

Class of 2024 Graduation

17th July 2024

Graduate Speaker Dr Matthew Heneghan

Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, friends, family and fellow graduates. I am beyond delighted to stand here today.

For those graduating from the School of Medicine, doesn't it seem surreal to cast our minds back to being underneath this very building before our university careers? I remember attending my interview in the crypt and convincing myself in the weeks following that I couldn't possibly have secured a place. It truly feels like a full circle moment to celebrate the end of our degrees in this cathedral together!

Starting university, anxious to make friends and settle into a new way of life, it seemed overwhelming at times to think of what lay ahead of us. I distinctly remember one lecturer talking about how normal it can be to experience 'imposter syndrome'. Despite this we've managed to make it through, and there have been plenty of highlights outside of the classroom.

For me, I've thoroughly enjoyed being involved in the Artefacts society. For others who are more physically inclined, I know sports teams have played a huge role in your university experiences.

Those experiences have been in abundance, and I will certainly look back at my university days fondly. From North Wales, to Vietnam, the Eiffel Tower to Blackpool Tower, through elective opportunities, many have experienced medicine in a range of settings. I know we'll be better doctors for it and I'm so proud to be part of the class of 2024.

Coming from Liverpool, I am biased, but the city has been fantastic to train in; a metropolis of culture, there is always something going on. From Eurovision to football, Taylor Swift to The Beatles, the experiences in Liverpool have allowed us all to rest and recharge away from our studies.

Today is a day of celebration, and a day of reflection. In my fourth year, whilst on placement at Marie Curie, I had a lovely conversation with a patient. I shared that I would graduate as a doctor in 2024. He congratulated me, saying he would be 'looking down' as I walked across the stage. This led me to reflect on the privilege bestowed upon us to make a positive impact on people's lives. Whilst I was intercalating, my dad died in Marie Curie. Partaking in palliative care placements during 4th year, on my elective, and during my SAMP project, have allowed me to feel as though I am giving something back to my community and my dad.

By reflecting on how grateful we are for the positive guardians in our lives – perhaps thinking of the people who may be looking down at you today, and for the inspiring patient interactions we've had, we can draw upon those experiences when times get tough in the future.

As we come to the end of our graduation ceremony, it would be remiss of me to not take time to say thank you to those who have guided us along the way. Firstly, thank you to Professor Scott, all the staff at the School of Medicine and the NHS trusts who have skilfully directed us through our degrees. Thank you to the patients who have so graciously given their time to allow us to become the physicians and dentists we graduate as today. Last but not least, thank you also, to our family, friends, partners and guardians, including those unable to be here today.

Class of 2024, I am in no doubt of our future successes as a cohort- many congratulations and I hope you all enjoy the well-deserved celebrations.