

Research at Regent NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1-OCTOBER 2021

Welcome to the very first issue of the Research at Regent newsletter!

At its core, research is an opportunity to be curious and search for answers. This newsletter is a space to celebrate that curiosity and highlight the achievements and research, emerging or established, of Regent's staff and students. Another part of satiating one's curiosity and growing, both personally and professionally, involves engaging with learning and development opportunities, which you will also find shared within the newsletter.

We are pleased to kickstart this newsletter with reflections on Regent's recent successes and ambitious growth plans from CEO and Principal, Dr Selva Pankaj. In this issue, we celebrate Regent students' positive response to the Digital Learning Survey and recognise October as Black History month as we take a look at the degree awarding gap. We also recap Dr Palto Datta's and Dr Rula Alousi's Research Roundtable presentations and shine a spotlight on Rozalia Acodrinesei's master's dissertation research on the impact of artificial intelligence on e-commerce. This issue also looks at Dr Ahmmed Khondokar Farid's research around the social capital of young entrepreneurs and recognises recent publications and conference presentations by Regent staff.

Turning to issues of diversity and inclusion, we celebrate the funding that Regent has won from the Office for Students to participate in a project to improve student mental health provision. We also introduce a section where staff can keep up to date on professional development opportunities. Finally, be sure to check out the upcoming events section for your diary.

As the newsletter grows, we look forward to expanding its scope and continuing to include your contributions alongside more of the content you would like to see.

We hope that this newsletter will inspire you and kindle your curiosity!



Dr Anna Wharton,
Research Officer / Editor

Guest Think Piece

Digital Academic Delivery, Disruptive Innovation and New Degree Awarding Powers

By Dr Selva Pankaj,
Principal and CEO



I am delighted to write this think piece for the inaugural issue of Research at Regent, our brand new bi-monthly publication that highlights the fantastic work undertaken by our academics, staff and students.

The motto of Regent College London is 'The End Result of Education is Character', and the past 18 months, with all that the global Covid-19 pandemic has thrown at us, has certainly been a time when the character of our staff and students has been tested to the full. But we have risen to the challenge and come through with flying colours!

Looking back, I feel immensely proud of how we responded agilely to the sudden shift from traditional in-person classroom based learning to the brave new world of synchronous and asynchronous Digital Academic

Delivery. But importantly, I also recognise how much we have learnt about what makes for successful digital teaching, learning and assessment.

At the start of the pandemic, I commissioned Professor Patrick McGhee to carry out research helping us to pinpoint exactly what worked for our students when learning digitally. I am pleased to say that the results of this research (summarised in Professor McGhee's article below) show that we are leading the field in this area. Nevertheless, we are not resting on our laurels. We are continually looking to learn from research - drawing on evidence from our recent survey asking students to indicate their preferred channels for consuming learning - to improve our provision further.

Of course, with our campus recently

re-opening, we are now looking to ensure that all students enjoy the type of learning experience that enables them to flourish academically, personally and professionally – accessing it at the place, time and via the device that suits them best.

These are exciting times for Regent. Our plans will, I believe, bring tangible benefits to our students (our customers), our staff and the communities we serve. Our application for New Degree Awarding Powers is progressing quickly and we are well underway to achieving our goal of becoming Regent Hill University: a disruptive, technology-enabled higher education provider with 10,000 customers worldwide.



Regent Students Rise to the Challenges of Digital Learning

With Professor Patrick McGhee

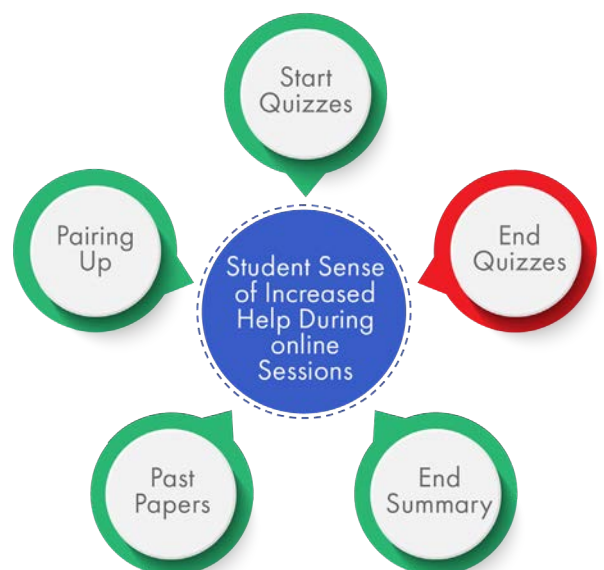
Regent has recently been reviewing the preliminary results of a large one-year study led by Professor Patrick McGhee, looking at student engagement during digital online learning. Surveys of over 1,000 students, across eight different degree-level institutions in the University of Bolton partnership (including Regent College), have highlighted a number of interesting and positive findings.

Compared to others in the sample, Regent students reported being more satisfied with their course and grades, being less likely to have considered leaving their course, and having a clearer idea of what they were planning to do after graduation. Additionally, Regent students were more likely to indicate that they had received helpful support from tutors over the academic year.

Reflecting on what worked well during digital learning, Regent students also indicated that they found quizzes at the start of sessions, summaries at the end, past papers and pairing up as being particularly helpful, while quizzes at the end of lessons were less helpful, as shown in Image 1.

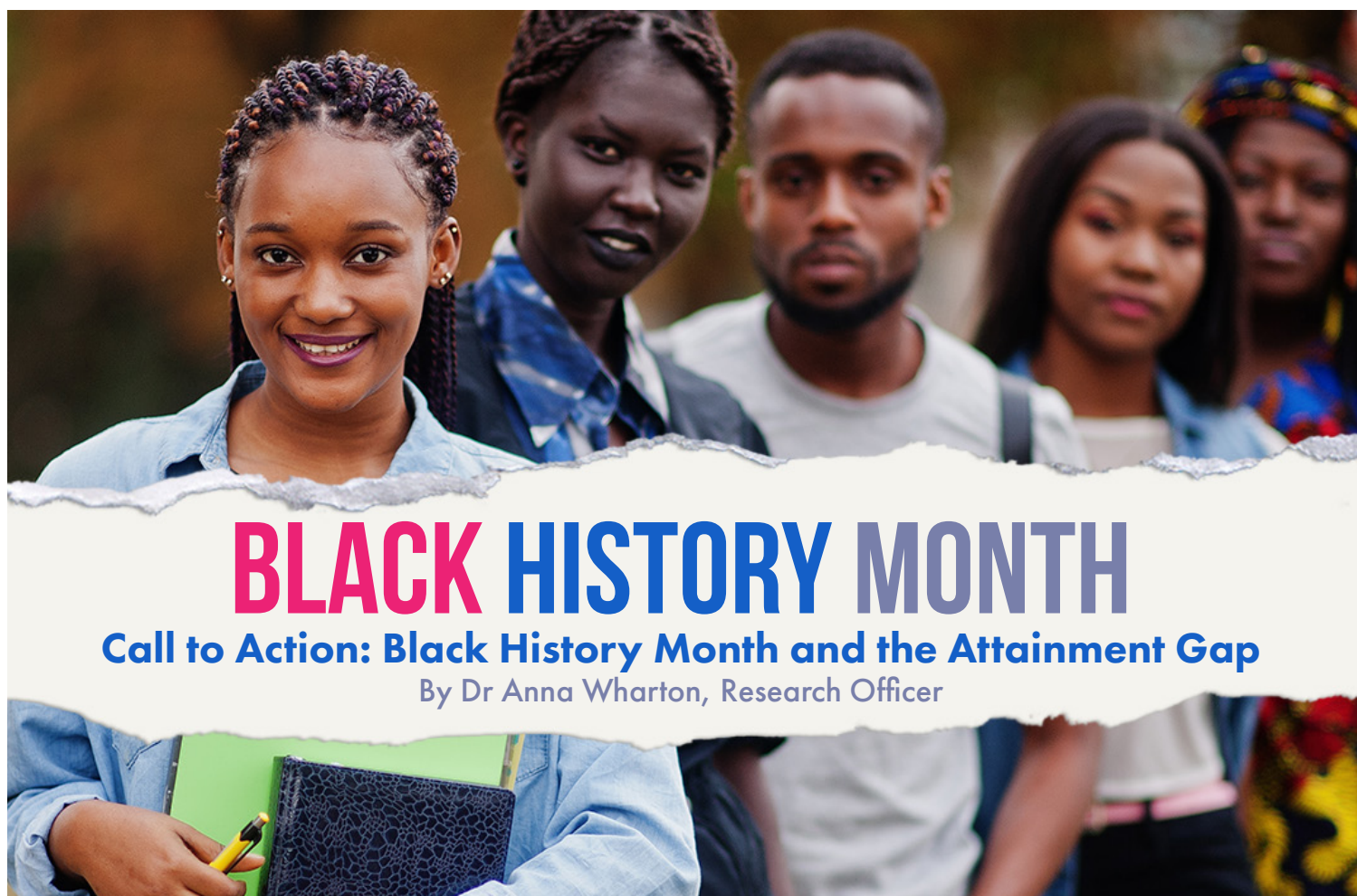
Overall, students at Regent found online learning to be well managed, interactive and convenient – though several reported missing meeting with friends and tutors face-to-face. Students also suggested ways they could be helped further. These suggestions included having more opportunities to work in groups with peers and receiving one-to-one support during formative feedback.

Summarising the preliminary results, Professor McGhee said, “It is clear that Regent students and staff have worked hard, been well supported and risen to the challenges and opportunities of digital learning during Covid - in many respects more than elsewhere. Students have also offered clear ideas on how they can continue to be supported in the coming year and I know that the College is keen to do everything they can to maintain the momentum around effective digital learning.”



You can see the [report from the first phase of this research here](#). The full report from the second phase will be published later this year.

Image 1



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Call to Action: Black History Month and the Attainment Gap

By Dr Anna Wharton, Research Officer

This October we celebrate Black History Month. In recognition of that, staff at Regent have been invited to reflect on relevant contributions made by members of the black community in their taught sessions. Regent has also invited Kemoy Walker from the [KYSO Project](#) and Bukola Bayo-Yusuf and Winnie Annan-Forsen from [Excellerate Black Futures](#) to speak at Regent this month.

While the number of ethnic minority students in higher education has increased in recent years, the Higher Education Statistics Agency's [report](#) on student data from the 2019/20 year reveals that just 27% of UK undergraduate students are from ethnic minorities. By comparison, Regent College reports that around 40% of Regent students are from a Black, Asian or other ethnic minority background (BAME), a notably higher proportion of students than the wider UK higher education sector. Regent is committed to meeting the diverse needs of all its learners through its [Access and Participation Plan](#).

As a higher education institution, it is important to take time to consider what Black History Month can and should look

like as a celebration and call to action in our context. So, while we celebrate the increasing support provided for Black British students in UK higher education, we must consider how that support can continue to improve as we seek to close [the degree awarding gap](#). This gap refers to the notably smaller ratio of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students who are awarded a 'good' degree compared to white students.

[Research](#) suggests that part of the ongoing awarding gap may be to do with differences in the experiences between black and white students at university. It has been observed that overall black students are less satisfied with their university experience than white students who are at the same university.

[This 2018 article](#) suggests that when black students have the opportunity to engage in groups, such as a student union, or are provided with 'culturally sensitive mentorship and support', this can enhance the experiences of black students.

[This 2019 report from Universities UK on #closingthegap](#) identifies five key steps

to reducing the attainment gap. The first is the provision of strong leadership, which is committed to removing the gap and leading by example. The second step is to build in opportunities to talk about race, racism and the gap with students. Developing more representative, inclusive and diverse environments in higher education institutions is the third key step. The penultimate step involves gathering evidence more systematically to inform conversations and the final step advocates for collaboration between universities to identify and evidence 'what works'.

While the UK higher education sector is actively seeking to better understand and eliminate the degree awarding gap, individual institutions must continue to improve their own support and provision for BAME students. [Take a look at this case study from our partner University of Northampton on fostering engagement with BAME students.](#)

For more ways to acknowledge Black history and celebrate Black futures, [visit Black History Month 2021.](#)

Research Roundtable Recap

We are pleased to share that we recently had two excellent Research Roundtable presentations by Dr Palto Datta and Dr Rula Alousi, both from the School of Business and Enterprise. The events were very well attended by approximately 85 academics and other Regent staff.

How to be published

With Dr Palto Datta

In August, Dr Datta presented on how to be published in an indexed journal, drawing on his own extensive publications and experience as an Editor-in-Chief of an academic journal. The talk

covered the reasons why academics should publish, common reasons why papers get rejected, and practical guidance on structuring a manuscript for submission to an academic journal. One of Dr Datta's top tips was to not rush to publish, but rather to take time to select a suitable journal and carefully follow their author guidelines. [Click here to view the recording of Dr Datta's presentation.](#)



Qualities of a Good Paper



Research Roundtable Recap

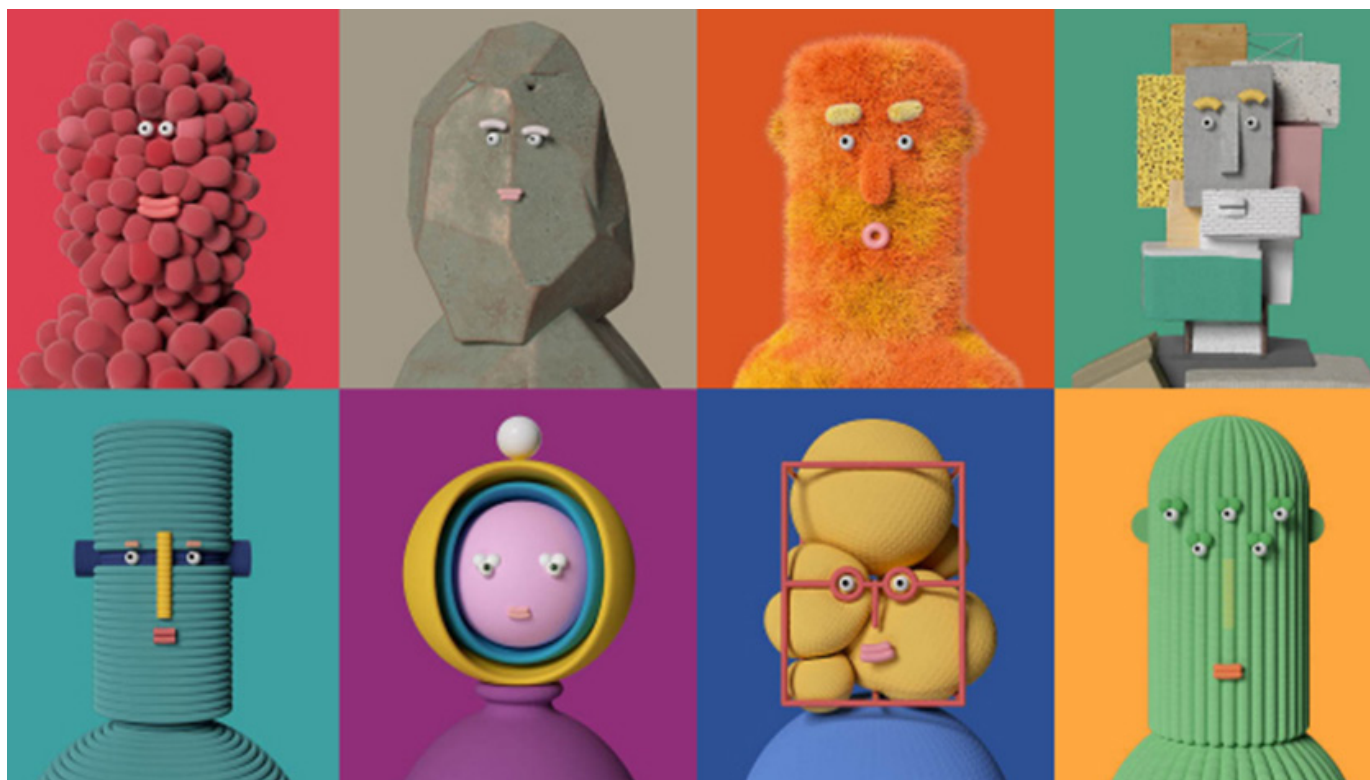
Enhancing digital teaching and learning

With Dr Rula Alousi



In September, Dr Alousi spoke about how to enhance the experience of digital teaching and learning for both students and teachers, and how to maximise the opportunities provided by this 'new norm'. Her talk considered the need to get to know one's students as more than 'faces on a screen', and offered practical suggestions around

how to become familiar with each student's learning and personality styles, using accessible online quizzes such as the [Adobe Creative Types quiz](#). Understanding better who students are can help to facilitate more engaged teaching and learning online. [Click here to view the recording of Dr Alousi's presentation.](#)



Creative Types by Adobe Create, 2021

Two fascinating Research Roundtable lunchtime presentations are planned for the autumn term:

In October, Professor Oluwafemi Esan, from the School of Allied Health, will explore newly qualified teachers' coaching skills as shaped by their experiences of initial teacher training.

In November, Dr Xavier Matieni, from the School of Computing and AI, will consider how learner engagement is cultivated and how to build a community of inquirers through interconnected learning.

All staff and students are encouraged to attend. Please see Upcoming Events for more information.





Spotlight on Student Research

This section highlights a piece of research conducted by a Regent student and celebrates the excellent work being done at Regent College.



The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on E-commerce Business: A Case Study of Amazon Customers in London

By Rozalia Acodrinei,
MSc International
Management Student,
September 2020 Cohort

At the end of our master's degree we are asked to write one of our most important pieces of work to demonstrate our capabilities and identify our area of interest. For my dissertation, I conducted a case study on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on E-commerce with Amazon customers in London. AI is a common term today, and we can find its practical applications everywhere in automated robots, satellite navigations, smart appliances, voice recognition and much more. This research presents the customer's perception about the use of artificial intelligence by the E-commerce giant Amazon.

My research aimed to demonstrate the impact that AI-enabled technology has had on Amazon's customers. I believe it is very important for each organisation to understand their customer's perception of the journey from web search, to the services and product quality, and the security offered up to the moment customers have received and are using those services or products.

The findings of my research were unexpected, demonstrating that Amazon's customers are very diverse, and that some are very open to the implementation of AI in their services

and products, while others are reticent. When speaking about the security offered, customers believe that other cloud platforms offer more security and do not trust Amazon's 1-click checkout.

As a result of my research, I make two recommendations concerning Amazon's security. First, they can send newsletters explaining the complexity of the Amazon Web Service (AWS) and second, they can include well-known payment platforms such as PayPal.

Although these findings were unexpected, they have demonstrated that Amazon customers are very satisfied with their services and products and that Amazon is gaining a competitive advantage.

Overall, my research achieved its objectives to examine the benefits of AI, assess how AI improved Amazon's services and explore the gap between customer perception of AI-based security and Amazon's applied security system. Artificial intelligence's impact on E-commerce is a wide-ranging subject and there are many opportunities to learn more on the topic.

Young Entrepreneurs, Strategic Entrepreneurship, and Social Capital: An Empirical Understanding



By Dr Ahmed Khondokar Farid, School of Business and Enterprise

Researchers of social capital and entrepreneurship who have focused on small businesses have noted that such institutions fail to bring together bonding social actors due to bureaucratic complexities. Hence, concerned institutions cannot benefit from bonding social capital unless they can connect to that bonding social capital.

My research has contributed to filling this gap through a qualitative case study approach in the Bangladeshi context. The research investigated bank branches and their loan officers' processes for assessing the financial eligibility of small businesses. In this context, the research introduces two terms: 'social mentors' and 'bridging actors'. It was found that loan officers consider the bonding relationship between the owners of young firms and other actors such as nearby established firms, loan officers and supply chain officers of buyers. I have called these 'social mentors'. They provide mentoring support to the owners of young firms with regard to decision-making with information and communication in day-to-day business problems, which then fosters strategic entrepreneurship in the owners in the long run.

When loan officers find an owner of a young firm with a satisfactory bonding relationship and the capability to learn, they provide

an initial loan and connect the owner with other 'bridging actors' such as successful entrepreneurs, suppliers, customers, training providers and facilitators within the same industry and connected with the same bank. Thus, the loan officers act as 'bridging actors'.

This research offers a model which recommends that banks strategically support branch level loan officers to enhance bonding and bridging social capital and develop strategic entrepreneurship with the owners of young firms. This study also suggests that social capital and entrepreneurship researchers, and public and private institutions continue to investigate how to maximise the role of social capital, social mentors, bridging actors and strategic entrepreneurship in owners of young firms.

Full article by Dr Ahmed Khondokar Farid and co-authors forthcoming.



Diversity and Inclusion Matter(s)

'Many Hands': Regent College's Investment in Mental Health



By Tanya Tanna, Student Wellbeing Coordinator

We are delighted to announce that Regent College London, along with seven other higher education providers, [has won funding from the Office for Students to support student mental health.](#)

Regent will participate in a peer-to-peer support project called 'Many Hands', which aims to address mental health concerns in order to reduce barriers to sustained educational engagement and attainment. The project – based on an accessibility, prevention, early intervention, and ongoing support model – is set to launch in November 2021.

Through the project, Regent students will have access to an online platform for peer-mentoring, a method of

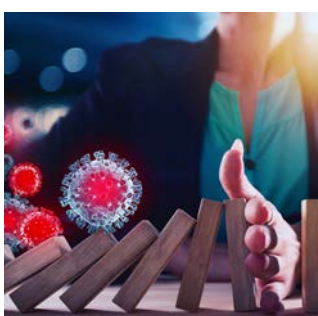
support shown to improve mental health through empathy and the sharing of lived experiences. Meeting positive peer role models through mentoring and recognising that it is possible to recover from mental health issues can also tackle isolation and motivate students to commit to their own recovery. Peer mentoring also addresses the challenge of stigma, which is too often a substantive barrier to help-seeking. This online platform will be discreet and remotely accessible to benefit students who may have limited access to mental health provision. Regent students may also have the opportunity to be trained as mentors, which can increase a sense of confidence and self-esteem through the development of reciprocal relationships.



Publications, Presentations and Events



Dr Anna Wharton led a discussion on [Castelli and Sarvary's 2021 article](#) 'Why students do not turn on their video cameras during online classes and an equitable and inclusive plan to encourage them to do so' on 22 September. The event was well attended by 34 members of staff.



Dr Chris Wood presented on 'Recalibrating Assessment Post Covid-19' to the Governors for Schools Conference: All Pupils, Every Ambition, held on 24 September. His presentation drew on [Regent's research paper looking at 'The Future of GCSEs and A Levels'](#) and considered the implications of the pandemic on assessment in the UK and globally.



Dr Anthony Basiel was an expert speaker at the [UCX conference](#) at ExCel London on 6 and 7 October. The theme of the conference was around digital transformation and navigating the new era of communication and technology.



Dr Palto Datta was invited to present a lecture for postgraduate students of management at the University of Mumbai on 6 October. The lecture was part of a series put on by the Bombay Management Association.



Dr Datta has also co-authored an article on quality assurance in higher education in Bangladesh: Datta, P. and Graves, D.M.J. (2021) 'Micro-Compass quality assurance short programme: Designing effective quality assurance systems in HE Institutions in Bangladesh', *International Journal of Higher Education Management*, 8(1), pp. 57-68. doi: <https://doi.org/10.24052/IJHEM/V08N01/ART-5>

Staff & Professional Development

By Rajib Mustofa, Quality Enhancement Manager



Welcome to this first briefing on Staff and Professional Development at Regent College London. My role as the Quality Enhancement Manager within the Academic Services team is to lead on the creation of a professional development framework that underpins the development of both academic and professional services staff and the enhancement of Regent's teaching, learning and assessment provision.

This section of the Research at Regent newsletter will keep you informed about key staff development events happening at RCL and at our partner institutions. It will also keep you up to date with external opportunities that can support your career development, be that gaining new skills and broader experience, or contributing to discussions on issues affecting academic and professional services staff.



Upcoming events include:

INTERNAL

1

[Formative and Summative Feedback on the HND Programme -](#)

11 October, 13:00-14:00 via MS Teams (Open to all staff teaching on the HND Business Programme)

2

[Professional Recognition from AdvanceHE: Routes to Fellowship -](#)

14 October, 13:00 – 14:00 (Open to all academic staff; details on how to book a space will be emailed to all)

3

[Fellowship Categories and Building your Application -](#)

28 October, 13:00-14:00 (Open to all academic staff; details on how to book a space will be emailed to all)

EXTERNAL

1

[Effective Approaches to Online or Virtual Teaching: Advance HE-](#)

6 and 13 October, 10:00-11:30

The Virtual Teaching course, designed by AdvanceHE, is aimed at nurturing and developing contemporary professional learning, with a particular focus on online pedagogies and digital delivery within fully virtual or hybrid teaching spaces.

2

[Quality Matters 2021 -](#)

20 and 21 October, 10:00-13:15

Quality Matters is QAA's annual student-focused conference which provides an introduction to student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement. This event is ideally aimed at staff working in student supporting roles.

Please note that staff will need to seek approval from their respective Heads of School or Line Manager to attend external events.

Please watch this space as we will periodically publicise information about key events in this section of the newsletter.

In addition, if you know about events that you would like to circulate, please contact Rajib Mustofa on Teams or at Rajib.Mustofa@rcl.ac.uk.

Upcoming Events

2021 Research Methods e-Festival

25-29 October

10th International Conference on the Restructuring of the Global Economy

9-11 December

Research Roundtable (open to staff and students)

Monthly lunchtime research presentations by Regent staff

13 October – Professor Oluwafemi Esan presents on new teachers' coaching skills

17 November – Dr Xavier Matieni presents on building a community of inquirers

[Click here for more information and links](#)

Reading Group (open to staff)

Monthly lunchtime discussion of one scholarly work

[Click here for more information](#)

Academic Skills Webinars With Vanessa Lima, Academic Skills Advisor

Every Tuesday at 5pm from 28 September – 9 November

[Click here for more information and links](#)

Careers & Employability Webinars With Stephen Roach, Careers and Employability Advisor

Every Thursday at 5pm from 30 September – 4 November

[Click here for more information and links](#)

Guest Speaker Series

Fortnightly from 6 October – 15 December

[Click here for more information and links](#)

Join the Research Development Group

Staff members, we would love for you to join our voluntary, monthly meeting of academic and professional staff championing research engagement at Regent.

The Group has already contributed brilliantly to the establishment of Research Roundtable and the Research at Regent newsletter and is currently engaged in a discussion around the development of Regent's core research interests.

If you would like to come along, please contact [Dr Anna Wharton](#), Research Officer, at anna.wharton@rcl.ac.uk.

Call for contributions

We welcome ideas and research from everyone at Regent and are happy to support research engagement across all schools and teams. We also invite members of staff to support future newsletters as part of the editorial team and to recommend student contributions to the newsletter, which are well done, original or innovative.

If you would like to contribute to or support future issues of this newsletter, please contact [Dr Anna Wharton](#), Research Officer, at anna.wharton@rcl.ac.uk.