Report from SUREbyts Launch

December 2021

1. Context

On Friday, 10 December 2021 the [SUREbyts resources](#) were formally launched with an online event in which various people presented on their development and use of SUREbyts videos over the past year. A [recording of the session is available on the SUREbyts website](#).

During the final part of the launch, breakout rooms were used to conduct a discussion related to the future of SUREbyts and the more general question of building enhanced links between research and teaching and learning.

The feedback from the discussion is summarised in the sections below:

- Section 2: How to Encourage Researchers to Develop SUREbyts Videos
- Section 3: How to Encourage Lecturers to Use SUREbyts Videos
- Section 4: How Else to Enhance the Links between Research and Teaching and Learning in Early Years of Undergraduate Studies

SURE Network partner institutions are encouraged to use their on-campus SUREbyts events in Q1-2 2022 to develop action plans arising from the suggestions in this document.

2. How to Encourage Researchers to Develop SUREbyts Videos

2.1. Make Use of Existing Networks to Showcase SUREbyts

Informal interpersonal networks and formal networks in SURE Network partners, and beyond, should be used to showcase SUREbyts and make people aware of the opportunities to become involved. The branded material, including the pull-up banners should be used on campuses to raise the awareness of SUREbyts. Testimonials from people who have already developed SUREbyts would be helpful for this objective.

2.2. Expand the Pool of Authors

To date, all the videos that have been produced have featured either researchers or research students in Higher Education. Consideration should be given to expanding the pool of potential authors, to include, for example, excellent final year students (e.g. presenters or prize winners at the SURE Conferences), researchers in industry, and researchers in Higher Education outside the SURE Network partners. Authors should be encouraged to work as a team to develop an individual video, or a set of videos, if they would like to do so.

2.3. Reassure Potential Authors

It is important that potential authors know that it can be a relatively straightforward process, and that guidance in available. If authors make any errors, these are quickly and easily corrected in the later editing process, so authors don't need to worry about this. This is all described in the [online guide for authors](#).

2.4.   Promote the Benefits of SUREbyts for Authors

These benefits include enhanced CVs, [digital badges](#) and raising their online profile. The benefits already published on the [SUREbyts website](#) are:

- Disseminate your research to an early undergraduate (year 1 or 2) audience.
- Contribute to the enhancement of research in the undergraduate curriculum.
- Enthuse novice scientists about your research and the future world of research.
- Help develop the problem solving, critical thinking and research skills of novice scientists.
- Start the process of recruiting future students.
- Build your online profile.
- Increase your research impact.
- You can apply for a Digital Badge from the SURE Network.

3. How to Encourage Lecturers to Use SUREbyts Videos

3.1.   Make Use of Existing Networks to Showcase SUREbyts

Informal interpersonal networks and formal networks in SURE Network partners, and beyond, should be used to showcase SUREbyts and make people aware of the opportunities to use SUREbyts in classes. The branded material, including the pull-up banners should be used on campuses to raise the awareness of SUREbyts. Testimonials from lecturers and students who have already used SUREbyts would be helpful for this objective.

3.2.   Enhance the Description and Guidance for Videos on the Website

It should be easy for lecturers to know what a video is about and what level and class it is appropriate for without having to watch the whole video. Enhanced descriptions, and/or reviews/testimonials should be added to the webpage for each video.

3.3.   Promote the Relationship with Creativity

Currently, SUREbyts is very focussed on research. The relationship with creativity and innovation may be more appealing for undergraduate students, so this should be emphasised.

3.4.   Broaden the Context of Use for SUREbyts

Opportunities should be sought to use SUREbyts at orientation, induction and even prior to students coming to higher education, through open days and school visits. Research specific open days, showcasing the innovation taking place in Higher Education, could be offered to secondary school students. At these, students could meet the SUREbyts authors and others involved in research.

4. How Else to Enhance the Links between Research and Teaching and Learning in Early Years of Undergraduate Studies

4.1.   Embed Research in Curricula

Learning objects and video content related to research but tailored to the early years of undergraduate studies should be developed and shared (e.g. how to search online, how to do research, critical thinking videos). Opportunities should be sought for this content, including SUREbyts, to be embedded into curricula. For example Communications, Professional Development

and Learning to Learn modules could benefit from the embedding of research related topics. Module descriptors and learning outcomes could be shared as appropriate.

4.2. Create more structured opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate students to interact

Dedicated fora where postgraduate students and research supervisors present their research in an accessible way to students should be identified and developed (e.g. lay seminars, soap box type event, speaker's corner). A mini-conference for students, with live SUREbyts, presentation could take place with research students presenting their work for undergraduate students. During these events, students could meet with role models and challenge some of their perceptions / misperceptions / stereotypes relating to research.

4.3. Encourage lecturers and postgraduate students to discuss their own research

Lecturers should be encouraged to take a small part of their class time to discuss their own research, in particular those aspects of their research about which they are most passionate. Postgraduate students who are involved in laboratories should be encouraged to discuss their research with undergraduate students.

4.4. Involve First- and Second-Year Students in Research Projects

First and second year students could play a role in real research projects. For example, they could collect data for a project by recording environmental data in teams in their community. They should then be shown how that feeds into a real research project being carried out by professional researchers.

4.5. Competition to Create a SUREbyt

Consideration could be given to running a competition for first year groups (or a multidisciplinary group from across a faculty) to create a SUREByt, mentored by a tutor or a lecturer. A prize for the winner could be sponsored and the project could then be promoted on social media.

4.6. Posters throughout the Campus

An example from the University of Reading involves the use of small posters (approx. A4) with a picture related to some research being conducted within the University – a brief summation of a problem and the person (i.e. University Staff member) who is carrying out research on this topic and what they are doing. This provides a very visual – easy to consume means by which the students could connect scientific research with work being undertaken within the university. The posters could be changed regularly. Posters should be small and not take up too much space. Such posters will be much more effective and accessible than a traditional scientific poster.

4.7. Research Placements and Field Trips

Research placements for those who are interested in this path as an alternative to industry and include field trips to laboratories could be offered to students.

4.8. Showcase Research

A departmental champion for SUREbyts and/or engagement between research and teaching and learning could progress the ideas suggested here. Research that is taking place could be showcased on social media, and through existing events e.g. Maths Week, SciFest, Science Week.