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UEA admits live-stream lectures and virtual seminars could become norm

>> Students' union says provision needs to keep pace with growth in student numbers

EXCLUSIVE
Joe Jameson
Editor-in-Chief

UEA has stated that it is "unrealistic to assume" that it will not explore the possibility of increasing the use of "high quality video links" as a method of teaching. The Union of UEA Students (UUEAS) has warned against the move, urging the university to ensure that it is able to accommodate the rise in students predicted over the next few years.

Recently the university has suggested that it may look to increase the use of video links as part of its teaching methods, as it came to light that a Nursing induction lecture was held in two rooms, the students in the second had to watch a livestream of the lecture. When asked about the situation which had occurred in a nursing lecture, a university spokesperson said that the use of live streaming was not a "common method of teaching used in the School of Health Sciences", but added that it "is not unrealistic to assume that using a high-quality video feed as part of our learning and teaching methods will be utilised in the future".

This admission comes at a time when Exeter University has announced a new partnership with Pearsons Education to build a series of online postgraduate degrees which could come on stream by September 2016. Exeter claims that the degrees will be "competitively priced with 'on the ground' degrees and allow students to fit their learning around part time work. The university's provost, Professor Janice Kay, hopes that the project will widen



Photo: Flickr: Harry Harris

the access to higher education from vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Commenting on the prospect of UEA students viewing more of their lectures through a live stream, Undergraduate Education Officer at UUEAS, Connor Rand, said: "Hastily video linking lecture theatres and issuing timetables late doesn't give students confidence". He added that if the university was planning to expand, "it must make sure that the appropriate seats are there before students arrive".

This move by the university leaves it open

to questions about the value of degrees at their current price of £9,000 a year, and whether students are paying a fair amount for their level of teaching access. Rand, stated that "[As] the university intends to expand its student numbers in the next few years, it's critical that this is done in a planned way with facilities and services growing alongside", explaining that this extended to "lecture theatres, in resource for the hubs, and in services like accommodation, DOS and the SU".

This news comes as the University has been caught out over a situation where some

students have found that their timetables had not been filled in, or had seminars missing. Prior to the beginning of the semester the university was faced by a serious software issue which prevented it from issuing timetables to students in advance of Freshers week. This was compounded by a rise in students enrolling at UEA this September, and a reduction in teaching space in comparison to the same time a year ago, due to the closure of CD Annex, as well as the reduction in use of the Blackdale building, as the site is prepared for new accommodation.

Former law lecturer detained in Ireland after fleeing his trial during lunch break

Sam McKinty & Peter Sheehan
News editor and Deputy editor

Police in Ireland have detained a former UEA lecturer who absconded from Ipswich Crown Court on the 30th September. Julian

Myerscough, 55, a former UEA criminal law lecturer, fled the court building just before the jury was due to return its verdict. He was being prosecuted for breaching the terms of his sexual offences prevention order, having been convicted in 2010 of possessing indecent images of children. Myerscough was found guilty in his absence.

Ipswich Crown Court judge, Emma Peters, issued a warrant for Myerscough's arrest after it became apparent that he had fled the court. She told the jury: "You will see Mr Myerscough is not in court. Unfortunately he seems to have left the Ipswich area over lunch. I have issued a warrant for his arrest and significant steps are being taken to ensure he is taken into custody at the earliest point".

A European arrest warrant was then



Julian Myerscough, former UEA law lecturer Photo: supplied

issued after Myerscough was spotted in Dublin. It is thought that he took a train from Ipswich, then travelled to Ireland by ferry. He was subsequently detained by the Gardaí, the Irish police force, on Friday morning. British and Irish authorities are co-operating to ensure his return.

The charges date back to September 2013, when police raided Myerscough's address in Lowestoft and seized a laptop, a computer tower and a USB memory stick. All the equipment was found to contain indecent images of children. He was also charged with three counts of breaching the terms of his prevention order.

During the trial, in which Myerscough represented himself, he said that he "wouldn't be told by the courts what he mustn't do".