



# The Student Opportunities Fund

## Make a life-changing difference

Donations to the Student Opportunities Fund recognise individual potential and support some of the most talented and deserving students, enabling them to continue their education at Leicester.

The Fund offers vital support to students through Research Scholarships, Hardship Awards and Sports and Music Scholarships, promoting a culture of excellence to raise ambitions and academic standards.

Here are just a few examples of students who have received an Alumni Research Scholarship:



### Evi

Evi started her exciting nine year journey at Leicester in 2005 when she began studying for a BSc in Medical Genetics. In 2011 the award of her Postgraduate Research Scholarship brought her ever closer to realising her ambition of becoming a successful research investigator.

The generous philanthropic support of alumni for the Student Opportunities Fund was critical in enabling Evi to pursue her PhD in Cardiovascular Genetics. Evi successfully completed her PhD and graduated in 2014. She hopes to continue her important work to develop new diagnostic and treatment strategies which could have major impact on many of our lives.



### Neil

Neil was awarded a three year Alumni Scholarship and completed his Management PhD in July 2015. Neil's research looked at foreign exchange markets, in particular the period from 1970 until the Global Financial Crisis. Neil's PhD also enabled him to get a full-time lectureship in Leicester, which means he can use his experience and connections to help other students.

Neil said of his scholarship, "I really can't thank the Alumni enough for this support – it gave me the confidence to take on a PhD when I had young children and helped me make a career change into teaching. I haven't looked back."



### Ahmad\*

Ahmad\* is a young doctor from Damascus, Syria. With few opportunities to progress his academic career in Syria, Ahmad approached the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA)\*\* for support to study at Leicester. CARA offered to cover half his costs to study for an MD (Doctor of Medicine) degree at the University of Leicester. The University also agreed to waive his fees. But this still left Ahmad with a shortfall of £20,000 and unable to leave Syria and come to England.

It was at this point that the amazing support of Leicester graduates stepped in. Ahmad was awarded a scholarship from the Student Opportunities Fund – fully covering his remaining costs, allowing him to come to Leicester. Ahmad is currently conducting life-saving research into TB and respiratory infections at the University.

**Your support for the Student Opportunities Fund** could give other capable students, like Evi, Neil and Ahmad, their opportunity to register for a Masters or research degree and to undertake world-leading research as a member of the next generation of talented academics.



Stock photo used to protect identity of student

“ **After suffering extremely ill health during my degree, I was unable to complete my final assessments. This left me in an extremely difficult situation, as I had no money to support myself, and having fled domestic violence, I had no home to return to.**

**I found myself no longer able to cope with my circumstances and although I had faced many adversities before, I had finally given up all hope of completing my degree.**

**However, this support turned everything around and was truly the difference between carrying on and having to finally give up. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities the support has provided me, and hope I can one day be in a position to contribute back, knowing the difference it can make.**

**Open thank you letter from Sarah\*  
a recent recipient of an Alumni Hardship award**

## Hardship Awards

Each year, hundreds of students in exceptional financial need, with nowhere else to turn, seek assistance from the University. Alumni support provides a lifeline for many of these students, with typical awards of around £500 per student. Here are just a few more examples of those who have been helped:

- **Joseph**, who had to return home unexpectedly when his mother went into intensive care, had his travel costs covered by a Hardship Award so that he could visit his mother and then return to his studies.
- **Emma**, who struggles with mental health problems and is estranged from her family due to cultural difference, has been assisted with housing costs to enable her to move into safe accommodation.
- **Dino**, a final year PhD student, suffered a marriage breakdown and on top of this his funding agency in Spain withdrew all sponsorship for his studies. He received support to complete his final few months of study at the University.

Alumni support for the Student Opportunities Fund helps ensure that students in need, like Emma, Joseph and Dino, receive the vital support that they need to continue their studies and fulfil their potential.

### For more information please contact:

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## Giving is easy

These are just a few examples of the dozens of students whose lives have been transformed thanks to the generous support of Alumni for the Student Opportunities Fund.

Every gift made to the Fund makes a difference and has a profound impact upon the lives of students at Leicester.

Please make a gift today  
[www.le.ac.uk/donate](http://www.le.ac.uk/donate)

**Thank you for your  
incredible support**