

The Little Book of Big Impact

A collection of nominations for the
2024 University Alliance Awards.



**University
Alliance**



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Introduction

Every year, University Alliance (UA) holds the Alliance Awards. It's our opportunity to celebrate the incredible teams and individuals across our membership. Universities are not just institutions, they are made up of thousands of individuals working together towards common goals. It is important to us at UA that we don't just celebrate the impact of our universities, but also the contributions of the people that make that impact happen.

Each year, we receive more nominations for the Alliance Awards than we can shortlist, but we believe all our longlisted nominees deserve recognition. That is why we have summarised all the 2024 longlisted nominations in the 'Little book of big impact.' Together, their stories paint a bigger picture of the impact our universities can have on individuals, communities and the future. **We have edited the original nominations for length only.**

About UA

University Alliance (UA) represents some of the UK's leading professional and technical universities.

Our member universities specialise in working with industry and employers. Their teaching is designed to prepare students for careers and their knowledge and research drive industry to innovate, thrive and meet challenges.

As UA we:

- Provide professional networks for leaders and staff at our member universities
- Run joint programmes such as the Doctoral Training Alliance
- Develop research, insights and advice to help inform government policy
- Link policy makers up with people working 'on the ground' in our member universities.

CREATING OPPORTUNITY

Alliance universities take an innovative, applied approach to teaching, and leverage their relationships with employers to deliver opportunities for their students. We know that each student faces a unique set of challenges in being able to make the most of their time at university. Across the Alliance, these teams and individuals are working with students to tackle these challenges and ensure every student is able to capitalise on the opportunities university offers.

Dr. Abhinesh Prabhakaran, StageCraft, UWE Bristol

StageCraft was developed to help students overcome their fear of giving oral presentations. It integrates immersive virtual reality with machine learning & eye-tracking technology to provide real-time feedback to students on how to improve aspects of their presentation style. This provides a safe and controlled environment for the students to practice their skills. It has been designed to be highly customisable, allowing students to simulate & practice their presentations in a range of scenarios. AI is used to generate questions based on the presentation topic which provide the student with an opportunity to practice answering spontaneous questions.

Learning and teaching enhancement centre, Kingston University

Created in 2018, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Centre (LTEC) at Kingston University is built on collaboration, enabling and facilitating excellence across the university. One recent LTEC project addressed the underrepresentation of Black students in their international mobility programmes. LTEC developed the International Black Scholars Programme (IBSP), as well as taking part in a month-long international mobility programme, the scholars develop projects which help educate staff on the experiences of their Black students.

CyberWEST, UWE Bristol

CyberWEST brings together UWE, University of Bristol, University of Exeter & University of Plymouth.

The team collaborated to develop a set of activities for teaching across the scope of cyber security – coordinating academic and student involvement, whilst catering for schoolteachers' and students' needs across the region. They ran a series of regional university-led workshops to support teachers across the Southwest and disseminated practical activities with online resource packs and a searchable repository. CyberWEST also created networking opportunities that connect schools and universities across the region to collaborate and upskill in cyber security education.

Apprenticeship and CPD cluster, Anglia Ruskin University

The newly formed Apprenticeship and CPD cluster is dedicated to revolutionising the student experience across the master's programme. By listening to student and apprentice feedback, they introduced dynamic marking rubrics for the research methodology and major project modules. The cluster revamped the pathophysiology module to let students showcase their knowledge through verbal summative presentations instead of traditional writing. These initiatives reflect a united effort to improve the curriculum. They have highlighted current library guidance, created a video on good academic practices, and revised assignment guidelines to promote originality, ensuring students are not only well-prepared academically but also equipped with essential skills for their future careers.

Ben Bushell, Course Leader, Music Management, University of West London

London Noise Records (LNR) has transformed the music business. Ensuring graduate employment and student success in the music industry, the pioneering business model serves as an inspiration for educators and institutions alike. It offers students a safe and fair platform to produce and release music, backed by a partnership with Sony Music's AWAL for distribution. The success of LNR is evident in its impact on student outcomes, with graduates securing industry roles and achieving notable public recognition. The project helps to tackle the gender recruitment gap in a male dominated industry with 100% of all female graduates securing industry employment.

International student experience team, University of West London

The International Student Experience team was developed in 2021. The team hinges on collaborative working requiring the input of the entire university community, including the SU. With over 100 nationalities represented at UWL, a support package was developed for every stage of the international student journey, catering for their diverse needs. The team is committed to enhancing the student experience whilst instilling a sense of belonging. Students are helped to navigate the transition process into a new education system and are provided with tailored advice depending on their circumstances. Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Innovation Partnerships Team, Kingston University

The Innovation Partnerships Team lead Studio KT1 & Not My Beautiful House: Studio KT1 is a creative agency developing opportunities for students allowing them to experience working with industry before they graduate. Studio KT1 has employed over 300 students on 80 projects with ~£155,000 paid to students to date, honing skills in portfolio development, networking and pitching. 'Not My Beautiful House' was created by students with direction from Studio KT1 - a place where dreams and experiments happen outside the constraints of campus. It sells work from students, alumni and the community with 80/20% split in the sellers' favour. The impact of both projects is astounding.

Phoenix+ team, Coventry University

Phoenix+ embraces challenges that face modern students. They offer each Coventry University undergraduate a tailored journey of support towards their next destination, starting with a skills assessment that not only tracks their progress but offers recommendations based on their responses. Phoenix+ centralises campus opportunities, allowing students to join events, learn on-demand and gain experiences in the UK and abroad. Ensuring graduates leave with more than just a degree, preparing them for success in life and work. Since September 2023: 3100+ students have engaged with Phoenix+, 1000+ students have completed the Phoenix+ Skills Assessment and 54 placement opportunities have been offered in the UK and abroad.

The Explore prototype team, Kingston University

Society and businesses are facing an unprecedented challenge - careers we know today will not exist in the future. Kingston University is transforming its curriculum to address this need through a new model of education - Future Skills. They are the first higher education provider in the United Kingdom to embed Future Skills teaching in every year of every undergraduate programme. Assessment centres provided authentic graduate recruitment experiences to 536 students. As a result of this innovative prototyping, the core components of our Future Skills Explore module have been established. This will be delivered across all undergraduate courses from September 2024.

Library Services, University of West London

UWL's Library Services team has been at the heart of a series of ambitious linked projects to accelerate diversity and inclusion in our collections, to help contribute to narrowing awarding gaps. Library collections and libraries must represent and recognise students' diverse identities, background, and the cultural capitals they bring to their studies. Awarding gaps are complex, and changing pedagogic practices are crucial to eliminating them 'as such, we believe institutional support, challenge and oversight of our work has been key to our success.' The co-create UWL Library campaign directly surfaces student recommendations for materials that reflect their culture and experience.

Lucy Squire, Head of Subject, Music and Drama, University of South Wales

Lucy has built a strong reputation for championing the development of the music industry through sustained engagement with stakeholders, policymakers, and communities in collaboration with students. At the forefront of her work is a student-led festival called 'Immersed' that draws together her expertise in industry and academia to foster new forms of knowledge exchange that directly impact education, the music ecosystem and its governance through the curriculum and partnerships she has developed. She has made higher learning fun and engaging with a purpose for our students through real-world employability experiences with industry partners.

DRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES

In addition to their role as large employers and their investment in local firms and services, Alliance universities consciously work with local businesses and employers to meet the needs of their local economies. That includes ensuring they are teaching their students the right skills and that their research and knowledge is shared with industry. In particular, Alliance universities specialise in supporting SMEs to start up and scale up. Across the Alliance, there are dedicated teams and individuals working on this.

Business, Enterprise and Innovation team, University of Hertfordshire

The University of Hertfordshire's Business, Enterprise and Innovation team, in partnership with Imperial College London and Cranfield University, aimed to address the gap in healthcare provision where SMEs attempting to develop solutions to health issues are faced with growth-stage funding challenges. They secured a £1.5m bid from Research England to create the Healthcare Technologies Capability Connector which offers a £35K support package to small-medium healthcare firms. Connecting the London MedTech cluster to Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire's biopharma ecosystem, the partnership leverages the combined networks of the three universities to build a diverse talent pipeline. The HTCC is already proving to be pivotal in accelerating healthcare innovation within the region.



Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group (EIG), Robert Gordon University

EIG created a unique enterprise programme specifically for women with children, who are interested in self-employment or starting a business. An independent review in Scotland found that female entrepreneurs – particularly mothers – continue to experience obstacles when starting new ventures. The EIG's Women in Business programme seeks to address the root causes of under-participation of women in entrepreneurship: logistical constraints, sense of belonging and lack of suitable networks. Delivered online over seven weeks, subjects include: motivation and values, understanding customers, marketing, legalities and pitching with confidence. The programme's success led to additional Scottish Government funding to facilitate the roll-out of the programme to other Scottish universities.

Arup & BCU STEAMhouse Digital Labs Team, Birmingham City University

Birmingham City University (BCU) and Arup worked together to launch new state of the art Digital Labs to drive education and innovation. The Digital Labs are a high-tech addition to STEAMhouse's existing facilities and services and help accelerate the growth of local businesses and the education of students. Serving both commercial and research purposes, the Digital Labs have been set up to drive digital innovation through expertise, equipment, community, and collaborative spaces.

Leeds Beckett KTP Team, Leeds Beckett University

Leeds Beckett is a top provider of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, ranking 11th nationally with 96% of all bids approved for funding. Achieving this outstanding position is a result of phenomenal collaboration between teams including: business development, SME engagement, post award management and academic teams. A laser focus on KTP through intensive collaboration and prioritisation has led to sustained success and impact. Their growth trajectory continues to exceed expectations with 10 further KTP submissions this year. The team's academic expertise, experienced business development managers and KTP development and delivery team has facilitated diversification of their portfolio across seven of our nine academic schools.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

Alliance universities are some of the largest providers of healthcare education in the UK. Their innovative practices set the standard in healthcare training, from groundbreaking simulation facilities to creative partnerships with local authorities. In addition to training the healthcare workforce, they are also delivering research and product development that can fundamentally change the future of healthcare. These teams and individuals are dedicated to improving health outcomes and living standards.

Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, Middlesex University

Middlesex University has been working with North Central London Integrated Care System (NCL ICS) for almost a decade, to improve health outcomes for its 1.6 million residents. In England, vacant roles in Adult Social Care (ASC) are projected to reach 25% by 2035. This led Middlesex and NCL ICS teams to upskill ASC nurses and engage with service users to co-produce ASC training. The participating ASC nurses felt more confident to support nursing students, which contributed to five additional ASC partners agreeing to offer 60 new placements per year for adult, mental health nurses and trainee nursing associates. Together, these projects will help ASC nurses serve patients and their families both professionally and empathetically.

Children's nursing team, Oxford Brookes University

The children's nursing team have always worked excessively hard to support every single student who applies and graduates as a children's nurse. They take pride in their ability to provide support to each of their team members, whether it is celebrating publications or achievements, recruitment, or delivering offer holder days using skills and teaching approaches to give the potential students an opportunity to learn in the same way current students would learn. The team endeavours to produce high-quality teaching across the students' years of learning by including multiple service users and excellent opportunities for interprofessional simulations, including physio students and medical students. They achieved number 1 in the Guardian League table for children's nursing.

Psychology Digital team, Kingston University

The Digital Psychology team has created a pioneering VR solution aimed at mitigating the risk of mental health problems among children who have experienced trauma. The VR intervention has proven effective in reducing post-traumatic stress symptoms. The project has reached children across in the UK, the Gaza Strip, and refugee communities in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. The team's outstanding dedication, creativity, and unwavering commitment to community wellbeing reflects the core values of fostering impactful change through innovation.

The Centre for Apprenticeships and Skills, Middlesex University

Middlesex University is boosting the number of Social Workers and Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) via the development of innovative new Degree Apprenticeship Academies. There are major difficulties and challenges for local authorities recruiting qualified social workers and EHPs. This skills gap has negative impacts for everyone. Middlesex's Degree Apprenticeship Academies are specifically designed to address these challenges by proactively engaging with local authorities to develop the programmes that meet their needs. This model of proactive co-creation and sustained partnership between employers and the university innovatively reconstitutes the nature of the relationship, to help address the recruitment challenges faced by local authorities through the apprenticeship levy.

UWE Bristol BSL (British Sign Language) Society, UWE Bristol

The BSL Society at UWE Bristol have been working to incorporate deaf awareness training to UWE Bristol healthcare students. Following the success of this, UWE Bristol is considering incorporating this training into its entire healthcare curriculum. This will ensure the next generation of healthcare professionals understand the barriers that the D/deaf community face in accessing healthcare. The impact of this training could save the life of a D/deaf person and giving healthcare students this vital training will enable them to support D/deaf people in accessing and navigating an inclusive healthcare system.

Professor Joy Notter, Professor of Community Healthcare, Birmingham City University

Joy began her career as a nurse, before gaining a Masters and PhD. Joy has improved nursing education, training and curriculum development.

She was a founding editor of British Journal of Nursing among other publications and has sat on the boards of many national and international healthcare associations. Having dedicated much of her career to building nursing and critical care capacity in LMIC countries, she was awarded a campaign medal for services to health by the Vietnamese Government in 2012. Her research in Zambia to transform critical care nursing during the Covid-19 pandemic was described as 'vital' by the UK Government.

Theresa Heering, PhD Student, Coventry University

Theresa Heering is one of the most successful PhD students from Coventry University's Centre for Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Science. In 2024, she was awarded the Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) of the Year Award for her dedication to understanding and preventing Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injuries in children. Theresa's innovative approach to understanding and preventing ACL injuries in children can change lives, as will the broader impact of her research.

Her cutting-edge approach and willingness to utilise emerging technologies is also to be celebrated. Her success and continued dedication to delivering innovation in her field is a testament to her exceptional professionalism.

Fiona Suthers, Head of Clinical Skills and Simulation, Middlesex University

Fiona Suthers has spent over thirty years at Middlesex. She pioneered the introduction of augmented reality in nursing and midwifery training. Middlesex was the first university in the UK to invest in this technology to develop and support students. Fiona was instrumental in opening the University's 'virtual hospital' to train nurses and midwives at Saracens Rugby Club StoneX Stadium.

During Covid-19, Fiona delivered a major vaccination training programme for the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group. Around 3.7 million people received their vaccine thanks to the training programme developed by Fiona and her team.

Theresa Critchlow, Senior Lecturer and Programme Lead, University of Derby

Theresa works tirelessly to ensure the students within the child nursing programme receive the highest level of teaching and support possible, obtaining second for teaching quality in the National Student Survey (2023). Theresa goes above and beyond by participating in events such as International Nurses Day and Florence Nightingale celebrations; to promote nursing. Theresa also continues to work in the clinical environment and so brings the most up-to-date practices to the curriculum for the students. She embodies modern nursing through her values and principles and is an inspiration to many staff who have the privilege to work with her.

Professor Mike Duncan, Centre Director, Centre for Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Sciences, Coventry University

Professor Duncan is the mind behind the Cerebral Palsy Living Lab events and the (neurotypical) Young Footballers Living Labs. Children take part in sports science experiments and play the role of scientists as they learn how the Living Lab works. The events investigated physical literacy and encouraged children living with cerebral palsy to be competent, confident and motivated by movement skills. In February, Mike's team welcomed 10 children with cerebral palsy to the event; 100 neurotypical children attended the Young Footballers Living Lab across the 2023-2024 academic year. Interest in the next sessions is rising, with Mike and those involved keen that they become a permanent fixture.

Kristina Church, Research and Innovation Administrator, Anglia Ruskin University

Kristina has played a huge part in the rapid advancements at the ARU School of Medicine. She has led the coordination of marketing and recruitment processes for the school's first cohort of PG clinical academic trainees. This has presented logistical challenges and Kristina's initiative has been key to receiving hundreds of applications and the recruitment of excellent candidates. The recruitment of these trainees is a first for Essex and marks the start of a new era of training research active doctors locally. Kristina's enthusiasm, creativity and team-working approach has led to her making a significant contribution to the development and impact of research at the School.

DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Alliance universities have a strong track record of delivering impactful research to advance the fight against climate change, and are working with industry to harness new technologies to advance a more sustainable future. For example, Teesside university is currently collaborating on an innovative hydrogen transport project. We know, though, that we also need to decarbonise our own sector. Across the Alliance, hard-working teams and individuals are working on just that.

“Ripples of impact to transform futures”: Sustainability team, UWE Bristol

UWE Bristol has had a long-term commitment to create a university where sustainability is part of every decision they take. They have significantly advanced in this area not only by ensuring that sustainability is woven across every decision they make, but also by driving impactful change internationally, nationally and locally. Their successes are verified through achieving their 4th Students Organising for Sustainability-UK accreditation, adoption of the principles of PRME, and the SU@UWE being the seventh-year top scoring NUS Green Impact Student Union. They are known for co-creating and co-leading initiatives with students. Sustainability is part of their DNA.

Education for a Sustainable & Resilient Future (E4SRF) Team, Oxford Brookes University

Education for a Sustainable & Resilient Future team are commended for their exceptional collegiality and dedication to sharing their expertise in education for sustainability and resilience across disciplinary boundaries and internationally. The team secured British Council (BC) funding to collaborate with TED University (TEDU) in Turkey. Its aim was to support TEDU staff transform their curricula to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals across different disciplines.

Nanna Blomquist, Senior Environment and Sustainability Adviser, University of Hertfordshire

Nanna Blomquist is qualified, committed and proactive when it comes to embedding sustainability and driving crucial environmental and sustainability changes at Herts and beyond. Nanna's conviction is evidenced in all she has achieved, including: ensuring that sustainability is a core value in the university's next strategic plan, developing key sustainability strategies, organising the university's first ever sustainability conference for over 100 key stakeholders, launching a new carbon footprint labelling system across all university food outlets to help drive behaviour change, and so much more. Nanna's integrity in her sustainability work is remarkable.

Wyn Griffiths, Senior Lecturer in Product Design and Engineering, Middlesex University

Wyn enables students to explore natural disasters and climate change. His conviction that everyone can play a part in public life has led him to deploy immersive technology to engage a wider range of people in policy discussions.

For 13 years, he has helped direct the immersive science festival SMASHfestuk, which he co-founded. Its current programme FLOOD! brings together thousands of people from participating communities, schools and colleges.

The WILDFIRE! (FLOOD!'s predecessor) project partnered with the Phoenix Housing Association, which provides community homes in South London, and the Lewisham Youth Theatre which works with disadvantaged youngsters.

Sustainability and Environment team, Coventry University

The Sustainability and Environment team is accelerating projects to become Net Zero Carbon. The team leads Coventry's Net Zero Carbon efforts, driving innovation and partnerships. Notably, they recently collaborated with consultants Turner and Townsend to research current carbon pathways, taking an integrated approach that considers practice interventions and governance frameworks. Their efforts are already having a considerable impact at a local and regional level. Coventry has now also been ranked in the top quintile of QS Sustainability University Rankings and been recognised as a 1st class university in the People & Planet University league rankings 2023/2024. The S&E team are at the heart of this push.

Bill Somerville, Director of Estates and Property Services, Robert Gordon University

Bill joined RGU in 2006. He managed the University's relocation from multiple places across Aberdeen to one campus.

He was an early leader in carbon reduction and was involved in the 2010 Carbon Management Programme with The Carbon Trust. Bill has actively supported initiatives such as the Quad to grow. He has also created a travel infrastructure including a campus cycle officer and fleet of electric vehicles.

Bill is working on the decarbonisation of the University's heating and the restoration of land across the river to create a unique biodiversity site which will be a significant legacy for the University. Bill is such an inspiring leader.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Alliance universities operate at the heart of their local communities. They work with local authorities to train the public sector workforce, including teachers, midwives and police officers. Their partnerships extend across their communities, including local schools, charities and community groups. They open their doors to the public as well as actively reaching out, and take action to tackle local challenges such as food poverty. These teams and individuals are working to support their communities to thrive.

Dr Marsha Smith, Research Fellow, Coventry University

Dr. Marsha Smith's efforts in redistributing surplus food and establishing social eating spaces in rural areas have demonstrated effective solutions to food insecurity during the UK's cost of living crisis. By engaging with over 200 customers and community groups across rural Nottinghamshire, Marsha sought diverse viewpoints to understand the challenges faced by organizations like FareShare Midlands, which redistributes unsold food. She aims to support the development of future community eating spaces and is currently evaluating a "community meal" service. These spaces show how communities can come together to share food, experiences and support in times of need.

Inter Faith Network, Middlesex University

Middlesex has a thriving Inter Faith Network (MDX IFN) which works with local faith leaders. This builds on the university's long history of interfaith dialogue, as 64% of its students identify as "BAME". After the escalation of violence in the Middle East in October 2023, 864 antisemitic incidents occurred in Barnet and 576 Islamophobic incidents. In response, the university and MDX IFN actively engaged with the student body and wider community to support community cohesion. MDX IFN's efforts have seen them succeed at the London Faith and Belief Community Awards (2022 & 2023) and the Mitzvah Day Awards 2023.

ARU Law Clinic, Anglia Ruskin University

ARU Law Clinic was designed to promote collaborative working with students and the local legal profession to ensure students gain real-life experience, alongside the chance to work with lawyers, building professional relationships and networks. The Clinic has a huge impact on the local community, having assisted nearly 4,000 people, and now includes a Support@Court team offering in-court support to those without representation. Given the wide range of service users, referrers and supporters, the Clinic actively respects and embraces different viewpoints, always striving to deliver a valuable service.

Oxford Brookes and Sobell House Ox Trail Team, Oxford Brookes University

Last year Sobell House Hospice cared for two thirds of people who died in Oxfordshire. In 2023 Oxford Brookes became the Learning Programme Partner for a sculpture trail, the first ever in Oxford, designed to raise funds for the Hospice. Academics have developed content for a Schools Learning Pack that has reached over 37,000 young people in Oxfordshire. Marketing colleagues designed the pack and it, and all materials for the trail, were printed by Brookes Print. Legacy content in the form of lesson plans, supporting schools to support students to talk about loss, have been created by Oxford Brookes based educational publisher, Hamilton Brookes.

Marketing and Communications Team, Festival of Ideas, University of Hertfordshire

The marketing and communications team's Festival of Ideas is the university's first ever in-person, public, completely free Festival of Ideas. Forgoing traditional lecture formats, the team delivered an innovative two-day festival that gave visitors an immersive taste of Herts. The event hosted over 150 sessions, including interactive workshops, creative arts exhibitions, music performances, keynote speakers and panel discussions. They reached a broad regional audience through regional newspapers, radio and BBC News coverage. Close collaboration across events, communications, social, PR and the studio meant the team delivered an outstanding event, uniting Hertfordshire and the university together in celebration of higher education.

Antisemitism working group, University of Greenwich

In January 2024, the University of Greenwich's antisemitism working group organized an event for International Holocaust Memorial Day in the face of rising antisemitism in the UK. The project's aim was to educate others and encourage others to share their own experiences. This project was a successful example of knowledge exchange with external partners, student participation and cross faculty collaboration. It highlighted the interconnectedness of communities, the importance of solidarity, and stories of resilience and resistance. One school commented: 'It reinforced our belief that this is an important subject to cover and highlighted the importance of passing the message on to future generations as freedom is such a fragile commodity'.

Rezbi Duffield, Lecturer in Policing Practice, University of South Wales

Rezbi demonstrates a strong commitment to her learners, going beyond conventional methods, and providing lived experience for students from ethnic minority backgrounds, understanding their unique needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Rez's inclusive teaching practices are reflected in the measurable progress and success of students from ethnic minorities. Rez uses innovative and effective teaching methods that cater to different learning styles, making the subject matter engaging and accessible to all students. This involves incorporating technology, interactive activities, real-world examples, and personalized approaches to learning. All of Rez's sessions expose the next generation of police officers to a world outside of an organisational culture of traditional policing.

Middlesex University #HearMyVoice team, Middlesex University

The #HearMyVoice campaign inspires culture change at Middlesex and in the local community to tackle violence against women and girls. Students have been agents of change: delivering, events, impact assessments or outreach activities, and through pairing with community organisations. The local community has tackled this agenda together by attending exhibitions, Theatre Arts performances, community partners forums, panel discussions.

The team delivered deep-learning days motivating pupils to develop their own #ItsNotOK campaigns and change the culture at their schools. Engaging young people in these issues has been challenging and it is a testament to the team's resilience, patience and determination.

USW Education & EDI Teams in collaboration with Urban Circle Newport & BlackNine Films, University of South Wales

As USW embraces the Welsh government's ambition for Wales to become an Anti-Racist nation, they acknowledge the need for collective work to address racial inequalities. The collaboration of USW, Urban Circle Newport and BlackNine Films aims to address racism and intercultural development within schools and colleges across Wales. It provides an opportunity for systemic change to be made through a sustained approach driven by educators. As an organisation, this collaboration provides USW with a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of driving the necessary societal change and transforming lives.

DEVELOPING THRIVING UNIVERSITIES

To deliver impact for their students, local economies and communities, universities must be thriving themselves. That means developing vibrant university communities, pursuing excellence and innovation in their teaching and research methods, diversifying their income streams and attracting students to their universities, ensuring their estates are well maintained and delivering exceptional support services. All of that is underpinned by highly effective and motivated individuals and teams.

KTP Team, Teesside University

Following the UK's loss of access to the European Regional Development Fund and with student numbers reducing, universities face challenges in establishing new or reinforcing existing income streams. Subsequently, TU announced a Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) expansion strategy: to grow from 7 to 30 KTPs by 2027. The team launched an ambitious KTP growth plan to engage the academic community and industrial partners. They developed 'Building your networks for high value partnerships', a workshop for academic colleagues focussed on profile development, networking, value propositions and pitching. They delivered the KTP Academic Conference and have already secured a portfolio of 14 KTPs and are on track to deliver the 2027 target.

Samantha Forbes, Project and Business Manager, Teesside University

Sam coordinated the delivery of TU's new London Campus – a complex, fast-paced project. This involved: creating a subsidiary company; sourcing and designing a physical estate; developing a novel cloud-based digital infrastructure; developing a new set of demand-led, industry co-designed UG and PG degree programmes; creation of a new academic model to improve access for underrepresented groups; design of a staffing model; sourcing and inducting new staff ; developing and operationalising a business and finance plan; and developing and executing partner development and student recruitment plans for both home and overseas students. The whole project was an amazing success, all down to Sam's super-hero skills.

Julie Strachan, Head of Department for the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment, Robert Gordon University

The Future of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (FTLA) is a project that reviewed the university's framework for teaching, learning and assessments. The goal was to deliver an inclusive student experience that reflected changing learner needs. The findings from 10 short-life working groups were used to develop new standards to address critical student experience elements that emerged. Phased implementation ensured staff were fully supported to embed the new standards which significantly changed the design and delivery of curricula and assessments. For the first time, the university introduced an ambitious root and branch change management plan to deliver comprehensive change with lasting impact.

Information Centre team, Kingston University

This team were previously solely a library enquiry team helping students across four sites. Ambitiously, the team always felt they could do more to further support our students. As part of a wider ongoing Student Hub project, the team evolved into an embryonic Information Centre in September 2021: becoming a single point of contact for all student services enquiries. The team evolved to help with general advice on money, accommodation, visa issues, disability support, student funding and library queries - to name a few. The team also took on the responsibility of doing the relevant checks to process international student check-ins with over 3,000 checked in that month.

Menopause and Menstruation Group, Oxford Brookes University

The Menopause and Menstruation (M&M) Group at Oxford Brookes University, led by Electra Dottin, has reshaped the university landscape by fostering inclusive dialogue and support for menopause and menstruation. The M&M Group goes beyond usual university practices, engaging internal staff networks, student groups, and administrative departments. Dedicated communication channels, a comprehensive website, and resource toolkits have normalized discussions on menopause and menstruation. Their commitment to inclusivity is highlighted by OBU's Menopause Workplace Pilot, allowing staff experiencing peri/menopause protected exercise time during work hours. The M&M Group embodies collaborative spirit, driving meaningful change and fostering a culture of openness and support.

Tom Levitt, Associate Lecturer, University of West London

Tom joined UWL in 2022 to help promote compliance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in operational and curricular matters, having spent a decade as a consultant and writer on responsible and sustainable business. He co-authored a 2021 CABS report on “Business Schools and the Public Good” and his first advice was to accredit as a Living Wage employer, to help ensure that all staff live in dignity – which was achieved in summer, 2023. By setting up a Staff Sustainability Network, open to all, Tom has created a forum for colleagues to learn more about sustainability. At 70, there’s no self-interest in Tom’s quest to see the world become more sustainable!

Procurement team, University of South Wales

The Procurement team's mission is to use their excellence and expertise to positively impact students, partners and communities through the optimisation of university spend. The team has introduced a supplier relationship management (SRM) programme to engage suppliers to become a 'University of Choice'. A standout innovation in the SRM approach is the implementation of the Social Value Matrix. Since Autumn 2023, this tool has become an integral part of the tendering process. This approach is transformational within USW, the Welsh HE sector and the wider HE sector.

Student Hub Team, University of Derby

The Student Hub Team have established a new standard for student support. The team established a single point of enquiry and ownership to remove frustration and deliver holistic resolution. This development had the primary objective of bringing staff and students into a service and delivery model, harnessing technology, knowledge and expertise in an accessible and supportive environment. The outcome has been dramatic; students have immediate access to the right people to address their challenges. Through this, students can focus on their studies and maximise their university experience, overcoming barriers which may have led to departure. This translates into better academic outcomes and graduate prospects.

Future Students Team, University of South Wales

In 2022, facing declining market share, USW's Marketing & Student Recruitment Team undertook a major restructure, uniting home and international recruitment teams as 'Future Students'. The team reframed their approach to campaign planning, monitoring, and content creation, improving team culture, integration, and market share. In partnership with UCAS, they conducted a 'leaky hosepipe' review, identifying gaps in their student recruitment strategy.

A recent staff survey was overwhelmingly positive, with praise from UCAS: 'USW's FS department is one of the best, most creative and organised departments we've worked with.' The institutional impact has been significant: and USW increased market share within their competitor set for the first time.

Mental Health Charter Mark Team, UWE Bristol

UWE Bristol has become the first university in the UK to achieve an “Award with Merit” for embedding mental health and wellbeing as a strategic priority and implementing a whole- institution approach. The team has demonstrated resilience, teamwork, and problem-solving through the process. An example of this is the work done to demonstrate that their services are safe and effective, the team developed and implemented a clinical outcome measure alongside the development of a whole-university non-clinical outcome framework. The framework means they can continue to challenge themselves, ensuring their services help build students’ individual competence, confidence and resilience and foster a sense of belonging and mattering in their community.

The International Office, University of Hertfordshire

The University of Hertfordshire's International Office has been resolute in strengthening its international recruitment and activity, while being highly compliant and robust in its approach. It's their meticulous work that's developed Herts' highly reputable network of global education agents and academic partners, facilitated strong strategic partnerships, impactful research collaborations and world leading global teaching and exchange opportunities. Thanks to the IO's immense professionalism, and their pioneering internationalisation strategy, the University remains financially stable at a time when many are struggling. Endorsed by the former Prime Minister and the King, recognition for the IO's remarkable work doesn't come much higher than that.

University of South Wales Students' Union, University of South Wales

The USWSU team have experienced significant turnover in senior management in recent years. Since then, the team achieved the highest level of engagement in its elections in over four years, organised the return of Varsity to USW, and supported student-led societies and events like International Mother Tongue Day. The entire team pooled resources to support each other to offer the best possible service to students, through establishing clear expectations, regular meetings and collective accountability across teams.

Digital Assessment Team, University of Hertfordshire

The Digital Assessment team are part of the Technology Enhanced Learning team and have been doing brilliant work to support colleagues across the university in using digital tools for tests and examinations. The team have been piloting a software tool and have worked closely with the company to meet the needs of staff to ensure effective assessments for students. They have worked very hard to mitigate any issues and ensure that the assessments have run smoothly, reducing anxiety for the students being assessed. They work collaboratively with staff across the whole university and have such a 'can do' attitude.

Kingston University Admissions Team Leaders, Kingston University

Admissions is one of the cornerstones of a HEI. Admissions processes and the staff who deliver the service are fundamental to the management and conversion of enquiries, applications and offers, and creating a positive first experience of the university.

The Admissions Team Leaders have ambitiously tackled the challenges that increased applications have presented, through a concerted and continuous effort coupled with a focus on new innovative approaches to systems and processing without additional resource. They have worked tirelessly with stakeholders to deliver many positive outcomes for our applicants. They continue to strive for excellence and take pride in their work, always conducting themselves in a professional manner.

Professor Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Professor of Applied Sociology, University of Greenwich

Many students have experience of facing barriers in higher education, whether through poverty or structural discrimination. Louise proactively supports every student to achieve their ambitions. It's the vision she sets herself: Education Without Boundaries. Her application of sociological auto/biography encourages students to explore their identities within the context of social structures. Greenwich's approach, spearheaded by Louise, was cited by TEF, which awarded them Gold for teaching excellence. Auto/biography was central to the establishment of the Office of Undergraduate Research within the faculty, which built new research communities and brought their work to international audiences and auto/biography has now been adopted more widely.

Poppy Diston, Therapy Dog, University of Hertfordshire

From licking faces to encouraging belly rubs, not many would get away with Poppy's work methods. But that's the benefit of being the University of Hertfordshire's most upbeat member of staff: there's not much you can't do that doesn't make people smile. Part of Herts' disability services and student wellbeing team since 2019, therapy dog Poppy provides vital wellbeing support to students.

A true champion of EDI, Poppy embraces every student with the aim of making them feel happier. Research shows interacting with dogs can help release 'happy' hormone oxytocin, improving mood and even lowering heart rate and blood pressure. Poppy is an asset to the university.

Roseanna Donnan, Student Experience Manager, University of West London

Roseanna consistently demonstrates an unwavering commitment to motivating others, even in the face of adversity. She leads the operational delivery of Student Welcomes, which has welcomed over 5000 new students/faces already, requiring a multi stakeholder approach. UWL have been implementing a new Student Records System (SITS) and a student app. In the face of teething problems early on, Roseanna adopted a calm approach and identified solutions to ensure the student experience was not impacted. She has fostered a nurturing and productive environment. Her resilience, optimism and ability to stay upbeat, regardless of the circumstances, has been a source of inspiration.

RGU:Union, Robert Gordon University

RGU:Union plays a key role in the university's outstanding student experience, offering social activities beyond the classroom and opportunities to make lifelong friends.

During the student cost-of-living crisis, the Union introduced Breakfast Clubs, giving the community access to free food and drinks every Tuesday morning. The team expanded to a Supper Club, providing free warm and hearty meals every Thursday. The team provided music, dances, and quizzes alongside the meals to positively bring joy in tough times. Most recently, the Union also introduced an Emergency Food Parcel Service in collaboration with local charity Cfine which supports students who are hit the hardest.

INSPIRING INDIVIDUALS

There are individuals at our universities whose impact on those around them comes from the way they work, their dedication, positivity and integrity. These individuals have taken on projects that improve the working environment for colleagues, shaped university cultures or in some cases delivered research and partnerships with global impact. From those that are working on a global scale, to those who simply make life much easier for those around them, the success of our sector rests on their shoulders.

Dr Myrtle Emmanuel, Senior Lecturer in HRM & Organisational Behaviour, University of Greenwich

Dr Emmanuel approaches race relations with authenticity, never shying away from difficult conversations. She rallies others and inspires collective action. Myrtle's work began in earnest in 2023/2024 to develop the university's Race Action Plan. She reshapes policies and fosters allyship through innovative training. By sharing their powerful stories nationally, she advocates for those who've faced systemic oppression. In collaboration with community members and colleagues, a mental health toolkit was designed for mental health practitioners, to reduce health inequalities experienced by people of African-Caribbean heritage. She transforms lives, communities, and institutions through the power of unity.

Alison Griffin, Head of Study Support, University of West London

Alison has devoted time and energy at UWL to widening access and student success, fundamentally changing the lives of many students for the better.

A late entrant to higher education, a single parent, and a first-generation student, she faced her own academic and personal challenges. Her experiences led her to develop UWL's Study Support Service, which reduces student stress and boosts confidence. Her innovative Study Skills Summer School was designed for mature offer holders, including care leavers, refugees, and those with no parental history of higher education. Her work has been outstanding.

Dr. Christine Grant, Associate Professor (Research), Centre for Healthcare and Communities

Aimed at investigating the impact of remote e-working on individuals with disabilities and neurodiversity, the Remote4All research project is a collaborative initiative with integrity at its heart. By addressing a critical gap in knowledge, fostering inclusivity and actively working towards positive change in remote work, Remote4All is helping deliver more equitable and supportive work environments for all colleagues. This incredible project is a product of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote4All revealed enablers and barriers to remote work for the disabled community, emphasising personalised policies that are crucial for fostering an inclusive culture.

Dr. Elizabeth Lloyd-Parkes, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Supply Chain Management, Coventry University

Elizabeth exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding research supervisor through her dedication, innovative approach, and unwavering support for her students' academic and professional growth. She goes above and beyond standard supervisory expectations through her innovative approach. For overseas students, she recognises potential difficulties in written expression and has established links with student support services to assist with grammar checking. Elizabeth is also deeply committed to the career development of her students. In May 2024, she received recognition from the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) for her outstanding doctoral supervision which marks the first time a USW academic member of staff has achieved this honour.

Thuy Mason, Senior Lecturer and Pharmacy Course Director, Kingston University

Thuy is a true professional, always innovative with unique ways of providing solutions to the most difficult problems. Her creativity extends to designing engaging educational games to attract prospective pharmacy students, which catapulted our course forward. She is our newly appointed BAME staff network chair, already pushing the EDI/anti-racism agenda forward through penning some poignant poems. Her attention to detail and resilience is clear in her work preparing for the high-stake competence exam which is a challenging task requiring a high level of accuracy. Thuy works tirelessly to upskill her students by offering several internship projects and enriching their learning. She is an asset to her institution and beyond.

Becky Comber, Procurement Manager, Oxford Brookes University

Becky carried her team through a change in departmental leadership. She supported the team on top of her heavy workload, showed her incredible memory skills and was able to answer questions that would have slowed the whole team down. She was “the glue that kept the team together”. Becky has not only fulfilled her role admirably but has gone above and beyond while facing significant challenges within the procurement department.

Mark Gilbert, Finance, Business and Process Manager, Anglia Ruskin University

Mark plays a crucial role in the Financial Services department team. His exceptional understanding of financial operations and the systems used set him apart. He is continuously seeking improvements in the account system. His efforts in automating processes have not only saved time but also allowed others to focus on additional tasks and responsibilities. It is evident that Mark's contributions are highly valued and appreciated by the department.

Reverend Vaughan Rees, Director of Chaplaincy Services, University of South Wales

Reverend Vaughan Rees has served USW for almost 20 years. When he joined the then University of Glamorgan, the Chaplaincy was Vaughan and a couple of rooms. Today, the University is USW, and the Chaplaincy is involved in all facets of university life. Under his leadership, the Chaplaincy has led many EDI initiatives and one of its voluntary Assistant Chaplains convenes our Spectrum LGBTQ staff group. He has been chair of the Wales HE Prevent Group and HEFCW colleagues tell us that he's their "go to" person in Wales. Former Vice-Chancellor Professor Dame Julie Lydon said "What would Vaughan do?" will continue to be a yardstick for compassion and fairness."

Christopher Abbott, Director of Estates and Facilities, UWE Bristol

Chris has been a constant positive 'can do' member of UWE's senior leadership team for 20 years. He places the student and staff experience at the very heart of everything his department does. He leads dedicated teams that support the university 24/7 - their team are the beating heart of the university. Nothing can happen without them delivering exceptional student and staff centric services and support. Chris will be retiring this year. His passion has never wavered. He has overseen well over £1billion invested in estates over his tenure and has continued to challenge and improve every service area he leads.

Professor Aletta Norval, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education), Anglia Ruskin University

Since 2018 Aletta has been Deputy Vice-Chancellor at ARU where she has made a tremendous impact on our strategic direction and led our innovative, inclusive and entrepreneurial education strategy. She is known for her analysis of Apartheid discourse and has worked on biometrics, focussing on issues from citizen consent to identity management techniques. At ARU, Aletta has made an outstanding contribution to the innovation in our academic portfolio, and led us to TEF Gold, University of the Year, Athena Swan and other awards that demonstrate our inclusive culture. Aletta is retiring and will be missed as a kind, thoughtful and inspirational leader. Her legacy will be profound.

June Hughes, University Secretary and Registrar, University of Derby

If June was a stick of rock, the University of Derby and its values would run right through her. June began at the University in 1987 as Senior Admin Officer. She is a sounding board, helping staff to improve student outcomes. She supported the Graduate Outcomes team improve survey response rates and increased oversight of TEF data, improving continuation, progression and outcomes.

As a Fellow and Council Member of AUA, former Chair of the Midlands Group, and national Executive member of AHUA, June shaped national policy for HE professional service.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Kath Mitchell said: "Without June, I cannot imagine how I would have been able to undertake my role."

Dr Charlotte Jeavons, Head of School of Human Sciences, University of Greenwich

Charlotte began her career more than 25 years ago as a dental nurse: a trailblazer, breaking glass ceilings and setting new expectations. In 2023, she was elected as president of the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD). As BASCD's lead for Oral Health Improvement during the pandemic, she acted as a policy advocate across multiple sectors, ensuring that oral health remained a priority. She recently completed a pilot study into the experiences of BAME students studying public health. Charlotte has demonstrated an unwavering positive attitude and an exceptional ability to motivate others through her numerous roles and achievements in public health.

Alex Best, Alumni Relations Coordinator, University of Hertfordshire

After facing his own mental health challenges, Alex became a Wellbeing Champion for the Marketing and Communications department. Alongside signposting colleagues to mental health support and advice, he holds support sessions and is famed for his hugely successful departmental workshop on stress. Alex also champions the University's Active Staff program, encouraging colleagues to try various sports and participates himself. As Vice-Chair of the University's Staff Men's Health Network (Mental Health), he has spoken at the University's ACTIVATE program. Embodying Herts' values of being friendly, ambitious, collegiate, and enterprising, Alex approaches challenges innovatively. Recently, he launched the Powered by Herts podcast to create an inspiring series of interviews.

Karl Fletcher, Senior International Compliance Officer, University of Derby

Karl has demonstrated exceptional dedication and resilience in overcoming numerous challenges related to the university's international compliance, student attendance, and engagement. His tireless efforts have ensured that colleagues within the team and the wider university adhere to correct procedures and continuously update local processes to maintain compliance across the board. Karl has taken a leading role in coordinating specialist advice and engagement meetings with international students. Karl has been instrumental in implementing a variety of initiatives and enhanced student support systems. Karl is also a pioneer in sharing best practices within the sector, overseeing internal staff understanding of visa regulations, and providing comprehensive training on compliance matters.

Dr Heba Ghazal, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy, Kingston University

Dr Heba's contributions have significantly impacted students' performance in a positive manner at Kingston University and beyond, including national numeracy ranking exams and the postgraduate registration assessment set by the pharmacy regulatory body. Her unwavering commitment has improved the university's standing in the world of pharmacy. She uses a blended approach to teaching - instilling a dose of fun and a positive competition in the classroom using quizzes in addition to adopting rigorous assessment strategy. She tailored her teaching to the different levels, using different delivery methods, including e-teaching and formative exercises. Her dedication has improved student outcomes and inspired her colleagues.

Faz Syed, Faculty Facilities and Services Officer, Oxford Brookes University

Faz's professional focus transcends his role, driving impactful solutions swiftly and efficiently. His exceptional ability to delve into problems, identify pain points, and collaborate across departments is unparalleled. Faz consistently demonstrates a willingness to investigate complex challenges, addressing them with a holistic understanding and a keen eye for detail. His dedication to improvement has resulted in innovative solutions to problems that many deemed insurmountable. His remarkable contributions have not only resolved immediate issues but have also set a new standard for continuous improvement within our facilities and services. Faz embodies the qualities of an outstanding Faculty Facilities and Services Officer.

Professor Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Professor of applied sociology, University of Greenwich

Many students have experience of barriers in higher education, whether through poverty or structural discrimination. Louise proactively supports every student to achieve their ambitions. Her application of sociological auto/biography encourages students to explore their identities within the context of social structures. Greenwich's approach, spearheaded by Louise, was cited by TEF, which awarded them Gold for teaching excellence. Auto/biography was central to the establishment of the Office of Undergraduate Research within the faculty, which built new research communities and brought their work to international audiences and auto/biography has now been adopted more widely.

Andrew Knight, Deputy Director, Occupational Safety and Health Services, University of Brighton

Andrew is seen as the 'go-to person' for help with recruitment panels, or disciplinary hearings by departments across the institution or support with projects. He has the ability to encourage others to raise the bar whilst maintaining a high level of professional standard as a safety practitioner. His achievements include the successful introduction of service level agreements with stakeholders, a help desk to assist workflow, a team stress risk assessment that introduces support for all staff members, valued coffee catch-ups and team meetings to support lone working. Simply put, if he is leading a project, you have every confidence in its success.

Dr Valentina Ippolito, Senior Lecturer in Filmmaking and Deputy Director for the Centre for Practice Research in the Arts, School of Arts, Kingston University

Dr Valentina Ippolito's professional and personal input while working with students and her collaborative approach with colleagues are extraordinary. Valentina has encouraged practices of inclusivity, diversity and equality in filmmaking at theoretical level and by fostering a practical approach while working on the filmmaking BA module 'Voices'. Students were encouraged to explore underrepresented societal themes and give power to the unheard voices of individuals and marginalised groups. At all times, even under the pressure of deadlines and large workloads, the student cohort and collaborators felt supported and heard.

BRILLIANT ALUMNI FROM THE DTA

The Doctoral Training Alliance (DTA), run by University Alliance, is a doctoral training programme providing a national network for doctoral researchers and their supervisors, as well as training opportunities to help develop their research and professional skills. It supports career development within and beyond academia. Our DTA alumni deliver highly impactful research and go on to have successful careers in academia or industry. Here we recognise the impact of just some of these researchers.

Dr Ashfaque Alam, Lecturer in Semiconductor Education, King's College London/Sheffield Hallam University

Dr. Alam is a Lecturer of Semiconductor education at KCL. Upon completing his PhD in Semiconductor Materials and Optoelectronic devices for energy application, he published four first-authored research articles from his research in reputed journals, including Nature's Scientific Reports, MDPI Energies etc.

His novel concepts were presented at the Royal Society of Chemistry's 6th Energy Sector Early Career Symposium in 2022. He also co-supervises doctoral projects at Sheffield Hallam University, focusing on sustainable energy materials, and published initial findings as the corresponding author. Alongside his academic and technical skills, his proven commitment to mitigating the climate crisis is truly remarkable.

Dr Rjaa Ashraf, Research Fellow, Coventry University

Rjaa is an extremely hard-working individual, and consistently went above and beyond the expectations of a PhD student. Her work identified how systems can reduce methane gas flaring and increase the profitability of biomethane production for clean cooking and electricity generation. Her work was published in multiple conferences and was selected for a special issue in the leading journal Chemosphere. She was awarded her PhD with minor corrections within a month and subsequently went straight into a Post Doc, working on the Solar Energy Transitions (SET) Project, which focuses on clean cook solutions for vulnerable communities in Africa.

Dr Pablo Duro, Senior Medical Writer, Bionical Emas, Manchester Metropolitan University

Pablo studied the effectiveness of assessment tools that a clinical team can use to assess and support a patient before they have a major surgery, delivering an excellent standard of work. Testament to this hard work, dedication and professionalism, Pablo has to date accumulated 3 first author publications, a further 4 co-authored publications, conference presentations and was appointed as an honorary researcher at Manchester NHS Foundation Trust. As if that wasn't enough, Pablo was also a finalist at the '3-minute thesis' Manchester Metropolitan University competition. Pablo has achieved a seemingly impossible amount in his 3 years of study, which is testament to Pablo as a person and a professional.

Mahmoud Eltaweel, Teaching Fellow, University of Hertfordshire

Throughout his doctoral studies, Mahmoud actively engaged in both national and international arenas, participating in four international and two national conferences to promote the need for sustainable energy solutions. His commitment to advancing green technologies was further evidenced by a successful partnership with a UK-based company, enhancing their prototype product through research published in a Q1 journal. His contributions to the field of energy and renewable energy extend globally. His efforts go beyond what might be expected from a PhD graduate, demonstrating a proactive, positive attitude that inspires others and contributes significantly to the field's advancement. This aligns deeply with the DTA's values of impactful and collaborative behaviour.

Dr Ana Ferreira, Product Development Scientist at Arxada (formerly Lonza ingredients), Nottingham Trent University

Dr Ana Ferreira demonstrated outstanding professionalism and collaboration. Ana's research on the development of antimicrobial materials has been published in six highly ranked scientific journals. Ana's achievements have been disseminated with scientific communities at three prestigious international conferences in the UK, Germany and Italy. Ana's contribution to Material Science and Nanoparticle Research impacts past and current students, inspiring them in their exciting new research and discoveries. In the year 2022 Ana was awarded the Research Development Grant from the Royal Society of Chemistry. Ana has transferred crucial skills received during their doctoral study, into the current role which was indispensable for Ana's successful career development.

Spyridon Gavalas, DTA/MSC COFUND PhD Researcher, University of Central Lancashire

Dr. Gavalas' groundbreaking research focuses on optimising carbon dots, zero-dimensional fluorescent carbon nanomaterials known for their high photoluminescence, tunable optical properties, and biocompatibility. The impact of Dr. Gavalas' research is substantial. His cost-effective and scalable synthesis method paves the way for widespread adoption of these enhanced nanoparticles in biomedicine, optoelectronics, and materials science. His exceptional attention to detail, innovative problem-solving skills, and dedication to advancing the field of nanotechnology not only expanded our understanding of carbon nanomaterials but also opened new avenues for their application. He demonstrates leadership and a commitment to excellence in his field.

Dr. Cecilia Gialdini, Postdoc Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, Ulster University

As a PhD student, Cecilia was proactive, managing not only to complete her doctoral thesis during the Covid pandemic, but also to gain teaching experience, co-organise academic events and publish articles. Cecilia's outstanding work has been recognised at the national and international level, since she was awarded the 'Marjorie Boulton' Fellowship offered by Esperantic Studies Foundation, and she has been accepted as Postdoc Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and Associate Fellow of the Centre for Research and Documentation of the World Language Problems.

George Milev, PhD Researcher and Lecturer, Nottingham Trent University

George's PhD is focused on the development of a novelty heat pump, a project that aimed to improve the performance of currently available models to support the UK's plan to build more sustainable technology. During his PhD, he presented his work at several conferences and has successfully published a number of papers in international journals. His research on the impact of replacing all fossil fuel vehicles with EVs has received significant media coverage. His development skills, knowledge and sustainability passion has resulted in him being awarded the outstanding PhD student award from NTU's Student Union this year.

Katharina Steier, Test Engineer, Manchester Metropolitan University

Kath impressed the team with her work ethics, dedication, and ability to carry on experiments under minimal supervision from the start of her project. Her impactful work was demonstrated through her readiness to undertake any tasks. Sadly, her PhD progress was hindered by a breast cancer diagnosis at the end of the first year of her PhD. Despite the difficult diagnosis she showed enormous professionalism and positivity and was determined to carry on. For Kath, staying connected to her regular life at university helped her to maintain focus and to overcome health difficulties she was facing. Katharina has beaten cancer and restarted her PhD in April 2021.



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