



**JM
SU SEAs**
Student Experience Awards
2026

Friday 5th June 2026



Welcome from your VP Education

Hello and welcome to our JMSU Student Experience Awards 2026!

It has been an absolute pleasure to be your Vice President of education 25/26!

This year, I attended a million meetings, forums and events that really amplified students' educational needs across LJMU, all while working alongside you guys! With the help of course and school representatives, the university staff and my wonderful JMSU team, we have had many successes this year - From extended library hours to kitchenettes on campus for PGRs, and even reviewing AI regulations.

LJMU and JMSU truly amplified my student experience when I came to university, it is hard to leave such a wonderful position behind for my next steps. However, loving this university and my student union will forever continue, as it has a deep and special place in my heart. I'm also staying for my master's, so see you next year!

LJMU introduced me to science, wonderful tutors and new beginnings. I have completely transformed from the nervous

19-year-old I once was, to someone confident and empowered, JMSU gave me the freedom to lead, connect and belong, not just in this role as VP Education, but as an LJMU student as well.

As a collective, we have recruited and trained over 600 registered course reps, with brilliant engagement from them throughout the year with our different student-led spaces, such as Lunch and Listen, pop ups and of course, tonight! The impact this engagement has had for LJMU and the SU has been astronomical.

By the time you're reading this I am committing to my last projects as the Vice President of Education which includes extracurricular transcripts, swap shops and my handover to the next Vice President of Education, LJ McAiney.

It has been an honour to serve as your Vice President of Education this year and I hope I have been as impactful onto all of you as you have been to me. Stay in touch and now, signing out!

Erin x

Student Spotlight



“Over the past two years as a Course Representative, I have learned so many skills and had so many great experiences which have all made me feel more connected to my course. A crucial part of the student experience is students knowing that their feedback genuinely leads to positive change, so being able to communicate student feedback to my academic staff, that I knew would be acted upon to directly improve my course, was so important to ensuring a sense of belonging for myself and my peers.

That feeling of belonging was fostered further by my efforts being recognised through incredibly positive feedback during Board of Studies meetings, where staff praised my dedication, professionalism, and proactive approach to student representation. Through this role, I have developed valuable skills in communication, organisation, leadership, and time management, while also learning the importance of creating approachable and engaging ways for students to share their experiences.

I have worked hard to create opportunities for students to share their views openly, whether through surveys or informal conversations, helping to strengthen communication between students and staff and improve the overall course experience, ensuring my peers knew that the student voice was not only being heard, but was really valued on our course.

The role of Course Rep allowed me to contribute to meaningful change and help students feel more connected within the LJMU community and has been one of the most rewarding parts of my university journey.”

Amy Keefe – Level 6 Course rep for Criminal Justice

Outstanding Course Team

Audio and Music Production Team

“The team has created a welcoming and inclusive environment where every student is treated with dignity, care and respect. Their supportive approach helps students feel valued and encouraged to succeed, regardless of their background or experiences. Through their dedication to student support, inclusive teaching and genuine investment in students beyond graduation, they have built a strong sense of community where students feel they truly belong.”

Cyber Security Team

“The course team consistently creates an engaging and supportive learning environment where students are encouraged to develop confidence, build real world skills and reach their full potential. Through their practical approach to learning, strong organisation and commitment to student success, they help students feel valued, supported and prepared for life beyond university. Their collaborative approach has created a positive academic community where students can thrive and truly feel a sense of belonging.”

English Literature Team

“The department has created a supportive and welcoming environment where students feel confident, valued and encouraged to succeed. Through engaging teaching, meaningful feedback and a genuine passion for their subject, the team consistently goes above and beyond to support students throughout their journey. Their commitment to creating opportunities and preparing students for life beyond university has built a strong community where students can thrive.”

Outstanding Teacher

Bob Cumiskey

“They consistently go above and beyond to create a welcoming and supportive environment where students feel valued, encouraged and able to succeed. Through their engaging teaching, genuine care and dedication to student wellbeing, they help students build confidence both academically and personally. Their lasting impact can be seen in the way students continue to recognise and value the difference they have made throughout their university journey.”

Cyber Security Team

“They consistently go above and beyond to create an engaging and supportive learning environment where students feel motivated, encouraged and able to thrive. Through their passion for teaching, approachable nature and commitment to student success, they make complex topics accessible while helping students build confidence both academically and professionally. Their dedication, enthusiasm and genuine care for students have had a lasting impact on the learning experience.”

English Literature Team

“They create an engaging and supportive learning environment where students feel confident, motivated and excited to learn. Through their dynamic teaching style, approachable nature and genuine commitment to student success, they make complex topics accessible while encouraging students to challenge themselves and reach their potential. Their enthusiasm, creativity and dedication have made a lasting impact on students both academically and personally.”



Outstanding Personal Tutor

Emma Clark

“They consistently create a welcoming and inclusive environment where students feel valued, heard and genuinely supported. Through their approachable nature and tailored guidance, they help students build confidence, navigate challenges and develop both academically and personally. Their dedication, empathy and commitment to student success have had a lasting impact on students’ journeys and sense of belonging within the university.”

Dr. Karl Jones

“They consistently create a welcoming and supportive environment where students feel valued, heard and connected. Through their approachable nature, tailored guidance and genuine care for student wellbeing, they help students build confidence, navigate challenges and achieve their potential. Their dedication, empathy and commitment to supporting students both academically and personally has had a lasting impact on the student experience.”

Dr. Will Jackson

“They have consistently gone above and beyond to provide support both academically and personally, helping students feel heard, encouraged and capable of overcoming challenges. Through their tailored guidance, regular support and genuine care for student wellbeing, they have helped students build confidence and believe in their own potential. Their dedication and lasting impact has played a significant role in supporting both personal growth and academic success.”

Academic Support Star

Dr. Kirsty Lever

“They demonstrate exceptional dedication to supporting student success, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where students feel respected, encouraged and capable of achieving their potential. Through their balance of academic rigour and empathy, they help students build the skills and confidence needed to succeed, particularly those navigating higher education for the first time. Their support, encouragement and commitment have had a lasting impact on students at the very start of their academic journey.”

Harriet Morley

“They are a valued and trusted source of support, always willing to offer advice, guidance and encouragement to students and colleagues alike. Their ability to support a wide range of student needs, combined with their warmth, knowledge and approachable nature, helps create a welcoming environment where students feel confident and supported. Through their dedication and genuine care for the student experience, they have become an integral part of the community and a positive influence on those around them.”

Suzanne Smith-Gapper

“They consistently go above and beyond to provide exceptional support, making processes easier and more accessible for both staff and students. Their patient, approachable and proactive approach helps students overcome challenges and feel confident throughout their studies. Through their dedication, empathy and commitment to student success, they have made a meaningful and lasting impact on the learning experience.”



Professional Services Star

Gemma Taylor

“They consistently demonstrate exceptional expertise, knowledge and dedication in their role, but what truly sets them apart is their kindness and willingness to support others. Always approachable and ready to help, they create an environment where people feel comfortable seeking guidance and support. Through their compassionate and practical approach, they have made a significant difference to both staff and students, helping people feel informed, reassured and confident during what can often be challenging transitions.”

Laura Heatley

“They have made a significant difference to students throughout their global opportunities journey, providing consistent support, reassurance and guidance every step of the way. Their approachable nature, quick responses and genuine care help students feel confident and supported during what can often be a daunting experience. Whether supporting students before departure or while they are thousands of miles away, they create a sense of stability and belonging that leaves a lasting impact.”

Sharon Gouldbourn

“They consistently go above and beyond in everything they do, combining exceptional knowledge and attention to detail with a warm, approachable and positive attitude. Their willingness to help, proactive approach and genuine care for both staff and students creates confidence and reassurance for those around them. Their dedication, efficiency and ability to make people feel supported has made a lasting impact and makes them a valued and appreciated member of the community.”

Contribution to Belonging and Community

Dr. Áine MacDermott

“Within the university, their inclusive, student centred teaching further reinforces a sense of belonging. They support students from a wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds, ensuring they feel capable, confident, and able to succeed. By balancing academic rigour with empathy, they create a learning environment where students can be their authentic selves while striving for excellence. Through their leadership, innovation, and dedication to equity and inclusion, they have made a significant and lasting contribution to fostering belonging and community.”

Sleiman Darwish

“Throughout their time as Vice President, they have demonstrated a deep commitment to fostering a strong sense of belonging among students. Their presence is both welcoming and inspiring, naturally creating an environment where individuals feel valued, included, and comfortable being their authentic selves. Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in everything they do, helping to create a community where differences are not only accepted but genuinely appreciated. Their impact is not only seen through events and initiatives, but in the way people feel welcomed, supported and connected.”

Student Software Engineering Team

“The team is a student founded and led community that creates a strong sense of belonging through shared projects, peer mentoring and real world experiences. By providing a welcoming space to collaborate, they help students find their peers, build confidence and develop a sense of identity within their discipline, particularly those who may not initially see themselves as leaders or confident contributors. Through student leadership, inclusive participation and opportunities to showcase their work, they have created a supportive community where students feel valued, connected and empowered to grow.”

Outstanding Student Rep

Amima Zubair

“They have shown exceptional dedication and commitment to ensuring that students feel heard and represented. Through their proactive approach, strong communication and genuine care for their peers, they consistently create opportunities for student voices to be shared and acted upon. Their reliability, professionalism and determination to improve the student experience has made a lasting impact on their course community.”

Milly Plant

“They have shown a consistent commitment to representing and supporting their peers, helping to create a welcoming and supportive community within their programme. Through their reliability, approachable nature and dedication to improving the student experience, they have gone beyond representing the needs of their own cohort, making meaningful contributions that have positively impacted the wider student community.”

Gizem Kandemir

“They have demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership in representing their peers, acting as a trusted link between students and staff with professionalism and care. Through their dedication, collaborative approach and genuine commitment to improving the student experience, they have helped create a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel heard, valued and encouraged to engage.”

Erin Garland

“They have shown a proactive and dedicated approach to student representation, consistently ensuring that student voices are heard and acted upon. Through their professionalism, approachable nature and active involvement across the wider student community, they have played an important role in strengthening engagement and creating meaningful connections between students, staff and the wider student experience.”

Student Star

Danielle Currie

“They are a highly respected member of their cohort, recognised for their professionalism, compassion and commitment to learning. Through their willingness to support and encourage others, they help build confidence and create a positive environment where students feel valued and supported. Their caring nature and dedication to helping those around them has made them a trusted and uplifting presence within the university community.”

Connor Eves

“They have shown a genuine passion for enhancing the student experience through their involvement in student representation, research and wider university initiatives. Their work has helped bring important student perspectives to the forefront, particularly around the experiences of late diagnosed neurodivergent students, helping to inform future practice and priorities. Their proactive approach, dedication and commitment to creating positive change has made a meaningful impact on both students and the wider university community.”

Chris Kaser

“They are a hardworking and positive student who consistently goes above and beyond to support those around them. Through their willingness to share knowledge, encourage peers and contribute to the wider student community, they have become a valued presence within their cohort. Their patience, dedication and commitment to helping others succeed has made a meaningful impact on both individual students and the wider community.”

**Paddy Cree and
Riham Bakhouche**

“Through the Belonging Podcast, they have created a platform that brings real student stories to life, helping others feel seen, heard and connected.

By creating a welcoming space for students to share their experiences and carefully shaping each story, they have played a vital role in promoting inclusion and belonging across the LJMU community.

Their work has the potential to create a lasting impact, helping current and future students see that there is a place for them at LJMU.”

To listen to the podcast, search for ‘The Belonging Podcast’ on Spotify.

Phillip Minty

“They have shown incredible determination and resilience throughout their university journey, overcoming significant challenges while continuing to fully engage with their studies. Their warmth, positivity and commitment to changing their future for the better has made a lasting impression on both staff and fellow students. Through their dedication and perseverance, they have become a valued member of the university community and an inspiration to those around them.”

