

Undergraduate Students of the Year 2015

The criteria against which nominations for the Undergraduate of the Year are judged state that:

“The nominee should have made an exceptional contribution to the life of the University, contributed significantly to the development of the curriculum or enhanced other students’ experience at University through activities such as peer support, student societies, or work with central services such as Recruitment and Admissions. Alternatively he or she should have coupled excellent academic achievement with either major external activity (top level sport or music) or have overcome major difficulties.”

Alison Howard, Manchester Pharmacy School, FMHS

Alison Howard, who has just completed the third year of her Master of Pharmacy degree, is described as having enhanced the student experience immensely in many ways.

Alison is the treasurer of the Manchester University Pharmacy Society which arranges both social and employability events. She is also a Peer Assisted Study Session (or PASS) leader, facilitating the first year students’ understanding of calculations skills.

She has written the Student Involvement Strategy, which she discussed with the Pharmacy External Advisory Board and also delivered a ‘learning at lunch’ session on student support to staff. In addition, she has generated a ‘virtual community’ of patients and medical centres which have been adopted as teaching tools.

Alison has networked with Pharmacist Support, a Manchester-based charity, which supports pharmacists and pharmacy students in need. She has also organised bake sales, raising £450 for Children in Need and Save the Children as well as for Pharmacist Support.

Lucy Neat, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, FHUMS

Lucy Neat has just completed her second year of the Integrated Professional Masters programme in German and French. Lucy came to Manchester with outstanding A-Level grades in French, German, Spanish and English Literature, and has sustained an excellent academic performance in spite of a severe physical disability.

Lucy is confined to a wheelchair, and faces ongoing treatment for her condition. She is in receipt of a Snowdon Trust award that supports her in living independently while at University, and her resilience in difficult circumstances is an inspiration to her fellow students.

Lucy is described as an outstanding linguist, with a formidable intellect. By way of examples, her average mark in her first year was 79.33%, and she was awarded the Keith Millward prize for all-round excellence in French Studies.

Rachel Arnold, Faculty of Life Sciences

Rachel has just completed her BSc in Plant Sciences and is described as being a committed student with a strong academic record and as someone who has a great sense of responsibility and a desire to make a difference in the University and the wider community.

She was a programme representative for two years and was a Student Ambassador this past year. She has been Events Co-ordinator of the University Botanical Society and this academic year was Chair of the Society.

Rachel combined her studies and these activities with a significant amount of voluntary work having been a mentor with YouthLink and Child North-East and undertaking teaching activities with ReachOut. Most recently she was a science busker at the Manchester Science Festival.

Andrea Ibiassi, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, FEPS

Andrea Ibiassi has just finished her 4th year of a MEng degree in Electrical & Electronic Engineering with Industrial Experience and is currently on target for 1st class honours.

In addition to being an excellent student, Andrea, is a volunteer with Robogals which involves participation in school workshops and a weekly commitment to visiting schools to try to encourage more girls into engineering. Andrea has authored an article on Robogals for the Institution of Engineering and Technology (or IET) website.

Andrea is also a mentor for ReachOut, a charity that works with children in disadvantaged communities in Manchester and is a STEM ambassador who participated in the Big Bang fair In March 2014.

Following attendance at a TargetJobs event entitled “It’s not just for the boys” in October 2013, she was invited to apply for the Engineering Undergraduate of the Year award. This involved answering a questionnaire from the sponsor E.ON, on-line tests and attendance at an assessment centre. She was one of 10 finalists from approximately 500 applicants for the Engineering Undergraduate of the Year award.

All of these achievements and contributions have been delivered despite a challenging childhood in Angola where studying was incredibly difficult.