



LIVERPOOL
JOHN MOORES
UNIVERSITY

A CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF START-UP AT LJMU



INTRODUCTION FROM EMMA ROBINSON, HEAD OF WORK-BASED LEARNING AND ENTERPRISE AT LJMU



Welcome to 20 years of Startup at LJMU. The stories of our entrepreneurs really showcase the ingenuity and diversity of our students and graduates, and I am proud of every one of them.

Startup has now been an important part of the student offer at LJMU for 20 years. Our approach has always been inclusive and developmental; so that students have ownership of their ideas and are fully informed of the choices they can make about their venture. We support every student who asks for help, helping them develop the skills and techniques they need to understand their product, the marketplace and the opportunities ahead.

This approach has brought many successes in terms of new business, and we estimate that companies supported by LJMU turnover at least £20M per year.

I would like to acknowledge the partners and people that helped us over the years.

But the most thanks go to the Bathgate Group, who, with an extraordinarily generous gift of £300k in 2016 have supported hundreds of students to follow their dreams.

Entrepreneurs who have been supported by the Bathgate fund are shown with this logo:



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Becky Allison started her beauty subscription box company, 'The Indy Box', during lockdown, in partnership with her aunt who also studied at LJMU. Her business aims to support independent beauty brands and provide customers with access to their products. Every month the Indy Box provides customers with five innovative products, whilst saving over 60% off the RRP.

Her passion for the business gave her the confidence to study Marketing and has provided an income during her studies. Becky is already implementing the knowledge and skills she's gained into the development and growth of her start-up.



Fear means it's important - not that it's not within your reach!

Becky Allison

Faculty of Business & Law

The Indy Box Ltd



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE INDY BOX**





Adam Bresnen is a Merseyside-based Artist, who graduated in 2009 from LJMU School of Art & Design with a degree in Fine Art. He has worked with the LJMU Start-Up Team to develop his confidence as a self-employed creative. Since then, he has developed a successful career as a Fine Artist, with

specialisms in both portraiture and mural art. Recent projects include working as lead artist on murals of Liverpool Football Club legend, Robbie Fowler, and Liverpool boxer, Natasha Jonas.

An exhibition of his work is planned for 2024 at the Oakland Gallery, New Brighton.



Don't listen to people when they tell you to do something else - believe in yourself and your business.

Adam Bresnen

Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Brezaux



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
BREZAUX**



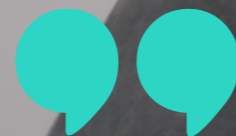
CULTURE CITY



Work hard, be nice to people and know the importance of a good network.

Joe Campbell

Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Culture City Ltd



Joe founded his business, Culture City, in 2013 whilst studying for a degree in Media Production at LJMU. Joe built a strong presence on social media by creating videos to promote and showcase music, theatre and art, and his client base quickly grew. Since then, Culture

City has evolved into a content creation house specialising in high-end creative and corporate film/audio production, photography and design, working with some of the biggest names in the creative industries. Their high-profile list of clients includes companies such as

Nike, Sound City, BOSCH, Liverpool City Council, Seven Store and artists such as Tim Burgess, Boy George, The Racket and Noddy Holder, to name but a few.

Culture City has recently moved into a new office space in the Royal Liver

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
CULTURE CITY



BATHGATE

GROUP

Building where they have created a multi-purpose studio for all their filming, photography, podcasts and design needs, as well as enough room for the team to expand, which they hope to do in the very near future.



Holly graduated from LJMU with a First Class (Hons) degree in Graphic Design & Illustration in 2021 and since then she has established herself as a Freelance Graphic Designer, specialising in Branding and Identity, Social Media Marketing and Print Design.

She works alongside multiple design studios within Liverpool

and with a versatile range of clients both within the UK and internationally.

Holly also works as a Visiting Lecturer for two of the Universities within Liverpool, teaching portfolio design, at LIPA and supporting Third Year Students, back at LJMU.



The relationships that you make at university, and after, are incredibly valuable. People want to see you succeed, put yourself out there and network. Accepting rejection and brushing yourself off is also crucial.

Holly Carter

Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Freelance Graphic Designer



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
HOLLY CARTER**





TWIN
BY TARE ISAAC

Tare Isaac founded her luxury women's clothing brand, Twin by Tare Isaac, in 2020, after graduating from LJMU with a degree in International Broadcast Journalism and then taking part in a special development programme for international entrepreneurs.

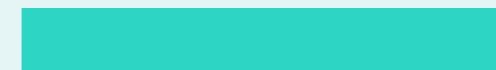
Specialising in high-end women's blazers and dresses, Tare's designs are now stocked by Wolf & Badger, the curated online marketplace for independent designer brands, giving her business a global reach.



Always stay true to yourself in every business decision because that is what makes the brand.

Tare Isaac

Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Twin by Tare Isaac Ltd



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
TWIN BY TARE ISAAC**





Mike Kerr graduated with a B.Ed. in 2002 and was studying for a Masters in Education when he started his first business in 2016, Piadina Pronto, selling authentic Italian piadina, arancini and pasta. Born to Bake, Mike’s artisan bakery was started during the pandemic to great success. His next venture opens in 2024.

Mike received support and funding from LJMU to buy his first mobile food station and never looked back. Learning to bake for his second venture was a real challenge, but one that has paid off and Born to Bake has a production base in Bromborough, Wirral serving both wholesale and retail customers.



Attend LJMU workshops for guidance and go for it! If you never try, you’ll never find out. Always be open to suggestions, and build a good network.

Mike Kerr
Faculty of Arts and Professional Studies
Piadina Pronto Ltd, and Born to Bake



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
PIADINA PRONTO AND BORN TO BAKE





Fiona's first paid work as a writer came about in 2016 thanks to a journalism assignment set by her tutors at LJMU. She went on to see her work published in three magazines whilst still studying at university and graduated in 2018 with a first-class degree in Creative Writing. She feels that this has helped open the door to numerous opportunities, including being commissioned to write a monologue for the award-winning Welsh project GALWAD, that was performed by Game of Thrones actor, Owen Teale and screened on S4C and Sky Arts.

In addition to her writing work, Fiona is well established as a festival organiser and has recently set up a new company, Coed Celyn Productions, synergising her experience in logistics and writing to expand into theatre production. She will stage a month-long production at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival in the summer of 2024, with the goal of this being a springboard for further tours and productions.

Pick a subject you have a passion for and go for it. Don't delay! It really can open up a world of unforeseen opportunities.

Fiona Maher
Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Creative Practitioner

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
FIONA MAHER



Fiona Maher



Land is a speciality coffee shop started in 2018 by designer/artist duo, Lotte Manson and Matthew Nightingale, in Liverpool Science Park.

With a combined experience of over 20 years within catering, buying/purchasing and design, they source their coffee carefully from sustainable suppliers and it is served through the means of espresso and delicate hand-drip methods.

Drawing upon their design background, every aspect of the Land customer experience is considered, from the quality of their purchase to the crafted takeaway cup individually hand printed.



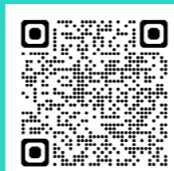
Hard work pays off. Take all the advice, help and resources you can and make lots of contacts.

Lotte Manson

Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Land Coffee



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
LAND COFFEE**



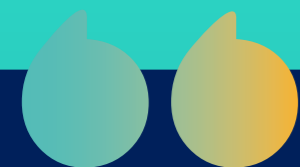


Sharon Munroe graduated with a BA in Health Studies from the LJMU School of Public Health in 2013.

Soon after, she set up Equilibrium

North West CIC, with the goal of reducing health and wellbeing related inequalities in her local community. Based at Livingstone Street Play and Community Centre in Birkenhead, Equilibrium works to reduce disadvantage to groups and individuals most at risk, and to find solutions to help them have the same chances and experiences as their peers.

Equilibrium recently became a family hub supporting family life and life span development. They provide and host 24 weekly activities and services for all ages and stages; including access to other services, SEND groups, social groups for reducing isolation, baby and toddler groups and after school play groups and youth clubs for children of all ages. They also provide room hire, training opportunities, food projects to reduce food poverty; and event planning for community events, parties and fundraisers.



Go for it! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Stay true to your ethos but always be prepared to ask your customers what they want and need and be prepared to adapt.

Sharon Munroe
Faculty of Health
Equilibrium North West CIC



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
EQUILIBRIUM NORTH WEST CIC**





Muhammad Shehzad Nazir graduated from LJMU with an MSc in International Business & Management in 2019. He founded his security business, Progressive Group International (PGI), in the same year, as part of a development programme for international entrepreneurs.

PGI grew quickly and now offers a full-range of professional security services from Retail Security Services and Door Supervisors through to Event Security and Key holding services.

PGI is seeking to become a thought leader and expert for the Security Industry.



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
PROGRESSIVE GROUP INTERNATIONAL**



Create a solid business plan outlining your goals, strategies and financial projections, stay focused, persistent and resilient in the face of challenges and setbacks.

Muhammad Shehzad Nazir
Faculty of Engineering & Technology
Progressive Group International Ltd





FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
OSSAI AGENCY



Phil Ossai started on his entrepreneurial journey whilst on his placement year at LJMU, joining a programme with the Startup team to startup and run a clothing company. He believes this year was fundamental to his future career path as an entrepreneur.

Phil graduated from LJMU in 2020 with a BA in Business Management and founded his second company OSSAI Agency in 2022. OSSAI Agency is a personal branding agency that works with 'Underestimated Founders' (Diverse & Female Founders) to build their personal brands on LinkedIn. OSSAI generate awareness and new business for their clients through brand management, consultancy and workshops.

Build your personal brand. It's not about what you know, it's not about who you know, it's about who knows you. Also find a way to be patient and have fun along the journey too.

Phil Ossai
Faculty of Business & Law
Ossai Agency Ltd





Dennis Outten graduated from LJMU with a BA in Fine Art in 2012 and recently returned to undertake an MA in Immersive Media, graduating in Spring 2024.

He started his business, Focal Studios in 2019. His company specialises in creating innovative and immersive audiovisual experiences, harnessing the power of technology to bring their clients' stories to life.

Recent projects include the spectacular projections for Lunar New Year, hosted at St Luke's Bombed Out Church for the past three years, and the Eurovision 2023 logo beamed onto the Birkenhead Ventilation Tower as Europe's music fans descended on the city – Focal Studios are the masterminds behind it all.

2024 sees exciting times ahead for Focal Studios. They are founding their own creative technology hub in New Brighton, taking over a three-story building, working in partnership with local learning organisations and creating a space where people can work and develop their creative practice.



Following your path can take you in many directions, but as long as you're moving forward that's fine.

Dennis Outten
Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Focal Studios Ltd



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FOCAL STUDIOS



Dennis Outten
Focal Studios Ltd



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT **PICNIC**



PICNIC was co-founded by LJMU graduate, Sam Patterson. The food business provides healthy fast food to its Liverpool clientele both on-site and ready for delivery.

During the early stages, the business was run from his co-founder's parents' garage. After buying all the kitchen equipment, ingredients and setting up an Instagram page to get their name out there, it was time to get cooking.

They opened their first premises with Picnic Liverpool Smithdown Ltd in 2020 and expanded in 2023, opening a new restaurant in West Derby. Since opening, PICNIC has seen support from the local community, with Uber Eats awarding the business as the North West's best restaurant of the year in 2022 and shortlisting them again in 2023.



The main thing you need to do is just start, that's the bottom line. You're never going to be ready or have a perfect time to start! Get going, don't stop, it all falls into place when you have a vision.

Sam Patterson
Faculty of Health
PICNIC





Sean's Place is a men's mental health and suicide prevention service founded by LJMU graduate, Debbie Rogers. She established the charity due to losing her brother Sean in 2019 when he was just 34 years old after a long battle with mental health.

The award-winning charity supports men in the Merseyside area through free and immediate access to support such as counselling, bereavement support, family support & hypnotherapy. Sean's Place also offers social support such as angling, music, cookery, mindfulness, gardening, walking groups plus training and qualifications.



Things will go wrong and it will hurt - but each failure is a lesson that will help your future goals.

Debbie Rogers
Faculty of Business & Law
Sean's Place CIC



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
SEAN'S PLACE**





SAiFELY was founded by LJMU Graduate, Kirk Ryan, in 2019.

Kirk studied Multimedia Systems at LJMU, graduating in 2008 and rising quickly to executive level. Kirk is an experienced founder and innovator. His new start-up uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to detect dangerous scenarios from live data and raise the alarm.

SAiFELY is a personal safety application currently in development which will serve both domestic and commercial markets.



An idea is nothing without execution, build the right team and measure the things that matter.

Kirk Ryan
 Faculty of Engineering & Technology
 SAI FELY Ltd

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SAI FELY

Kirk Ryan
SAiFELY Ltd



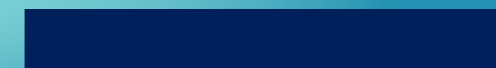
Little Umbrella Events is an events management company started by current Events Management student, Rebecca Shaw, in 2023.

Her business is available for business events, private celebrations and weddings. Little Umbrella Events offers full-planning and on-the-day coordination to both private and corporate clients, as well as B2B event strategy consultancy.



Take advice from the Start-up Hub and have the confidence to go for it.

Rebecca Shaw
Faculty of Business & Law
Little Umbrella Events Ltd



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
LITTLE UMBRELLA EVENTS**



BATHGATE

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Jean-Jacques knew that he wanted to set up his own business from the start of his time at LJMU, registering for support from the Start-up team on Day 1 of his studies in 2018. Since then, he has graduated with a BSc in Sport Development and is now studying for a MPhil in Sports Science.

He co-founded his business, Sports Therapy Hub, with his business partner, Lee Gallagher. They provide injury treatment and rehabilitation services to individuals and sports clubs/teams throughout Liverpool. Their innovative approach of combining sports injury treatment within a fitness complex has provided the local community and centre members a local service, with therapists who have vast experience working in the sports and fitness industry.

Sports Therapy Hub treats most acute and chronic sports injuries. Their therapists provide Sports Massage, Deep Tissue Massage, and injury advice to treat a range of injuries.



Take the time to learn how to best communicate your enthusiasm, drive and motivation so that everyone can share their own enthusiasm, drive and motivation.

Jean-Jacques Sillito
Faculty of Science
Sports Therapy Hub (NW) Ltd



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
SPORTS THERAPY HUB (NW)**





FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
LO TIERNEY



Lo Tierney is a freelance illustrator specialising in portraiture and queer art. They graduated from LJMU in 2015 with a degree in Graphic Design & Illustration.

In 2023, Lo held an exhibition of their work entitled 'Spectrum' at Cass Art in Liverpool. Spectrum was a portrait exhibition of autistic people that they drew, and the accompanying Instagram account had writing from each participant about the positive and negative aspects of being autistic. 'Spectrum' is an ongoing body of work that aims to bring people together and start a conversation between autistic people and allies.

In addition to their freelance work, Lo also runs art workshops like the popular 'Drink and Draw', which recently received coverage on Radio Merseyside.



Do it! Being your own boss is the best.

Lo Tierney
Faculty of Arts, Professional & Social Studies
Illustrator & Activist





Scenegrph Studios was co-founded by LJMU Computer Games technology & doctoral graduate, David Tully, with the goal of making XR (extended reality)

accessible and enjoyable for everyone, whether they are using it for entertainment, education, or other purposes. The company is committed to delivering high-quality, innovative products that exceed their clients' expectations and create a lasting impact on the XR landscape.

Recent products developed by Scenegrph include Spirit VR, an application that uses virtual reality mindfulness to reduce anxiety and promote good mental health. Also Spirit VR Confidence, a virtual reality application that builds users' confidence through Virtual Reality public speaking scenarios.

You are not Luke Skywalker, you are Yoda. Your job is to help your client be the hero. If you do that, they will pay.

Dr David Tully
Faculty of Engineering & Technology
Scenegrph Studios Ltd



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SCENEGRAPH STUDIOS





Utubakwu Michael Ushie founded his business Thalasic Ltd in 2021, after graduating from LJMU with an MSc in Marine & Offshore Engineering and taking part in a development programme for international graduates.

The Liverpool based company specializes in procurement, supply, installation, maintenance, engineering, and software solutions for a wide spectrum of industries, with a primary focus on the maritime and shipping and the energy sectors.

With a commitment to excellence, innovation, and unwavering customer satisfaction, Thalasic is poised to emerge as a trusted partner for clients seeking top-tier equipment, spare parts, and digital solutions.



Liverpool is a great place to start and grow your business. The LJMU Start-up Hub is always there to assist you. Please take the chance.

Utubakwu Michael Ushie
Faculty of Engineering & Technology
Thalasic Ltd



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THALASIC LTD





Student Futures - Start-up Hub

Email: startup@ljmu.ac.uk

Website: www.ljmu.ac.uk/startup