
TEACHING AWARDS

The Teaching Awards have been running at Manchester Met since 2010. They have been successful in highlighting excellent teaching and rewarding members of staff and teams who have made a real difference to the student experience. This year, we received 934 nominations, with 613 nominations received for Teacher of the Year. This year we have drawn out some key themes from the nominations to highlight best practice and things that students value.

We have identified six key themes running through the nominations that students used to describe excellent teaching at Manchester Met.

PROFESSIONAL/GOOD KNOWLEDGE

Students value staff who have excellent subject knowledge and professional experience. Whilst this may seem obvious, genuine enthusiasm for the subject is well-received by students, particularly when teaching staff are engaged in their own research in their subject area.

Students also appreciate "real world experiences" such as practical classes, in-depth casework and examples from industry. It is clear that this experience can influence a student's desire to continue with study or their chosen career path. Nominations demonstrate that students appreciate assignments being clearly linked to course content and experiences that will be necessary when they enter the world of work.

The following quotes reflect this theme:

"He's a specialist and I'm grateful for the excellent recommendations, his extensive scholarship and expertise

– which has improved my own knowledge areas"

"She's an expert in the field and I feel honoured to have her input in my project. Despite her expertise, she discusses your project with you as a peer"

PERSONAL AND/OR PASTORAL SUPPORT

Pastoral support is mentioned in most categories and definitely contributes to the student experience. It is clear that pastoral support is offered by a variety of staff members. Students mention warmth, encouragement, advice, friendliness and reliability. They value being treated as an individual, being able to trust staff and feeling important. In the Best Personal Tutor category, many students had nominated the person because their support made them feel like they could stay at university. This suggests that pastoral support is extremely important for retention – especially for students who may live away from campus and have other commitments.

"If I didn't have such a supportive tutor I probably would have given up coming to university"

"They've been an absolute guardian angel"

"He is consistently considerate and always approachable"

INSPIRATIONAL AND ENCOURAGING

Staff can inspire students in many ways. This includes being academically inspiring, giving encouragement to continue on the course and inspiration to pursue career goals.

Some quotes that highlight this are:

"They encourage me when I feel like quitting"

"I don't think I'd be finishing my first

year without her, she's possibly one of the most positive people I have met"

"If I become a teacher and I am half the teacher she is, then I will have reached my career goal"

"When I supervise my students I hope to do so with wisdom, enthusiasm, patience, humour and kindness just like him"

"She has helped me to discover myself"

"She has had a prominent role in my personal growth as a professional and as a person"

FUN AND INTERESTING

For many students, a fun or interesting lecture is great motivation for attendance and hard work. Students mention how they appreciate staff who "don't just read off PowerPoint slides" and have a variety of activities in lectures, classes and seminars. They also appreciate humour in classes as it keeps them engaged and can help them remember things.

Students talked about getting more out of classes that were fun. Some specific things mentioned were: group work, programmes like Kahoot, social media, online courses that use a variety of teaching methods, online forums that are responded to regularly and the use of cutting-edge technology.

"Although his methods are different, I find them to be much more effective than just copying notes from a huge PowerPoint. I remember more information and feel more confident in my own knowledge."

"As opposed to lengthy tutorials, we have workshops where we complete work directly related to our coursework. There's always a full

turnout because we feel like it's worth it"

GOOD ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic support is mentioned in most of the categories, and students appreciate staff who give extra time or are available when they need support. This support can take many forms, for example, answering questions in lectures, providing different types of assessment and giving useful, timely and constructive feedback. Students appreciate encouragement, consideration and motivation. They also mention the importance of staff listening to their needs and concerns.

"She always goes the extra mile by going out of her way to find the answers to questions by providing extra research material for us"

"Always finds a solution to our problems and is very patient when we don't understand things"

"She runs extra support sessions in her own time that are invaluable to our learning"

PERSONALITY AND FRIENDLY NATURE

Many students highlight the importance and value of staff being friendly and easy to get along with. This can be really encouraging, especially to students who consider themselves to be quiet, have low confidence levels or anxiety. The word 'approachable' is mentioned a lot (58 times for Teacher of the Year), as is appreciating being 'treated as an equal'. This makes students feel more comfortable when speaking out.

"She's truly an inspiration to me, and is always so friendly and approachable"

"Always greets me with a welcome smile and asks me how I am"