

## Celebrating and Recognising the Achievements of Research Staff in the Faculty of Science and Engineering

To celebrate and recognise the achievement of the University's research staff, the Research Staff Strategy Group introduced Research Staff Excellence Awards. We are delighted to announce the inaugural winners and highly commended within the Faculty of Science and Engineering.

Following an open call for nominations, colleagues nominated research staff for their achievements, impact and successes in their research. The winners and highly commended were selected by a panel comprised of academics leads for research staff and researcher development and chaired by the Associate Vice President for Research. Full details of the awards and criteria are available [here](#).

**Dr Ashok Keerthi** in the Department of Chemistry has been an active researcher in Manchester since 2016 and is currently a Ramsay Memorial and Presidential Fellow. Ashok's outstanding research publications include four Nature papers and one Science paper. His breakthrough papers are having a major impact on the field of nanofluidics as evidenced by three of his publications being in the top 1% cited papers in the academic field of Chemistry. In recognition of this fantastic achievement, Ashok is the Faculty winner of **Research Staff of the Year 2020**.



In addition, the excellent research being carried out by Dr Daniel Thomas, as evidenced by his impressive research outputs in the area of cosmology, was highly commended in the same category.

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**Dr Mike Buckley's** Nature paper *Age estimates for hominin fossils and the onset of the Upper Palaeolithic at Denisova Cave* is the winner of the Faculty's **Best Outstanding Output by Research Staff**. Mike's crucial contribution to this work was the application of his unique expertise in species identification using a method of collagen fingerprinting (ZooMS). The paper signified a landmark moment in the evolutionary history of hominids being identified through ZooMS and was cited 53 times in the first 18 months of publication.

A landmark sole-author paper from Dr Daniel Thomas in the Physical Review D Journal was highly commended in this category. The paper breaks new ground in terms of theoretical modelling in cosmology and was highlighted by the journal as an Editor's Selection.

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**Dr Chris Overton, Dr Lorenzo Pellis and Dr Helena Stage** are the Faculty winners for **Best Outstanding Contribution to Research Impact by Research Staff** in recognition of their significant contribution to the national scientific response to COVID-19. The team have engaged with the SAGE subgroup on Modelling. Research and impact has been achieved in a number of ways, including commissioned studies from SAGE and its subgroups through to engagement with the Public Health England modelling cell and direct work with wider government. Their data and forecasting work on the doubling rate at the early stages of the pandemic had a significant impact on the change in the speed with which the lockdown was introduced.

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**Dr Michael Avery** is the winner of the University-wide award **Best Outstanding Contribution to the Research Staff Environment**. Michael has developed the postdoc forum in Materials from a largely social forum into a broader forum of support with conferences, lunchtime seminars and support for grant applications. This approach is being replicated across other departments. Michael's engagement with the Faculty ensures the researcher's voice is heard within the Faculty and the University. During lockdown Michael has continued to create a supportive research environment through the organisation of online meetings and forums for all postdocs across the Faculty.

The work of Dr Igor Chernyavsky and Prof Radha Boya and was highly commended in this category. They have organised a range of grant writing workshops and resources which has been well received by their peers.

Many congratulations to all of the winners and highly commended research staff, your significant contribution to the research excellence of the Faculty is appreciated.