Inspirational Teaching Awards 2014

The winners – as nominated by their students
Welcome to the fourth year of the University’s Inspirational Teaching Awards. What I find most impressive about the ITA initiative is that each year over 1,000 of our teaching, research and student support staff are nominated.

They are nominated by our students for having had a transformative impact on their student experience and for having inspired their learning. This year more than 3,500 students took the time and trouble to nominate their tutors and other staff who they felt had had a significant impact. As a result, more than 1,500 individual staff and teams, academics and student support staff were named.

The judging panel are in the privileged position of reading all of the nominations. This process is a great source of pride, as the appreciation that our students have for the creativity, academic challenge, collaboration and dedication of my colleagues is expressed in their own words.

From that extensive long list, the judges had the difficult task of identifying just 22 people to receive these awards. In addition five Inspirational Research Supervisor Awards and two team awards for Outstanding Student Support are being recognised tonight.

The relationship between the student and their tutor is at the very heart of our University, so it is right that we recognise formally the expertise and commitment of the staff who work in this area. High quality teaching, and the impact that this has on the future lives of our students, is what our University was established to achieve.

I am very proud to be involved in celebrating with the winners this evening. All of them have been identified for their personal qualities, their professional expertise, their passion and commitment to their work, whether that is in a teaching, supervisory or advisory capacity. I am also delighted to see that some former winners of the awards are here tonight, having been recognised once again for their inspirational involvement in their students’ achievements.

An Inspirational Teaching Award is a wonderful accolade, for the winners and every single member of staff who received a nomination from one, or many, of their own students. I hope they are as proud of their success as we are of them.

Congratulations to you all, and I hope you enjoy this special evening of celebration.

Professor Philip Jones
Vice-Chancellor
Inspirational Teaching Awards

Paul Beresford
Paul is the course leader for BSc Food Marketing Management and BSc Food and Nutrition at Sheffield Business School. He teaches a range of marketing and business-related subjects and is currently studying a DBA in the field of consumer behaviour.

Paul joined the University in 2000 and, in 2006, he was Interdisciplinary Champion for the £17 million Food Innovation project to deliver new multidisciplinary interventions for the food and drink industry. He was then project manager on a three-year Yorkshire Forward project delivering ongoing innovation interventions for regional food companies.

Over the past 20 years, Paul has worked in both the public and private sectors in a range of business development, project management, marketing and teaching roles.

‘Paul is an outstanding lecturer with a heart of gold. The quality of his teaching is amazing, and I cannot thank him enough for the support he has given me. Paul will be the reason I gain employment following graduation.’

Colette Beecher
Colette was born in Rotherham and studied at Salford University, qualifying as an occupational therapist in 1990. Specialising in neurological rehabilitation, she worked in hospitals in Sheffield, Newark upon Trent, and Rotherham before joining Sheffield Hallam in 2006.

Since then, she has completed an MSc in vocational rehabilitation and teaches the subject to occupational therapy and physiotherapy students. Her specialist interests and expertise are in neurology, community rehabilitation and brain injury.

Colette has worked closely with the technicians to develop resources to teach neuroanatomy, relating it to functional ability.

‘Colette is energetic, fun and vastly knowledgeable. She really inspires us and is a truly fantastic teacher and person. I can’t wait to qualify and I just hope that I am half the occupational therapist she is.’

Michelle Blackburn
Before becoming an academic, Michelle had over 20 years’ experience as a human resource consultant, working with private and public sector organisations throughout the UK including Shell, Rolls-Royce, the British Library and the Ministry of Defence.

At Sheffield Business School she teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate students about organisational behaviour and human resource management. She has also taught students in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland and India.

Michelle is a member of the British Psychological Society, a fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. She has co-written book chapters on training needs analysis, learning design and delivery, and talent and career development.

‘Michelle has always made me feel positive about myself at university. She does her best to help students out with work and her abundant enthusiasm and passion is so contagious. She really helps to give students confidence in their own abilities, and that to me is invaluable.’

Tamsin Bowers-Brown
Tamsin is the course leader and a senior lecturer in education studies. She teaches modules in research methods, education policy and the sociology of education. She is passionate about issues relating to inequalities in education.

Tamsin says, ‘It is really rewarding working with students, sharing ideas and seeing how students develop their thinking and confidence. My favourite day of the year is the graduation ceremony, seeing my students walk across the stage and collecting their degrees.

‘We do some great things in education studies, and students commit to their course through the food and drink industry.

Helen Childerhouse
Helen joined the early years and primary teacher education team at Sheffield Hallam in September 2008. She supports undergraduates and postgraduates working towards qualified teacher status and also supervises teachers completing their masters degrees.

After having taught in primary schools for over 15 years, she says it has been a privilege to share with trainees her experiences and knowledge about professional practice, special educational needs, child development and policy and practice.

Helen particularly enjoys working in partnership with schools to support trainees on placement. She is now working towards completing her PhD focusing on primary teachers’ perceptions of what it is like to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

‘Helen always gives inspirational lectures and seminars, and has made me feel more confident as a mature student. She is always friendly, approachable and answers to emails quickly and with great advice.’

Dr Dora Chan
Dora is a principal lecturer in management accounting in Sheffield Business School and one of the quality and enhancement leads for the faculty.

Having worked in the toy industry for six years after high school, Dora took a life changing decision – she packed her bags and came to the UK to pursue higher education. Holding non-standard qualifications, Dora is grateful that University of Portsmouth and Sheffield Hallam University opened their doors to her and helped her to fulfil her potential.

Dora is indebted to Professor John Cullen – her own inspirational teacher at Hallam – who encouraged her to embark on a PhD and become a full-time lecturer here. She also met her husband, fellow lecturer Denzil Watson, through the University.

Dora would like to dedicate this award to her late mother, who was a role model and an inspiration throughout her life. She is passionate about issues relating to inequalities in education.

‘Dora is such an influential teacher. I will be taking everything I have learnt from her seminars into my future career. She puts the hardest of modules into a format that is easy to understand.’
Jenny Cockill  
Jenny spent the early part of her career working in the hotel industry, winning the Hotel Manager of the Year award in recognition of improved financial performance and staff and guest satisfaction scores.

Family relocation to Glasgow and Sheffield allowed Jenny to share her industry experiences on a part-time basis with students from the Scottish Hotel School in Strathclyde University and from Sheffield Hallam.

It was this insight into the value of an industry-based practitioner to the student experience that prompted the next phase of Jenny’s career at Sheffield Hallam. As course leader, she has been able to work closely with students and industry to create a range of opportunities that enhanced the relationships between the University, the employers and the undergraduates.

‘During my three years at Hallam, Jenny has been amazing. She has inspired me to achieve a higher level of understanding about life and working in the hospitality industry. A lot of people from my course call her our “university mother” – we would be lost without her.’

Phil Crowther  
Phil can’t imagine teaching without an eventful previous life in industry, where some great successes were interspersed with the odd catastrophic failure.

His experience running megaplex cinemas for UCI or the sales operation at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, and managing Health and Racquet Clubs for Esporta, provides him with many anecdotes which he still relies on heavily when trying to relate some of the theory of events management.

Phil considers himself a ‘pracademic’, and encourages all academics to find ways of connecting and re-connecting with practice in their fields. He says it’s an honour to win this prize, and he’s inspired by the many colleagues – in the events team and beyond – who show passion and commitment to students.

‘Phil is the most enthusiastic and motivated lecturer! His lessons are something else – so engaging and with so much energy, whether at 9am or 5pm. He makes so much effort to get the best out of all students he teaches, as well as organising extra events.’

Dr Xinjun Cui  
Xinjun has always been passionate about aerospace engineering. He joined Sheffield Hallam University on aerospace engineering in 2012, and became the course leader in 2013.

He has been engaged in teaching and research in the fields of aerodynamics, propulsion, flight mechanics, computational fluid dynamics and applied maths for 25 years, and has published more than 30 journal papers and won two science and technology development awards in China.

In recent years his research has focused on computational fluid dynamics, with applications in transonic flows, multiple-phase flows, granular flows and natural hazardous flows.

‘Xinjun’s sheer passion for his subject is inspirational. On top of that, he goes out of his way to help students understand the subject and cope with the workload. I would not be doing a masters without him.’

Liz Erett  
Liz is a first-year tutor to about 100 maths students. She says it’s hard work, but satisfying to ‘make them into a little maths family’, as one student put it in recent feedback. She teaches pure maths including group theory, linear algebra and cryptography.

In 2005, Liz took two years of unpaid leave to go and teach voluntarily in Zambia in a boys’ secondary school in the bush. She is particularly interested in mature students and ethnic minority students – both the challenges they face and the positive impact they have on the other students.

Liz is involved with the maths help drop-in service and the annual Pop Maths Quiz for school students. Outside work, Liz tries to spend as much time as possible outdoors.

This is Liz’s third Inspirational Teaching Award.

‘Liz is a great role model, mentor and lecturer. She has supported me through thick and thin – when times were rough, she was always there to support me. She has given me the inspiration to work hard in my final year and reach my potential. Thank you Liz!’

Jane Foggin  
Jane joined Sheffield Hallam in 2004 as a senior lecturer in the social work subject group in the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, following 18 years in social care, mainly in the field of mental health. She leads the BA Social Work course.

Jane is passionate about working with learners and enjoys the complex challenges of leading the delivery of a course that combines both academic and professional learning for students.

In her spare time, Jane’s two main hobbies are music and camping. She can be a complete anorak about tents and banjos if allowed to be.

This is Jane’s third Inspirational Teaching Award.

‘Jane inspires us by leading by example, working hard, and demonstrating research and knowledge. She is a consummate professional and has always been approachable and supportive, showing concern, warmth and passion for her beloved subject.’

Dr Anne Hollows  
After qualifying as a social worker in 1974, Anne has worked in a wide range of local and national agencies in England and Scotland, with 19 years in higher education (16 of them at Sheffield Hallam).

Her specialism is child and family social work.

Anne also teaches in central and eastern Europe, with PhD students in Georgia and Ukraine. She is currently developing social work education in Kosovo. She shares all these experiences with her UK students.

Her teaching aims to be evidence-based but always applied to practice, to be interactive and exciting but to cultivate individual effort, and to inspire students to a life-long intellectual curiosity.

‘Anne is a fountain of knowledge, and has often gone more than the extra mile. She has been very supportive of the social work society, helped me with her legal knowledge and given her time freely to support someone I was working with outside the university.’

Liz Erett
Dr Anne Hollows
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Jayne Hunter

Teaching is in Jayne’s blood – her mother was a primary school teacher and her father was a lecturer in in electrical engineering at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. Jayne graduated from Sheffield City Polytechnic with a degree in business studies, where she was taught by some of her current colleagues.

She joined Sheffield Hallam in 1994, and has been here for 20 years. She is a senior lecturer in the Sheffield Business School, specializing in teaching Sage, e-business management, e-crime, managing decisions and career management and professional development.

Jayne is absolutely thrilled (if not a little embarrassed) to have been nominated for this award and can’t quite believe that students have taken the time to write about her.

‘Jayne is a kind soul, always putting her students’ education first and willing to go the extra mile. She makes the hardest and most boring subjects so fun and interactive. I will take away from her lessons into my future everything that I have learnt and interactive. I will take away and most boring subjects so fun mile. She makes the hardest first and willing to go the extra putting her students’ education.’

Professor John Joyce

John is professor of accounting education at Sheffield Business School. He works with students at all levels within the University, from new undergraduates through to the supervision of PhDs. He has previously received the University Teaching Excellence Award and another Inspirational Teaching Award.

John has published extensively in both professional and referred journals on accounting education. Specific interests include communication apprehension, self-efficacy, financial literacy, and the development of vocational skills.

He has a long history of involvement with the professional bodies. He was awarded the title CIMA Education Advisor by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants for his underpinning research for the Beyond 2000 initiative. He is a former member of the councils of CIMA and the Association of Accounting Technicians.

‘His exceptional teaching style really forced me to study hard for his module, while keeping it fun and enjoyable to learn. He was 100% responsible for my high management accounting grades, and also at making me realise how much I am investing by attending university.’

Dr Nikki Jordan-Mahy

Nikki is the biochemistry course leader. She teaches physiology, anatomy, pathology and biochemistry with a splash of embryology and forensic pathology.

She says, ‘I am delighted to be nominated as an inspirational teacher. It is great to think that students are willing to write nice things about me, especially when they aren’t getting any marks for it.

‘There are no tricks or magic – it is all about having fun whilst you slip a few complex scientific facts into their brains. I do a lot of big group teaching, which is part “lion-tamer”, and part “stand-up comic”. I love teaching and I guess my enthusiasm shows. I am often assisted by my skeleton Nigel which the students love, and he helps them get to grip with the fundamentals of anatomy and physiology.

‘There is never a dull moment in Nikki’s lectures, and fun learning leads to better recollection of information and a greater knowledge of the subject. She is a very approachable member of staff who is happy to expand on topics or give more explanation.’

Alison McHale

Alison is a senior lecturer and module leader for work-based projects and employability lead across the English programme in the humanities department.

She graduated from Sheffield City Polytechnic with a B.Ed in 1981 and started work as a secondary school teacher in Hastings and Essex. In 1998 she came to Sheffield Hallam to work on widening participation, outreach and guidance projects. Taking postgraduate training, she worked as a careers adviser from 2004 to 2012 in the Careers and Employment Service.

She says, ‘I love working collaboratively with all the staff across the University and our external partners to bring opportunities together for the students. Seeing our students grow in confidence gives me a real buzz.’

‘Alison is one of the most motivational teachers I have come across. A seminar with her can change your mood and outlook on life – truly! I aspire to have the same energy and positivity of mind as her in my job.’

Professor Hilary Povey

Hilary is a professor of mathematics education based in the Mathematics Education Centre, where she has worked for 25 years. She is passionate about the teaching and learning of mathematics and committed to exploring social justice issues in mathematics education.

Before coming to Sheffield Hallam, Hilary worked for the Inner London Education Authority as a secondary mathematics teacher, an adviser and a curriculum development leader, including as director of the SMILE mathematics project.

She has published widely in both research and professional publications but says, ‘My deepest love has always been and will always be for teaching mathematics – to all and any ages and at all and any levels. I believe that everyone can do mathematics. There is no special “maths gene”.

‘Hilary is the single most brilliant professor I have ever been fortunate enough to meet. She sets the best example to trainee teachers. I have learned more from her than I ever thought possible, and I can only hope to inspire 5% of my students the way Hilary has inspired me.’

Neil Sissons

Neil is the course leader for stage and screen. Last year he directed Jack Steel and Family at the Crucible Theatre, which was commissioned from the playwright John Godber. The production, funded by the University, involved professional actors, designers and stage staff and a large group of Sheffield Hallam students from across several disciplines.

Before working here, Neil spent 27 years as a professional theatre director. He ran his own national and international touring theatre company, Compass Theatre Company, which toured vibrant new approaches to classics texts around the world. He was also a freelance director and an associate director of Hull Truck Theatre Company for eight years.

Neil has directed just under 100 professional productions. He relishes the chance to teach in his home city, and is enjoying the opportunity to reflect on his own professional practice, pass on his experience and develop his approach through work with students in the classroom and the rehearsal room.

‘Neil’s industry-based knowledge is second to none. To have had the opportunity to work with such an engaging individual, who always has the time to explain and help, has been an incredible advantage.’
**Tim Williams**

Tim is an experienced marketing professional who joined Sheffield Hallam after a successful career in the food and drinks industry. After time spent at Pfizer and the Co-op he moved back to Sheffield to head up a regional design and promotion agency, before going back to the client side of marketing as retail marketing manager for Whitbread and then marketing director for a national food wholesaler.

Tim draws on his business experience to bring knowledge, passion and a practical context to his teaching and actively encourages student feedback as a means of continually developing his teaching materials and delivery style.

As a placement officer he builds strong relationships with employers to maximise employment opportunities at placement and graduate levels.

‘Tim is an amazing and enthusiastic tutor. He is very supportive, and his help when I was finding a placement was invaluable. He knows what he’s talking about and is always there to help students with a smile.’

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**Emma Taylor**

Emma graduated from Sheffield Hallam University in 1994 and started work as an occupational therapist in Rotherham. She moved around different services in Rotherham before completing a masters degree in ergonomics and taking the plunge into teaching, returning to Sheffield Hallam in 2004 as a senior lecturer.

Emma has a small clinical caseload outside of the university which keeps her fresh with knowledge and awareness of reality – something she feels is necessary for teaching and which is appreciated by the students.

She also loves trying different ways to engage students in their learning and has recently developed a particular interest in social media which she is continuing to learn about and apply where she can.

‘Emma has been so motivational, supportive and encouraging. She is consistently trying new ways of being innovative and keeping up to date with the most current issues and ways of working, learning and networking.’

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**Heather Wain**

Heather is based in the Centre for Science Education where she is the co-director of the Science Learning Centre consortium for Derbyshire, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East.

After teaching in secondary schools for 17 years, she made the decision to come to Sheffield Hallam in 2008 in order to widen her experience, knowledge and influence in science education. During this time, she herself has been inspired by many of those with whom she has worked, read or studied.

Heather’s particular motivation is to change the perception and accessibility of physics through the way that it is taught, with a specific interest in the girls and physics agenda. She is therefore delighted to have been nominated for an inspirational teacher award by her students – particularly as they will be the physics teachers of the future.

‘Heather has supported everyone in our first semester, and helped me grow in confidence vastly. She has generated an interest in physics that I never dreamed of having, and she explains everything in a variety of ways that I never dreamed possible.’

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**David Smith**

This is David’s third Inspirational Teaching Award. He is very pleased to be nominated again by the students – he says it’s always nice to know someone somewhere can be excited by enzymes and DNA.

David is currently researching Parkinson’s disease, linking together a range of biochemical and analytical methods to find out how and why cells die in the brain. He tries to use this background to give context to his teaching and show how the content of the lectures is really used.

The award is a reflection of the high quality of teaching and commitment of his peers who give him space to try out new ideas. His family also play their part, by asking the hard question of ‘Why should I care?’, and only tutting a little when he answers emails at night.

‘David makes lectures fun. He doesn’t just lecture you for two hours – he interacts with his students and is always prepared to offer that extra bit of help if you are struggling. He has inspired me to do more work outside of my course and to be more interested in science.’

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Inspirational Research Supervisor Awards

Dr David Clegg
David is a product of Sheffield Hallam University, having gained a degree in computer-aided engineering followed by a PhD in discrete-event simulation in 2000. Since then he has been employed as a senior lecturer, director of studies and consultant.

His research interests are in applying process improvement methods – simulation, lean and 6 sigma – to solve healthcare and industry-based problems.

He uses these challenges to enhance students’ learning and assessment through providing a rich context for the subject matter. Part of his role is also that of link tutor, ensuring that the academic requirements of the University, partner colleges and industry are met.

‘The inspiration I get from David is in his attention to detail, logical approach to research and development of analysis. I can only hope to aspire to the levels of competence David has achieved.’

Dr Nick Hodge
Nick is a reader in education, childhood and inclusion, principal lecturer in autism, leader of the Equality, Diversity and Social Justice Research Group and research lead for the Department of Education, Childhood and Inclusion.

Nick was a teacher supporting disabled children and their families in schools for over 15 years. During this time Nick became a lecturer in autism for the University of Birmingham and Sheffield Hallam, before becoming a full-time lecturer in the Autism Centre in 1999.

Nick was a member of the first cohort of students to study for a Professional Doctorate in Education at Sheffield Hallam, graduating in 2006. Inspired by the quality and commitment of his colleagues who taught and supported him throughout the doctorate, Nick has tried to emulate this within his own support for research students.

‘Nick is able to sense when I need critical feedback and when I need a boost. This is a rare quality that has kept me motivated and shows he understands my thinking. He is patient, motivational and reliable – the best type of supervisor I could wish for.’

Dr Nicola Palmer
Nicola joined Sheffield Hallam in 2000 after working in the public sector, management consultancy and academia. She is an experienced consultancy project manager and was UK lead for an EU-funded Tacis project in Kyrgyzstan, which inspired her research publications on post-Soviet tourism development and travels to that part of the world.

Nicola is a Sheffield city centre business improvement district champion, and she leads the Visitor Economy Research and Practice SIG as part of the SBS Research Institute and is head of research programmes for Sheffield Business School.

She is an active supervisor of PhD and DBA students and a strong believer in the need to support and challenge people to be the best that they can be. She also believes, most importantly, that research should be fun!

‘Nicola is a role model of being a successful academic while coping with motherhood and her university workload. She is an inspirational woman who always generates a positive flow of energy. I am very proud of being her PhD student.’

Dr Heidi Probst
Heidi qualified as a therapeutic radiographer in 1987 at the London Hospital (Whitechapel) and worked in the NHS for 14 years, specialising in pre-treatment imaging. She started at Sheffield Hallam in 2001 as a senior lecturer and has been a reader in radiotherapy for 14 months.

Heidi has a special interest in breast cancer and runs a breast cancer radiotherapy masters module. Her current research focuses on improving the radiotherapy technique and treatment experience for women undergoing radiotherapy to the breast.

Heidi is passionate about research and increasing research capacity in her profession, and is chair of the College of Radiographers research group and associate editor of two radiotherapy journals.

‘Heidi is an excellent supervisor who always goes that extra mile. She is incredibly knowledgeable and is happy to spend time passing that knowledge on by explaining concepts and suggesting ideas. This has been invaluable to me.’
Dr Becky Shaw
Becky was lucky enough to attend the infamous Stourbridge College of Art and then Liverpool John Moores University for both undergraduate and PhD studies. Following that she co-led Static Gallery, Liverpool – a gallery famous for being ‘so pretentious it never has any art in it’.

She makes works in the public realm, including spending many happy hours as artist-in-residence in different fields in universities. This experience has fuelled a passion for, and commitment to, cross-disciplinary conversation.

Becky was recently appointed as postgraduate research tutor in the Art and Design Research Centre and is delighting in the opportunities this generates to debate key issues such as method, voice and rigour, and to forge interdisciplinary supervision teams.

‘PhD research is not easy, so I have found Becky’s support truly inspiring. My confidence has grown exponentially and my strengths and potential have been recognised, which has been a very uplifting experience.’

Outstanding Student Support Awards

ACES Cantor Help Desk Team
The ACES Cantor Help Desk Team have formed a formidable team with the help of their bright and affable personalities. David Culver has worked full-time in Cantor Building since it was opened in 2008 and has remained the steadfast face of the ACES Helpdesk in Cantor. Judith Goh and Carol Hunt joined David as job-share partners in 2011.

They have built a wonderful rapport with everyone they meet. Students in particular see them as the friendly face of the faculty. They give straightforward information and advice, and excellent customer service. Building contacts with other faculties and departments, they always know who to ask for a favour and work as a team across the University, not just in ACES.

They genuinely care about the people they meet. David is a very genuine, sociable and views everyone in a non-judgemental way. He is never happier than when he is around his ‘work family’. Carol is the maternal, cossetting, no-nonsense one. She likes everything to be done right and won’t hesitate to tell you if it doesn’t meet the expected standards. Judith is the cheery, practical and pragmatic one. She is principled, committed and optimistic.

International Student Support Team, QESS
The team provide specialist services to ensure all international students have the best possible experience while studying at Sheffield Hallam University. Our international students get a warm welcome and orientation on arrival, and specialist advice and support specific to their needs throughout the year.

The team also organise an exciting range of integration activities to help all students get the most out of Sheffield Hallam’s international community. They run regular fun events and projects so students from different backgrounds can meet, develop their cultural awareness and their knowledge of the world.

You can follow the team’s activities by signing up for the International Students’ Bulletin or by following them on Twitter (@SheffHallamINT).