



SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER 2024

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A message of thanks from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dave Petley

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this year's Supporter Newsletter. Our supporters have never been more integral to the work that we do at the University of Hull, and the difference you make has never been more pronounced.

As a university, we are committed to helping our students succeed and achieve their ambitions. Today, multiple and complex challenges stand in the way of those aspirations, but your support is helping our students navigate and overcome them.

Sometimes a solution can be simple, but at other times a range of interventions can help. Most importantly though, is the need to create an environment that is clearly welcoming and supportive so that students know they are not on their own. That is why your contribution is important; it not only provides practical solutions, but it demonstrates we are working together.

Our volunteers are essential to creating that environment. Over the course of the last academic year, they have contributed a record number of volunteer hours, providing guidance to students on how to make the most of their studies, find career opportunities and make job applications. They've also been sharing their stories, including both successes and challenges, and inspiring staff, students and the wider community.

Our donors have made a significant impact, providing support that enables strategic interventions at every stage of the student journey. For example, our partnership with IntoUniversity reaches young people before they even study with us, helping students from communities where there is low progression to university across our region. Our scholarships attract and support talented students, and a range of resources have been made available to address mental health and other pressing needs of our student community. With the Hull to Westminster Bursaries, we're helping students prepare for life after graduation by taking advantage of life-changing internships.

One of the things I've enjoyed reading about in this year's newsletter are the experiences of those who have received your support. Lilly Rockett's piece in particular is a wonderful reminder that giving doesn't happen in a vacuum and that often there can be a ripple effect with multiple impacts. One of those outcomes is that those who have received assistance go on, like Lilly, to advocate for others and work to ensure help is there for those who need it.

We know that our young people have an amazing contribution to make. By helping them to overcome the challenges they are presented with today, you are helping to make students' hopes of a bright future a reality. Thank you for your ongoing support.

If you would like to get involved or view previous Supporter Newsletters please visit: www.hull.ac.uk/special/alumni

Expanding opportunities across the region to support students facing disadvantages IntoUniversity

In line with our charitable aims, the University of Hull exists to raise aspirations and provide the resources that young people in deprived areas need to access higher education and benefit from the opportunities that this brings to individuals and communities.





Celebrating the opening of the Marfleet IntoUniversity centre in 2023

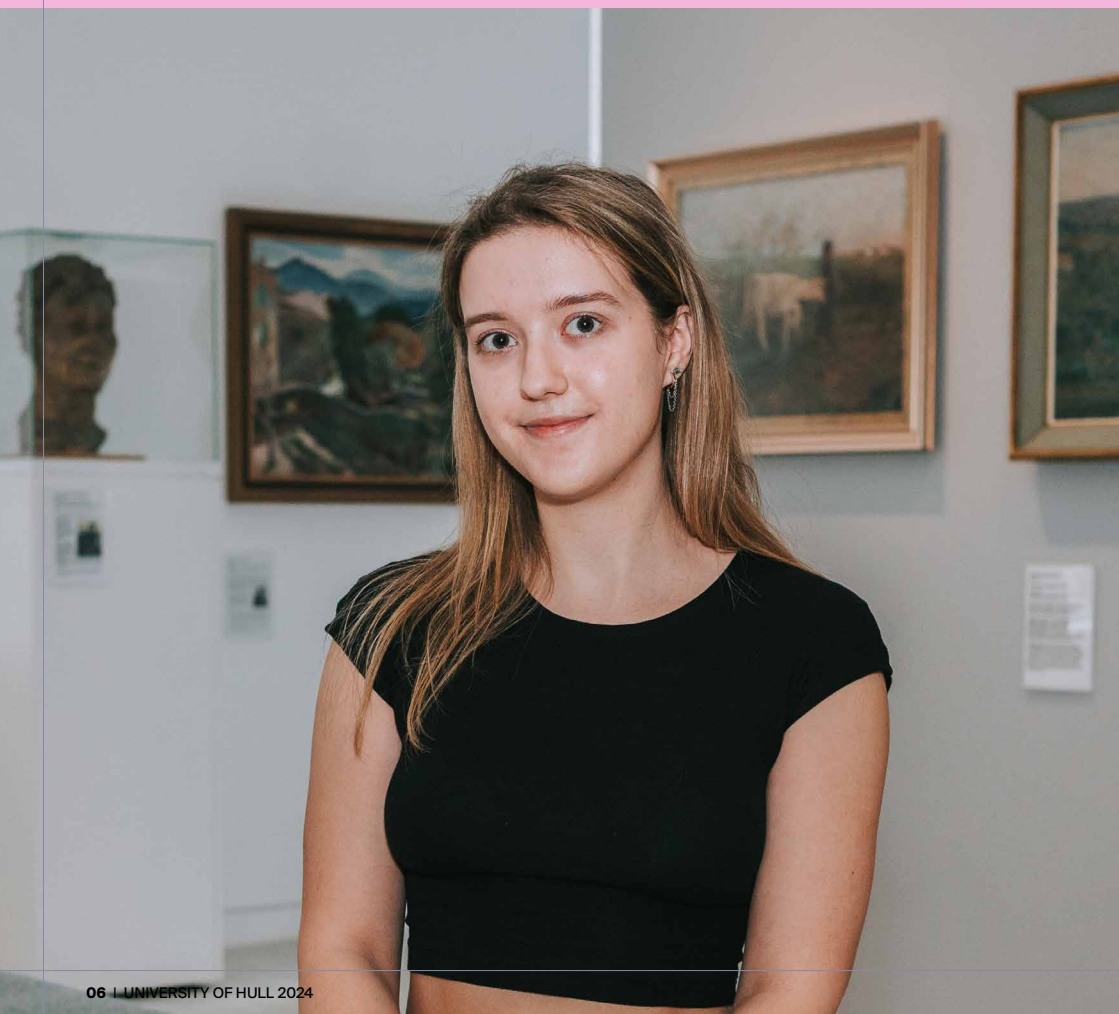
Working with our alumni, trusts, corporate partners, a third sector partner IntoUniversity and an academic partner in the University of York, we opened an IntoUniversity Centre in East Hull in 2022. The centre assists students from low income backgrounds in Marfleet to access higher education. Since then, we've raised funds with partners for two additional centres in Bridlington and Grimsby.

In the last 12 months, our Hull centre supported 986 unique students through the provision of academic and pastoral support. This included 675 primary and 279 secondary school pupils who undertook Primary and Secondary FOCUS programmes. A highlight of the year included a family engagement session, enabling adults and carers to attend a photography exhibition compiled by students finishing a photography degree topic. This enabled the learner group to explore concepts and themes including narrative and presentation.

Our new Bridlington centre opened fully in September 2024. Having appointed a Centre Leader and three education workers over the summer, the team were able to focus their initial work on setting up the centre and delivering an outreach programme of workshops to Year 5 pupils on the theme of 'What is a University?' Having founded partnerships with Bridlington and Headlands Schools and four primary schools in the area, the team are now in the process of delivering FOCUS and Academic Support programmes in the town.

The Grimsby centre began delivering programmes in September 2024, opening their account with a 'Creative Arts' FOCUS week to Year 6 students from local primary schools. This included a visit to Yorkshire Sculpture Park and culminated in graduation ceremonies at the Universities of Hull and York. A series of Secondary FOCUS workshops, aimed at Year 7s and Year 11s focused on the theme of 'Choosing Success' and helped pupils to develop the knowledge and skills to make career-forming education choices beyond 16.'

Fostering a supportive environment: how the impact of the Jeremy Round LGBTQ+ Scholarships goes beyond the finances



During the academic year 2023/24, alumni support meant that we were able to award six students our Jeremy Round LGBTQ+ scholarships of £1,000 each.

The scholarships have proven to be incredibly significant to these students, and whilst the relief of the students having fewer financial worries has been very important, that is only half of the story of these wonderful awards. Below, we share with you the stories and thoughts of some of our Jeremy Round LGBTQ+ Scholarship recipients to show you how this money has allowed them to take part in charitable and volunteering work, empowered them to live their aspirations, and given them the freedom to make the most of their educational journey in a supportive environment.

"Coming to University provided me with the opportunity to find others who shared in my experience, encouraging me to explore different sides of queer culture. I am truly grateful to Hull University for fostering an environment that supports queer individuals and celebrates them, receiving this scholarship only improves upon that gratitude."

- Isi

"I was delighted to receive the email detailing my successful application for the scholarship. I have been in a place of financial struggle since the beginning of university; I have not been fortunate enough to have a family who is able to support me financially through my studies. I would once again like to extend my gratitude to you donors, as I would have been unable to have this opportunity without each and every one of your donations. I feel as though I will be able to breathe much easier now my money worries have been alleviated significantly."


- Anonymous

"I am particularly grateful that your support will ensure I can continue volunteering for the mental health charity 'Shout'; where I act as a crisis responder to the text service. This funding will enable me to dedicate more time to this, providing crucial support to those in need, while also advancing my university studies. As I aim to get a place on the clinical psychology doctorate in future, your encouragement motivates me to persevere in achieving academic excellence. Becoming a clinical psychologist is a dream of mine as it acts as an opportunity to support those in need, particularly those in marginalised communities. As I am autistic, I understand how integral this is in creating the inclusivity and diversity one should expect in modern society."

- Anik

"I think it is important to let people know the impact they have on your life and the impact of this scholarship will be quite profound to me. It will make the difference between being healthy and not, between getting that extra bit of knowledge and not and between succeeding in my life goals and not. I really don't think that I can thank you enough for choosing me."

- Rai



Lilly's Story

A first-hand account of how the Student Success Fund is helping students overcome challenges and get the most of their University of Hull experience

In this article Lilly Rockett, a current PhD student at the University of Hull, tells us about the impact of the Student Success Fund, which she saw first-hand during her time as Student President last year.

The Student Success Fund, consisting of donations from alumni, trusts and foundations and other friends of the University of Hull, enriches the lives and experiences of students through a multitude of different opportunities. It provides much need support in times of difficulty through the mental health projects and hardship funding to Sports and Arts Participation Grants, ensuring students at the University have access to a good quality experience that will help them succeed.

After moving to Hull, I found myself drifting from one job to another, never quite finding something I was truly passionate about. But I've always had a love for teaching and supporting those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), so it felt natural to return to university to further my education. Despite starting my journey during the uncertainty of COVID, I felt an immediate connection with the University of Hull. It quickly became clear to me that this is where I belong—my place, my home. Being part of this university community has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

My journey here began in 2020 when I joined as a Psychology undergraduate. It was during my Masters in Education that I dedicated myself to becoming a

student representative for Inclusivity and Diversity. I chose to run in the election to become President of Inclusivity and Diversity because I saw a real opportunity to make a difference for students who often feel overlooked. During my time as a student representative, I realised there were gaps in the support systems, especially for students with Specific Learning Difficulties, disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community. I'm passionate about helping others and knew I had the drive to create positive change. By stepping into the role of President, I could build on the work I had started and introduce new initiatives that would ensure all students, regardless of their background or challenges, had the support they needed to thrive.

During my time as President, one of the most impactful projects I worked on was tackling period poverty. It's a reality that still affects many people—myself included. I remember being on campus during my Master's degree when my budget was tight. I found myself caught short without sanitary products and couldn't afford to buy any. Feeling embarrassed, I was about to leave and miss a lecture when I discovered the free products provided by the university in the library. That moment hit home, and I knew I had to get involved.

Thanks to generous alumni donations, we were able to stock free sanitary products on campus. But I wanted to take it further. In my last few months as President, I found a new supplier—Riley—whose products aren't just effective but also eco-friendly and sustainable. This was a huge win, aligning with the university's carbon-neutral policy while helping students like me who needed access to these essential items. It felt like we weren't just addressing a need, but also supporting a cause that had long-term positive impact.

Another area I focused on was mental health support. University life can be overwhelming, especially for mature students or those from protected backgrounds. I saw firsthand how loneliness and stress could take a toll on students. I kept mental health support leaflets on my desk and handed them out regularly—students frequently shared their struggles with me. To address this, we organised a Wellbeing Week to connect students with services like the Student Assistance Programme (SAP), which offers six free counselling sessions. As Presidents we also had mental health first aider training.

SAP is an invaluable resource that provides students with access to free, confidential counselling and wellbeing

support. The pressures of university life can sometimes feel overwhelming, and SAP ensures that students have somewhere to turn for help, whether they're dealing with personal struggles, academic stress, or mental health concerns. The programme offers up to six free counselling sessions, and many students I know have found it to be a lifeline during difficult times.

One of my close friends, who completed their undergraduate degree in Psychology, found their passion for student wellbeing through SAP. After utilising its services themselves, they were inspired to get involved and ended up securing an internship at the university, working directly in student support. It's a testament to how important SAP is—not only does it provide essential mental health support, but it can also inspire students to pursue careers where they can give back and help others in similar situations.

Sports are another lifeline for many students. Our wheelchair basketball team is the only disabled and gender-inclusive team on campus, but it faces huge costs for equipment and transportation. Without the Sports Participation Grant, this team—where many students find their sense of belonging—wouldn't exist.

I've been on both sides of this experience: as someone who benefited from these resources and as someone who advocated for them. I'm incredibly grateful for the donations that made it all possible.



To everyone who supports these initiatives, I want to say a heartfelt thank you—you truly make a difference in students' lives.



Volunteer Power: Giving Time, impacting student lives

In the last academic year our volunteers contributed a record number of volunteer hours. Volunteers have been incredibly visible across campus, enriching student experience through mentoring, speaking at events, sharing their stories through our podcast series or through written profiles, and by setting projects on courses.

We are incredibly grateful to our alumni and other friends of the University of Hull for giving back in this way, because by speaking with students you are doing more than just sharing your unique career journey and experiences, you are giving them the gift of your time. By doing so, you are inspiring them to see potential career paths, helping them to shape their ambitions and letting them know that they are not following this path alone.

This year, in addition to the mentoring programme, volunteers have talked to students about the future of Artificial Intelligence, ran workshops on working in radio, talked about the experience of women in leadership, and collaborated on the 'Alumni Conservation Conference', which showed students in Biological Sciences the careers that are available to them, and so much more.

One of the key messages many of our speakers and volunteers have given students is to make the most of the experiences presented to them at the University of Hull. We are so grateful that not only have so many of you seized the opportunities that were available to you, but you have also helped us to create new opportunities for students. Thank you so much!

If you would like to know more about volunteering, please email Jill on alumni@hull.ac.uk



Dr Margaret Anderson, Liz Sproat and Clare Taylor at our Beyond International Women's Day event.

This is how some of our students feel about the experiences you have shared:

"Hearing directly from people who have gone from where I am now to where I want to be was hugely valuable for me personally. I feel a lot more optimistic and less anxious about the future."


"Without opportunities like these several members of our society wouldn't have expressed a greater interest in covering radio events and taking a more proactive role in society business."

"Hearing the stories of the alumni, what they do, and how they got there helped clear my mind around what I can do after graduation and what I need to do to work towards getting a job in the industry."

"Alumni volunteering offers more than just the chance to give back – it provides personal growth, new connections and networks, new skills to add to your CV, and the rewarding experience of making a meaningful contribution and impact upon the UoH community. Time is a unique and special gift to give."

Jill Smithson

Alumni Volunteer Coordinator



Mentoring: guiding our students, sharing advice and helping them to shape their future careers beyond their studies

Each year as part of The University of Hull Mentoring Programme, students seeking careers guidance, help with job applications or interview techniques, and advice on how to make the most of their studies are paired with mentors who can share with them the benefit of their knowledge and experience working in their chosen career field.

Below we share the thoughts and feelings of some of our student mentees about how the mentor programme has benefitted them.

I've learned a lot of valuable lessons from her, particularly about supply chain management in different angles and other essential skills like communication and relationship-building. She is good at explaining complex concepts in a simple and understandable way, which has made my learning journey much smoother.

- Qingyun

David's approachable and jovial nature makes every interaction enjoyable, and his advice often transcends the professional sphere, offering insights that are beneficial to my personal life. His dedication to mentoring is not just a commitment to sharing knowledge but a deeper investment in the well-being and success of those he guides.

- Samson

My mentor has given me more knowledge about the world of work and also insights into working in their chosen field of work. I have gained some really beneficial insights into what the next steps may look like for me after university and I have felt more reassured after having meetings with my mentor.

- Amelia

He consistently demonstrates dedication, patience, and expertise in guiding and nurturing my growth. He goes above and beyond to provide support, encouragement, and valuable insights, helping me achieve my goals and develop professionally and personally.

- Ruth

Deborah does not only give me valuable advice and support but also genuinely celebrates my achievements such as my job hunting, academic achievement, etc. I will never forget her encouragement and belief in my abilities.

- Ren

Christopher's mentorship has been transformative, expanding my thinking and empowering me to tackle challenges with creativity and confidence. His dedication to my growth and development as a mentee deserves commendation and recognition.

- Kehinde



**Thank you so much to all our mentors.
You are helping to prepare the next generation
of students and helping them to get a head
start in their careers!**



Students from a previous cohort of British Politics and Legislative Studies doing internships at Westminster.

From Hull to Westminster: how a bursary is helping students access life-changing experiences in Parliament

In this article we hear from one of the students who received a Hull to Westminster bursary to support a work placement in Parliament. They share with us the experiences that were made possible by the bursary, and how it helped to create a life changing experience.

Working in Politics is a privilege, and I did not come from a privileged background, but the Placement programme at the University of Hull gave me the chance to create the connections, and gain the experience I needed to have a chance at working in Politics.

The Palace of Westminster is undeniably one of the most iconic buildings in the Western World; it is instantly recognisable. Whilst Parliament's primary functions are to give assent to legislation and scrutinise the government of the day, for a short period, Parliament also served as my place of work.

Experiencing working in that place is a privilege, and one that cannot be put into words easily. As a 21-year-old student, to explore its corridors, full to the brim with history and tradition, was tantalising. To sit in the House of Commons during Prime Minister's Question Time and observe the PM battle it out is an experience I know I'll never forget. Even to hear Big Ben chime on my way to work in the morning and realise "that means I'm late to work" made me feel lucky for the opportunity I had been able to access through the Hull to Westminster internship. I know that without the Hull to Westminster bursary, I would have really struggled to get by during my placement year.

The primary barrier to taking up an internship in Westminster is a financial one. Working unpaid, whilst living in the most expensive city in the country is near impossible. The cost of living, especially in London, is higher than ever. It is simply so hard to get by in that city.

When you are living on such a tight budget, questions such as “can I afford to travel to see my loved ones at Christmas” or “do I have enough money to buy the shoes I need for work” present big problems.

Receiving the Hull to Westminster bursary was simply fantastic. Before I received it, I was struggling financially, despite living extremely frugally.

Not only did it aid my immediate financial problems; the money also had long-term impact, providing sustenance to me during the Election Campaign when I was no longer able to claim expenses for food and travel, at the same time the demands on me at work were higher than ever. I simply would not have been able to afford to continue my placement during the Election if it were not for the bursary.

The bursary enabled me to continue my placement, and towards the end, I managed to secure a part-time remote working job in Parliament, which I since continue to work alongside my studies.

The work that Members of Parliament undertake is incredibly broad. And so, it is only natural that their staff are exposed to all sorts of different tasks. From drafting press releases and speeches, to interacting with Constituents and attempting to solve the problems they were facing in their lives, it is safe to say I learned a huge amount.

During my year in Westminster, I was lucky to work on a diverse range of projects and tasks. But what I'm most proud of was writing the opening

speech for a debate in the House of Commons that the MP which I worked for was opening.

To sit in the House of Commons and watch a Member of Parliament give a speech which I had written was a truly humbling experience. For the first time in my working life, a task which I had completed had undeniable value. To see my work recognised so publicly was fantastic, and the positive feedback I received from my colleagues only made it better.

Working for an MP seeking re-election was an experience like no other. It's not just the buzz around a General Election; the stakes are so much higher when you work in politics. Losing the election in your constituency will mean you lose your job, simply as it no longer exists.

On the other hand, winning in your constituency, and in the General Election is amazing. It is a culmination of 7 weeks of incredibly hard work and commitment, and it results in not only the relief of securing your job, but working for the party in Government also brings its own benefits.

I cannot understate the impact that the bursary had on my ability to access my placement in Parliament, which I can say with confidence after completing the placement, was a life changing experience.

For me, the bursary was not just numbers in my bank account, it made a huge difference to my life, my mental health, my experience on placement, and it enabled me to access more opportunities in my career.

I am to this day so incredibly grateful for the generosity that the donors showed, and I cannot express the gratitude I have for the charity they showed by offering their money to a stranger.

Let us know what you want to see from the next Supporter Newsletter

As a supporter of the University of Hull, your contribution makes a huge impact on students, staff and others in our community, so it's important to us that we let you know how much of a difference your support is making. To help us plan future communications, we'd appreciate your thoughts on how we could most effectively tell you about the impact of donations and volunteering here at Hull. Let us know by scanning the QR code and answering a few short questions.



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