

## FutureLearn Scholarships Launch - Additional Comments from Expert Judges

**Tim Plyming, Managing Director, Paid Short Courses & Microcredentials at The Open University**, said: "I'm delighted to be a judge on the panel for the FutureLearn Scholarship. This initiative aligns with the OU's mission and provides the opportunity for individuals to benefit from life-changing learning that will help them achieve their full potential and enrich their contribution to society in a post-pandemic world. The world has changed in the last 18 months and the pandemic has accelerated the requirement for innovative, accessible learning as people upskill or re-skill to meet new global challenges. The FutureLearn Scholarship is designed to support individuals to do just that and I'm proud to be a part of it."

**Poet and Mental Health Activist, Hussain Manawer**, added: "It's great to be a part of the judging panel for FutureLearn's Scholarship. It is so important for young people to know all the different options that are available to them, especially when it comes to decisions that will help shape their future. Working as a Mental Health ambassador and poet, I am vocal about my own personal struggles: one of them being the pressures that come with being young and figuring out your next steps. FutureLearn offers a variety of courses that allow for young people to tailor their learning and their thinking to what suits them best. I am looking forward to being on this journey with them and watching them explore subjects they are truly passionate about."

**Professor Rachid Hourizi, Director of the Institute of Coding**, said: "The Institute of Coding is pleased to support the FutureLearn Scholarship - an initiative that will help more people kick-start their career in an in-demand area like tech. We know from our work that the UK has a pressing digital skills gap and we need positive initiatives like this to support people into well-paying, high-quality employment in this key area of national need."

**Professor Craig Hassed MBBS, FRACGP, OAM, Mindfulness Coordinator and Director of Education at Monash University**, commented: "Online learning has opened up a whole new world of educational opportunities in an amazing and diverse array of fascinating topics. These FutureLearn scholarships are a brilliant initiative enabling the next generation to take steps towards creating a new future for themselves and also making an important contribution to the world."

**Rita F. D'Aoust, Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing**, also added: "Our learning environment and culture has fundamentally changed as individuals seek flexible yet authentic digital learning formats for targeted needs. FutureLearn provides an accessible and engaging platform that builds upon global expertise to meet multiple learning needs. Adult learners look for quality but flexible and affordable non-degree training to meet market and employer needs. I am excited to serve on the FutureLearn Scholarship panel and contribute to a rapidly advancing approach, especially given the unprecedented pivot in our workforce and learning market."

**Dr. Ella Gilbert, PhD, Climate Scientist and Presenter**, said: "Inspiration and mentoring are so important when it comes to sustainability, the environment and climate change. Too often, we can feel paralysed by the enormity of the problems facing humanity, angry about

the lack of action, confused about the most effective solutions, and unsure of where our skills and talents can be most usefully applied. Education gives people the tools to tackle the climate and ecological crises themselves, and empowers people to take actions to change the world for the better. I'm really pleased to be part of FutureLearn's scholarship initiative, which I hope will encourage new people to gain skills and knowledge of sustainability topics.”

**Andria Zafirakou, winner of the global 2018 teacher prize**, said: “I am delighted to sit amongst other great names on the judging panel for FutureLearn’s Scholarship. Throughout my career, I have witnessed first-hand how important accessible education is to young people and I am hoping that this scholarship will give those who are seeking social and flexible learning the opportunity to fulfil just that. FutureLearn’s vast database of courses is perfect for someone looking for new opportunities outside of a traditional learning route. Their teaching and educational courses allow people to learn in ways that best suit them, helping them to build the skills needed in whatever life throws at them and I look forward to seeing the students showcase the passion they have for these subjects.”