

## Achieving at DMU

At DMU, we champion, promote and celebrate the diversity of our ~~staff~~ students. Find out more about our inspirational staff below.

Therefore, wherever forums are constructed, consultations taking place, or a change being made, there should be a conscious effort made to ensure that there is fair representation of women included to ensure our voice is amplified and actions taken accordingly to achieve recommended outcomes.

Secondly, in a broader sense I think mechanisms like this one (the newsletter and DMU Women more generally) are fantastic as it provides a safe space for prevalent topics related to women to be discussed and directly feed into other activity at DMU. From the voices of women that we do hear otherwise, it tends to be women in levels of seniority. This is undoubtedly important and necessary, however having an avenue where women in mid or junior level roles can be more regularly is perhaps an opportunity that can be taken advantage of, to allow women of different levels share ideas and foster solidarity amongst ourselves.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

One piece of advice that has stuck with me is to always look to those who have less than you, rather

Amina Chitembo  
Lecturer and PhD Researcher, Faculty of Business and Law

How long have you worked at DMU and what do you do?

I started my PhD in April 2019 and became a part time lecturer in September 2019. My research is

À v šZ}µPZ / Z À v}š }u%o š šZ i}µœv Ç Ç šU ]š[• uÇ WZ Z •  
never thought of myself as academic let alone taking on this level of study. Starting out if  
š v P u}šZ œU P œ}Á]vP µ%o ]v • u ] v Z À]vP Ç•o œ] ÁZ] Z Á  
odds were kind of against me. My PhD is not just for me, it is for all women who have been told they  
v[šU •%o ] ooÇ Z]PZoÇ •l]oo stuck in œdeskillœ. That is why I founded  
Migrants Leadership Institute, I aim to see more HSM women sitting at the table and bringing their  
own chair if needed.

Who inspires you and why?

There are many people who inspire me if I can name a few. My mum and how she lived her life  
without fear and taught us to do the same. Looking at the world now I get inspired by looking at  
women like Meghan Markle and Jacinda Arden. I have had more inspiring men in my life so while I

v[š v u šZ u ooU / }



David Dee

Associate Professor/Reader in Modern History, Faculty of Design and Humanities

David Dee is an Associate Professor/Reader in Modern History at DMU, his expertise being focused on immigration/ethnic History.

David took Shared Parental Leave (SPL) introduced in the UK in 2015 between January and July 2020 after the birth of his daughter Abigail.

"I'd been aware of Shared Parental Leave for a while when my wife and I found ourselves expecting our first child in 2019, and it was something that we were both very keen to look into. There is a huge amount of information out there about SPL, which is sometimes quite overwhelming, but I found that DMU's own guidelines were really clear and easy to follow. I also found DMU's HR team and my own Line Manager very knowledgeable about the scheme and very helpful. After initially being daunted by the arrangements with both of our employers, my wife and I found things were organised really smoothly."

David looks back really positively about his time on Shared Parental Leave:

"Taking Shared Parental Leave was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Being around for the

HardeepKaurBasra(PFHEA)

Academic Development Consultant & Associate Professor Teaching & Learning

How long have you worked at DMU and what do you do?

I have worked at DMU for nearly four years, and I am an Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning (T&L) and an Academic Development Consultant. In this role, I have the institutional lead for the Advance HE accredited provision, which includes the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic

What professional achievement are you most proud of and why?

I recently became a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education (PFHEA) for demonstrating strategic leadership in learning and teaching, and much of my recognition focused on the work I have done on addressing equality and diversity in learning and teaching. I am only fifth academic to achieve this at DMU, and one of handful of women of colour to receive this accolade in the sector. Considering I do not hold a post carrying positional authority or one that has significant seniority getting this achievement is even more special; it recognises my willingness to go above and beyond and my ability to make sustained strategic impact at institutional, national and international level.

What challenges have you had in your career and how did you overcome them?

I started my career as a lecturer in International Relations but was often on fixed term fractional posts. This carried on for nearly 10 years and I never seemed able to get that break. Whether this had anything to do with my gender or race it is hard to say, but did I feel I was denied opportunities. In the end I transitioned away from being a subject disciplinary academic to one focusing on enhancing learning and teaching practice. Within this type of academic position, I feel I have been able to add greater value and reward as I am shaping and influencing the teaching practice of others to enhance the student learning experience. I think being resilient and taking on



## Imogen Perkins

Mental Health Intervention Officer, Student and Academic Services



with Depression (when it wants to rear its ugly head!), and I want to let you know that sexuality or your mental health should never be something to hold you back or define you. For me, although growing up I had an interesting past in life, which led me to wanting to work in mental health to help others who may have been through what I had. I suffered significant trauma from a young age which needed intense therapy to process, as well as being a registered carer for my mum and younger brother from 1418. Things were hard, really hard, but I persevered.

I studied and trained hard to be psychiatric nurse, with university being the pinnacle of my self acceptance for both things that had happened to me, but also really getting comfortable with my sexuality. It was a great time to find who I was and I was surrounded by incredible friends that supported me with this.

When I got my first role I was over the moon. This was in an acute psychiatric ward, and it became a foundation for me through periods of toxicity and internalised misogyny which really put a damper on me working through any triggers or being as out and open as I usually would be. Due to this I left to join a new team working in a psychiatric intensive care ward, where I truly felt accepted.

This move led to me embracing myself on a deeper level when it came to my sexuality, which was helped by my manager at the time also being open and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. It was here that I started work on my book, that was supported and hyped by all my team mates, as I knew I wanted to get my story out there to show people they could overcome atrocity and still thrive. It was also here that I really started to think about working in a university with students. I had been a student lead on both wards, as well as a trainer for my trust, and my deputy matron at the time talked about how both were a strength of mine and I really needed to consider

I left that ward due to promotion and moving on to become a senior psychiatric nurse and trauma, low mood, and anxiety lead for child and adolescent inpatient services which really allowed me to further embrace my sexuality. Working with younger generations that were posting regularly on TikTok and other social medias about themselves, their identities, and their struggles, really helped me to reflect on and embrace my own, which in turn made me a better nurse and role model for them.

Coming to DMU since then has been an amazing experience. Not only has the shift in work hours and work life balance allowed me to finish projects (such as publish my book and embrace my professional and personal. Not only that, representation is so important in our university. Students



Katie Normington  
ViceChancellor

I feel proud to be the first woman ViceChancellor at DMU. In saying that, it does feel that the time is well past that we should be recognising women as doing things for the first time. But unfortunately,

Leanne Herbert  
Training & Business Development Officer

Tell us about yourself

My name is Leanne Herbert and I joined DMU in 2009 as a Faculty Disability Coordinator in The Faculty of Technology as it was then. My education and early career were in the field of beauty, holistic and sports therapies where I was fortunate to have spent years working in spa's and gyms on cruise liners in the USA and the Caribbean. It was during this time that I began to experience symptoms of weakness in my legs with investigations leading to a diagnosis of Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy, Dysferlinopathy.

The impact of my newly diagnosed disability meant leaving my incredibly physically demanding career and so I became a college lecturer and continued my studies in teacher education. It was as a result of working with disabled and dyslexic students as well as learning to live with and self advocate about my own disability that I became passionate about disability equality and inclusion. My own experiences have taught me that life with a disability is challenging and rarely ever straight forward and support can be key in enabling someone to succeed.

It has been during my time at DMU that I have had the most opportunity to change and grow, both personally and professionally. I completed my part LLB in 2014 whilst also having my son in 2012. This

I am a massive fan of comedy, and never fail to be uplifted by watching my current favourite disabled comedians, Rosie Jones, Lee Ridley and Hannah Gadsby.

What urgent changes do we need to see in the world?

Accessibility and acceptance are ~~mis~~important to me. Our world is still incredibly ableist, seeing disability as something bad or to pity. Whilst my life is challenging, I attribute a lot of my success and resilience to my disability.

Things that affect my day to day life that I would ~~absol~~ love to change are firstly the ability to make bookings as a disabled person, whether that be to a theatre, a concert, for a hotel, or a holiday because it is a nightmare! It always requires many more phone calls or hoops to go through and it is almost impossible to book to do something when there are three of you (as I am in my little family). Accessible hotel rooms for example often only accommodate two people and if you ever come to the theatre with me and we are more than a two, I see you in ~~the~~ the show!

Another change I would like to see is in relation to the cost of things for disabled people. If you have ever bought an exercise bike, how much did it cost? My accessible exercise bike cost nearly £5,000! What about the last time you ~~bu~~ bought a toilet? Accessible toilets can cost up to £4,000! Even bed

Manjeet Ridon  
Associate Dean(International)

We encourage all DMU Women to prioritise self care, do you have any tips you can share?  
I love swimming and find it is a great way for me to step away from a busy work and home life and focus on my breathing and enjoy some quiet time by myself. Regular exercise like swimming really

**Marian ChijokeMgbame**

Senior Lecturer in Accounting & Finance, Faculty of Business and Law

How long have you worked at DMU and what do you do?





Meredith Wilkinson

Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

enough to have strong parents when I was growing up who helped me live in a fully sighted world, as that is of course the world I live in. I am so grateful they did this, as it really did give me the best start in life.

After completing my PhD at Lancaster University, I came to DMU in 2012 to take up post as a Postdoctoral Research Assistant in Psychology. I then progressed to a lectureship in Health Studies (now Health and Wellbeing in Society) and then moved back to Psychology to take up a senior lectureship.

Firstly, I don't refer to it as such like me as in an individual with a visible disability. The implication I think of this is that there are questions I would have wanted to ask that perhaps only those individuals that could answer them

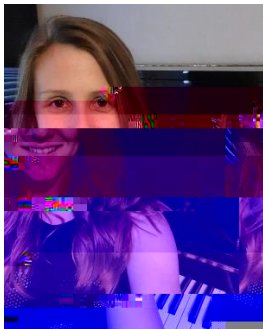
The second reason is to be of service to others. I have been blessed to have such supportive mentors, collaborators and colleagues over the years. I hope that perhaps by doing this I can be useful to someone else.

I think the biggest barrier one can face is themselves in terms of their thought processes. This is a consequence of multiple things such as self-doubt, lack of confidence and so on. I learned to take more opportunities and create more opportunities for myself. For example, an article published in Times Higher Education on the importance of flexibility for universities in their teaching post-pandemic especially when it comes to students with disabilities and disabilities. Before, I think I have been perhaps too nervous to do so, but now I think the potential benefits that come from that far outweigh any nerves or doubts I may have.

I think the idea of striving for equality is very important especially as we emerge out of the pandemic. This within DMU I think. I believe it is important for both



Phillipa Steel  
DMU Music Officer, Social Impact and Engagement



Tell us about yourself?

My name is Philippa Steel and I joined DMU back in January 2019, as DMU Music Coordinator.

and singer, I studied music at the University of Nottingham. After graduating in 2014, I explored a variety of roles in and around the city, within the hospitality and entertainment industries, but Nottingham to study an MA in music.

It was during my MA course that I realised my fascination for the way music plays a part (excuse the pun) within power, social control and the way we see the world. This opened my eyes to a number of pathways within music, and helped me move forward in my career.

My current role as DMU Music Officer is centred around creating high quality, transformative musical experiences for our students, staff and community, and enables me to continue to be curious about the role of music in our lives and identity.

Outside of DMU, I continue to pursue my personal music ambitions. This has been a long, bumpy road, with crises of confidence, self-esteem and ongoing battles with performance anxiety. Lockdown 1.0 forced me to slow down and evaluate where I wanted to be, and so I began working on these deep-rooted challenges. One of my proudest, personal achievements is the release of my debut single, Hear Me Out in June 2021. [Listen here on Spotify.](#) I put one foot in front of the other, creating more music and getting back out to performing so that I can share music with others.

Who are your role models?

I am lucky to be surrounded by many amazing role models in my life, including family, friends, colleagues and those I admire from afar. For the purpose of this article, I must mention some super strong Steel women; Mum is a master communicator and leader, and my sister, now living on the other side of the world, introduced my sister and me to the piano. I treasure memories of her playing whilst we sang along, and smiling with encouragement (or gritted teeth?) when I would just strum the piano and note bash until something sounded like a song.

On the whole, a role model in my eyes is someone who works hard, speaks up for themselves and others, and remains true to their own identity. These are qualities that I strive to embody.



Sarah Thomson  
Director of Social Impact and Engagement

Sophie Holder  
Executive Officer to Deputy PVC for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

My name is Sophie Holder and I still consider myself a newbie to life in Leicester, although I have been living in the city (or its outskirts) for the past two years. If we get the chance to talk, my accent will reveal my firm London roots.

What urgent changes do we need to see in the world?

One of the injustices ever present on my radar is race equality, the lack thereof. As a Black woman, this is something I have always felt zealous about but the recent Sewell Report calling Britain an example to other white population countries in regard to race has reinvigorated me once again!

I view DMU as an institution that doesn't deny current realities and I am grateful that our work in EDI seeks to make a little difference for people who comprise the global majority. We are willing to ask the difficult questions and take actions that will begin to make necessary change and I am excited to be contributing to this cause in my new role.

Roger Saunders  
Associat



Zheng Wang

Associate Professor & Reader in Economics, Faculty of Business and Law

I'm an armless economist working Business and Law. The adjective 'armless' as a physical condition already puts me in a tiny minority category, and the even rarer combination of it with the profession 'economist' makes me probably the only one of the kind in the world.

Born and raised in China, I was no different from other children in the country, until at age nine an electrocution accident took away my arms and a toe, turned the life of my family especially of my parents completely upside down. It was from that moment I started a long journey of learning to regain independence in a harsh and often discriminatory environment towards disabled people. My dad refused the suggestion of sending me to a special school. Instead, he sent me back to the same school I had been going to before the accident, despite all sorts of difficulties I would face



Zowie Davey

VC2020 Lecturer, Centre for LGBTQ+ Research and Division of Social Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

I started work as a senior lecturer on 1 September 2016 in the Centre for LGBTQ+ Research in the School of Applied Social Sciences.

My work centres on transgender embodiment and wider LGBTQ+ issues education, politics and healthcare. DMU has supported my work through internal funding and I have been fully supported by an amazing line manager, team, research support staff (RBI) and finance staff. I have encountered an important LGBTQ+ friendly atmosphere and received much encouragement.

My often-marginalised research and trans identity has been encouraged from the very start of my encounter with senior academic staff at DMU in the interview, in all the meetings I have attended since and within chance encounters with other colleagues in and around the university.

Although I do not 'come out' all the time and my 'passing privilege' is evident, I feel that if I happen to, in the course of any (research) meeting at DMU, this will be met with acceptance. I feel many other forms of diversity are too. I also feel that if anybody does react in an inappropriate way towards me I would be able to pursue lines of rectification.