

Title of case study

Developing student research skills and confidence through an academic style Student Journal

Staff Lead

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School/ Department

School of Life Sciences

Faculty

Health and Life Sciences

Please briefly describe the activity undertaken for the case study

Insider Imprint is a student journal for undergraduate and masters students. The journal is open access and online (see [Insider Imprint website](#)) as well as in print, and scientific articles are peer-reviewed. We launched our first issue in May 2018, and are now working towards issue 2.

We invite submissions from all year-groups and we are open to a wide range of articles such as research articles, literature reviews, reflections on an experience (i.e. internship, volunteering, placement etc.), debates, conference reviews, book reviews, artwork and more. We also commission pieces, for example in issue 1 we had some 'where are we now' pieces commissioned from recent graduates.

We aim to create a professional academic journal, both in terms of its appearance and content. We also aim to make the experience of submitting work to us reflect the true publishing experience, although with more support in place such as writing clinics for potential authors.

The journal is currently run by one academic (Fabia Allen) and a small team of PhD students. Further PhD students are recruited to perform peer-review of articles when needed.

Our overall aims are to:

- Create an academic-style journal for our students
- Support students in publishing their work
- Provide opportunities to publish and enhance CVs
- Provide editorial & peer review experience for PhD students
- Inspire & inform current and future students
- Promote the School at open days and outreach activities

How was the activity implemented?

PhD students were recruited for the team in early 2017. Students were invited to submit an application, and were then interviewed for positions on the editorial board.

Once the team was gathered, we spent some time planning our overall goals and aims for the journal.

Work then began in the spring of 2017 to set up the infrastructure of the journal, including journal policies, author guidelines, peer-review training materials, website etc.

From spring 2017 we advertised for submissions to undergraduate and masters students and the majority of these then came in over the autumn of 2017.

Submissions, peer-reviews, writing clinics, re-submissions, requests for commissions etc. took place during the autumn of 2017 and by Christmas we had the majority of content for issue 1.

We then spent early 2018 on the typesetting of the articles, sourcing artwork and arranging printing before we launched with our first issue in May 2018. We plan to continue with further journal issues going forward.

Has this activity improved programme provision and student experience, if so how?

The journal represents an accessible opportunity for first time publishing, and provides students who engage with it excellent experience in what it takes to publish work. This will build confidence and put students in a stronger position to publish in the future.

Students who publish with us can highlight this on their CV, and as we are open access and online they can directly showcase their work to future employers.

In addition, the journal contains many articles that other students will find interesting and inspiring to read. For example, they can read about what current students are doing (research, volunteering, internships etc.) as well as about what previous students have gone on to do. One of our aims is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experiences between our students.

The PhD students on the editorial board are gaining fantastic experience in all aspects of managing and producing a journal and working in a close team. Furthermore, PhD students who peer-review articles for us are given access to peer-review training materials we have created for the journal.

Did you experience any challenges in implementation, if so how did you overcome these?

This has been a huge project to undertake, so a main challenge was lack of time. However, having recruited a strong team we were able to pull this together in a relatively short timeframe. Having regular team-meetings, defined roles for team members, and communicating using SLACK have all helped.

An additional challenge is that students may submit work that supervisors do not want published. We have created a submission form that includes an area for students to collect consent from their supervisor before we will publish. We will not publish work without this consent.

Which Liverpool University Hallmarks and Attributes does this case study relate to (tick all boxes that apply)

Research-connected Teaching X
Active Learning X
Authentic Assessment
Confidence X
Digital Fluency
Global Citizenship

How does this case study relate to the Hallmarks and Attributes you have selected?

Research-connected Teaching

- Students communicate their own research & read that of their peers
- PhD students give peer-review feedback

Active Learning

- Students must engage with the process, from reading our author instructions, preparing their manuscript, responding to peer-review comments etc.

Confidence

- Builds confidence in what the publishing process involves, and in writing ability.
- Students learn about what each other are doing, get ideas, motivation and confidence through seeing what others in their position have done.

How could this case study be transferred to other disciplines?

A journal could be applied to any other discipline.

If someone else were to implement the activity within your case study what advice would you give them?

You need a good small team, a clear timeframe and clearly defined steps to meet your goal.

You need to reach out to students through social media, but still standing up e.g. in lecture theatres and at pop-up stalls, to tell them about what you are doing; face-to-face communication is essential.

If you need further advice, come and talk to us.



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