

# CELEBRATING OUR BRILLIANT COLLEAGUES HIGHLIGHTS 2023

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MANCHESTER  
1824

The University of Manchester

WE ARE  
**TRANSFORMING  
LIVES BY BEING AT  
THE FOREFRONT  
OF DISCOVERY,  
LEARNING AND  
TRANSLATION.**

**FACULTY OF BIOLOGY,  
MEDICINE AND HEALTH  
HIGHLIGHTS 2023**

Everything we do is a team effort, and we hope to reflect that here, inspiring, motivating and celebrating the everyday contributions that help us transform lives.

If you'd like to provide us with valuable feedback, make suggestions for future editions, submit stories or suggest a colleague that should get a mention then please email [bmhcommunications@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:bmhcommunications@manchester.ac.uk).

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# YOU ARE WORLD LEADING, AWARD WINNING AND BRILLIANT

Last week we celebrated over 500 colleague nominations in our annual celebration event. These nominations showcase who we are as a Faculty; the passion, dedication, creativity and kindness that you all have. It was the perfect time to celebrate all that we have achieved together and the achievements are many.

We were awarded an overall rating of [Silver in the Teaching Excellence Framework](#) this year with Gold for student outcomes. This was fantastic recognition of the work you do, every day, to support our students and the extraordinary efforts that colleagues have been making to improve the experience for all students and ensure every single graduate has the experience they deserve when choosing such a place as Manchester.

Last week, we were ranked 1st in the UK, 1st in Europe and third in the world out of over 1400 universities across 95 countries in the [QS World University Sustainability Rankings](#) adding to our exceptional performance in the [Times Higher Education Impact Rankings](#) league table earlier this year.

We achieved the highest award – [a platinum ranking](#) – by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement and became the second UK university to be awarded a [Silver Race Equality Charter award](#). On top of that, we won a [Green Gown Award](#) for excellence in environmental sustainability for our 'Zero carbon with no net' programme.

The [DETERMINE trial](#) was recognised at Life Science industry awards for their innovative multi-drug pan-cancer platform trial that is helping to find new treatments for rare cancers and our [Optometry team](#) was awarded the University's first ever Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence by Advance HE. A fantastic display of the collaborative work across teaching, learning and healthcare, their success is emblematic of the collaborative approach we take in our Faculty and the benefits of such an integrated approach with our partners.

## THIS YEAR YOU'VE PULLED TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

The Cyber Incident is just one of several challenges we have faced together this year. I know that teams have experienced significant pressure and I want to say thank you for all that you have done. It has not been easy, I know, to deal with these unexpected challenges at some of our busiest times of year but because of your contributions and our collective effort we have made sure our students graduated, our teaching and research continued and that we continued to have a very real, positive impact in our local and global communities.

You've remained dedicated to supporting each other and our incredibly important EDI initiatives as well as attending workshops, events and undertaking professional development that ensures we continue to innovate and improve.

This year you successfully introduced Teams Based Learning in our School of Medical Science thanks to the collective effort of many academic and PS colleagues; a fantastic effort by all involved. There's also been outstanding progress in our strategic plan to engage all Faculty laboratories with tools focusing on reducing consumption and waste, sharing resources more effectively and developing more sustainable protocols. The [Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework](#) and the [6R \(Review, Reduce, Reuse Refill, Replace, Recycle\) initiative](#) has resulted in 51% of Principal Investigators introducing a LEAF champion within their group, with 19% having achieved a LEAF award (19 Bronze, 41 Silver and 4 Gold).

We marked the official opening of the [Christabel Pankhurst Institute for Health Technology and Innovation](#) and welcomed Prof Alejandro (Alex) Frangi as the new Director.

Our new [£150m world-class cancer research facility](#) opened at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust's site. A multidisciplinary team of over 300 scientists and researchers and 400 clinicians and operational staff - the largest concentration in Europe – are now working to deliver clinical trials covering the full extent of the patient pathway, from prevention and novel treatments to living with and beyond cancer.

Our scientists, working with scientists at skincare brand No7, have created a new 'super peptide' blend proven to bio-hack the skin's natural repair process. The [discovery](#) follows 15 years of research and innovation using scientific methods and approaches that are more akin to medical research and rarely seen in cosmetic product development.

An [innovative genetic test](#) that can help prevent newborn babies from going deaf if treated with a common antibiotic, based on our work with Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) researchers, is now being used in routine clinical practice in maternity settings at MFT.

Our work here within the University as well as locally, nationally and globally is outstanding. These are just a few examples of your extraordinary efforts and achievements this year, there are of course many more. As a Faculty we are transforming lives and making a real positive difference thanks to your collective efforts, and it is one of the many reasons I am proud to lead the Faculty.

Best Wishes,  
**Professor Graham Lord**  
Vice-President and Dean



# THE SHEER NUMBER OF TALENTED STAFF HERE IS IMPRESSIVE.



The pages of this magazine shine a light on some of our brilliant colleagues but there are many more than are featured here.

I arrived in Manchester from over the Pennines at the beginning of August and I want to share with you my impressions of Biology, Medicine and Health in my first four months here.

I have in the last four months been hugely impressed by the sheer number of talented and dedicated staff that I have met at all levels. This is not just a comment on our academic staff who are world-leading in their particular fields of research and scholarship, but also the many professional services staff who are also specialists in their various domains. The success of Higher Education rests on the seamless collaboration between academic and professional services colleagues and I can see already that Manchester has this in spades.

Joining a new organisation and getting familiar with everything will always takes some time and The University of Manchester is particularly large and complex.

But I have been warmly welcomed by everyone I have met so far and that has made my induction so much easier. As a newcomer, I have been trying to systematically visit each part of the FBMH footprint to try and get a feel for the place and that is not yet complete. So, if you have not had the chance to meet with me yet, please be patient or drop me an email and invite me to one of your events.

It has been great to arrive in time to see the award of Silver in the Teaching Excellence Framework (with Gold for Student Outcomes). This is a great testament to all of the brilliant colleagues who contribute to our educational endeavour. But unfortunately, Higher Education is a sector with many challenges and these are not going to disappear anytime soon, if ever. We are only going to be able to tackle them if we work together and confront some of the issues head on. There is nothing unusual about the challenges that FBMH face (rising workloads, an aging estate, increasing student mental health issues to name but a few) but the size and scale of the Faculty means they are potentially harder to tackle with single actions. Bespoke solutions may need to be found, but I am confident that the brilliant colleagues we have in FBMH will help do their part.

Finally, I'd like to thank those who have gone before me in this role and who have made the job of starting here so much easier (and understanding the many acronyms!). Most notably, Peter Clayton as the outgoing Deputy Vice-President and Deputy Dean, and Mahesh Nirmalan who held the interim role before I arrived. Both of them have helped with a smooth transition for which I am immensely grateful.

## THANK YOU ALL FOR SUCH A WARM AND FRIENDLY WELCOME

Very best wishes,  
**Professor Allan Pacey**

Deputy Vice-President & Deputy Dean

# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR BRILLIANT COLLEAGUES

On 6 December we celebrated over 500 nominations at our Annual Celebration Event. The nominations showcase who we are as a Faculty; the passion, dedication, creativity and kindness of our colleagues across Biology, Medicine and Health.



What many of the nominations have shown is not just a sense of collegiality but the underlying kindness that drives it. Some of you will already know that one of the quotes I personally frequently return to is by the author Edith Wharton:

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it”

At the event we celebrated those who shine and illuminate the room for others, but we also celebrated those who hold a mirror up to that kindness and give it right back. The sheer number of awards that demonstrated these values was absolutely phenomenal. Whilst it was impossible to showcase every nomination on the day, we were able to show a highlight of inspirational nominations and nominees who received over 5 nominations each.

## [WATCH THE EVENT VIDEOS NOW](#)

Whether you heard a personal thank you at the event, received a nomination or not I hope you know that you are appreciated and that what you do really does have an impact, not just to our external communities but to each other and our students. I'd also like to recognise our colleagues that submitted nominations whether they were written, audio or video nominations. Your willingness to recognise and appreciate your colleagues makes a huge difference as well.

We know because our nominees tell us and they keep their nomination postcards at their desks as a reminder of how much their contribution matters not only in terms of the big picture impact but also each day to their team and to the Faculty. It is worth remembering that kindness ricochets in the most powerful way: if you have a received a nomination today please pay it forward as I know you will.

**Dr Elizabeth Micakovic,**  
Director of Faculty Operations

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR  
INSPIRATIONAL NOMINEES

**Professor Alison Qualtrough**  
School of Medical Sciences

**Dr Stacey McKnight**  
School of Health Sciences

**Ruth Norris**  
The Christabel Pankhurst  
Institute for Health  
Technology

**Dr Hannah Durrington**  
School of Biological  
Sciences

**Emma Thorpe**  
School of Medical Sciences

**Lewis Ablett**  
House Services

**Nazifa Choudhury**  
Faculty Office

**Professor Kurt Wilson**  
School of Medical Sciences

**Richard Clayton**  
House Services

**Dr Celia Hulme**  
School of Health Sciences

**Dr Emma Ferguson-Coleman**  
School of Health Sciences

**Trish Mitchell**  
House Services

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR  
**NOMINEES THAT RECEIVED  
FIVE OR MORE NOMINATIONS**

**Dr Mato Lagator**

School of Biological Sciences

**Hannah Cousins**

School of Medical Sciences

**Dr Isla Gemmell**

School of Health Sciences

**Dr Joanna Brooks**

School of Health Sciences

**Dr Peter Reid**

Faculty Office

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR  
NOMINATORS!**

# JESS GRUNDY'S BRILLIANT COLLEAGUES

In an environment where big achievements can take centre stage, part-time General Practitioner and Associate Programme Director for Staff Development MBChB in the School of Medical Sciences, Jess Grundy, shares her appreciation for the work of our everyday heroes.

The reason I nominated the people I did is because I've worked directly with them and know that they have gone above and beyond in ways you might not know unless you're in direct contact with them. It's the small things that makes a real difference. This is about recognising the people that everything would fall apart without; the smaller, critical things, they do all day, every day.

My role involves coordinating a lot of moving parts and ensuring that colleagues have the resources they need ahead of when they need them; there is a lot of forward planning.

To make all this happen I rely on the meticulous detailed work of my PS colleagues. I rely on all the academics in the medical school and our partner NHS organisations to deliver staff development activities, and I'm grateful to colleagues who attend and are actively interested and care about developing themselves for the benefit of our students, sharing their best practice.

The end user sees it all as one community of practice, but it actually involves a lot of different people and teams, all delivering to equally high standards, and often behind the scenes.

I nominated people in my team and in leadership positions because those roles don't always get the recognition they deserve.

It would be amazing to extend this to our NHS colleagues as well, to recognise those superstars and give them the opportunity to receive appreciation. This recognition and appreciation is important. I appreciate it and I feel like others do as well.

**"RECOGNITION IS IMPORTANT. KNOWING THAT SOMEONE IS SEEING THE EFFORTS YOU CONTRIBUTE EVERY DAY."**



**Dr Jess Grundy** is Associate Programme Director for Staff Development MBChB

# FATIMA MALIK'S INSPIRING PATH

At our recent Festive Faculty Event celebrating the contributions of our brilliant colleagues, Fatima, a Senior Clinical Teacher in Optometry and Lead for Contact Lens Clinic, found herself in the spotlight. Here she shares her joy and surprise at being nominated by her peers.

Fatima's story is not just one of academic achievement but also of personal growth and commitment to student welfare. Her approach to teaching, focus on mental health and contributions to MAP illustrate a career dedicated to enriching the lives and experiences of students. Her nomination is a testament to her impact as an educator, a mentor and a brilliant colleague.

**I WAS SO TOUCHED TO READ THE NOMINATION; I FELT SEEN FOR MY VALUES OF CARING FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL AND IT WAS HEARTENING TO REALISE THE LEVEL OF POSITIVE IMPACT I MAKE.**

Reflecting on the past year, Fatima shared her involvement in Continued Professional Development (CPD). "Education-based CPD was paramount in informing my personal teaching style as a visiting clinical tutor in the past and in my new role, I've found NAP workshops really interesting to further ground my approach to pedagogy."

Her dedication to improving teaching methods led her to design and deliver a CPD lecture titled 'Reflections on Clinical

Education', focusing on creating effective clinical learning environments and reflective practice. The positive feedback she received highlights the impact of her work, with attendees expressing that they 'found the topic of psychological safety and promoting a great environment for learning really interesting and useful.'

Fatima also makes time to support the mental wellbeing of students. "I designed and delivered a Wellbeing session entitled 'Starting Optom-istically' to first- and third-year Optometry students in Welcome Week."

Aware of the stress and anxiety that can affect students' performance, she aimed to equip them with tools to manage these challenges. The session, which included insights from recent graduates and alumni, was well-received, with student feedback describing the session as 'very informative' and an opportunity to gain 'a lot of insight into negative thinking habits and ways to overcome them.'

Looking ahead, Fatima has been invited as a guest speaker at the Celebration Event for the Manchester Access Programme (MAP).

"It's an honour to have been asked... Being an alumna of the first MAP cohort, the experience of being an Academic Tutor for the programme felt like coming full circle."

Her upcoming speech will focus on the influence of MAP on her career to help inspire current students.

**"I WAS SURPRISED BY MY NOMINATION, BUT IT WAS NICE TO SEE THAT WHAT WAS WRITTEN IS WHO I TRY TO BE AND THAT THE PERSON I WANT TO BE IS BEING SEEN."**



**Fatima Malik** is a Senior Clinical Teacher in Optometry and Lead for Contact Lens Clinic,

# NAZIFA CHOUDHURY: A SHINING EXAMPLE OF DEDICATION AND IMPACT

In the vibrant community of the Manchester Academy for Scientist Education (MAHSE) the exceptional dedication and positive impact of Nazifa Choudhury hasn't gone unnoticed!

Ahead of this year's Festive Faculty Event, Nazifa was nominated as a brilliant colleague for the pivotal role she plays in coordinating training programmes at MAHSE.

Reflecting on her nomination, Nazifa shares her feelings of honour and pride. "It lets you know that you are carrying out your role effectively and that your work has a positive effect on others," she says. This acknowledgment from colleagues is especially meaningful to her, going beyond the usual feedback received in annual performance reviews.

Nazifa, who is also a Wellbeing Champion, emphasises the importance of nominating colleagues. "Being able to publicly acknowledge everyday contributions is important now more than ever," she explains, referring to the global events of the past few years that have reshaped our work environments.

Nazifa believes that sharing appreciation can significantly boost mental health and serve as a motivational force, especially for those working from home who may feel isolated due to lack of visible impact of their work on others.

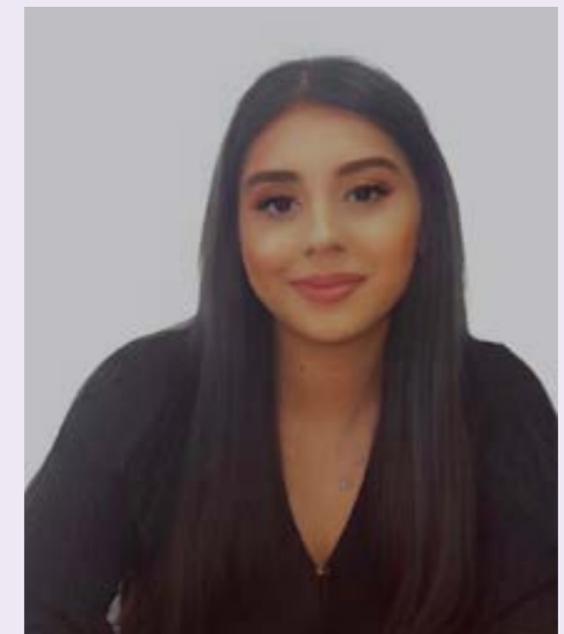
Looking ahead, Nazifa's schedule is packed with exciting projects. She is not just part of the small, busy team at MAHSE but is also pursuing her interests in finance through part-time

studies for an AAT qualification in Accountancy. Her passion for this field is clear: "I've always been interested in a career in finance." Additionally, Nazifa is enrolled in the latest cohort of 'Managing at Manchester', aiming to enhance her managerial skills relevant to her current role.

But that's not all. Nazifa has also embarked on a new journey as an entrepreneur, having started her own small business as a side hustle. "2024 is going to be a busy year!" she says with enthusiasm.

Nazifa's story is one of dedication. Her role at MAHSE, involvement in wellbeing initiatives, academic pursuits, and entrepreneurial venture all paint the picture of a dynamic individual who is making a significant impact in her field and beyond.

Her nomination as a brilliant colleague is a testament to her hard work and the positive influence she has on those around her. As she moves forward into what promises to be an eventful year, Nazifa Choudhury continues to inspire and make a difference in the lives of aspiring clinical scientists and her colleagues alike.



**Nazifa Choudhury** is the MASHE Co-ordinator, Manchester Academy for Healthcare Scientist Education

EVERYTHING YOU  
DO **MAKES A**  
**DIFFERENCE TO**  
**OUR STUDENT**  
**COMMUNITY.**

# A LOVE LETTER FROM OUR STUDENTS

**IN THE MIDST OF UNCERTAINTY AND NEW BEGINNINGS I FOUND MYSELF EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY AS A NEW STUDENT, UNSURE OF WHAT LIFE HAD IN STORE FOR ME. LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT THIS YEAR WOULD UNFOLD SMOOTHLY THANKS TO YOUR REMARKABLE EFFORTS.**

From the moment I stepped foot into this vibrant academic community, you embraced me with open arms. The seamless release of gradebooks, the compassionate extensions for deadlines when I fell ill, and the enlightening lectures on the board—all of these were made possible because of your unwavering dedication.

It's easy to overlook the extraordinary individuals who make a profound impact on our journeys. Today, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in caring for students like me.

You not only impart knowledge but also create an environment where growth and learning flourish. In a place far from home, you became the anchor that makes students transition into professionals easier. Your presence, guidance, and support helped transform the unknown into a place of familiarity and belonging.

I am in awe of your unyielding determination to go beyond your limits, working tirelessly to ensure that our university remains a beacon of knowledge and inspiration. You sacrifice your own time and energy to provide us with a running university, even when faced with challenges and obstacles. Your perseverance is nothing short of remarkable.

Beyond your professional achievements, I want to remind you that you are beautiful, wonderful human

beings with your own dreams and happiness. Your compassion and empathy shine through in everything you do, and your impact reaches far beyond the walls of our institution. The work you do is invaluable, and it shapes the lives of countless individuals.

I am eternally grateful for the impact you have had on my life and the lives of countless others. Your dedication and unwavering commitment have transformed this educational journey into an unforgettable experience. Your presence has made a profound difference, one that I will carry with me always. So, on this day, I want to remind you that what you do matters.

I am forever indebted to your kindness, expertise, and unwavering support. Thank you, dear Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health Staff, for not only providing an exceptional education but for being the guiding lights during this transformative phase of life.

**Dara** graduated this year with a Master's in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology.



## WITH HEARTFELT APPRECIATION...

Every day, as you stand before us with passion and expertise, you instil confidence within us.

You remind us that we are capable of achieving great things and encourage us to reach for the stars.

Your belief in our potential propels us forward and ignites a spark of curiosity that will continue to fuel our academic pursuits.

Your commitment to excellence and nurturing spirit transforms not only our educational experience but also the entire community of Manchester.

You have elevated this city to new heights with your knowledge, compassion, and unwavering passion for your craft.

You are the driving force behind the progress we witness and the positive change we embrace. I want to remind you that what you do matters.

You are the guiding lights, the mentors, and the pillars of our academic and personal growth.

Your selflessness and expertise inspire us to dream big and achieve greatness.

From lab techs, to reception staff who answer silly and ridiculous questions everyday. From teaching assistants to lecturers who painfully mark papers that make you question why you're teaching and to the staff who provide clean classrooms, security and functional working spaces. You are our Kings and Queens with silent crowns.

**Dara Jackson**

**Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology Masters Graduate**

EVERYTHING  
YOU DO **MAKES**  
**A DIFFERENCE**  
TO OUR **LOCAL**  
**COMMUNITY.**

# PERSPECTIVES, PARTNERSHIPS AND PRACTICE

**IN NOVEMBER, THE FACULTY HOSTED ITS SECOND SERVICE LEARNING CONFERENCE TITLED 'PERSPECTIVES, PARTNERSHIPS AND PRACTICE'. THE CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY INDIVIDUALS ACROSS VARIOUS DISCIPLINES, INCLUDING LEADERS OF SERVICE LEARNING INITIATIVES, STUDENTS AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS.**

During the conference attendees explored the potential for service learning to become an integral part of the curriculum, the challenges involved and the methods to make it a success.

## **What is service learning?**

Encompassing the University's core strategic goals, service learning ensures social responsibility and civic engagement remains central to the world-leading teaching and learning at Manchester. The transformative initiative allows students to address real-world challenges with their academic knowledge.

Unlike volunteering, service learning is embedded into the curriculum. Students are allocated time to engage in a project with local communities and minority groups, such as delivering educational workshops or providing vital community services.

Beyond developing practical and professional skills, this approach empowers our students to become conscientious global citizens, whilst also addressing the needs of our local communities and fostering positive and mutually beneficial relationships.

## **What was the conference about?**

Kick-starting the day were hosts Prof Raj Ariyaratnam and Dr Rachel Lindley, FBMH Co- Academic Leads for SL, who introduced the global Tamil First Language Project.

Dentistry students from the University and partners from Manchester Tamil School, spoke on their successful collaboration, running workshops in both Manchester and Sri Lanka to make oral healthcare services more accessible, reducing oral health inequalities.

Throughout the day, attendees were able to participate in interactive workshops, each addressing a specific aspect of service learning, from getting a project off the ground right up to student evaluation. This included an introduction into service learning pilot placements set up by the School of Medical Sciences and an interactive discussion-based workshop, where attendees shared their challenges and successes with service learning, receiving tailored advice from experts in the group.

Healthcare students explored the professional and personal skills they had developed through service learning, giving advice for organisers on how best to keep students engaged. Plus, Dr Enam Haque discussed barriers to engaging ethnic communities with service learning initiatives and on how to overcome them.

Workshops were accompanied by a series of lightning talks, covering a range of fascinating and diverse topics. Closing the event was Dr Cordelle Ofori, Deputy Director of Public Health at Manchester City Council. Drawing on her experiences as a GP and her work on the Making Manchester Fairer plan, she addressed the impact of service learning in a broader context, highlighting its importance for inclusive involvement and improving health equity.

Reflecting on the day, it was clear that despite coming with its challenges, the positive impact of service learning can be felt far and wide. Attendees left equipped with the knowledge to successfully integrate service learning into their curriculum and overcome any obstacles along the way.



# BRILLIANT VOLUNTEERS TAKE SCIENCE INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE

## UNDER THE CLEAR, STARRY NIGHT, UNIVERSITY MEMBERS, SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PUPILS GATHERED AROUND A BONFIRE TO REFLECT ON THE WEEKEND...

As part of the Faculty's Widening Participation and Public Outreach initiatives, every year Dr. Natalie Gardiner, Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Professor Mahesh Nirmalan, Vice Dean for Social Responsibility and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, with staff and student volunteers from across FBMH lead a residential field trip for year 10 pupils from a local secondary school, Trinity High School.

After an overwhelmingly positive reception from pupils and teachers, and University volunteers over previous years, the trip is now in its 5th year. During the weekend, fifty pupils are given the opportunity to participate in exciting field and lab experiments, away from their usual urban environment, whilst engaging with researchers, clinicians, nurses, graduates and students from across FBMH.

This year's trip took place at FSC (Field Studies Council) Rhyd-y-creuau, situated in a picturesque town in the North of Wales. The weekend was made most memorable by the kindness and enthusiasm of pupils, beautiful autumnal scenery and, rather surprisingly, some sunny weather.

Located close to the University, Trinity High School is distinguished by its diverse population of motivated and aspirational students, as well as their hard-working and dedicated teachers. With the school being surrounded by urban landscapes and city towers, the annual field trip provides the perfect opportunity for students to swap the bustling city life for the beauty of the countryside. One student when asked what part of the weekend they enjoyed most responded "the fieldwork, because it is so peaceful in the wild"; another responded "it helped us see the weird things in nature that we rarely notice".

The weekend kick-started on Friday evening with a speed networking event. Topics included exciting neuroscience research at Manchester, insights into careers in nursing, and the life of a doctor, as well as opportunities for students to ask any questions about university life and admissions.

The following day consisted of field and lab activities. Students explored the nearby woodland to conduct various field experiments, identifying different species of lichen and investigating how air pollution may affect their growth. Returning to the classroom, students conducted chromatography experiments, analysing the pigments present in different leaf species.

Ending the jam-packed day was Banji Adewumi MBE, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University. Banji spoke from her own experience, encouraging students to embrace their differences and turn their most unique qualities into their greatest strengths.

Under the clear, starry night, University members, schoolteachers and pupils alike gathered around a bonfire to reflect on the weekend so far (Most memorable thing? "... the open fire under a sky full of stars, with friends"). Many thanks and considerations were offered, with one pupil commenting how they had thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, allowing them to connect more deeply with their fellow peers and interact with others they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to. On Sunday, waterproof-clad staff and students braved the rain to conduct river sampling experiments and enjoy a stone-skimming completion.

Trips such as these highlight the importance of Widening Participation at the University, helping to break down barriers to higher education, raising awareness of the wide variety of options and career choices, and inspiring the next generation of researchers, scientists and healthcare professionals.



**"THIS WEEKEND AIMS TO MOVE SCIENCE OUT OF THE CLASSROOM INTO BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE SETTINGS AND ENABLE AN INFORMAL ENVIRONMENT WITH SUSTAINED CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEERS AND THE STUDENTS.**

**AS ALWAYS, I RETURNED FROM THIS WEEKEND FEELING INSPIRED AND ENTHUSED BY THE FANTASTIC STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS.**

**I AM GRATEFUL TO BE PART OF THIS, AND FOR THE FACULTY SUPPORT WHICH ENABLES US TO RUN THIS EVENT – STUDENTS HAVE USED THE EXPERIENCE TO SECURE WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS, AND FOR THEIR PERSONAL STATEMENTS.**

**I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL THE BRILLIANT FBMH VOLUNTEERS FOR JOINING US OVER THE WEEKEND AND INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION"**

**Dr Natalie Gardiner  
Associate Dean for Equality,  
Diversity and Inclusion**

# SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN NEW BEGINNINGS

**IMAGINE WAKING UP ONE MORNING WITH YOUR YOUNG FAMILY TO FACE THE HARROWING DECISION: ITS EITHER LEAVE OR DIE. FOR MANY, EXPRESSING A DIFFERENT OPINION HAS LED TO THE LOSS OF DECADES-LONG POSITIONS IN ACADEMIA OR HEALTHCARE. OTHERS HAVE SEEN THEIR LIVES TURNED TO RUBBLE BY RELENTLESS BOMBING.**

As a university of sanctuary, UoM provides safety to those fleeing conflict, persecution and a loss of their human rights. The maligning of refugees and asylum seekers in newspaper headlines often belies the immense contribution these resilient individuals and communities make to our city and country.

REACHE, the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Centre for Healthcare Professionals' Education, provides displaced doctors, nurses and other health professionals a comprehensive pathway to medical registration, NHS employment and a regaining of professional identity. We sit under The University of Manchester's Social Responsibility Umbrella in FBMH.

Respect and compassion are our guiding values. The programme is transformative to professionals who would otherwise be living in hotels on less than £40 a week. Within 2 years, they are returned to their professional identity, working in the NHS and become higher rate tax payers.

For 20 years we have supported and trained over 600 in country refugee and asylum seeker healthcare professionals to work in the NHS as doctors, GPs, surgeons, nurses, laboratory scientist and phlebotomists. Some of our alumni are your colleagues at the University. They supported the NHS during the pandemic and volunteered in large numbers to help keep us all safe.

This past year, we were able to lead in the development of a national network that will deliver what we do regionally across the country. Internationally we have held the inaugural EU RAS HCPs (refugee and asylum seeker healthcare professionals ) education programmes conference with plans to start satellite programmes and share learning in the Netherlands and Germany.

The dissemination of the stories of our members and the work of the programme was shared at the AMEE conference in Glasgow and the WONCA conference in Sydney. Our team and members have contributed to submissions to the BMJ, GP online and the Guardian.

There are numerous benefits to this socially responsible work including, excellent return on investment for the tax-payer and improving patient safety during a workforce crisis. Some other impacts of the work are that it improves recruitment in 'hard to recruit to' areas whilst tackling health inequalities and creating greater diversity in our workforce. Importantly it also advocates for the positive and balanced representation of refugees and asylum seekers.

We'll end with the journey of one of our alumni, Lama. She arrived in the UK a highly skilled paediatric consultant with experience of working and training internationally. She had tried unsuccessfully to secure a placement since her arrival in England. She rapidly progressed through the REACHE English classes. She was offered a paediatric training post for her clinical training and four years later, she is a Paediatric consultant, highly regarded by her colleagues.

**Discover more, visit: [www.reache.org.uk](http://www.reache.org.uk)**

**"REACHE IS AN AMAZING ORGANISATION THAT I AM VERY PROUD TO BE A PART OF.**

**I LIKE VOLUNTEERING FOR REACHE BECAUSE OF HOW ENTHUSIASTIC THE MEMBERS ARE TO LEARN AND HOW QUICKLY YOU SEE THEIR DEVELOPMENT OVER A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.**

**WE HAVE LOTS OF DIFFERENT RESOURCES THAT ALLOW US TO PROVIDE A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT METHODS OF TEACHING TO OUR STUDENTS KEEPING IT INTERESTING FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS."**

**Grace Pangrazi  
University of Manchester Medical student**

EVERYTHING  
YOU DO **MAKES**  
**A DIFFERENCE**  
TO OUR **GLOBAL**  
**COMMUNITY.**

# OUR RESEARCH TAKES PLACE IN 1 IN 5 COUNTRIES GLOBALLY

The dedication, expertise and brilliance that exists within our Faculty extends far beyond Manchester, it resonates across the globe. We have transformational research and teaching partnerships in one in every five countries globally, a staggering statistic which is only made possible because of the contribution of each and every member of our Faculty in all the roles they play.

Just as we have seen the number of our international partnerships grow, so too have we seen our international student community grow. Now, 25% of all of our students across UG, PG and PGR are international. Their decision to study with us is a testament to the excellent reputation that we have built across our research and teaching portfolio globally.

## TEACHING PARTNERSHIPS

Whilst we have welcomed new partnerships in 2023, our longest standing teaching partnerships this year delivered its 2,500th medical graduate, a figure set to rise further as the successful programme continues.

The Mansoura-Manchester medical programme was launched in 2006 to help address the healthcare workforce shortage in Africa and Southeast Asia by increasing the numbers of doctors who are trained each year, in parts of the world where the shortage is felt the most.

The partnership was the first of this kind in Egypt and the Middle East, delivering an international medical training programme based on teaching and learning methods used in the UK. The partnership with Manchester means that we provide guidance, training, and quality assurance to enable successful delivery of the Manchester programme, but recognition for the programme's success goes to Mansoura and has seen their ranking for Life Sciences and Medicine rise progressively over recent years. The graduates will go on to act as a much needed well trained and flexible workforce, who can meet the changing healthcare demands in low resource settings.

## GLOBAL HEALTH AWARDS

Our research portfolio continues to expand but it remains focused on responding to, and partnering to find, real world solutions to real world healthcare problems, things that can make a difference to individuals and their communities. This is increasingly important as pressure on healthcare systems continues to be applied globally especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Our solutions focused research has been recognised in our success in securing grants to fund our different streams of work. One big success has been the considerable funding for our NIHR Global Health Research Groups and Unit. These awards were made to different groups and spanned developing methods for sustainable care for anxiety and depression in Indonesia, improving oesophageal cancer survival in Kenya, mental health policy in Pakistan to understanding neurodevelopment and autism in South Asia. I mention these projects specifically as they highlight our expertise in different fields of global health and are areas where we are making a real difference to people and communities worldwide.

## PARTNERSHIPS DRIVING STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Our reputation is crucial to the recruitment of international students. It is our reputation, collaboration and publication with academic colleagues globally that sustains our position in the university ranking tables, which in turn influences the decisions of so many applicants. However, it is also vital that these partnerships are with universities, researchers and governments in countries where we are looking to recruit students. These partnerships provide powerful stories about our Faculty and University and give applicants reasons to look towards us rather than other universities. Partnerships in Africa, South Asia and South East Asia are essential for us growing our reputation in these regions and our long term recruitment plans.

We will learn something from each of these activities and partnerships and I look forward to seeing the difference these, and others, are making to the lives of people globally in 2024 and beyond.

### Professor Keith Brennan

Vice Dean for Internationalisation

Discover more, visit [Global health | Biology, Medicine and Health | University of Manchester](#)



# DISCOVERING THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF ASPERGILLUS

In the world of infectious diseases, certain discoveries can change our understanding of common health issues, as the work of Professor David Denning demonstrates. Shedding light on the widespread impact of a seemingly harmless fungus – Aspergillus, Professor Denning’s journey of discovery has revealed how this common mould, present in our everyday environment, can cause significant health problems and over 5 years is lethal in 50% of cases

**IT TOOK ME 10 YEARS TO ASSEMBLE 18 CASES OF LONG TERM LUNG INFECTIONS CAUSED BY ASPERGILLUS HERE IN MANCHESTER - AND NOW WE THINK THERE ARE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AFFECTED AROUND THE WORLD. WHY THE DISCONNECT?**

Aspergillus is almost everywhere. It’s in our homes, in our pillows, in dust balls and in compost, but most of us breathe in this green mould every day without adverse effects.

As a young doctor in training, Professor Denning looked after a few patients with aspergillosis, the infection caused by Aspergillus. However, these were mostly in patients with weakened immune systems, such as those suffering from leukaemia, lymphoma, or post-surgery complications.

And then came Roger, a patient from Salford whose case changed everything. A moderate smoker, Roger was treated for what was initially thought to be lung cancer – except it wasn’t. Roger recovered with the help of long-term antifungal therapy.

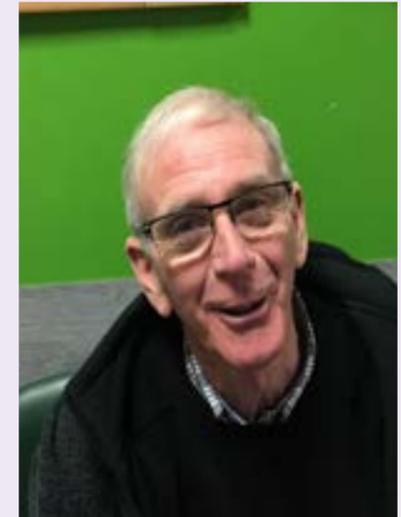
“He had no immune defect. Something was wrong with him, and we are beginning to understand what – a series of genetic variants in genes we know almost nothing about,” explains Professor Denning.

The answer came through historical and contemporary studies. Research from the late 1960s by the MRC TB committee revealed that about 20% of tuberculosis (TB) patients who were left with a lung cavity developed aspergillosis. This finding, when modelled globally, suggested that a staggering 1.2 million people could be affected.

Further research expanded this understanding. Professor Denning and his team studied aspergillosis in post-TB patients across several countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam, Nigeria, Uganda, and Ghana. This then inspired similar studies in India, Brazil, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Korea, Japan, China, and Kenya. Reviewing the data, they discovered that aspergillosis is often misdiagnosed as TB and can develop both during TB treatment and after its cure.

Professor Denning’s work has drawn attention to the global impact of aspergillosis, opening the door to understanding a disease that affects millions yet remains largely under the radar.

His efforts also remind us that sometimes, the most significant discoveries lie in the details of the everyday – even in the dust under our beds. Through his determination, Professor Denning has brought to light a global health issue that, until now, was hiding in plain sight.



Roger’s case turned Professor Denning’s understanding of Aspergillus on its head.



David Denning is Professor of Infectious Diseases in the Division of Evolution, Infection and Genomics

# EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

The International Collaborative for Translational Digital Health (ICTDH) stands as a pioneering collective endeavour between the Universities of Manchester, Toronto, and Melbourne.

## THIS INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVE SERVES AS A BEACON FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ADVANCEMENTS IN DIGITAL HEALTH.

At its core, ICTDH harnesses the collective expertise of these esteemed universities, leveraging their diverse strengths in healthcare, technology, and data analytics. This collaboration addresses the evolving challenges within the healthcare landscape, focusing on translating cutting-edge digital technologies into tangible solutions enhancing patient care, improving outcomes and optimising healthcare systems. The aim of ICTDH is to bridge the gap between academic research and real-world application.

By fostering an environment that encourages collaboration and knowledge exchange, this approach ensures an effective route from conceptualisation to implementation, benefiting individuals and communities worldwide.

Its success lies in its multidisciplinary approach. Experts from diverse fields such as medicine, engineering, computer science, data analytics, and social sciences converge to explore innovative ways to leverage digital technologies in healthcare. This expertise facilitates the development of ground-breaking solutions, ranging from wearable health monitoring devices to sophisticated data analytics platforms that empower clinicians and patients alike.

Furthermore, ICTDH cultivates emerging talent and nurtures the next generation of leaders in translational digital health. It is organised into three hubs with leads from each partner

university: Remote monitoring and virtual care; Health policy implementation and Data science and AI. The collaborative fosters a dynamic learning environment, encouraging students and early-career researchers to explore the intersection of healthcare and technology while gaining practical experience in this rapidly evolving field through collaborative research projects, internships, and seminars.

We have a wealth of current active collaborations including: Standards for reporting and auditing children's pain in EHRs with Sophie Jones (PI Melbourne), Jennifer Stinson (PI Toronto) and Dawn Dowding (PI Manchester); Identifying and addressing health equity barriers for digital technologies using the Health Equity Impact Assessment tool, Sabine van der Veer (PI Manchester), Allison Crawford (PI Toronto); How remote patient monitoring technologies impact on health equity: a meta-ethnographic synthesis of qualitative research, Sabine van der Veer (PI Manchester), Jay Shaw, (PI, Toronto) and Mahima Kalla and Kara Burns (PIs, Melbourne); and applied machine learning training to support cancer service delivery, Ang Davies (PI, Manchester), Sathana Dushyanthen, (PI Melbourne).

The ICTDH stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in reshaping the future of healthcare. Through its interdisciplinary approach, it aims to enable a joint community of health researchers, establish areas of joint research, develop industry partnerships and develop a sustainable funding model through research grants and industrial collaborations. We support the training and development of our researchers through existing or new initiatives, student exchange opportunities and travel bursaries to catalyse knowledge exchange between partner organisations.



Professor Ang Davies

The Collaborative is Co-Directed by Professor Ang Davies (Division of Informatics, Imaging and Data Sciences) and Professor Dawn Dowding (Division of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care).

We would like to thank Professor Niels Peek (outgoing Co-Director) for his valuable work in establishing the Collaborative and his leadership over the last two years.

Visit the Collaborative's webpage: <https://digital-health.mie.utoronto.ca/home>

# A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE...

2023 has undoubtedly been an unprecedented year during which the Faculty has encountered some significant challenges: from working through the response and impact of the cyber attack, industrial action within the University and the NHS, right through to the implementation of and acclimatisation to a significant level of change in the way that we deliver our student support. But in the year that I have now been at Manchester, for me what has strongly characterised this Faculty is not just the partnership and community-inspired approach taken to address these challenges, seeing our academic, professional services and technical colleagues collectively innovate to resolve these challenges; but it is the collegiality and the advocacy which importantly styles the conversations which lead us to these very solutions.

I am enormously proud and unspeakably privileged to lead a Faculty Professional Services community who have shown such ingenuity and generosity during a year which has seen the formation of new teams, new communities of practice, new and adapted processes amidst significant disruption.

It is important to acknowledge this, but it is equally important to shine a light on a year that has also been one of incredible achievements. Our Professional Services Teams are not just brilliant, they are award-winning! From sector recognition of the work our teams are leading on wellbeing, through to LEAF accreditation in recognition of sustainability in our laboratories; from those who have been instrumental in the publication of new research and securing of new funding, through to the myriad of innovative contributions made by our teams

to our teaching environment. These achievements echo powerfully in our Silver TEF status and underscore why as a University we are rated top in the UK and Europe, and third in the world in the QS rankings for sustainability.

I know many of you will no doubt be saying a fond farewell to 2023, looking with anticipation to the new year! But, before you do, please do take the time to reflect on the incredible journey and achievements you and your colleagues have brought to bear this year.

Best Wishes,  
**Dr Elizabeth Micakovic**  
Director of Faculty Operations



**As the Christmas break is almost upon us, on behalf of the School senior leadership team I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone for their hard work over the past 12 months.**

The continued efforts from all colleagues across our School are greatly appreciated – without your commitment and dedication it would be impossible to operate and deliver our excellent research, teaching, social responsibility and administrative support as effectively as we do. Particularly so during some challenging events in the last 12 months, which SBS has dealt with thanks to you and your superb collegiality. Please rest assured this is not taken for granted. Sincere thanks to everyone and do take a proper break and some time to recuperate if you can and enjoy the festive season.

The University will be closed over the Christmas period at the end of 21 December 2023, and reopen on 2 January 2024. Some buildings and labs may remain open for critical research and essential work, however there is no expectation for staff or PGRs to come onto campus during the closure.

I know that Christmas can be a challenging time of year for colleagues for many reasons, especially for those spending the festive period alone or apart from loved ones. As such, I would like to highlight the [University's resources](#) available to support your wellbeing in the coming weeks.

Have a well deserved break and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year - 2024!

Best Wishes,  
**Professor Simon Hubbard**  
Vice Dean and Head of School of Biological Sciences



**There is much to celebrate as we move into the Festive season.**

The 4 year Graduate Entry Programme in Medicine designed by Doug Corfield received over 300 applications predominantly from domestic students but also from South Africa, Canada, Australia, Singapore and India. We are on course to recruit our target of 45 to start next year. Early next month work will begin to construct the new Dental Teaching Hub which will enrich the student experience as well as allow expansion of our International PG capacity. We are celebrating the introduction of TBL which has received widespread approval from staff and students alike, and Faculty has sanctioned the development of the Integrated Degree Course in Medicine which is the brainchild of Margaret Kingston and for the first time will mean every student on the 5 year MBChB course will carry out a research option from 2026.

The School EDI Team has been completed and we welcome Suz Johnson as our SR representative. Suz will join Kat Dibb and Neil Pemberton and Keith Brennan’s Internationalisation Group as well to further our Global EDI Agenda. Also Anne-Marie Glenny has taken up her role as R and I lead for the School and I am excited to work with her once again.

SMS has asked Professor Barry Quinn at the University of Liverpool to carry out a review of Dentistry. It is envisaged that this will focus on how we deliver the BDS Programme and what it should contain for training the dentists of the future, where we should consider curricular changes as well as the size and shape of any new hospital development. I think this is an exciting moment for Dentistry and we look forward to Barry’s thoughts.

We are looking at developing a teaching hospital hub for student studies embracing cutting edge technology and extending its use to Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy as well as students across all 3 Schools. David Pattwell is drawing a Group together to plan it. The rapid advances in AI make this a particularly exciting prospect and will allow clinical exposure to be at our teaching forefront in an even more realistic way from the very early stages of training.

Christmas is approaching fast. I hope that you all have a wonderful break and get some well-earned rest and return recharged for 2024.

Best Wishes,  
**Professor Anthony Heagerty**  
Vice Dean and Head of School of Medical Sciences

**We all recognise how hard things have been this new academic year.**

Especially straight after a summer that came with the challenges of the cyber incident, industrial action, only to be followed by the difficulties faced at the start of semester. As we now move towards the end of the teaching semester and the joys of a Mancunian winter, it isn’t surprising if colleagues are beginning to feel like they are ready for a break. As we have mentioned before, a key priority of the School leadership team is to look and see what we can do to try and give people time back and build resilience back into the School.

However, even if things have been challenging, we genuinely have a lot to celebrate. The School is in a good financial position, our research is strong, we have been leading a number of exciting projects in the SR and EDI spaces, and we have seen major successes in external assessment of our teaching. Successfully negotiating six major accreditation events in the midst of everything else that was happening is a strong testament to the quality of our teaching and our people. For more on our many achievements this year, please read our December school newsletter but for now I really hope you have a good break over the Christmas period.

In January we look forward to seeing you again, ready to respond to whatever the New Year has in store for us.

Best Wishes,  
**Professor Andrew Brass**  
Vice Dean and Head of School of Health Sciences



# THANK YOU FOR THE CONTRIBUTION YOU MAKE EVERY DAY