registration number,
- and an email address.

Accounts will be created within two working days of receipt.



Profile on

Publications Office

Operating as a self-contained team, the in-house Publications Office works to a tightly focused remit. The team is responsible for producing undergraduate subject guides and Handbooks, plus Regulations, Exam papers and reports, and for processing the post-graduate materials. Publications consists of seven staff: an incoming Managing Editor, Kiran Sharma, whose broad publishing experience includes literature and b2b publications; a dedicated editor each for the LLB and LLM; two general editors dealing primarily with EMFSS, LLB and the smaller Humanities programmes; a production editor responsible for typesetting subject guides; plus a publications assistant who carries out general office duties and co-ordinates the reprints and postgraduate materials.

Although the team follows a fixed annual cycle of work, an increased workload has highlighted the need for greater flexibility. "Generally, we all take quite a hands-on approach" says the incumbent Managing Editor Michele Greenbank, "the advantage being that it broadens the range of what our editors do."

The annual cycle kicks off between September-December, dedicated to producing both print-based and web-based Exam papers and reports (for exams sat in the previous May). At the same time the team receives preliminary drafts of the following year's subject guides and give them a brief edit to make sure the author is on the right track. The in-depth editing process starts in December/January when the team receives the first drafts of the guides.

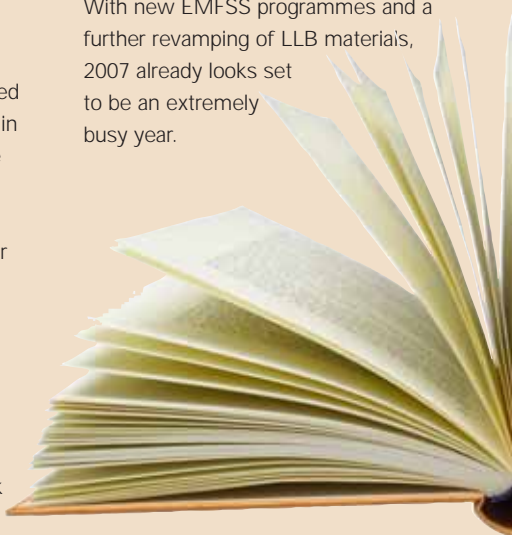
"In the initial stages the subject guide author will be briefed by the Programme Director. About 80% of our authors work

in the Lead College responsible for the degree; the remaining 20% are subject specialists from other universities. The Colleges send us their first drafts and we go through them in great detail, ensuring that they contain all the learning aids such as activities and learning outcomes. We send the author our comments and queries, and that – together with the External Assessor's report – forms the basis of the final draft."

The intense work on the guides takes the team through to March. Final drafts are then copy-edited and proofread between March-May in preparation for the production process. "We go to print in May for EMFSS and LLB Intermediate, and in mid-July for LLB Finals. All of the guides we produce for the smaller programmes are also sent to print. This takes us up to around August, when the cycle starts again."

"February through to April is our slot for producing the Handbooks and Regulations, a much less intense process on our part – essentially proofreading them and sending them to print. The postgraduate materials come to our office all year round."

With new EMFSS programmes and a further revamping of LLB materials, 2007 already looks set to be an extremely busy year.



Focus on



The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

SOAS is one of the world's largest centres for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Since its formation in 1916, SOAS has built an enviable reputation around the globe for the calibre of its programmes, teaching and research. The School's range of awards in the social sciences, arts and humanities is underpinned by the regional expertise and cross-disciplinary emphasis in all its teaching. Through the Centre for Financial and Management Studies (CeFIMS), the College leads in the development of postgraduate programmes in finance, management and related subjects.

The mission of CeFIMS is to increase professional understanding of these subjects by advanced research, and by making the University of London's expertise accessible globally through high quality postgraduate degree programmes. Academics at CeFIMS have international reputations and are involved in researching their subjects at the very limits of current knowledge. Research output covers a range of topics including corporate governance, corporate finance, financial sector development and economic growth, uncertainty and investment, labour market policies, and law of electronic banking.

The Centre has extensive international collaboration in research and teaching. Strong links exist with many institutions including Hong Kong University (SPACE), Beijing University, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, and University of Rome 'Tor Vergata'.

There are currently over 1,200 students enrolled for distance learning programmes taught through CeFIMS. In terms of the suite of postgraduate programmes offered through the External System, this places it second only to the LLM. www.cefims.ac.uk

Your feedback wanted...

We would welcome your feedback on a proposed External Programme Students' Association and website.



The University of London Union (ULU) is working with the External Programme to develop an External Programme Students' Association (EPSA) based around a student website, and we need your feedback as to what you want. Please visit www.uluepsa.com to see the "model" website and register your feedback. The website will give you an indication of some of our ideas and hopefully encourage you to make suggestions as to what you would like a Students' Association to do. All suggestions about what the EPSA could do for you are very welcome and the quantity and quality of your feedback will directly affect what happens next. You can really make a difference to this project just by saying what you want, and what you think about the idea.

Q & A with: Hilary Ganley

Appointed in 2001 to co-ordinate the development of the e-learning version of Royal Holloway's MSc Information Security, Hilary Ganley talks about pedagogy, PhDs and products.

www.londonexternal.ac.uk/infosec



The distance learning MSc in Information Security has been running for three years. What particular challenges and opportunities has this new format posed?

The early challenges were more concerned with pedagogic issues surrounding the writing and delivery style of the teaching materials. The materials themselves represented a snapshot of the course as delivered on campus and involved a large team of academics as well as security professionals as both writers and reviewers. The materials were successfully piloted with a group of part-time campus students in the year before launch. Meanwhile a support model was developed and a team of tutors appointed and trained to ensure everyone was ready for the launch.

It was soon apparent after launch that while most students use the online version, with its interactive and animation elements on first runs through the materials, they often preferred access to more traditional printed versions and audio CDs for review and revision purposes. At the same time, other students reported that online materials either on CD or via the internet meant they were able to make good use of spare hours at airports and hotels whilst travelling. In response to these requirements we now ensure a variety of modes of delivery are now available for all our students.

The most exciting opportunity relates to 'mixed mode' study. As campus students increasingly use online environments to access specific support for their studies, and e-learning students express an interest in

being able to attend campus for intensive face-to-face study periods, we're working towards building up credits for a degree by mixing modes of study. Check our website www.isg.rhul.ac.uk for updates.

The first cohort of distance learning students graduated last year. This must have been an important milestone for you?

We've been enormously impressed with the overall quality of our e-learning students in terms of their commitment and enthusiasm. All materials and support is available through the Virtual Learning Environment, and our students have also formed their own online community for mutual support. The first cohort of 7 graduates completed in 2005, with a further 22 in 2006. Overall, 12 of these graduates achieved distinctions. Whilst it's no surprise to learn of the increased career opportunities available for these graduates, we've been a little surprised by how many of them are considering further studies for a PhD! So far three have registered for PhDs at RHUL.

With 160 students worldwide engaging in online seminars and module discussion areas, has this created any logistical problems for academic colleagues at Royal Holloway?

Not really, no. We have a carefully structured support model which seems to work well. All e-learning modules are led by ISG academics or consultants. They're responsible for providing updates for their materials each year, which is essential for ensuring freshness in this rapidly changing area. It helps that in most cases campus and e-learning versions of

modules are led by the same academic. These academics also design the online seminars and brief the tutors whose task is to moderate seminars and monitor discussion areas.

In terms of programme development, how do you ensure that the MSc remains at the cutting edge?

The MSc programme has always maintained strong links with the security industry since it was first launched in 1992. Leaders within the industry are invited to contribute by giving lectures on the course, as well as contributing to the review process. With over 1,000 alumni now well placed within the security industry, the Information Security Group engages in numerous activities to maintain and foster its industrial links.

You attended the RSA Expo in San Jose earlier this year. What are the latest advancements taking place in the field?

At that time the hot issues were identity theft and email spam, so there were many products claiming to offer protection against these. The increasing requirements for regulatory compliance and the pros and cons of outsourcing security continue to attract much attention.

With my background in teaching programming and software development, I particularly noted the renewed interest in software security. In 2007, the RSA Conference is in San Francisco, and we'll be delighted to meet with any potential students on our University of London/Royal Holloway stand!

Imperial to withdraw from University of London

The University of London Council has accepted Imperial College London's formal request to withdraw from the University. The terms of the withdrawal were agreed by the Councils of both institutions during the summer.

Sir Graeme Davies, Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, described the impending departure as 'amicable' and said it was designed to enable Imperial College to pursue its chosen path as a stand-alone Higher Education Institution. He added: "Like any other institution, and in keeping with its

own history, the University of London continues to evolve. After nearly 100 years as a member of the federation, Imperial has now considered it appropriate to withdraw, while only last year the Central School of Speech and Drama successfully sought membership."

Sir Graeme said there could be no doubt that the University of London, one of the oldest institutions in the country and the best universities in the world, will continue to exist to the benefit of its remaining members, which include large multi-faculty and smaller specialist, and internationally renowned

Colleges and central Institutes. Between them they serve more than 115,000 students in London and a further 36,000 students studying worldwide through the University's External System.

Following Imperial's withdrawal in July 2007, to coincide with its Centenary year, the University of London federation will consist of 19 Colleges. All continuing students registered for a University of London degree at the time of withdrawal will be able to choose whether to switch to an Imperial degree.

Studying as an External student

When it comes to assimilating new material, being able to write good notes is an extremely effective study technique. We hope the following guidelines are helpful.

How to write effective notes

There is no substitute for making your own notes about key concepts, techniques, issues, arguments and references. While you are making notes the very activity of selecting what you think is the most important, interesting and relevant material, putting it into your own words, and making sure you can find it again later, is a powerful means of acquiring and developing your knowledge of a subject. What you are essentially doing is drawing on your own existing ideas and knowledge in order to assimilate new facts and ideas. It is what you already know that forms the structure into which you place the knowledge you are now learning. For this reason, the actual process of note taking is at least as important as the final product. The more actively you engage with what you read and write, the more you will remember and understand.

Some practical tips for note taking

- Use your own words: copying the text verbatim may make you feel that you are studying, but this is an illusion, based on what is a largely mechanical activity. It wastes your time and does little to stimulate your thinking.
- Try to be selective about what you choose to make a note of, unless you are dealing with very difficult issues that need to be described more fully. If you spend too long recording information, you are

rewriting it, when your actual aim is to note only the salient points, which should be kept as brief as possible.

- Try to set out your notes in such a way that they reflect the overall structure of the material you are studying, the main elements covered, and the connections between them. Having an idea of the overall structure of the material will enable you to memorize and place new information more quickly and effectively. You may find it helpful to read a section through first of all without taking any notes at all, while getting its overall structure clearly established in your mind. Then you can go back a second time and take notes on the details, relating them to the structure you have established.
- Underline or highlight key words and sentences so that when you look back at your notes you can remind yourself quickly of the main themes in the text.
- As a test of just how good your notes are, you should be able to pick up the notes you made three or four months ago and, having read them, be confident that you are able to write at least one accurate page on the subject.



Institution snapshot



Istanbul Bilgi University

Istanbul Bilgi University took its place as a private, non-profit institution within the Turkish system of Higher Education on 7 June 1996, in accordance with the decision of the Turkish Grand Assembly.

The aim was to introduce a fresh outlook to an obsolete education system and to establish an independent international institution of education in Istanbul. Since its foundation the University has developed rapidly. Currently there are 9,023 students (1,900 of them on full scholarships and 81 international students from 33 different countries) working toward their undergraduate and graduate degrees in 48 programmes under four faculties, an Institute of Social Sciences, an Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences and a Vocational School.

Istanbul Bilgi University is a member of the European University Association (EUA), the International Association of Universities (IAU) and the OECD/IMHE (Program on Institutional Management in Higher Education). Bilgi is also an active participant in the ERASMUS exchange network and has strong academic affiliations with numerous universities abroad.

University of London degrees are offered through the Economics department at Bilgi. Only a small number of selected Bilgi students are accepted onto the programme upon completion of their first year. At present, 61 students are studying in the fields of Economics and Management, and Mathematics and Economics. Every year, approximately 20 students graduate from the programme. Five or six of them are accepted onto PhD programmes at distinguished US universities with full scholarships, while the remaining graduates either enrol in Masters programmes – especially in the UK – or choose to work in reputable companies.

www.bilgi.edu.tr

Come and meet us

Below is a list of forthcoming exhibitions we will be attending:

Hong Kong Law Fair	20 January 2007
ULCS, Postgraduate Study and Training Fair, London, UK	24 January 2007
RSA Conference, San Francisco	5-9 February 2007
EDUKEX, Hong Kong	10-11 February 2007
DAWN Exhibition, Karachi, Pakistan	17-18 February 2007
DAWN Exhibition, Lahore	21-22 February 2007
EDUKEX Exhibition, Sri Lanka	22-28 February 2007
DAWN Exhibition, Islamabad	24-25 February 2007
CAREER 2007, Singapore	1-4 March 2007
Careers & Jobs Live 2007, London, UK	25-26 March 2007

For full details please visit our website: www.londonexternal.ac.uk/news_events/exhibitions.shtml

LSE Guide to Careers in Asia

LSE has produced the first careers guide aimed at graduates wanting to work in India, China, Japan and other Asian countries. The LSE Guide to Careers in Asia includes testimonials from LSE alumni now working in these countries, as well as information about multinationals with offices in Asia.

Howard Davies, Director of LSE, said: 'This guide represents a new commitment by a UK university to help its students and graduates find rewarding careers in Asia. We are one of the most international universities in the UK, and long had ties with individuals and institutions in Asia. We see this guide as a vital part of the careers service we can offer to our graduates, and a springboard to develop our contacts further.'



www.lse.ac.uk



University of London

Established by Royal Charter 1836

Bolstering the UN's development goals

The Bloomsbury International Development Centre, a collaborative project by six Colleges of the University of London – Birkbeck, the Institute of Education, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the Royal Veterinary College, SOAS and the School of Pharmacy – will be launched in early 2007 to tackle the complex problems of international development.

The new centre has won start-up funding from the government. Its creation will establish the largest multidisciplinary academic grouping on development issues in the UK. It will offer a unique range and depth of expertise drawn from six specialist institutions, and the strength of partnerships with researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in Africa, Asia, and other low- and middle-income regions. Initially, it will undertake work to support the attainment of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, but will also look beyond these to longer-term development issues and capacity building in low-income countries.

"Substantial challenges remain to achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and addressing longer-term development issues" commented Sir Andrew Haines, Director of LSHTM. "Action by governments and international agencies will only succeed if policies are underpinned by a robust research base, and by developing strong links with our partners in low-income countries. The range of expertise housed within this new Centre will be unmatched by any single UK institution and will constitute an invaluable source of independent expert advice."



International Management MSc receives AMBA accreditation

Developed by academics within the School of Management at Royal Holloway, University of London, the first ever distance learning MSc in International Management has now received AMBA accreditation.

The MSc offers an extensive range of topical, financial, business and legal options. As many of the department's academic staff are involved with international businesses – either as consultants or directors – this has allowed the department to draw on diverse and practical industry knowledge when developing new study materials.

There are currently over 800 External students in 80 countries taking the Royal Holloway MBA as part of the University of London External System, making it one of the most popular postgraduate courses.

www.londonexternal.ac.uk/mba



Support for the LLB in Vietnam

The Vietnamese government has recently approved the proposal from the Law University of Ho Chi Minh City to support the University of London LLB programme. This is the first approval the Vietnamese government has issued for an overseas External study programme. Professor Wayne Morrison, Head of the External Undergraduate Laws Programme, will be visiting the University in January 2007 to assist them in setting up tuition.

Professor Morrison and Dr James Busuttill, Head of the External Postgraduate Laws Programme, will also run a workshop on comparative legal education and comparative legal systems in Hanoi. This is part of the EC Vietnam Law Week taking place between 24-27 January 2007, organized by the British Council and funded by the EU.

Feedback

We would welcome your feedback on this issue and letters/comments for future publication. Please email us at: newsletter@london.ac.uk This issue (and back issues) of the newsletter are available to download in the 'Current Students' area of our website. You can also choose to receive them via email by visiting www.londonexternal.ac.uk/newsletter