



# Learning

We will admit the students with the best potential. We will challenge students intellectually and prepare them for life in the 21st century.

In addition to the 2,681 first degrees awarded by the University in 2002/03, thousands of people successfully completed postgraduate degrees, certificates, short courses (both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing), diplomas and continuing professional development programmes. Many of these people studied on a part-time basis while holding down a job, raising a family, or both.

The student population at Bristol represents a wide spectrum of ages, backgrounds, interests and reasons for study; lifelong learners from local areas study alongside international students from all corners of the world. At every level, the University is committed to teaching of the highest quality and to increasing the opportunities for learning.

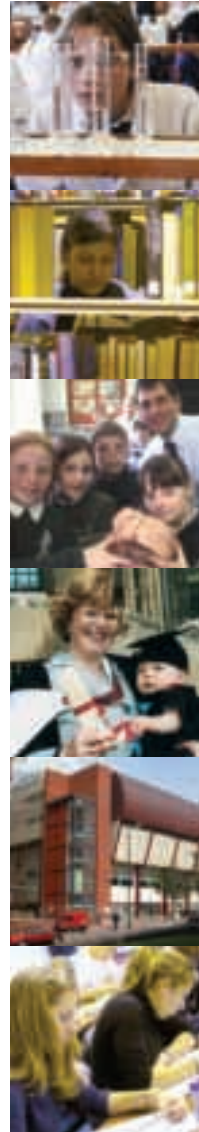
From the first Faculty Teaching Prizes to developments in e-learning, this section offers a glimpse of activities in learning and teaching at Bristol in 2002/03.

## LEARNING & TEACHING EXHIBITION

The third annual Learning & Teaching Exhibition, which aims to support developments and promote excellence in learning and teaching, took place in April. Exhibits ranged from the Partners in Practice project, which involves disabled people in the education of health professionals, to web-based French grammar tuition.



TAMANY BAKER





'A traditional university, it is moving with the times, offering unusual and innovative degree programmes alongside the staples'

*The Sunday Times*, September 2003

As part of the event, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas, presented the first-ever Faculty Teaching Prizes to: Dr Tim Cole (Historical Studies); Dr David Griffel (Mathematics); Dr Abhijit Guha (Engineering); Dr Karen Duncan (Oral and Dental Science); Dr Glenn Wakley (Anatomy); Dr Jim McKenna (Exercise and Health Sciences); Mr Richard Brawn (Graduate School of Education); and Mr Andrew Borkowski (Law).

#### FESTIVAL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Around 150 students from local state secondary schools and further education colleges joined academics for a Festival of Language Learning in September. The event aimed to promote and celebrate the diverse employment and social opportunities that language learning has to offer.



PERRY ROBBINS

Nikki Cooper, lecturer in the Department of French, with local sixth-formers at the Festival of Language Learning

Students tried out less commonly taught languages, such as Russian, Czech, Italian and Portuguese, and attended seminars on subjects as diverse as Rap Music and Race Politics in Brazil and popular German, Spanish and French films.

#### OPENING THE DOORS

The University opened its doors to schoolchildren on many occasions in 2002/03, through open days, summer schools and a wide range of organised

activities designed to get pupils thinking of themselves as the next generation of students.



JEREMY SLATER

#### Chemistry Challenge

Local pupils attended the Salters' Festival of Chemistry at the University in March (above), as part of an initiative with The Salters' Institute to promote young people's appreciation of chemistry. Pupils became forensic scientists to solve a 'crime', examined the rate of chemical reactions and heard a lecture on fireworks by Dr Peter Timms, Senior Research Fellow in Chemistry.

#### Hands-on science for Weston schools

Children from schools in the Weston Education Action Zone attended two science activity days in the departments of Physics and Earth Sciences in April. They conducted experiments with water jets, eddy currents and chaos and visited the Bristol Dinosaur, *Thecodontosaurus*.

#### Encounters of a scientific kind

Pupils from Hareclive and Westbury Park Primary Schools took part in some hands-on science in April with University scientists. They also met a



ERIC ALBONE

Marcelo Staricoff, teacher at Westbury Park Primary School, with some of his pupils

nurse, a vet, a doctor and a medical scientist, who talked about their work. The event was co-ordinated by Clifton Scientific Trust and supported by the Widening Participation Office and Clifton College.

### David Green Prize

Two students were recognised for their mentoring work in schools and other contributions to widening participation at Bristol. Kieran Borgeat (Zoology) and Keir Jones (Medicine) were joint winners of the 2003 David Green Prize for Widening Participation. Three students were also commended for their work in widening participation initiatives: Theo Berry (English), Nick Roberts (Engineering) and Rachel Bezant (Engineering).

### CONTROVERSY OF THE YEAR

In 2002/03 the University found itself at the centre of a media firestorm about admissions to the most popular

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN...**  
 That was the message of Adult Learners Week in May, when the Learndirect mobile (right, behind Staff Development Adviser Roger Morley and the Vice-Chancellor) visited the University. Learndirect, a University for Industry initiative, offers hundreds of courses for adults. Staff from the Public Programmes Office were also on hand to provide information about part-time and short courses run by the University.



SNAPSHOT ←

degree programmes, such as Economics, English, History and Law. The rejection of large numbers of highly qualified applicants from independent schools sparked false allegations that the University was 'dumbing down', engaging in 'social engineering' and practising discrimination. The fact that large numbers of highly qualified applicants from state schools also had to be rejected because of the extraordinary level of competition for places cut little ice with one or two newspapers.

## First Degrees awarded by Faculty

	1st	2:1	2:11	3rd	Ordinary	Aegrotat	Totals
Arts BA	91	450	69	0	2	0	612
Engineering BSc	11	16	6	1	0	0	34
Engineering BEng	6	14	10	3	1	0	34
Engineering MEng	80	130	62	6	1	0	279
Social Science BSc	79	289	80	5	3	0	456
Social Science MSci	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Science MSci	73	68	7	0	0	0	148
Science BSc	89	380	116	35	4	1	625
Law LLB	11	151	38	1	0	0	201
Medicine BSc	2	11	9	1	1	0	24
Honours		Pass					
MB, ChB	25	117				0	142
BDS	3	44				0	47
Distinction		Pass					
BVSc	14	61				0	75
<b>Totals</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2,681</b>

Almost overnight, more familiar headlines such as 'Bristol: only the middle classes need apply' gave way to ones like 'University accused of anti-private bias'. The University argued strongly that its only bias was towards motivation, academic ability and potential, that these exist in every part of society, and that its commitment to quality was absolute.

The annual review of admissions procedures was especially rigorous in the light of the national debate on these issues, and of the Government's White Paper on the future of higher education. The review resulted in a clear and comprehensive statement of Bristol's admissions principles and procedures. This is available at [www.bristol.ac.uk/university/how\\_run/policies/admissions-policy.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/how_run/policies/admissions-policy.html) and appears to have won approval from a wide range of interested parties.

#### IGDS – CONTINUED ADVENTURES IN LEARNING

The University's Aerospace Integrated Graduate Development Scheme (IGDS) enables scientists and engineers in the aerospace industry to pursue Masters-level training. The scheme, designed with the support of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and run jointly with the University of the West of England, recently won funding for scholarships from the West of England Aerospace Forum (WEAF).



→ SNAPSHOT

#### NEW APPROACHES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

##### **E-learning – and a new kind of Blackboard**

The University is using new internet technologies to support students both on and off campus and enable academics to develop innovative and challenging teaching, learning and assessment. This includes the launch of the Blackboard virtual learning environment, a web-based teaching tool, as a University-wide service in 2002/03.

Uptake of Blackboard has been rapid, and in some cases comprehensive.

Every course unit in the Department of Economics, for example, now has a password-protected website providing students with online course material. Some course units run online discussions and multiple-choice exercises, and use Blackboard to publish student essays and presentations online.

Work also began on a University E-learning Strategy in 2002/03 to help embed such developments, where appropriate, across the University.

##### **MSc from a distance**

The University has been drawing on its development of e-learning to allow greater access to its courses for mid-career professionals. A notable example is the MSc in Reproduction and Development, launched as an online modular course in 2001 by the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology. Each module involves online tutorials and lectures, plus essays and assessment by email and video conferencing. By July 2003 the course had enrolled its 24th student, with a further nine ready to start in the next intake. Around half the students are outside the UK, and as far apart as the Sudan, China, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia. For more information, see [www.red-msc.org.uk](http://www.red-msc.org.uk)

##### **New courses**

The University currently offers over 240 undergraduate programmes and over 120 taught postgraduate programmes. New courses introduced in 2002/03 included:

##### *Undergraduate*

Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon  
England (Diploma)  
Electrical and Electronic Engineering  
with Management (MEng)  
Human Musculoskeletal Science (BSc)

##### *Postgraduate*

Cinema Studies (MA)  
Colonialism in History (MA)  
Societies and Cultures of  
South-East Europe (MSc)