

The Value of Research, Education and Collaboration: following the merging of the Leather and Fashion at the University of Northampton

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The University of Northampton in 2022

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- ▶ UON is a modern University with a new purpose-built campus, designed to adapt to 21st century teaching and learning, located just a few minutes' walk from the town centre.
 - ▶ The highest quality teaching and preparation for employment available in the UK.*
 - ▶ Offering great value in welcoming and safe surroundings and less than one hour from London.

*TEF report, UK Government 2017

The Institute for Creative Leather Technologies

- ▶ Newest building on campus
- ▶ State of the art labs and lab/pilot scale tannery
- ▶ Delivers a wide range of educational programmes
 - Training programmes at a range of levels
 - Taught programmes inc. certificates, BSc, MSc



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Fashion, Leather and ICLT

- ▶ In 2021 it was announced that the subjects of Fashion and Leather would combine into a single subject.
 - All leather teaching programmes fall under this subject area
- ▶ Took full effect in Jan 2022 with the appointment of Vicki Dean as subject leader.
- ▶ ICLT remains – but focusses on the non-teaching aspects.
 - All research, enterprise and consultancy falls under ICLT's remit
- ▶ Externally the change in delivery is minimal, we will continue to do what we do well.

Fashion, Leather and ICLT



John Sinclair
Dean of Faculty



Subject leader and thus
leads the teaching
programme



Leads research
programme and ICLT



Undergraduate provision

- ▶ BA Fashion Design (Fashion, Textiles, Footwear & Accessories)
 - 60 students
- ▶ BA Fashion Marketing & Promotion
 - 75 students
- ▶ BSc Leather Technology
 - Inc. certificate in Leather Technology (yr. 1 only)
 - 40 students



Postgraduate provision

- ▶ MSc Leather Technology (Professional)
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Leather Technology (Professional)
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Leather Technology (Professional)
- ▶ Postgraduate Certificate in Leather Finishing – Automotive
 - Separate from MSc – in conjunction with Stahl



Impact of teaching

- ▶ Reorganisation offers students greater exposure to the full breadth of the subject area.
- ▶ Provides industry with qualified employees that are highly valued.
- ▶ Employability is very high – demonstrates a need for the graduates by industry
- ▶ Important part of succession planning to companies
 - Can be seen as an investment by industry



Research at ICLT

- ▶ Reorganisation will not affect research and improves expertise.
- ▶ Modes of engagement:
 - Rent/lease research space
 - Private client/ contract research
 - Consultancy
 - Studentships (inc. PhD and MPhil)
 - Collaborative grant applications to external funders e.g. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)



Research at ICLT

- ▶ **Benefits to you:**
 - Work with established world leading academics
 - Access to a diverse range of facilities and expertise
 - Access to grants
 - Cost-effective research
 - Generation of 'numbers' to support the industry
 - Independence – no perceived bias
- ▶ **Facilities:**
 - Pilot scale tannery
 - Physical & chemical testing labs
 - Analytical lab (inc. Chromatography, thermal analysis suite & elemental analysis)
 - Microscopy Suite (light & SEM)
 - Small scale shoe and leather goods manufacturing facilities



Why do Universities collaborate?

- ▶ How we are measured –
 - TEF – Teaching Excellence Framework
 - UK Government framework
 - Aims to ‘assess excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate–level employment or further study.’
 - REF – Research Excellence Framework
 - A system for assessing the quality of UK higher education research.
 - Papers, Environment and Impact
 - KEF – Knowledge Exchange Framework
 - Designed by the UK Government to help universities focus on improving communication with the public, government and business.
- ▶ All of the above improved through collaboration

Why do Universities collaborate?

- ▶ Beyond the measurement
 - Context to work – teaching and research
 - Knowledge exchange – we learn from you e.g. sharing your experience, process of commercialisation
 - Improves the delivery of teaching and research
- ▶ Passionately believe in supporting the industry – education and independent research key to that support.



Summary

- ▶ Already receive collaborative support from industry – more is always welcome.
- ▶ Collaboration is mutual
 - Teaching can support you, but your input helps to support us.
 - Research designed to support you in areas where you have a gap – but we learn from it too.
- ▶ There are costs, but it can be cost effective



Thank you for listening

