UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
CENTRE FOR ONLINE & DISTANCE EDUCATION

Activity Report
2023–2024

Contents

Welcome

The Centre of Online and Distance Education team is delighted to share our activity report for 2023 and 2024 with you. These have been a busy two years for the Centre, and we include selected highlights from our work in this report.

We want to thank all our CODE fellows, who make this work possible, through their dedication and commitment to pursuing excellence in online and distance education. We also thank the teams at the University of London and Federation Members and the wider communities who work with us.

About CODE

The Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE) supports the development, delivery and research of online and distance education.

Our aims are to:

- Enable high-quality online and distance education.

- Share and foster knowledge and practice in effective online, distance, and transnational education.

CODE's community of Fellows work in collaboration to innovate, analyse the latest findings and develop our understanding of effective online, distance, blended and hybrid learning through the following areas:

- Learning design
  Collaborate internationally to design, develop, deliver, and evaluate online and distance learning programmes tailored to diverse learner needs and contexts.

- Capacity building
  Assess requirements and contexts to support developing effective online and distance education strategies.
  Promote professional development through publications, events, training, and international partnerships.

- Research
  Conduct rigorous research to inform innovation, best practices, and quality enhancement in online and distance education.

CODE supports innovation, development and evaluation of practice within the University of London, across the Federated Members, throughout the UK and internationally.

To find out more about CODE, visit: **london.ac.uk/code**

Who we are

There are currently 44 CODE Fellows drawn from across the globe. Our Fellows are thought leaders in online and distance education practice, research, leadership, staff development, learning design and pedagogy. The Centre for Online and Distance Education is led by Dr Linda Amrane-Cooper and supported by a core team of CODE Fellows.

In summer 2023, we were delighted to expand the CODE Fellowship from 40 to 44 Fellows, attracting further leaders in the field to join the Centre. In January 2024, Dr Ashley Cox became the Associate Director of CODE, and in August 2024, Cristina Ticchi joined us as the CODE Centre Manager.

The Fellowship brings together an inclusive representation of thought leaders in research, academic practice and leadership in online and distance education. The Fellows include diverse roles: educators, course leaders, senior managers, researchers, educational technologists, learning designers and policy advisors. CODE and its Fellows are ensuring that our commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion is evident in our strategic activities, educational innovations and research.

Affiliation of the CODE Fellows

Number of Fellows	**44**
Fellows in Member Institutions (including BLE)	**18**
Fellows in University of London	**4**
List of Member Institutions with one or more Fellows	
Birkbeck, University of London	1
Bloomsbury Learning Environment	1
City St George's, University of London	2
King's College London	3
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	1
Queen Mary, University of London	2
Royal Veterinary College, University of London	2
UCL	6
UK based Fellows	**41**
Non-UK based Fellows	**3**
Non-Member Institutions	
Cambridge Education Group	1
Independent consultancy companies	4
Maastricht University (Netherlands)	1
Open University (UK)	2
Office For Students	1
Singapore Institute of Management, Singapore	1
University of Leeds, UK	2
University of New England, Australia	1
University of Leicester	1
Independent consultants and Emeritus Professors	**10**

Further details of our Fellows is provided in Appendix 1.
To find out more about our Fellows, visit: **bit.ly/fellows-code**
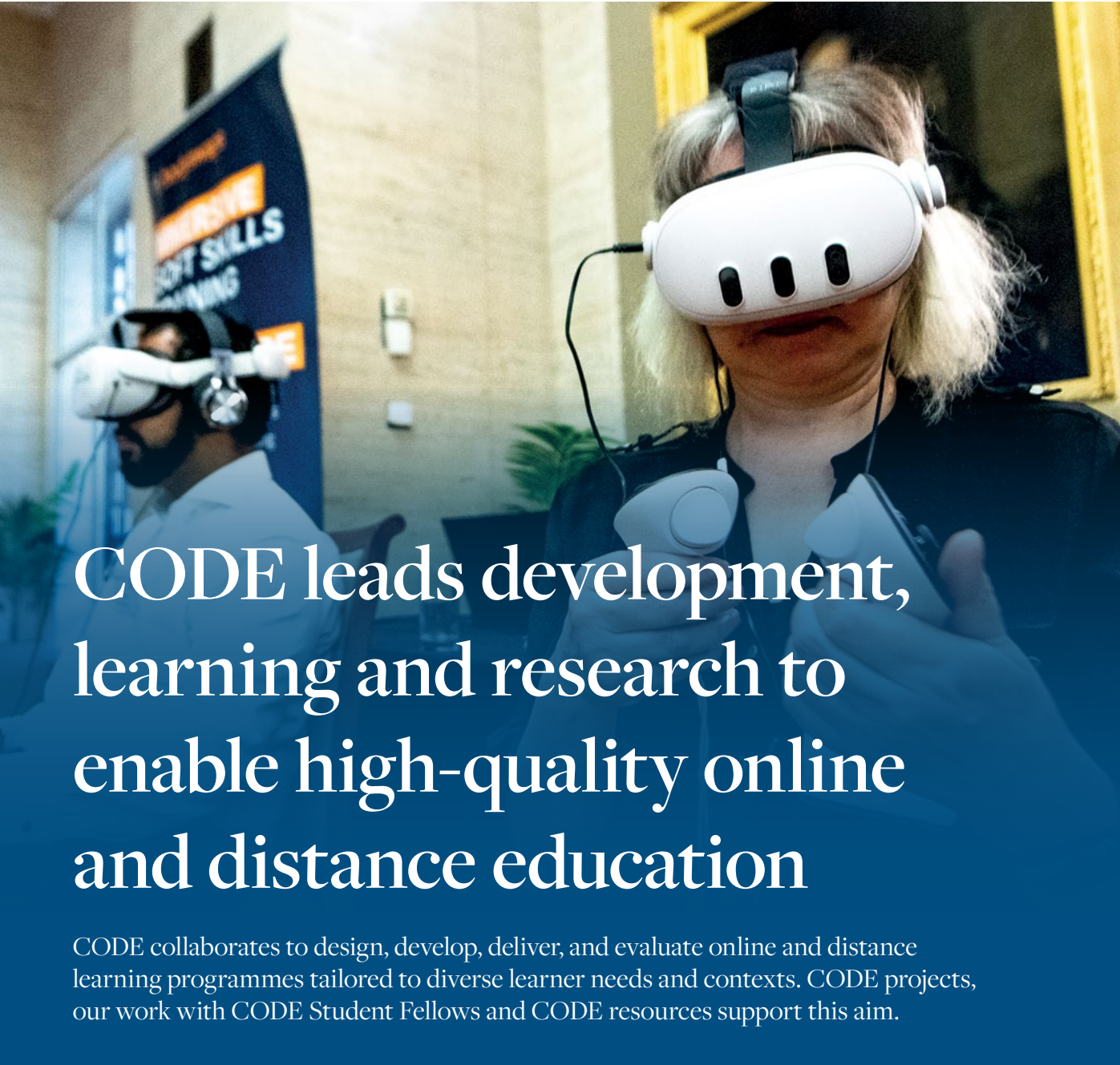
CODE leads development, learning and research to enable high-quality online and distance education

CODE collaborates to design, develop, deliver, and evaluate online and distance learning programmes tailored to diverse learner needs and contexts. CODE projects, our work with CODE Student Fellows and CODE resources support this aim.

Current CODE Projects 2023–2024

CODE Projects support the University of London, the Federation members and the wider Online and Distance Education community, by providing expertise and capacity to enhance, explore, research and evaluate innovation.

As in previous years, a call for project proposals went out to a wide range of stakeholders, projects were shortlisted, and CODE Fellows are now working on the following projects, completing no later than Summer 2025. Outputs from projects include guides, evaluation reports, research papers, policy, student facing resources and short courses.

Further details, including reports and resources from our current and past projects can be viewed here: bit.ly/code-projects

Supporting enhancements in learning, teaching and assessment

- Developing the integration of generative AI into learning, teaching and assessment strategies

- How to leverage AI for formative assessment: Developing engaging MCQs to foster learning and engagement.

- Development of the University of London Worldwide Online and Distance Learning (ODL) Decolonizing the Curriculum (DtC) Toolkit

Disciplinary innovation

- What is the most effective way to teach maths to online undergraduate students

- Guidance to learning designers on the best way to provide accessible content for computer science content/teaching on the online BSc in Computer Science.

- Crisis Game Simulation: Diplomatic Crisis

Evaluation of Innovation

- Undergraduate Laws learning and teaching pilot evaluation

- Evaluation of peer–reviewed assignments

- Studiosity pilot evaluation

- Longitudinal Evaluation of Online Time Assessment Summer 2024

- Evaluation of AI resources for distance learning students

- Evaluating CODE's decolonisation initiatives on the PGC International Sports Management Programme.

Supporting student success

- Engendering a sense of community in online learning and teaching and for international students

- Improving the quality of online education through reflective practice.

Horizon scanning

- Cultural Turns in Digital Education

- Evaluating the impact of the range of AI projects and capacity–building innovations

Externally funded Projects

- Evaluation of the QAA–funded Inclusive Employability Toolkit

- Designing for worldwide inclusive cultures, AdvanceHE–funded

CODE Student Research Fellow Internships

The CODE Student Fellows programme provides University of London distance learning students the opportunity to gain transferable skills through collaboration with CODE Fellows on projects funded by the Centre.

These topics range from educational research projects, development of student support material and data gathering activities. Student Research Fellows support CODE fellows whilst developing essential research skills, such as literature reviews and interview skills.

These CODE Student fellowships provide distance learning students with valuable opportunities for paid internships and to work with experienced researchers. Selection to become a CODE Student Fellow is via a competitive process. This programme has supported 20 Students (UG and PG), from 15 countries, in the 2023 session and 30 students, from 19 countries, in the 2024 session.

The Staff and Educational Development Association Award

We were delighted that the CODE Student Fellows initiative and two of our Student Fellows were recognized through a national award.

Our Student Fellows were awarded the Staff and Educational Development Association/JISC Partnership Impact Award (**bit.ly/code-student-fellows**)) for their research on online examinations.

Alexander Wade from the UK and Ndume Eliya Nduelib from the Democratic Republic of Congo joined CODE to assist in a longitudinal study assessing the impact and student experience of online exams post-COVID.

Under the guidance of CODE Fellows Stylianos Hatzipanagos and Alan Tait, Alexander (BSc International Development, final year) and Eliya (MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies, graduate) conducted remote interviews with peers from nine different countries. The students collaborated and compiled their findings into a detailed report.

The study indicated strong support for continuing online assessments, with respondents agreeing that the value of their qualifications remained unaffected by digitization.

CODE Resources

CODE supports online education practice by co-developing resources for universities and students.

Inclusive Employability Toolkit

In April 2024, the University of London Careers Group, CODE, and colleagues from Kings College and City Universities launched the Inclusive Employability Toolkit. The Toolkit – funded by a QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project grant – brings together bespoke and specially created resources for all educators to develop student employability inclusively through curriculum, drawing on sector-leading expertise and extensive professional practice.

Structured across three phases – Prepare, Deliver, Evaluate – the Toolkit explores a student's employability development journey and helps students and educators evaluate barriers to employability development.

Educators can visit the Toolkit to:

- Explore ways in which they can understand and evaluate the context for inclusive employability development.

- Develop effective collaborative partnerships between academic educators and careers and employability educators.

- Work with live briefs, alumni and employers.

Director of Academic Practice in Online and Distance Education Linda Amrane-Cooper said:

"Providing inclusive and effective support for higher education students' employability is a fundamental aspect of our work in universities, so I was delighted to work with colleagues on developing a practical, effective and comprehensive Toolkit. The Toolkit's design ensures that colleagues can design, deliver and evaluate the impact of their work with students online or face to face."
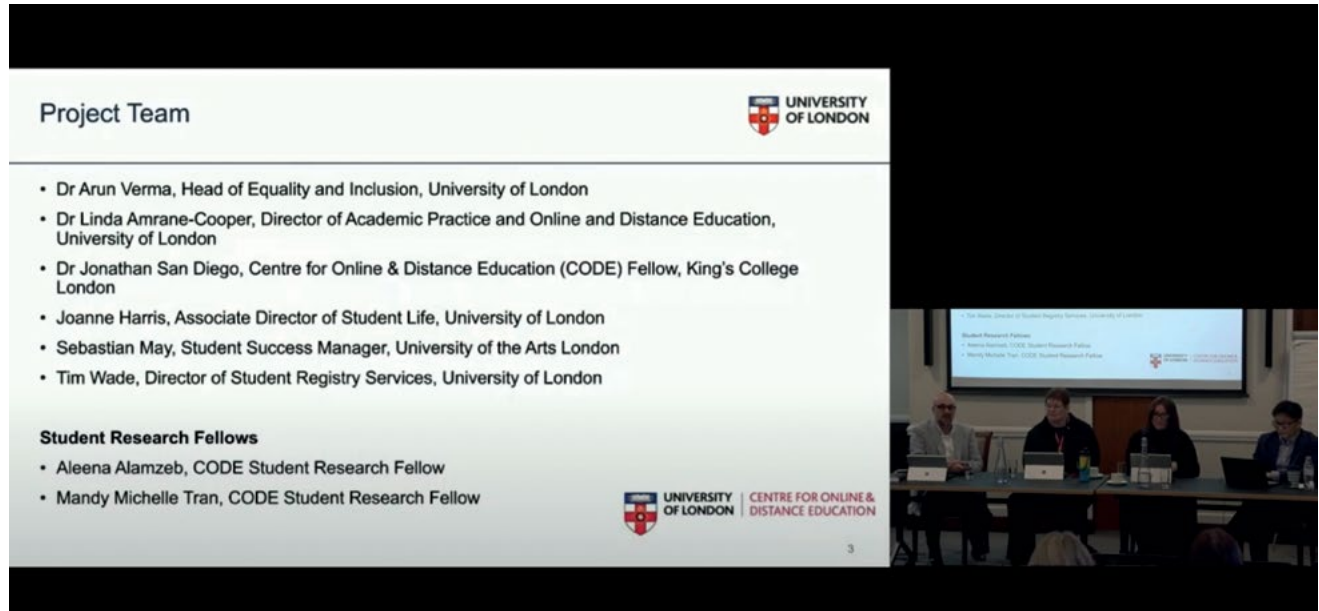
Designing for worldwide inclusive cultures

The University of London's Office for Equality and Inclusion, in collaboration with the Centre for Online & Distance Education (CODE), the University of London Student Life team, and research partners, King's College London and the University of Arts London, launched guidance and a report to support the development of inclusive cultures in international, online and distance education higher education. The project, which included input from two CODE Student Research Fellows, was funded by an AdvanceHE Collaborative Development Fund (bit.ly/advance-he). We held a launch event for the report on 23 October 2024, and a video of the event, along with a blog post, for more information, visit: bit.ly/ww-inclusive-cultures

The research contributed to the design of the University of London Student Life team's new Inclusive Culture Hub, which will launch in January 2025. To find out more about the new hub, visit bit.ly/youtube-ich

Supporting Student Engagement

Helping students to engage with online and distance education can be one of the biggest challenges, which is why the CODE Student Engagement Special Interest Group have developed a range of resources and provided webinars to support educators and students:

PDF: Top Tips for online student engagement bit.ly/top-tips-online

PDF: Top tips for supporting online student critical engagement bit.ly/top-tips-support

Webinar: Top Tips for Student Engagement – recording and blog post available bit.ly/top-tips-webinar

Further Top Tip resources are forthcoming.

Online and Distance Education for a Connected World

Published in March 2023, the CODE book Online and Distance Education for a Connected World Education for a Connected World has received great acclaim. With over 18,000 downloads, from 157 countries, this open educational resource, edited by the University of London's Centre for Online and Distance Education, addresses the practice and theory of online and distance education, building on knowledge and expertise developed in the University over some 150 years. Throughout the book, contributors explore important principles and highlight successful practices, including course design and pedagogy, online assessment, open education, inclusive practice, and enabling student voice. Case studies illustrate prominent issues and approaches. Together, the chapters offer current and future leaders and practitioners a practical, productive, practice- and theory-informed account of the present and likely future state of online and distance higher education worldwide.
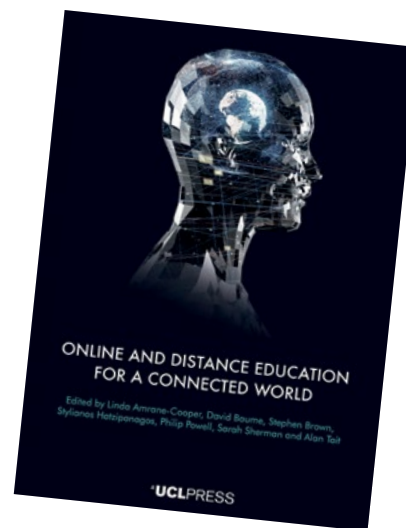
A colleague in Kenya noted:

'CODE book provides the answers for working with my students!'

Another UK colleague noted:

'The book... is helping me design our new online provisions, so that's definitely reach and impact.'

Other Resources

A very wide range of resources, in 12 different categories, are available on our website. CODE resources have been developed to support the development of expertise in the field of distance, online, digital, e-learning and technology supported learning. These resources (**bit.ly/resources-code**) are freely available to stream, download, copy and reuse under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY–NC–SA license.

Developing our website and social media profiles

In 2023 and 2024, with the support of the web team, the CODE website has been extensively redeveloped to help support our communities of practice. The redesigned pages highlight our capacity-building activities, including CODE events and conferences, our training and consultancy activities, and the free, open-source resources we have made available. They also foreground the research support we provide through funding and awards we provide for University of London and Federation members' research projects, through networking and placement opportunities and the research projects carried out by CODE fellows. A detailed report on our social media and web activity is provided in Appendix 2, demonstrating the increased activity both our web pages and our social media channels are experiencing.

CODE celebrates and fosters innovation

CODE celebrates and fosters innovation, scholarship and development of learning and teaching in digital, online and distance education by providing funds for research, and through our annual prizes and awards.

Roger Mills Prize Winners 2023, Francesca Cotier, James Findon and Professor Mary Stiasny OBE.

Teaching and Research Awards

Our funded Teaching and Research Awards (TRAs) support original pedagogic research studies that provide evidence for innovative and effective practice in distance, online, and technology-enhanced learning, teaching, and assessment.

Each year, four awards are open to staff throughout the University of London, the Federation and CODE Fellows through a competitive process, and can be worth up to £5000 each.

The Teaching and Research Awards made in 2023 and 2024 are as follows: supporting students to understand academic integrity with RTC colleagues.

2024 Awards

Project	Federation Member
A digital evaluation of a bespoke online learning programme	Queen Mary University of London
Working Together for Change: Strategic Approaches to Sustainability Education Through Authentic Group-based Assessments	City University of London
Evaluating an innovative approach to supporting teamwork online – co-created spaces in the metaverse	Queen Mary University of London
Pan-African, Southern African-led enhancement of doctoral supervision	UCL, IOE University of London

2023 Awards

Project	Federation Member
Student outcomes, satisfaction and engagement – transforming a traditional medical degree to a blended format	Queen Mary University of London
Understanding AI-driven teaching and learning: Examining In-depth views of students and tutors who took part in an 'AI Tutor' intervention on two UoLW modules	CODE Fellow and University of London
Evaluation of how the use of learning technologies to teach laboratory skills affect student outcomes; retention, progression, and satisfaction, for students on a distance learning programme	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Cyber educational gaming for flipped online education	Royal Holloway University of London

Roger Mills Prize for innovation in learning and teaching

Awarded each year, to a University of London federation programme/course, the prize recognises innovation in digital learning and teaching, pedagogy, and/or assessment.

The Prize committee considers value, impact and transferability in identifying the winning application. The winning team/individual present their work at the CODE Annual Research in Distance Education conference (**bit.ly/ride-annual-conference**)and winning applications are published as a CODE occasional paper.

The Roger Mills Prize for 2023 was awarded to James Findon and Francesca Cotier from Kings College London for a project entitled 'Team Based Learning in Psychology – from online to hybrid approaches'. Chair of the prize committee, Prof Mary Stiasny, OBE, commented that this entry was 'compelling, helpful and well-articulated' with 'practical pedagogical reasoning and results'. Vicky Mills, Roger Mill's daughter presented the prize to the winning team.

Our 2024 winning application was 'Fostering Students' Personal, Career and Professional Development through Delivery of an Online Mentorship Programme', submitted by Etheldreda Mbivnjo and Juliana Yartey Enos on behalf of the teams at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Ghana School of Public Health. The Prize committee noted: 'This is an impactful transnational project that demonstrates effective innovation in online/distance education and supports highly individualised student support through a robust framework for mentoring at a distance. There is clear evidence of impact, and the detail provided in the application supports the transferability of this work.'

Roger Mills Prize Winners 2024 Professor Mary Stiasny OBE, Etheldreda Mbivnjo, Linda Amrane–Cooper, and Juliana Yartey Enos.

CODE Learning Gain Award

The Centre for Online and Distance Education Learning Gain Award is for higher education educators, graduating from the UoL Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (**london.ac.uk/lthe**).

It is awarded by the programme's Board of Examiners to one participant each graduating cohort. Unlike many awards that acknowledge top levels of performance, this prize is awarded to participants who demonstrate the most significant improvement in their performance over the course of their study, recognising that some participants start much further back in the field than others.

2024 Winners

- Rabail Anwer – The Millenium Universal College, Pakistan

- Yasmin Mirza – London School of Science and Technology, UK

2023 Winners

- Rebecca Steenstra, King's College London, UK

- Racquel Miranda Barth, University of Technology and Applied Sciences Salalah, Oman

For further details about our awards and prizes are available, please visit: **london.ac.uk/code**

Supporting learning and teaching around the globe

CODE Promotes professional development through publications, events, training, and international partnerships.

Supporting the University of London

CODE projects, commissioned evaluations and development activities support the University of London in a wide range of ways.

For example, in 2023 a CODE project and Fellow supported the development of a distance education model for research led 'Introduction to digital humanities' with colleagues in University of London's School of Advanced Study. CODE undertook an evaluation of the development of UG Laws modules to support the enhancement of the programme, and CODE supported the evaluation of the AI tutor. Workshops on AI and assessment were delivered by CODE in autumn 2023 and attended by 15 Programme directors. The annual evaluation of the fixed time assessments and examinations undertaken by our online students each summer was completed in 2023 and 2024. The report, received by Academic Board, and the worldwide Senior team presented the opportunity for operational and policy development to be informed by the feedback from a wide range of stakeholders: students, examiners, Programme Directors, colleagues at our Recognised Teaching Centres, and operational teams.

Supporting Recognised Teaching Centres

Approximately 60 per cent of the University of London's 40,000+ online and distance education students attend local Recognised Teaching Centres (RTCs).

CODE has worked closely with RTCs over a number of years, and we have developed our work to support RTCs in the following ways:

- RTC colleagues continue to graduate from the CODE-led PGC Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, gaining expertise in learning, teaching and assessment and gaining University of London Worldwide Tutor Status.

- RTC colleagues are invited to present at and attend all CODE conferences, webinars and workshops – we are pleased that RTC colleagues take an active part in our learning communities.

- We have an international CODE Fellow from an RTC, Dr Maylyn Tan, from the Singapore Institute of Management.

- RTC colleagues also provide feedback on the large-scale summer examination through the CODE-led annual evaluation of online timed assessments.

PGC Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

The CODE-led and designed, fully online PG certificate for those teaching in higher education has been very successful in supporting the development of skills, competencies, and knowledge of effective teaching in higher education. By Spring 2023, the programme had 303 graduates from 50 countries.

Sharing Expertise with the University of Guadalajara

Blended/hybrid delivery entails offering courses in in-person and online modes.

The CODE professional development, delivered by CODE, for 40 participants at the University of Guadalajara, covered 12 topics that enabled participants to extend their understanding of key educational concepts and theories and to enhance their ability to deploy digital tools to integrate online learning into face–to–face teaching more effectively. A strong emphasis was placed on participants designing or revising and planning how to run their own learning courses. Extensive use is of contextualised theory, practical guidance, and peer interaction via an online virtual learning environment and workshops ensured that this course supported colleagues in Mexico to launch their blended courses in January 2023 successfully. Overall satisfaction with the CPD course was over 90 per cent. One respondent noted, 'It has provided me with more tools and knowledge about learning theories that I will apply in my teaching work in a blended mode'.

UNIVERSIDAD DE GUADALAJARA
Red Universitaria e Institución Benemérita de Jalisco

Welcoming Visiting Scholars

As part of our capacity building mission, CODE offers opportunities for visiting scholars to spend a period of usually four to six months on placement in the Centre.

A bespoke programme of activities is developed for each Visiting Scholar to support their intended outcomes. The nature of the placement can vary from specific research projects to skills development. For example, we can support research, applied research, evaluation, capacity building, upskilling, programme/short course development and training.

Visiting Scholars are supported by a team of CODE Fellows, led by the Director of CODE, Dr Linda Amrane-Cooper. They are given workspace in the University of London's iconic Senate House complex, provided with a desk, email account, and computer facilities, and granted access to our extensive online Library, which has over 100 million digital items and our physical collections in the Senate House library.

Regular meetings with CODE Fellows and other UoL experts ensure visiting scholars develop their initial research/project plans through peer review. Projects and research activities are fully supported by staff at the University of London, who can, for example, provide hands-on activities in our recording studios and editing suites or with technical workshops to support enhanced digital skills in virtual learning environment creation and development.

Between 2023 and January 2025 CODE hosted four colleagues from Open University China, sponsored by the Sino-British Fellowship Trust (**sbft.org.uk**)and the Chinese Ministry of Education:

- Professor Jiang Yilu from the Institute of Lifelong Education, The Open University of China, Beijing, China.

- Dr Ana Niu, Tianjin Open University, China.

- Dr. Qingsong Xi, Chongqing Open University, China.

- Associate Professor Xiaoyan Fu, Gansu Open University, China.

Additionally Visiting Scholars from the Americas joined us:

- Prof Dil Vosgerau from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil.

- Professor Brent Moore from Indiana Wesleyan University, USA.

Left to right: Dr Linda Amrane-Cooper with Professor Dil Vosgerau from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil. Professor Brent Moore.

Launch of the Daivd Baume Visiting Scholar Award

The CODE team would like to take this opportunity to remember Dr David Baume. As a Fellow of the Centre for Online and Distance Education, David has been at the heart of education at the University of London for over 18 years.

Over a long and distinguished career, David had many roles, as varied as deep sea diving safety instructor; Co-Director, Centre for Higher Education Practice at the Open University; founding Chair of the UK Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA); co-founder of the UK Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG); a founding council member of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED); and founding editor of the International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD). As well as his more recent contributions to staff development in Africa, Palestine and China as a CODE fellow.

During our annual conference in March 2024, we were joined by David's son, who worked with colleagues from across the sector to host a provocative and well-received session entitled 'Please Stop Teaching'.

In October 2024, we were delighted to launch The David Baume Visiting Fellow Award. This Award provides the opportunity for the Award holder to spend three months as a CODE Visiting Scholar. The Award celebrates and continues the work of Dr David Baume. Through this opportunity, we can continue David's work and passion for educational development by supporting a colleague from the Global South. Prof Dil Vosgerau from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brazil, is our first David Baume Visiting Scholar (**bit.ly/david-baume-award**). Prof Vosgerau's research at CODE focuses on new approaches to training professionals, considering the diversity and inclusion of students in the Brazilian context.

Inaugural Daivd Baume Award lunch with Dr Baume's family plus the award holder and CODE team

National Universities Commission Nigeria

In an ongoing collaboration with the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria, CODE has supported expanding high-quality online and distance education across Nigeria.

An extensive programme of events has supported this work in the last two years. Evaluation of the events showed high levels of satisfaction with the provision.

'The workshop was excellently organised.'

'The workshop was an eye opener that indeed ODeL is the way to go considering the fact that it has the capacity to attend to different categories of Learners'.

2023 workshop

Date	Event	Format
23 March 2023	5th Joint Symposium: Policy and Practice in Open and Distance and E-Learning Attended by 67 delegates, representing 24 HEIs.	A hybrid conference was held on site at UoL London and in the NUC offices in Abuja.
21, 22, 24 March 2023	Three-day workshop: Developing strategy, policies, and quality assurance structures for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) centres Attended by 42 senior participants representing 17 HEIs.	In person workshop at University of London.
11 April 2024	One-day workshop: Developing Enhanced strategies for student success in online and distance education. 16 senior participants from Nigerian Universities, plus NUC representation.	In person workshop at University of London.

Spearheading capacity building

In June 2023, a delegation of colleagues from Universite Putra Malaysia (UPM) attended a two-day workshop at UoL: *Developing approaches to support successful online learning.*

The workshop significantly impacted the team attending, who held a three-day boot camp once back home with their wider team. The department has built two recording studios based on the London model and has moved all its programmes to hybrid mode. A UPM colleague is expected to join CODE as a visiting scholar in 2025 to further support the capacity-building collaboration.

Building collaboration: Visits to the Centre

CODE welcomes many delegations to the University of London. Visits present an opportunity to share perspectives and approaches, to develop research partnership, to build training and CPD provision and support our visiting scholar provision.

In 2023 and 2024, we hosted four delegations from Universities in China, two Indian delegations, two delegations from Malaysia and one from Mexico. Colleagues contribute to our communities through webinars and conference presentations.

Research Publications and conferences

CODE Fellows publish a wide range of journal articles, and present at international conferences. Many papers arise from activities funded by CODE and this ensures our work is widely distributed.

CODE shares and fosters knowledge and practice in effective online, distance, and transnational education through our events and conferences.

CODE communities of practice and inquiry provide welcoming opportunities to focus on high quality online and distance education.

CODE conferences and events

Over 3000 colleagues from across the globe joined CODE events, webinars, conferences, and workshops in 2023 and 2024.

Providing high-quality, relevant, research- and scholarship-informed hybrid events has ensured that UK and international colleagues can join our audience and present their work and that the expertise within the University of London and the Federation is shared with wider audiences.

Your professional activities have impacted my practice because of the 'content' and the way you run and support these events. For instance, you often provide blog posts and summaries afterwards, and this adds real value, as it allows for continued reflection and learning.'

Virna Rossi, Associate Professor, Ravensbourne University

Engaging Webinars in 2023–2024

Regular webinars, organised by the University of London Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE), provide a platform for exploration, exchange and learning from the innovation and development taking place in digital learning. Events have included:

- Why learning design? Why now? **bit.ly/why-learning-design**

- Supporting Student Success workshop 2023 **bit.ly/sss-workshop-2023**

- De-colonising digital education: Bridging the great divide **bit.ly/bridging-great-divide**

- Becoming a Learning Designer **bit.ly/becoming-learning-designer**

- Supporting Student voice and students as partners in a blended environment **bit.ly/supporting-blending-enviro**

- Understanding our evolving digital practice: Scholarship and research of teaching **bit.ly/evolving-digital-practice**

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Understanding our evolving digital practice: Scholarship and research of teaching

1 June 2023

Jess Humphreys (University of Warwick)
Denise M. Sweeney (University of Nottingham)
Peter Felten (Elon University)

- Sustainable approaches to managing technology for learning bit.ly/approaches-managing-technology

- Top tips for student engagement bit.ly/top-tips-webinar

- Student digital learning experiences bit.ly/digital-learning-exp

- A climate change curriculum: how? what? when? And for whom? bit.ly/climate-change-curr

- Innovations in Digital Medical and Health Care Education bit.ly/digi-med-care

- Decolonising digital education: Lessons from distance learners bit.ly/less-dis-learn

- Robot Wrestling: Learning Design in the Age of AI bit.ly/robot-wrestling

- Supporting Student Success workshop 2024: Assessment bit.ly/sss-workshop-2024

- AI as a learning support bit.ly/ai-learn-support

- Designing for worldwide inclusive cultures – launch event bit.ly/ww-inclusive-cultures

- Inclusive Employability Development through the Curriculum: An Educator's Toolkit bit.ly/inc-employ-dev

- From Spark to Flame: learning design from an evidence base bit.ly/spavrk-flame
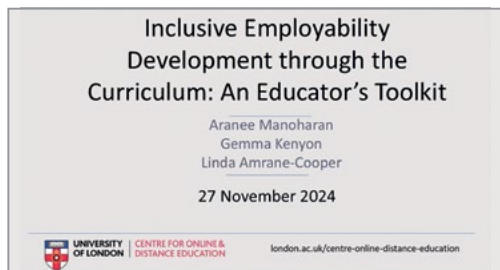
Research in Distance Education (RIDE) Conference

Our annual two-day virtual and in-person international conference focuses on research and scholarly practices in online, distance, blended, hybrid, and hyperflex higher education. We aim to provide opportunities to support our communities and our work through scholarship-informed discussion and debate.

RIDE 2023
SUSTAINING INNOVATION
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

RIDE 2023

In March 2023, the 17th annual Centre for Online and Distance Education conference on Research in Distance Education (RIDE) theme was Sustaining Innovation and Sustainable Practices. Keynote inputs focussed on AI in Education, Researching Online education, Open Educational Practices and what face-to-face education can learn from the intentional design processes used in online education. Abstracts were submitted from 18 countries, and our 400-strong audience hailed from 40+ country locations.

RIDE 2023 conference

RIDE 2024
LEARNING ANYTHING EVERYWHERE BUT HOW?
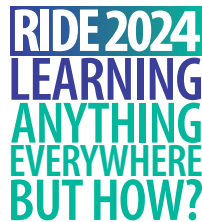
RIDE 2024

March 2024 saw our 18th International Research in Distance Education and e-Learning RIDE conference theme 'Learning: anything, everywhere but how?' Sub-themes explored Emerging pedagogies & methodologies, Emergent technologies, Belonging and well-being, Assessment for learning, Internationalisation, and transnational education. Once again AI was a key area for discussion at the conference. Lively debates about the meaning of teaching, collaboration and inclusion took place in our keynote sessions across the

two days. Abstracts were submitted from 24 countries, and our 500 strong audience hailed from 45+ country locations.

It has been pleasing to see the status, international reach and attendance at RIDE grow over the last two years. Linda Amrane-Cooper is keen to recognise the hard work of the CODE conference and events committees and the CODE administrative team, and to thank all the speakers and attendees. We also wish to spend special thanks to the University of London estates, IT and catering staff who support these events.

RIDE 2023 conference

Supporting Student Success workshops 2023–2024

Our annual Supporting Student Success (SSS) event is an in-person half day workshop aimed at supporting the development of ideas, practices and projects in online and digital education.

In May 2024, our fourth SSS theme was 'Supporting Student Success through Assessment'. We explored the ever-changing landscape of HE assessment. This was an opportunity to share practice, to understand how, as a sector, we are revising and reforming our understanding and practice in the light of threats and opportunities in a post-Generative AI world.

For 2023, our fifth SSS event was a very well received, extended workshop, led by Associate Professor Virna Rossi, entitled Inclusive by Design. This was followed by a series of presentations from CODE projects, on a range of topics in the field of student distance and technology-enhanced learning.

RIDE 2024 conference

Looking Forward

As the University of London Federation Welcomes its new member, Brunel, the CODE team look forward to working with Brunel's staff and students and welcoming a new CODE fellow.

In 2025 we will see the publication of several CODE occasional papers, including proceedings for our RIDE conference. For the colleagues working on the University of London online and distance programmes, a series of training opportunities will be delivered to support colleagues in developing approaches to assessment that utilise AI appropriately. We will be launching a series of short courses to support professional development and capacity building with our wider communities. With the development of the next University of London Strategic Plan, CODE will step forward to deliver a service to the University, the Federation and the wider community that supports achievement of the University's aims and objectives and maintains our leadership and expertise in online, distance and transnational education.

APPENDIX 1: List of CODE Fellows

Fellow's Full Name	Fellow's Institution	Fellow's Job Title
Chie Adachi	QMUL	Dean for Digital Education
Samantha Ahern	UCL	Faculty Learning Technology Lead
Stephen Brown	Independent	Emeritus Professor
Elizabeth Burns	University of London	Programme Director for the Divinity Programmes by Distance and Flexible Learning
Pete Cannell	Independent	Educational researcher and Associate Lecturer in Mathematics
Lynsie Chew	UCL	Professor in Financial Education
Martin Compton	KCL	College Lead of Programme, Module and Assessment Design
Ashley Cox	University of London	CODE Associate Director
Jude Dunkwu	UCL	Researcher in AI's strategic implementation in online distance learning and teaching.
Jon Gregson	Independent, SOAS	Director of Development Dreamers Ltd
Nichola Gretton	University of Leicester	Academic Practice Development Manager in Education Services
Stylianos Hatzipanagos	Independent (formerly KCL)	Executive Lead for Research and Scholarship
Leo Havemann	UCL	Programme Development Advisor for Education and Practice Development
Leonard Houx	Cambridge Education Group	Senior Instructional Designer
Christina Howell–Richardson	Independent	Independent lecturer in Higher Education
Shoshi Ish–Horowicz	QMUL	Head of Innovation and Learning

Fellow's Full Name	Fellow's Institution	Fellow's Job Title
Margaret Korosec	Leeds	Dean of Online and Digital Education
Dimitrios Koufopoulos	University of London	Director of the online MBA programmes
Stuart MacDonald	Independent (ICR consultants)	Director of ICR Research
Liz Marr	Independent, Former PVC Education Open University UK	Emeritus Professor
Patricia McKellar	University of London	Dean of UG Laws
Alexandra Mihai	Maastricht University	Assistant Professor of Innovation in Higher Education
Michele Milner	RVC	Director of Learning and Wellbeing
Neil Mosley	Neil Mosley Consultants	Consultant
Oscar Mwaanga	University of London	Programme Director for the Post Graduate Certificate in International Sports Management
Norbert Pachler	UCL	Pro-Vice-Provost (Teaching, Learning, Digital Education)
Alan Parkinson	UCL	Professor of Financial Education and School Deputy Director
Daksha Patel	Independent (formerly LSHTM)	Associate Professor
Luis Pereira	City St George's University of London	Senior Lecturer in Educational Development in the Department of Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD)
Matt Phillpott	Independent (formerly SAS, University of London)	Educator, Writer and Historian
Philip Powell	Independent and OFS	Emeritus Professor
Simon Rofe	Leeds	Reader and Associate Professor of International Politics

Fellow's Full Name	Fellow's Institution	Fellow's Job Title
Jonathan San Diego	KCL	Senior Lecturer in Educational Technology and Healthcare Informatics and the Director of iTEL Hub
Clare Sansom	Birbeck	Lecturer, Freelance Consultant and Science Writer
Sarah Sherman	Bloomsbury Learning Exchange	Director
Anita Skinner	LSHTM	Assistant Professor and Deputy Programme Director of the Infectious Diseases MSc programme
Samantha Smidt	KCL	Academic Director
Donna Smith	Open University	Senior Lecturer in Politics in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Director of The Open University's Tuition Programme
Alan Tait	Independent, Former PVC Education Open University UK	Emeritus Professor
Maylyn Tan	Singapore Institute of Management	Head of Academic Development
Christine Thuranira–McKeever	RVC	Director for Online and Distance Learning Programmes and Vice–Principal
Steve Warburton	University of Newcastle, Australia	Pro Vice–Chancellor (Education Innovation)
Luke Woodham	City St George's University of London	Lecturer in Technology-Enhanced Learning and Head of the eLearning Unit in the Centre for Technology in Education

|	
Number of Fellows	44
Fellows in Member Institutions (including BLE)	18
Fellows in University of London	4
International Fellows	3

APPENDIX 2: Social media and web report

Social media

Reflecting wider changes in the social media landscape, CODE has shifted the focus of its engagement away from X (formerly Twitter) and towards LinkedIn and YouTube, where interest has been strong. Over the course of 2024 CODE acquired 979 new followers on LinkedIn, 1,152 post engagements, and 132 posts. Most impressively, the site's posts had 45,733 impressions (the number of times CODE posts have been displayed in other people's LinkedIn feeds). As can be seen in the graph below, engagement with LinkedIn was particularly high around the time of the RIDE conference in March 2024.

Similarly, our YouTube playlist has had strong engagement in 2024 with 8,534 total views of videos published this year. For example, our video on "Becoming a Learning Designer" achieved 1,200 views; "Why learning design? Why now?" – 769 views; and "Robot Wrestling: Learning Design in the Age of AI" – 464 views.
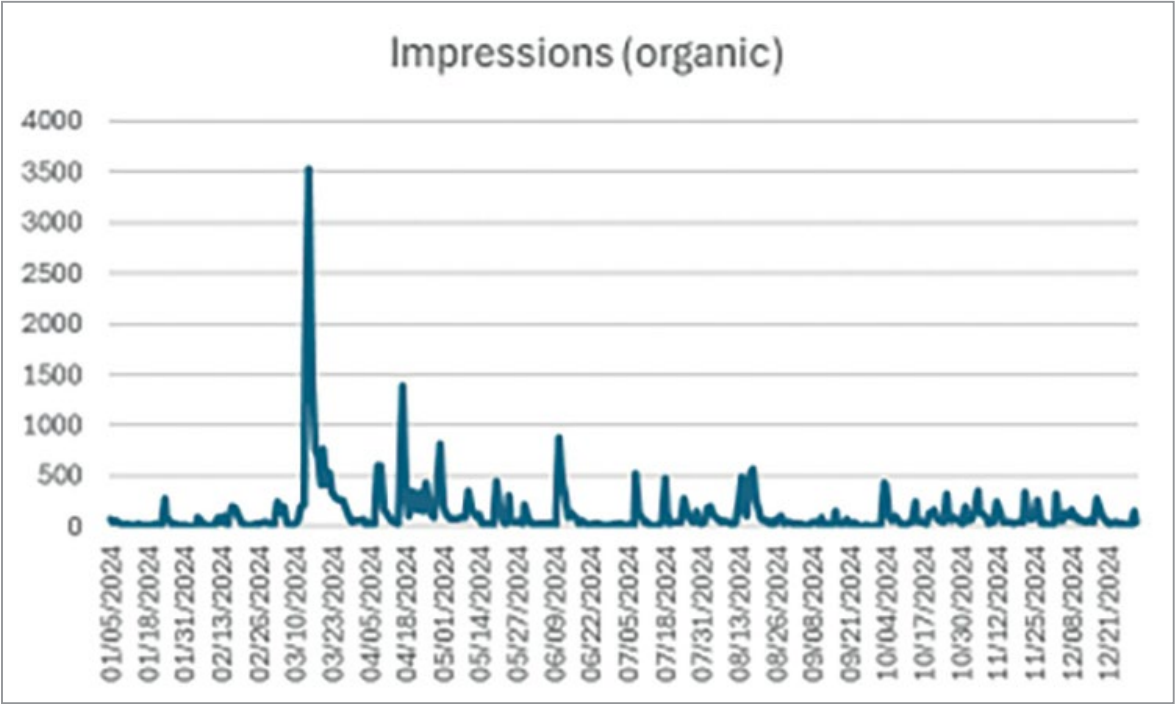
Views	Sessions	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate
86,824	**49,572**	**32,326**	**65.21%**
↑ 338.3%	↑ 361.6%	↑ 474.4%	↑ 24.4%

CODE web page performance

CODE web pages are hosted on the University of London website. This report spans two calendar years: January 2023 and December 2024. However, due to changes that occurred during 2023, direct comparisons between 2023 and 2024 are not always possible. See **note** below for further details.

CODE web pages are well–used. Between January 2023 and December 2024 there were 33,396 recorded visitors to CODE web pages, over 86,000 separate page views (a page can be viewed more than once by one user) and 11,545 'engaged sessions' (i.e. visits lasting longer than 10 seconds, with at least 2 page views or from which the visitor followed a link to another page.) The engagement rate was 65.21%. (Iinformational content such as this has a "good" engagement rate if it is higher than 50%.)

The most visited pages are the CODE landing (home) page, RIDE conferences and CODE open source resources, visiting scholars, events (webinars) and CODE projects, in that order. All these display high engagement rates (65–85%). Slightly less visited are the Training and Consultancy, Awards and CODE fellowship pages. This is expected since Awards and CODE fellowships are not universally advertised or available. Training and consultancy is recognized by CODE as having development potential and will be a key development area in 2025.

There was a distinct peak in page views around two weeks after the annual RIDE conference in 2023, rising from a background level of around 200 page views per day to 864, whereas in 2024 a different pattern was evident. In 2024 page views peaked one week before the RIDE conference and again one day before it. This may reflect different behaviours: seeking information about the programme in 2024 as opposed to viewing conference outputs in 2023. However, with only two year's worth of data to compare it is too early to reach a firm conclusion.

CODE appears to have a significant core of loyal users, as revealed by the number who accessed CODE pages by typing a URL into their browser or using a bookmark (so-called

'direct traffic') (7,403 users). Moreover, CODE's external profile appears to be driving a significant level of additional traffic to its pages. A clear majority of visitors accessed CODE pages via search engines such as Google, Bing, etc. (circa 23,000 users).

Search queries ranged broadly across online events (conferences and webinars), distance learning/educational consultancy services, training, online teaching and assessment design, CODE fellowship, awards and history of distance learning at UoL. This indicates that the majority of search queries are relevant and directed to appropriate pages. However, out of a total 56,154 searches, a significant number of

Peak page views: March 2023
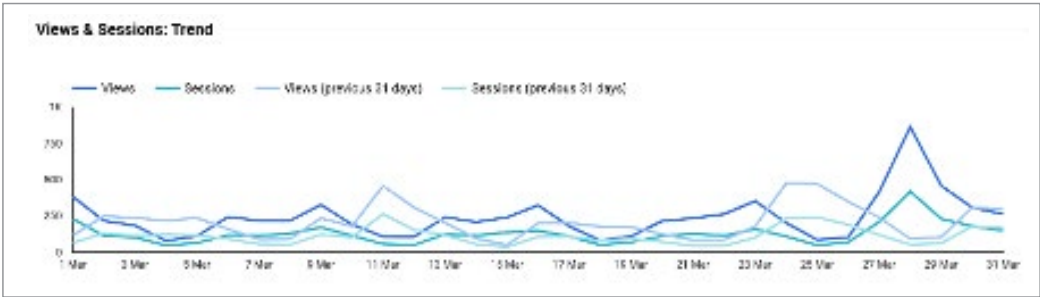
**Peak page views: March 2024**
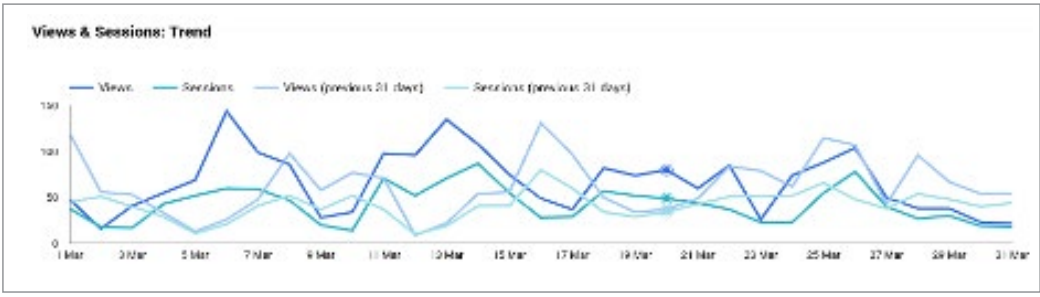
search queries were for university of London Online Courses (1410 searches), University of London online learning (1372 searches) and distance learning centre (1138 searches). As CODE is not primarily student–facing, is not responsible for recognised teaching centres and does not generally provide information about UoL courses apart from the PG Cert Learning and Teaching in HE, this suggests that a number of potential student inquiries are routed inappropriately to CODE.

Unsurprisingly the majority of CODE page visitors were from the UK (12,209), with the USA (2061), India (1924), Pakistan (1345) and Nigeria (681) the next most frequent sources of visitors. The total

number of source countries is not available, but search queries have been recorded from at least 50 different countries.

CODE web pages tend not to be viewed from a mobile phone. The majority of visitors (65.3%) viewed CODE pages from a desktop computer. Only a third (33.6%) used a mobile phone to view CODE pages. This reflects the CODE target audience which is primarily education and training practitioners, researchers and managers, rather than students. The viewing preferences of CODE page users have implications for the layout of information on CODE pages and the positioning and functionality of navigation menus. The
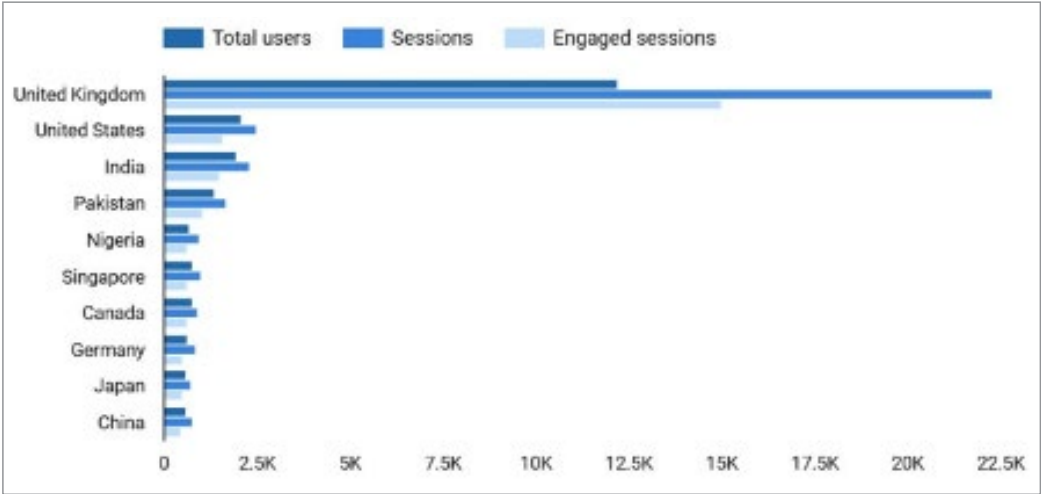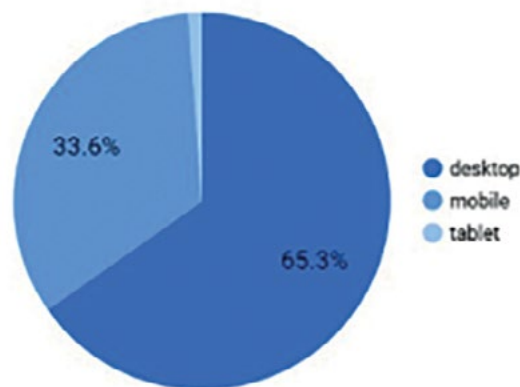
November 2023 redesign which prioritised mobile phone users created a number of design issues which are currently being worked through with the Web team and external consultants Numiko to ensure that CODE pages will be sufficiently accessible and navigable via desktop PCs in future.

Comparing 2023 with 2024, although there were more site visitors in 2023 (22,871) than 2024 (11,352), more separate page views (62,483/24,341) and more engaged sessions (20,817/11,545), the engagement rate improved from 61.53% to 73.43% between 2023 and 2024. The decline in recorded numbers can probably be accounted for by the changes reported in the NOTE below. The increase in engagement rate indicates that more of the actual page visitors are staying within CODE pages for longer, moving between CODE pages more and/or following links from CODE UoL web pages to CODE news and blogs on general UoL pages or external CODE content such as YouTube videos of CODE events or LinkedIn pages.

A notable change in 2024 was that India overtook the USA to become the highest source of CODE page visitors after the UK.

Conclusions

CODE's social media and web presence successfully attract significant traffic and engagement with CODE content and activities. Moreover, social media and CODE web page visitor logs evidence increases in engagement over the current reporting period. For example, the already successful level of user engagement with the web pages achieved in 2023 increased significantly from 61.53% to 73.43% in 2024.

Despite an understandable preponderance of UK visitors to CODE pages, CODE has a broad global reach via its web presence across at least 50 countries including the USA, China, India, Pakistan, Canada, Germany, Singapore and South Africa. Interest from India increased in 2024.

Core content such as RIDE conferences and CODE open source resources, visiting scholars, events (webinars) and CODE projects are all popular destinations for visitors.

User behaviour patterns with respect to RIDE conference web pages appear to be shifting. With only two year's worth of data the trend is not yet clear but LinkedIn data confirm strong interest in this CODE event.

CODE pages need to continue to be optimised for access via desktop PC, although mobile devices are used by around a third of CODE page users.

Future development

Social media: In 2025 CODE plans to create a dedicated YouTube CODE/University of London channel to accommodate the growth in numbers of videos posted and audience interest. CODE's presence on LinkedIn will continue to be prioritised over X and developed further to take advantage of LinkedIn's professional focus.

Web site: Following discussions with the UoL Web team in 2023 and 2024, a redesign exercise is underway that aims to resolve many of the access and navigation issues that arose from the November 2023 redesign (see NOTE below). Communication strategy: Following a stakeholder identification workshop in 2024, a formal stakeholder engagement strategy is being developed, including a survey of CODE stakeholder perceptions of and engagement with CODE activities. This will help to inform decisions about future priorities concerning the way CODE uses social media and it's web presence.

Note: During 2023 the web team restructured the UoL web site and redesigned the pages and navigation. In November 2023 the redesigned CODE pages went live. Some differences between the way the old site worked and the new site mean that direct comparisons across 2023 and 2024 are not always possible. For example, News and Blog items are now centralised and as such, they have a different path which means visits to these pages cannot be separately measured post November 2023. Changes to navigation design have made it harder for visitors to move around within CODE web pages. Another important difference is that some elements within pages such as descriptions of individual projects and descriptions of specific resources created by CODE are no longer individually addressable. This again means that traffic to these individual elements can no longer be counted separately. A further complication is the introduction of GDPR rules regarding the use of cookies which record user behaviour on web sites. First implemented in 2021 but tightened significantly in November 2023, research has shown that restrictions on the use of cookies reduce the level of traffic recorded by web sites. One such study reported an overall traffic reduction of approximately 15% in the long–run and a measurable reduction in engagement with websites. Traffic from both paid and unpaid channels dropped significantly.

On screen:
Valorisation and normalisation of productivity mania

Staff precarisation and casualisation (& a hyper-competitive labour market)

Workforce inequality (cf. gender pathways/ceilings/unequal burden)

Epidemic of bullying, harassment, discrimination

RIDE 2024 conference

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