

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

APPLICATION FORM

Reference Number (02/2020)

Please refer to the [scheme criteria and guidance](#) when completing your application.

Please save as a PDF file and submit your application to Martin Wise: m.wise@reading.ac.uk

Nominator's details

Name:	Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Role:	Pro Vice Chancellor (Education)
Directorate:	Vice Chancellor's Office
School / Service:	
Department / Unit:	
Contact Telephone number:	6140
Email:	e.m.mccrum@reading.ac.uk

Team Leader's details (This may be the same person as the Nominator)

Name:	Joy Collier
Role:	Head of Academic Development and Enhancement
Directorate:	AGS
School / Service:	CQSD
Department / Unit:	ADE
Contact Telephone number:	4329
Email:	j.collier@reading.ac.uk

Team Name / Project Title

Developing an Institutional Approach to Student-Staff Partnership

Team Members

(Include all members of the group applying for the award, including the team leader and any student members. Indicate the percentage of the award that each group member should receive. This should total 100%)

Name	Employee Number	School/Function	Role in Team	% of Award per team member (The total awarded to the team cannot exceed 100%)
Joy Collier	832200	CQSD	Project Lead	23%
Victoria Bundy	917490	CQSD (previously RUSU)	Student Engagement Lead	23%
Elizabeth McCrum	731420	VC's Office	Academic Lead	18%
Edward White	918999	CQSD (previously RUSU)	RUSU Lead	18%
Kath Davey	NA	RUSU	Student Engagement Co-ordinator	18%

Previous Funding

Has anyone in your team previously been awarded in these or any other Awards at the University?	Yes
<p>If yes, please give details of date and type of award:</p> <p>Elizabeth McCrum - Collaborative Awards 2008, 2010, 2015</p> <p>Joy Collier - Collaborative Award - 2013</p>	

Case for Award

Please outline your case for an award, referring to the scheme criteria as appropriate (1000 words maximum):

This application is based upon the collaborative approach taken by members of CQSD and RUSU to build the foundations of an academic community, through which staff and students are encouraged to work in partnership, both within and beyond the classroom. This is a re-submission following advice from the panel in 2018 to re-apply within two years, once further impact of the project could be demonstrated.

The collaboration began in 2016, with a national HE pilot project commissioned by TSEP – The Student Engagement Partnership - on behalf of HEFCE, who wanted to ensure that their quality assurance processes better represented the views of students within the institution's Annual Provider Review (APR). Reading was one of just 16 HE providers who were successful in their bid to participate in the pilot.

Collaboration – CQSD and RUSU

Joy Collier (then CQSD Academic Developer) approached Niall Hamilton, subsequently Ed White (then RUSU Education Officers), Victoria Bundy (then RUSU Academic Rep Manager) and Kath Davey (RUSU Advice and Representation Manager) to apply to the pilot. We had previously worked together on the development of policy, promoting the PLaNT scheme and engaging students in T&L events, but this initiative gave us a unique opportunity to work as partners from project conception through to evaluation to better understand the views of Reading students. Support from a senior T&L leader was required to ensure the project and its potential to bring about change had maximum visibility at University level as well as clear alignment with T&L strategy. Prof Elizabeth McCrum (then T&L Dean) did not hesitate to take up this role.

The project objectives were to:

- Develop a new approach to engaging students in discussion about their T&L experience
- Understand if/how students experience 'partnership' in their Schools and
- Strengthen the relationship between RUSU and the University for future student engagement initiatives

To achieve our objectives, JC and NH co-designed and co-facilitated a series of 'Student Forums' (supported by VB and KD), which promoted a 'safe-space' for dialogue among students, and crucially, between students and the University/RUSU. A mixture of 26 traditionally 'engaged' (e.g. Academic Reps) and 'non-engaged' students participated in lively discussions, which elicited a range of views on the extent to which they felt involved in shaping their education. Participants were drawn from over 50% of the institution's academic schools and included members of under-represented groups, including: postgraduate, international, BME, mature and commuter students.

Results

EW and JC worked together on analysis following the Student Forums, identifying key themes to be addressed:

- Students felt a stronger culture of partnership existed at course-level, than at University-level;
- Academic Reps were more informed regarding T&L matters than non-Academic Reps;
- Communication between the University and students was a contributing factor for students feeling a lack of partnership at university level

Students identified the positive nature of partaking in an activity co-run by RUSU and UoR, finding it reassuring to observe the constructive partnership between the two parties. As a result we co-created a UoR & RUSU '[Partnership Commitment](#)' which defines our collaborative approach; this can be found on both websites and in Academic Rep handbooks. We have continued to run events in collaboration including RUSU Academic Rep training, UoR T&L Conferences and T&L Programme sessions to share expertise and improve the student learning experience.

Impact

Our contribution to the Pilot had influence nationally on TSEP's '[Evaluating Student Engagement Activity](#)' report, framework and guidance and (with other TSEP institutions) fed in to HEFCE's, subsequently OFS's, '[Strategy for Student Engagement](#)'.

The student feedback we gained also resulted in internal changes, directly impacting the student experience. University recommendations included:

'Make mid-modular feedback a standard practice across schools' to provide greater opportunity to address issues as they occur; this resulted in the **introduction of [Mid-module evaluation](#) into policy**;

'Engage with the wider student body, particularly in relation to key decisions or initiatives'; this led to a full-scale **review of the Student Academic Representation policy** to ensure students have the agency to engage with course/school-level T&L initiatives.

We also introduced **communication workshops for Academic Reps**, ensuring Reps have the tools to engage, and close the feedback loop, with a diversity of students. A new **feedback organogram** has also been included in programme handbooks to make student feedback routes more transparent.

Importantly, this work has had significant and ongoing institutional impact. The group continued to oversee the implementation of recommendations by establishing a Working Group on Student Engagement. In 2017, JC launched the Student Engagement Community of Practice, bringing together colleagues and students to share perspectives and best practice approaches to partnership e.g. a Part 3 Student Rep recently presented their experience of programme-level assessment mapping and action-planning in partnership with staff in Biological Sciences.

In 2019, the strategic 'Student Voice & Partnership' project was established to manage and improve Reading's institutional approach to these areas and review and enhance student voice mechanisms. With JC, VB, and KD as Workstream leads and EMc as Chair of the SV&P project, we have been able to bring our work to bear in this strategic forum, continuing to engage student-partners across all activities:

Through extensive consultation with over 200 Academic Reps, RUSU, SE CoP and staff, we co-created **the institution-wide '[Principles of Partnership](#)'**, a set of values that underpin the University vision for student engagement and partnership. These principles are currently being embedded into QA policy, awards schemes and informing Schools' engagement with the Curriculum Framework. JC, VB and EMc were responsible for planning and running the 'T&L Conference 2019: Building an Academic Community', with keynote speaker Dr Cathy Bovill (University of Edinburgh), a sector expert in student partnership. The Principles of Partnership were launched at this event, which brought together over 100 staff and students from across the university, to share ideas and develop partnership practices at Reading.

Our continued collaborative approach has influenced and ensured **integration with the institutional Evaluation & Impact Project**, for which EW was appointed as Project Officer. The Principles of Partnership have been used to inform the resources in the E&I Framework, which encourage colleagues to adopt a partnership approach to evaluating their T&L activities to enhance student learning and development.

VB has developed the '[Student Voice and Partnership](#)' **online toolkit** to guide and support colleagues along their journey of partnership working. The institutional *Teaching and Learning Exchange* blog was revised to include a new category ([Student Voice and Partnership](#)) to share best practice in this area and to promote entries written or co-authored by students. Our objective now is to further bring the Principles to life for meaningful enhancement at UoR and continue to build a thriving academic community with students as our partners.

Head of School / Service (Please answer all questions and delete as applicable)

Is your Head of School/Service aware of this application?	Yes
Is your Head of School/Service supportive of this application?	Yes