

Editorial

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Doctoral research within the faculty is world leading. This continues to be the case, evidenced in the latest Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (2023), where 96 percent of our doctoral researchers, both PhD and DBA, said they are satisfied overall with their doctoral programme, far exceeding national averages.

Our aim with the faculty conference continues to be, to provide a safe space for our postgraduate researchers to share their progressing research. Creating this dedicated doctoral community forms an essential hub for growth, support, and innovation. Pursuing a doctorate is a challenging and transformative journey, and a structured, collaborative environment provides the scaffolding needed to thrive both academically and personally. We see this conference as a cornerstone in supporting what is fast becoming a thriving doctoral community.

The essence of this doctoral community lies in its shared purpose: fostering an ecosystem where postgraduate researchers can connect, exchange ideas, and collectively advance their work. Here our community bridges diverse disciplines, offering a rich mix of perspectives that can enrich individual your individual research. By belonging to such a network, doctoral candidates gain access to collective wisdom, mentorship opportunities, and a sense of camaraderie that can support the often-isolating nature academic inquiry.

A crucial aspect of this community is the opportunity for students to present their work to *critical friends*—peers and mentors who engage with their research in a supportive yet challenging manner. This opportunity is essential for two key reasons. First, presenting to critical friends encourages us to really think about our key ideas helping us gain clarity of thought.

Second, constructive critique from peers and faculty fosters resilience and flexibility in our thinking. By addressing probing questions and considering alternative viewpoints, we refine our arguments and reinforce methodologies. Taking part in these opportunities for iterative feedback process is important for rigorous research, but can also be a rehearsal for engaging with the broader academic community.

Thank you to everyone involved: our doctoral researchers, supervisors, cross-faculty attendees, friends of LJMU, and our doctoral administrators who have worked extremely hard to ensure the day runs as successfully as it possibly can.