

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, POSSIBLE PRESENTS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND REFLECTION

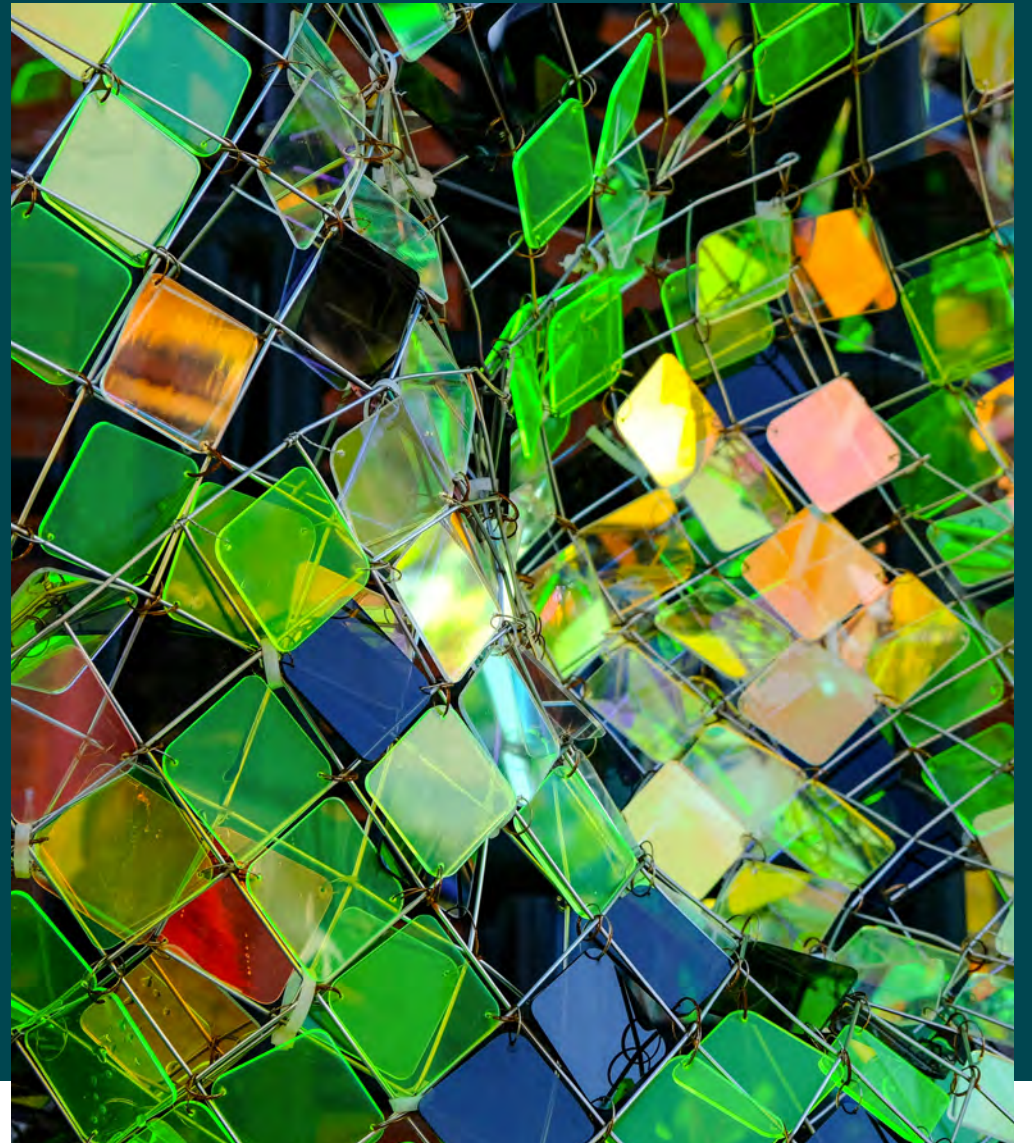
LIBERAL ARTS UNDERGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM 20th May 2025

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of University of Bristol Liberal Arts, we warmly invite students and staff on any Liberal Arts programme (UK or international) to a symposium showcasing original undergraduate research and student-led reflection on liberal education.

In a densely connected world, Liberal Artists understand the value of looking beyond disciplinary 'blind spots' to integrate knowledge and perspectives to create new insights. This symposium will showcase what interdisciplinary research can do and reflect on possible future directions for Liberal Arts and interdisciplinary education.

The broad theme of the symposium is 'alternative futures, possible presents'. As we reflect on a decade of Bristol Liberal Arts, we ask: what are the futures that interdisciplinary research and education make possible? Many Liberal Arts programmes ask students to tackle the 'big questions' or complex problems facing the world today, pointing to alternative futures on both global and local levels.

Other Liberal Artists are interested in the historical, philosophical, theoretical, ethical or political ideas underpinning the way we think about concepts like the future, anticipation or hope, or the way that futurity is engaged with in art, music, literature, film or architecture. Liberal Artists often take the 'long view' to explore how the past exerts influence on the future, or how future-thinking reshapes our understanding of the past.



You may present on research undertaken for an assessment or produce something new. If your work doesn't fit the 'alternative futures, possible presents' theme, don't worry! We are most interested in passionate research and also welcome 'open' proposals on any topic encountered on your interdisciplinary degree. You may also present your reflections on Liberal Arts and interdisciplinary education.

We want to build connections between Liberal Artists at different universities, celebrate the rich range of work undergraduates do, and generate new thinking about the Liberal Arts. As such, we welcome non-traditional approaches as well as proposals for individual or group presentations.

Your contribution may (but does not need to) connect to one of these themes:

- Interdisciplinarity in a changing world; e.g. public health, medical humanities, technocultural studies, environmental humanities, memory studies, digital humanities, etc.
- Imagining the future; e.g. futurology, utopia, dystopia, dreaming, ideation, alternative speculative imaginaries
- Connections between the past, present and future
- Invention, innovation, new thinking and problem solving
- The uncertain and the unknown
- Hope, anticipation, prediction or agency
- Communication, culture and politics
- Societies, systems, space and place
- Environmental futures and sustainability
- Experience and identity; e.g. crip futures, queer futures, black futures
- Beyond the university; e.g. engaging publics, integrating non-academic knowledge and perspectives, citizenship
- The future of Liberal Arts; what next for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and antidisciplinary education?
- The future of the university; what next for higher education?
- 'Open' proposals on any theme or topic relevant to interdisciplinary research and reflection

We welcome contributions in formats including:

- 10-minute individual presentation. You may use notes or a script if preferred. You are welcome to use slides or handouts, but this is not compulsory.
- 20-minute group presentation. You may use notes or a script if preferred. You are welcome to use slides or handouts, but this is not compulsory.
- Imaginative, creative, performative, screened or otherwise non-traditional ways to share your research and reflections, in time slots of 10, 20 or 40 minutes. Individual or group, including potentially different ways of engaging with research and sparking idea-development, through maybe the body, senses or imagination.
- 20- or 40-minute workshop, focused discussion, roundtable or other activity. Facilitated by an individual or a group. Feel free to use space creatively and involve participants.
- Something we haven't thought of! Use this space to present your research and reflections in whatever way you believe will showcase your ideas most effectively.

We encourage proposals from students at any stage of their degree. Proposals for presentations should be in the form of an abstract which concisely introduces your research. Proposals for an activity, workshop or non-traditional format should outline what it is that you intend to do and why.

Please send proposals of approx. 200 words via Microsoft Form by 1st April 2025.

<https://forms.office.com/e/dPz1j0fq0G>



There is no registration fee for this symposium and refreshments will be provided. Unfortunately, we cannot subsidise transport or accommodation.