

# NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY  
— OF CENTRAL —  
LANCASHIRE



## European exchanges with multiples benefits

At a time when so many European eyes are fixed firmly on the Euro and the enlargement of the European Union is near at hand, the University of Central Lancashire is beginning to develop academic and cultural links with universities in Central and Eastern Europe.

As a result of a bid put together by Professor Michael Parker, the Department of Cultural Studies has just been awarded a grant from the British Council in Poland to set up and maintain a staff exchange as part of their Literature Initiative Programme. Initially the exchange will involve the University of Central Lancashire and Lodz University in Poland, but the Department aims to develop this into a three-way link. Discussions are underway with Charles University, Prague, in the Czech Republic. The British Council is particularly keen to promote a tri-partite exchange programme in which individual academics can contribute to and enrich teaching and research in partner institutions, and where all parties can collaborate in each other's academic and cultural development.

Lodz is the second biggest city in Poland and, like Preston, is a place with a long history of involvement with the textile trade. That being said, the cultural differences between the two are marked and there is much to be learned on both sides during the week-long exchanges which will take place over the next five years. Professor Parker sees many advantages in the academic links between the two universities. Although both universities have a considerable number of teaching and research areas in common – Irish Literature and Post-Colonial Literatures, to name but two – staff may well have very different approaches to these subjects and certainly bring different cultural perspectives to these areas of study.

Like the Department of Cultural Studies' involvement in the Maastricht Center for Transatlantic Studies, the AMATAS project and the international conference scene, this development reflects the university's commitment to the wider academic community.

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