In the latest league tables, Bath is rated ninth best university for students in the UK. In this issue, *Insider* takes an alternative perspective and talks to nine members of staff about why they rate the University highly.
NINE reasons why the University of Bath is good for staff as well as students

This summer, the University was rated as the ninth best university in the UK in both The Times and The Guardian’s annual university guides. The University’s ranking was up from 13th place in both guides, and The Times places the University “firmly... among the country’s educational elite”.

In this issue we take an insider’s look at the University and talk to nine members of staff who each have their own reasons for thinking that Bath is a good university to work for, as well as to study at.

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3. Social life - The quizmaster
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University publications are voted best in the country

Insider, the University staff magazine, and The Gift of a Lifetime, the new legacy booklet, both scooped top prizes at this year’s national design and print awards.

The new look Insider, winner of the best design category, was launched last year by Sue Fairhurst, Graphic Designer; Claire Hornshaw, Press & Publications Officer; and Nic Delves-Broughton, Photographer. It has a clean, contemporary design which aims to appeal to the cross-section of staff at the University.

The Gift of a Lifetime, a new booklet aimed at those considering leaving a legacy to the University, won the in-house ‘design on a recycled paper’ award (sponsored by the Waste & Resources Action Programme). It was designed by Sue Fairhurst and written by Rob Grimes, Development Officer.

The winning publications were announced at the annual University Print Managers Conference, which celebrates excellence in design and printing at universities and colleges in the UK. The winners were judged on a series of criteria, including: consideration of target audience, overall impression and photography.
The researcher

Since opening its doors forty years ago, Bath has been a research intensive university. It has established an international reputation for expertise in many areas and continues to invest heavily in its facilities to enable this reputation to be built upon.

In 2005, a new £2.87 million building was opened that secured Bath’s position at the forefront of international photonics research. The facilities have enabled Professor Jonathan Knight and his colleagues in the Department of Physics to lead the way in the development of novel optical fibres and devices.

“For me, 3 West North is testament to the University’s commitment to investing in research. Our world-class photonics research would not be sustainable without these state-of-the-art facilities.

The University made a long-term investment in photonics but it hasn’t had to wait long to see us become established as leaders in our field. There are no equipment limitations on what we can achieve here. That’s a pretty exciting and privileged position to be in.

All the equipment was funded by awards; the University and the Higher Education Funding Council for England met all the building and infrastructure costs.

“There are no equipment limitations on what we can achieve here.”

Optical fibres are the backbone of modern telecommunications systems. Every time you make a long-distance phone call or log on to the internet you are using optical fibres.

Our long-term objective is to have complete control over light – to make it do exactly what we want! We work with fibres that are 1/10th of a millimetre in diameter and kilometres in length, each containing hundreds of holes just a thousandth of a millimetre across.

We have links with about 50 universities, institutions and companies worldwide, from Bristol University and Imperial College to the Universities of Auckland and Sydney.

We are able to provide a fantastic environment for a PhD student. As well as some of the best facilities in the UK, there is the reputation of the University as a whole and the attractions of the city.

My colleagues at Bath are the best I have ever worked with. It’s an enthusiastic and focussed team, but very informal and friendly.”

For more information about the Centre for Photonics and Photonic Materials see www.bath.ac.uk/physics/groups/cppm/index.php
The long-term worker

Staff development and flexible working conditions are a fundamental element of working at the University. Training opportunities enable staff to move roles within their department and beyond. As the University has grown so have these opportunities.

Judith Walker, Student Money Advisor, joined the staff in 1963 at the then Bristol College of Science & Technology; she retires in July having worked at the University ever since. Over the years she has worked in various departments, gained a series of professional qualifications, and raised a family.

“Truly flexible’ – that’s how I’d describe working at the University; there can’t be many employers that could have offered me roles over the years requiring anything from 4-40 hours per week.

At 17, I was interviewed for my first job by Dr George Moore, the University’s first Vice-Chancellor. Since then I’ve had a huge range of roles at the University, from records clerk to PA and archivist, but my current position, as Student Money Advisor, has pulled all my experiences together.

When I came back to work in 1978 I brought my daughter with me. A group of interested staff, along with the Students’ Union had been allowed to set up a nursery.

A Student Money Advisor I value the fact that we’re small enough at Bath to get to know and understand the individual students who need our help. It’s not just a case of dishing out loans and grants, these students need emotional support and advice too.

So much of what I have achieved has been due to the support and flexibility of my managers and the University. I will always follow with interest the continuing development and successes of the University and speak with genuine pride of having worked here. Indeed, on reflection when I wrote a history of the University for the Silver Jubilee, I realise that in a way I was writing my own history too.”

For information about staff development opportunities at the University see www.bath.ac.uk/staff-development/
The former student

Most departments have a member of staff who first came to the University as a student. Not only does this reflect well on the student experience but also on the University as an employer.

Dr Geraint Owen, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, studied for a degree in Manufacturing Systems at Bath between 1986 and 1990. On completing his PhD he was offered a teaching fellowship and became a lecturer in 2001.

“Out of my 1986 class of 30 students, two of us have stayed on as members of staff in the department, and I know there are others from my year working in other departments around campus.

Being a student here has given me an invaluable insight into the lives of the people I’m teaching. It helps me understand the bigger picture of life beyond the department.

Over recent years, the department has gained an excellent reputation. These days students turn down a place a Cambridge to study here.

There are very few empire-builders in this department. All the academic and technical staff work for the good of the department rather than the good of the individual.

I fell into a career in academia. I travelled after graduating and while I was away I called Tony Mileham, who had just joined and is now Head of Department; he told me he’d put me down for a PhD, and it went from there.

The best thing about my job is that I get to teach the next generation of engineers. It’s the practical stuff that I love rather than the theory.

Most people at Bath would know me as ‘Speed’ because of a passion for racing old cars. I rebuild cars now. Once I’ve finished restoring my Gran Prix Bugatti, I’ll be racing it competitively.

The department was involved in the design of the Clever Car, which received a huge amount of national and international press. I know that no one who reads it will remember who I am but it helps build the reputation of Bath as being a high-quality technical university.

It feels as if I’ve always been here. It wasn’t a sudden transition from poacher to gamekeeper, I just gradually started spending less time in the student bar.”
The City of Bath, one of Europe’s favourite city break destinations, is a huge draw for staff and students alike.

When Giles Peters, Room Bookings Officer, moved to Bath he became fascinated by the city’s history and in 1980 he became the youngest ever member of the Mayor’s Corps of Honorary Guides, a free guiding service unique to Bath.

“My father was in the army so we travelled around a lot. Exploring the history of a city has always been a way to help me settle down and feel at home.

I’m just a professional tourist really. I’ve been guiding since 1980 but I’m still learning about Bath’s history; the more I learn, the more enjoyment I get from living and working here.

I came across a flasher on one tour. It was hard to keep the attention of the group after that. Usually it’s late-night shopping opportunities in Jolly’s department store that provide the distraction.

Ralph Allen - for me, he’s the city’s most important figure. I don’t think he gets the recognition he deserves for his feats of engineering during the building of Bath. How many people know about his wooden railway?

I love the City’s compactness. We have a huge amount of history in a really small city.

One of my most memorable tours was back in 1981. As we went round someone pointed out smoke coming from one of the hills. When I got home I got a call saying the South Building had just burnt to the ground.

Town and gown, that’s how I describe my life in Bath. Working at the University allows me to see another side to city life, especially through all the pomp and ceremony of graduation. It feels like being a part of the city’s living history.

One of my favourite places in Bath is the Blind Garden in Henrietta Park. The flowers smell amazing. Another is the perfect Georgian Lansdown Crescent.

The Mayor’s Honorary Guides was officially founded in 1934. The idea came from Alderman Cotterall, mayor in 1930, who used to like guiding his friends around the city.”

The Mayor’s Tours run year round and are free of charge. For more information see www.thecityofbath.co.uk or contact The Mayor’s Office between 1-5pm Monday-Wednesday on tel 01225 477411, or email mayor’s-parlour@bathnes.gov.uk
The buildings on the Claverton campus are not its best feature; the grounds, however, with striking views over Bath and its valleys are enjoyed by staff and students alike.

In May, Sophie Hughes, Administrator at Bath Assessment Centre, launched a lunchtime Women’s Walking Group along with Naomi Wilkinson and Marlene Bertrand from the Equalities and Diversity Unit. The group organises walks around the campus and local area.

“If we were an inner-city campus this would never work, but the grounds are perfect for lunchtime walks. Once you’re off the Parade it feels really green and the views can be stunning.

Once a week we go off campus. Finding new routes is never a problem as the local area is so varied, from Rainbow Woods and Sham Castle to the quarry caves and the canal.

The inspiration to set up the walks here came from a comment made at a Women’s Lunchtime Seminar on ways to ‘spring clean your life’.

Finding new routes is never a problem as the local area is so varied

Before I worked here I did a degree in Nutrition, Exercise & Health. As part of my dissertation I designed a ‘health walk’ to help improve physical, mental and emotional health.

‘Refreshed and revitalised’ is the way staff describe how they’ve felt after coming on a walk. It’s a social event too - we’ve had walkers from all over the University, not just staff but postgraduate students too.

As well as improving your mood, a thirty minute walk will help strengthen your heart, lower blood pressure and the risk of diabetes and help maintain or lose weight.”

The Women’s Walking Group meets in UBSA from 12.20pm for a prompt start at 12.30pm on Monday and Friday. The Monday walk takes 45 minutes and explores the local area, the Friday walk is 30 minutes and usually stays on campus. For more information please contact Naomi Wilkinson on n.w.wilkinson@bath.ac.uk

Sophie Hughes, Administrator at Bath Assessment Centre, has launched a Women’s Walking Group on campus.
Bingo, bowling, the bar...UBSA, the University of Bath Staff Association, is home to many of the University’s staff social activities and as such plays an important role in the life of the campus.

Paul Maggs, Health & Safety Adviser in the Safety, Health & Environment Unit, is also UBSA’s resident quizmaster. Since 2000, he has compiled and compered quizzes that challenge teams from all corners of the campus.

“UBSA used to be just a wooden hut and the committee would be dominated by individual departments until there was a coup and someone else took over. Now we have a wonderful building and a committee drawn from all over the University.

I’ve made useful contacts through social events at UBSA, often people that I wouldn’t normally come across during my working day turn out to be useful people to know.

Often the teams are made up of people from different departments. It’s excellent to see people mixing informally – it promotes good communication across the University.

I never go to pub quizzes but I watch ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire?’, only for research purposes though! I like to have a go at University Challenge too. It takes about an hour to write 75 per cent of a quiz, but the last 25 can take forever – that’s the bit you try to make really original.

I find general knowledge quizzes work best. I have included questions on University topics but that gives some people an advantage. Keeping questions as general as possible is the most effective leveller.

The prizes are great. UBSA is very good at spending its profits on what matters to the people that use it.”

UBSA quizzes are open to all members. The next quiz is to be held in UBSA on Thursday 21 September. For more details please contact Paul by email at c.p.maggs@bath.ac.uk or call ext 6491.

It only costs £5 per year to join UBSA and all staff are eligible. For details about membership, please contact Membership Secretary, Sally Ford, on ext 6751 or email s.j.a.ford@bath.ac.uk
The archaeologist

Part-time classes have been run by the Division for Lifelong Learning in Bath since 1994, and at Oakfield since the campus opened in 2000. Aimed at staff, students and local residents, the programmes provide opportunities for personal and career development.

Carole Harrin, receptionist at the Swindon Innovation Centre, completed her first archaeology course in 2003 before she began working at the University. She has attended them ever since.

“I’ve definitely become an archaeology addict. The more I learn on the courses, the more I want to learn.

When I finished my professional qualifications I swore I’d never study again but most of the archaeology courses I’ve done have been fun and relaxed – it hasn’t felt like learning.

Wilts is one of the densest areas of archaeological sites in the county. It has been heavily settled through the ages and then the Ministry of Defence bought up huge swathes of land, which protected it from development.

If you kick a molehill in an area of archaeological interest you might well make a find – the moles do the digging for you.

I knew I must be hooked when I volunteered to go on a fieldtrip to Stonehenge in January. It was unbelievably cold standing there looking at stones but you when you visit a site you learn so much that is hard to explain in the classroom.

I’ll keep on doing courses for as long as they’re running. I’m not doing it for credits, just purely for recreation. The people who do the archaeology courses have become friends now.

One of the great things about archaeology is that it makes you look at modern sites as the archaeology of the future. There’s a 1950’s Cold War bunker over at Avebury that is as much an archaeological site as the 3,000 year-old Bronze Age barrow it sits next to. They’re both sites where man has had an impact on the landscape.

I don’t think I would have applied for this job if I hadn’t known about the campus through the courses; funny how one thing leads to another.”

The Division for Lifelong Learning also runs a series of day and weekend schools, and free public lectures. For more details about what’s on offer at the Claverton and Oakfield campuses see www.bath.ac.uk/lifelong-learning/ or call the Division of Lifelong Learning on ext 3422.

Carole Harrin, receptionist at the Swindon Innovation Centre, has studied archaeology at Oakfield since 2003.
ICIA runs a programme of classes, workshops and talks, as well as professional performances and exhibitions, which are open to staff, students and the general public. All ICIA activities are offered to staff at a concessionary rate.

Katie Rickard, Teaching Fellow in the Department of European Studies & Modern Languages, has been attending classes on campus since 2002.

“I’ve always had creative hobbies so having ICIA classes on campus has been brilliant. I’ve been able to try my hand at lots of new things.

I started doing ceramics when I was doing my postgraduate degree, until then I didn’t realise how much was available on campus. I wish I’d taken more advantage of it while I was an undergraduate.

The thing I really like about ceramics is that there seems to be an infinite amount of skills to learn. It doesn’t stop with throwing a pot, the next stage is to learn the different ways you can shape it.

Out of all the things I’ve made my favourite so far is a duck, despite the fact that its appearance is a bit of a running joke in my family! I also made some jewellery last year that I sold at a Christmas market – that was really satisfying.

The course is fantastic value for money, plus we get an Arts Barn Card. The card allows students to use the facilities outside of class time, so I’ve been able to practice throwing on the wheel, leave work for firing, and come back and work on specific pieces when I’d run out of time in class.

I’ve been on a Raku weekend course – it’s a great way to get a taste of something and see if you want to take it further. I’ve also learnt flat glass-making on campus and now I have all the equipment at home.

I love teaching. Sometimes it can get a bit stressful but ceramics is a great way to be able to relax and switch off.”

Katie’s ceramics class is held 2-5pm on Wednesday in Arts Barn Studio 2. ICIA also offers a range of dance and music classes. For more information on all ICIA courses see http://www.bath.ac.uk/icia/ or phone ext 6777.
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RECREATIONAL SPORTS

The yogi

Being able to use the same sports facilities as Olympic athletes is an unusual perk of the job. All the facilities at the Sports Training Village, some of the best in the UK, are open to staff at a discounted price. There are also independent classes around campus for staff and students.

In January, Alastair King, Reader in the Department of Mathematics, joined an Iyengar yoga class on campus. The class is run by Jon Hunt, Research & Innovation Manager within Research & Innovation Services.

“Although I’ve been doing yoga for a few years now, I still feel like a beginner. Iyengar is one of the more strenuous forms of Hatha yoga.

I wanted to take up an informal type of exercise and colleagues recommended Jon’s yoga class on campus. He caters for all levels and it’s not taken too seriously.

I find the class the perfect cure for my posture after being hunched over my desk all day. Being able to just walk across campus to the class makes it very convenient.

I find that yoga squeezes out the stress. It makes me feel more supple, stronger and more relaxed. I certainly sleep better when I’ve done a class.”

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Iyengar yoga has an interesting past - Mr Iyengar, from India, was one of the first to bring yoga to the West in the 1940s; the origins lie in the 5,000 year-old Hatha yoga. He is still going strong and manages to stand on his head for 30 minutes a day!

This method of Hatha yoga is particularly good for strengthening and toning the legs, arms and back, and preventing back and joint problems in the future.

When I started yoga 10 years ago it still had a reputation of being exercise for girls, now Premiership footballers and, recently, Bath Rugby Club have learnt Iyengar yoga to improve their game.”

Jon’s classes run at 6pm every Wednesday. For more details email Jon at jh298@bath.ac.uk

Alastair King (right), Reader in the Department of Mathematics, is taught Iyengar yoga by John Hunt, Research & Innovation Manager.
NINE HIGHLIGHTS FROM A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF ICIA...

1. Leading Canadian artist Barb Hunt presents first solo UK exhibition Transience, organised in conjunction with the Centre for Death and Society. (September 05)

2. Krische/Wright Company presents Odyssey, a new dance piece by award-winning dancers Jerwood. Commissioned by ICIA and Swindon Dance. (October 05)

3. A joint project with Bath University Student Theatre & ICIA, Now gravel is under my shoes; now grass was devised with guidance from the new Theatre & Dance Co-ordinator, Tanya Steinhauser, and was presented at the Theatre Royal, Bath. (February 06)

4. Jacqui Dankworth Trio sells out - "One of our finest singers regardless of category," says The Times newspaper. (February 06)

5. Bath University Student Musicals Society presents Sweet Charity, breaking all previous student box office records and scooping many Society Awards. (February 06)

6. Henri Oguinde Dance Company is another sell-out, and the fourth in a series of ICIA and Swindon Dance co-commissions. "No other choreographer working in Britain today can provide an evening of such fertile musical and visual variety," says Daily Telegraph newspaper. (February 06)

7. ICIA & SU Arts Societies Fundraising Gala - the Students’ Union Arts Societies work together to produce a showcase from recent performances in support of ICIA’s campaign to redevelop the Arts Complex. (March 06)

8. ICIA Symposium - leading cultural and visual arts commentators reflect on the impact of trauma in art. Presented in association with the University’s Centre for Death & Society. (May 06)

9. Sue Lee & Kosta Andrea Theatre Company presents the world premiere of Feeling Good, an ICIA and Theatreworks co-commission. (June 06)