

**2021 Distinguished Achievement Awards
Professional Services and Cultural Institutions of the Year**

Jennie Blake, Library – individual winner

Jennie Blake is Learning Development Manager in The University of Manchester Library.

Jennie leads the My Learning Essentials provision, which has supported students throughout lockdown. Over this time Jennie and the team have developed nearly 200 resources, blogs and podcasts which have attracted almost 90,000 hits, supporting students with their studies and research. Jennie has launched a peer network supporting students from widening participation backgrounds to form a network of their peers to explore academic, wellbeing and employability resources.

As a result of the Library's innovative virtual teaching and support model, Jennie was asked to help guide the University's Welcome Induction and Transition Group to establish materials, resources and events to support this crucial start of year activity. It meant that students who were unable to be on campus could still access the vast majority of support, information and opportunities available.

As an inaugural fellow of the Institute for Teaching & Learning, Jennie also conducted a project that has influenced the way our University approaches academic advising.

Jennie has been described as having an exceptional ability to embrace change with enthusiasm and positivity. She is well known for her exemplary approach to sharing best practice, working across organisational boundaries and her unrelenting commitment to the continuous improvement of the learning experience for all students.

Stephanie Fisher, Student Experience – individual winner

Stephanie Fisher is Senior Residential Life Coordinator in the Directorate for the Student Experience.

Steph is a key contact within Reslife for the Advice and Response team and she consistently goes the extra mile to support the team in dealing with complex and often urgent student issues with integrity, tact and diplomacy, putting students at the heart of everything she does.

Steph is an extremely supportive and motivating manager who has led her team by example during the COVID-19 pandemic. At one point over 50% of the halls population were in self-isolation and needing support; mainly food but also a significant number with welfare concerns. Steph worked tirelessly to deliver the support required and triaging to other University support services as needed.

Steph played a key role in supporting the day-to-day operation of a phone bank which was set up to ring all student residents in halls in October and November 2020. This resulted in conversations with over 3,000 students, with 310 residents receiving help with additional information and 108 students with well-being concerns being identified.

Steph has significantly contributed to maintaining a positive, open and respectful working environment during a very challenging period and is praised by her colleagues for her thoughtful and compassionate approach.

Margot Power, Faculty of Science and Engineering – individual winner

Margot Power was Project Manager for the Campus Reopening Group in May 2020.

Margot joined the Faculty of Science and Engineering in January 2020 to support the Faculty MECD change project. Less than three months later the University campus was closed and the UK went into lockdown. By May, with restrictions easing and having already proven to be an adept Project Manager in the short time working in FSE, Margot willingly agreed to be redeployed to support the coordination of the Campus Reopening Group.

This was a hugely challenging undertaking, but Margot quickly took on board the enormous scope of the task, established excellent working relationships with multiple stakeholders and independently oversaw the delivery of specific subprojects.

As well as coordinating the main group and subgroups, to maintain the fast pace required, Margot was also an active member of the team – drafting communications for StaffNet; providing comments and feedback on policies and process documents; briefing key colleagues and joining the dots between different pieces of work to ensure a level of consistency whilst not delaying the overall work plan.

Margot has shown extreme agility and flexibility, providing excellent levels of support and guidance, and encouraging others to work across institutional boundaries and ultimately enabled colleagues to safely reopen our campus.

University of Manchester Worldwide Development Team – Small Team winner

Team members: Dianne Bennett, Lukasz Kaczmarek, Tamara Montrose, Nadine Morgan, Rachel Powild, Clara Andres Rodrigues, Peter Trimbel, Steve Wheeler, Emma-Lee Yarwood

Following the closure of the University campus in March 2020 and with all teaching and learning activity moving online, the University of Manchester Worldwide Development Team demonstrated a staggering display of responsiveness and their ability to embrace new challenges. They created and launched a new and complex service to support students who were experiencing problems accessing their online courses or any University services due to technical problems or the lack of appropriate equipment. Without this entirely new service, 'HelpMeGetOnline, many students would have been left struggling for technical support at a time when they needed it the most.

The team worked flexibly and collaboratively with colleagues across campus to ensure those students who were registered for additional support were prioritised. As a team, they demonstrated outstanding levels of coordination, creativity and mutual support, and every individual member took on significant extra workload in an unfamiliar area to ensure this project was delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Professor April McMahon, one of the referees for the team said that HelpMeGetOnline was an immediate, collaborative, collegial and crucial part of the University's student-facing response to our move online after lockdown in March 2020.

Cross Faculty eLearning teams (BMH, DSE, FSE, HUMS) – Large Team winner

Members – This is a collective award for all the eLearning teams in the University, in recognition of their collective achievements.

In March 2020, the University was forced into moving all teaching online within a week. Critical to the success of this were the University's eLearning teams and the leadership and support they provided for academic staff, Professional Services teams, and University leaders, to ensure that there was an effective teaching delivery model.

Some of the achievements include: upskilling the whole institution to teach online, doing so in a very short period of time and continuing to work in partnership with academic colleagues to improve the blended learning offer; leading the development of policies, principles and guidance for blended learning, assessment, accessibility and the wider student experience which apply across the institution, as well as tailoring these for specific audiences; collectively procuring equipment and software, evaluating their effectiveness and developing recommended purchasing options; developing new services to meet new demand; and developing new training.

All members of the eLearning teams have played a critical role in the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in doing so have demonstrated a high level of professionalism, leadership, resilience and dedication. This has only been possible by being able to build on the existing good practice, collaborative working, and academic partnerships already established.