

Estates and Facilities colleague part of winning University Challenge team

You may have seen that our University Challenge team have been crowned winners of the UK's toughest quizzing tournament, becoming joint most successful in series' history. You may not know that one of the contestants, Ray Power, works in our Environmental Sustainability Team. Ray joined Estates in September on the University's graduate intern scheme and runs our sustainability engagement activities including the popular student Sustainability Champions programme, co-ordinates our events and manages our social media channels.



Having beaten out New College Oxford and LSE to reach the quarterfinals, from there defeating UCL and Sheffield, and sailing past Imperial with 250 points to 70 in the final semi-final round, they finally triumphed over Edinburgh in last night's finale.

The victory is an historic one for the University, as with this fifth win (2006, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2025) it becomes the most successful University in the history of the competition, joint with Imperial College London.

The winning team this year was made up of Ray Power (Film Studies and English Literature), Kirsty Dickson (Medicine), Rob Faulkner (Physics with Astrophysics) and their captain, Kai Madgwick (PhD, AI and Astrophysics), along with reserve player, Argyro Olympitis (PHD in Immunology).

Ray told us how "growing up, my Grandma was always a huge fan of University Challenge, and when a friend of mine who'd been a contestant a couple of years before told me that they were recruiting again, I signed myself up!"

Once in the team, the training process is tough, spending hours each Tuesday sequestered away in a quiet part of the library, testing each other and playing along with old episodes. It wasn't all about gruelling revision, though.

Ray says they never expected to win when they began the contest, they just kept playing and ended up in the final.

“We never expected to win, we were just happy to be there. The whole thing was nerve-wracking! It was so intense and felt so much like a super weird school trip!”

Having been beaten by Edinburgh 195 to 80 in the quarterfinals of the competition, the tournament's last leg was a chance for the Manchester team to right some wrongs.

“Yeah, they beat us really badly. It was scary but we were happy with how far we'd already come. We knew how wonderful and clever the team from Edinburgh were, and we just went into it wanting to do our best!”

Do their best they did, and in bringing home the trophy for Manchester, they are the fifth team to do so, placing our university at the top of the all-time leaderboard, in the company of Imperial College London.