

NEWS RELEASE

University to sponsor Deaffest

The University of Wolverhampton will be the main sponsor of Deaffest 2015, the UK's leading Deaf-led film and arts festival.

Deaffest will take place in Wolverhampton from 14 to 17 May 2015 and is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

The University is a long-standing supporter of the event, which will take place at the Light House in the city.

Deaffest is organised by Zebra Access, the charitable arm of specialist Sign Language Interpreting services and Media company Zebra Uno that is based at the University of Wolverhampton Science Park.

Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Geoff Layer, said: "Deaffest is a dynamic and vibrant festival, which celebrates the talents and achievements of deaf filmmakers and artists from around the world. Our staff and students have supported and indeed contributed to the growing success of Deaffest for many years, so we are delighted to show our enthusiasm and support for this excellent event."

Nikki Stratton and Marilyn Willrich, Directors from Zebra Access and Zebra Uno, said: "It is indeed an absolute privilege to have the continuing support from the University of Wolverhampton. The University have stood by us from day one and we cannot underestimate how sincerely grateful we are. Deaffest, the UK's only Deaf-led Film and Arts Festival, has been a festival that has gone from strength to strength and we are incredibly proud of what we have been able to achieve. The support from the University of Wolverhampton will ensure that our 10th year anniversary will certainly be a festival to remember."

Deaffest, the Deaf Film and Television Festival, was launched in 2006 by Zebra Uno, Light House and the University of Wolverhampton. It was launched with a purpose to provide deaf filmmakers with an opportunity to be recognised for their talents, to show their work and be supported in achieving their aspirations.

This year's Deaffest will feature a Film Awards Gala with live entertainment, a stalls fair, arts and films seminars for all ages and film screenings from across the globe.

As part of the University sponsorship, there will be opportunities for student volunteers to work as interpreters at the event.

The University has almost 60 deaf and hearing impaired students, who are supported in their studies by an expert team of trained interpreters from the Student Enabling Centre.

The University offers BA (Hons) degree courses in Interpreting (British Sign Language/English) and Deaf Studies, and is one of only three in the country to do this. There are currently around 160 students on the seven courses at Wolverhampton.

The BA (Hons) Interpreting: British Sign Language/English degree recently received the highest possible level of accreditation from the [National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People \(NRCPD\)](#). It is the first BA route in the UK to achieve this endorsement.

Graduates from the Interpreting and Deaf Studies courses go on to enjoy a range of employment opportunities, including working at the Foreign Office, teaching, speech therapy and counselling and have an employability rate of almost 100%.

The department also runs a unique annual seminar series for Sign Language interpreting students and alumni of the interpreting programme, the International Research Interpreting Seminars (IRIS).

Zebra Access celebrated winning the Outstanding Organisation Achievement award at the 2014 Signature Annual Awards. The charity scooped the award in recognition its work to ensure that deaf people enjoy equal participation and access to further education and employment without any communication barriers.

For more information about Deaffest, visit: www.deaffest.co.uk

For more information about Deaf Studies and Interpreting courses at the University of Wolverhampton, visit: www.wlv.ac.uk

ENDS

Picture: (l-r) Marilyn Willrich, Director, from Zebra Access, Nikki Stratton, Director, from Zebra Access and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Jackie Dunne from the University of Wolverhampton.

For more information please contact Vickie Warren in the Media Relations Office on 01902 322736.

Date Issued: Tuesday, 17 February 2015

Notes to editors

About the University of Wolverhampton

- Based at campuses in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Telford and education centres in Stafford, Burton and Birmingham City Centre, the University has 23,000 students and 2,400 staff. In addition, the University of Wolverhampton Science Park is home to tenant businesses and supports the development of innovative companies
- The University welcomes students from around the world and has regional offices in China, Malaysia, India, Oman, Nigeria and Cyprus. It has a branch campus in Mauritius and courses are also delivered with global partners in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Russia, France and Cyprus

- It is investing £50 million over the next two years to redevelop its campuses in Wolverhampton city centre. This includes a new £22 million Science facility and a new £18 million University of Wolverhampton Business School building.
- The institution's excellent teaching and learning provision, which spans sciences, creative and performing arts, education, business and management, health and wellbeing, engineering and technology, law and social sciences, ensures 94% of graduates find employment
- Of the 13 subject areas entered in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, all had elements graded at the highest level as being world class. The University also entered more staff and more subject areas for assessment than previously.

Further information about International Research Interpreting Seminars (IRIS)

A unique Faculty funded annual seminar series for Sign Language interpreting students & Alumni of the interpreting programme.

Established in 2010, IRIS reflects the growing international trend of research, literature and publication within the sign language interpreting domain and fosters and promotes experienced and emerging talent including Alumni of the Interpreting programme.

Its aims are to:

- Build upon the academic expertise within the subject and cognate areas within and outside the University
- Disseminate innovative research and practice
- Provide a bridge between interpreters, students, academic staff, international and national organisations
- Provide Continuing Professional Development opportunities for professional interpreters

Past events include topics on:

International Sign – what it is, what it is not

Access to Work Interpreting: 'It's not all about work'- exploring the interpreter's role in the workplace,

DeafBlind Interpreting: A BSL interpreter's perspective,

Interpreting within the Deaf Muslim Community,

Vicarious Trauma – Theory to Practice: identification and management strategies for sign language interpreters,

Medical Interpreting – Challenges, Complexities, Consequences,

Current Research Trends in Applied Linguistics and Translation,

For further information please see: <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-institutes-and-centres/casr---centre-for-applied-social-research/casr-research-in-deaf-studies-and-interpreting/>