

The Wolfson Research Exchange The University of Warwick Library



Vision and purpose

The Research Exchange is an imaginative and technology-rich facility, part-funded by the Wolfson Foundation under its CURL/RLUK Libraries Programme, where research staff and students can work and meet with colleagues across campus to discuss and explore their research.

The space arose from the library's desire to meet the changing needs of academic researchers, both in terms of physical space and support. Since its opening at the beginning of the 2008/09 academic year the Research Exchange has been supporting the University's research strategy by providing an exciting and innovative focal point for this community thus improving the researcher experience and supporting the enhancement of research at the University of Warwick and beyond.



The space

The Research Exchange provides a number of environments to meet different needs: open-plan collaborative study spaces, quieter and more formal study accommodation, social and break-out areas, and three bookable seminar rooms for research-focused workshops, conferences and other events. The seminar rooms are also highly configurable, with retractable walls allowing for larger groups and even conferences of up to 90 participants.



Seminar rooms in open configuration



Seminar rooms in closed configuration



Events and activities

The facility is heavily used to stage a wide range of activities some examples of which are outlined below. Many events are organised by research students themselves thus supporting knowledge transfer to other researchers. The activities also provide a means of introducing new researchers into the wider research community from the very beginning of their careers at Warwick.



- Academic conferences
- Reading groups
- Poster presentations
- Drop-ins / discussions
- Skills training workshops
- Video-conferencing
- Inductions
- Research meetings

“The Research Exchange is somewhere I can confidently send researchers and academics to for use as a resource, a place to meet, or do work outside their usual environment.”

Jeremy Ireland, Postgraduate Administrator, Department of Chemistry

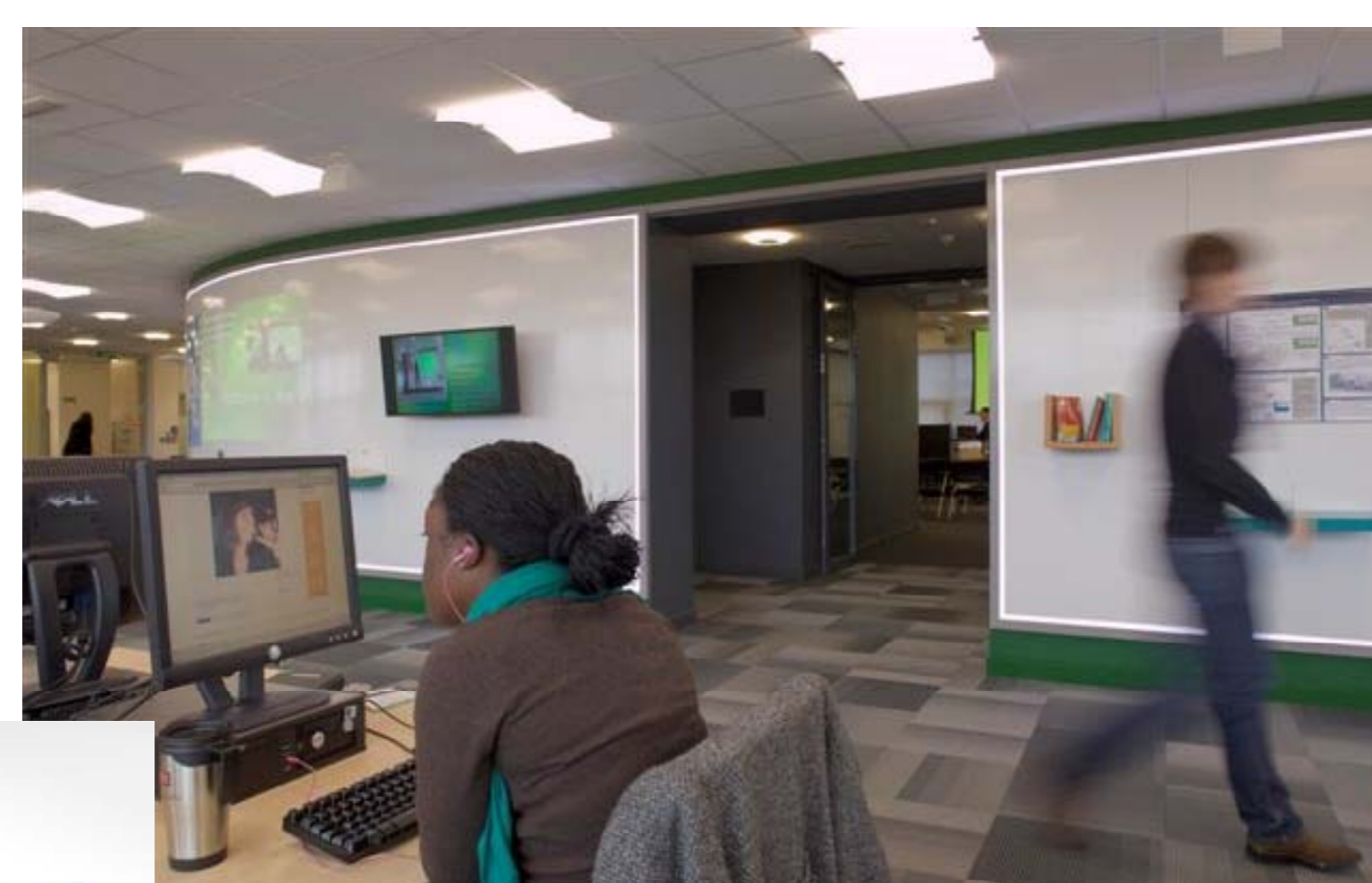
“The facilities in the Research Exchange are a real asset, superb for developing presentation skills and hosting internal and external events.”

Tracy Horton, Postgraduate and Research Co-ordinator, Department of History

Support and services

The facility provides a single, central location where multiple sources of expert advice are made available. The Library works in partnership with many departments including those listed below, to offer an integrated service involving drop-in and other support sessions relating to research as well as personal skills development.

- Graduate school
- Academic faculties
- Research student skills programme
- Learning and development centre
- Careers service
- Research support services



We also have a team of advisers based within the facility whose strong research-backgrounds mean that we can offer peer guidance along with technical and AV support for the wealth of multimedia technologies that we host.



The resources

The physical space of the Research Exchange is complemented by a range of resources and multimedia equipment provided to meet our users' varied needs. The informal work areas contain PC workstations, reading areas, communal sofa areas as well as a kitchen with vending facilities. The facility is wireless-enabled throughout and to support researchers in sharing their ideas there is a unique multimedia 'creative wall' allowing remote data projection from various points throughout the facility (including the seminar rooms) to LCD and projector screens. This enables anyone in the space to work collaboratively and to easily involve others in discussions.

Each seminar room also hosts a range of AV and interactive presentation equipment including document visualisers, SMARTBoards and video-conferencing, thus catering for a wide range of events and giving researchers the opportunity to use different media.

The community

In focus groups prior to the Research Exchange's conception, many researchers stated that while their research into new and novel areas brings them independence, the nature of the work can often be isolating. Consequently, academic staff and research students alike are increasingly requesting social and academic environments that facilitate the research process, but also recognise the benefits of interaction, collaboration and targeted support. They expressed a clear desire for a dedicated space to help foster a community of research scholars.



“The PhD life can be a lonely life and you can feel a little isolated, the Wolfson Research Exchange is a place I want to spend time in, a really useful space to be and to work with other people around me.”

Freddy James, PhD candidate, Institute of Education

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