

Activities Guide for Schools and Colleges

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Our activities help to raise pupils' aspirations and attainment in order to widen participation in Higher Education.

Gail Rothnie
Head of Outreach

Challenge what you know.

Introduction

The Outreach team has a focus on working with state schools and colleges in the West Midlands to raise aspirations and improve motivation among local students in order to widen participation in higher education.

We seek to provide impartial information and advice to support subject choice for GCSE and A level options and future higher education progression. We also work with teachers and advisers so that they can provide appropriate guidance to their students.

We run a number of programmes and activities from primary school through to sixth form. All of our activities, with the exception of some of those delivered as part of our Aimhigher Partnership, are provided free of charge to schools. Please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach for further information.

Selecting participants

When selecting students for participation in an activity, we ask schools to give priority to students from groups who are currently under represented in higher education and who have the potential to progress to university. This would include:

- ☐ Students with no parental history of higher education
- ☐ Students eligible for Free School Meals or in receipt of the 16–19 bursary
- ☐ Students who live in postcodes where there are low progression rates to higher education and a high index of multiple deprivation
- ☐ Students with disabilities or who have been in local authority care



Primary

Professor Fluffy

We work with Year 5 and Year 6 primary school children, introducing them to the concept and vocabulary of higher education through games and activities, finishing off the event with a mini-graduation ceremony.



Primary Workshop



Secondary

Years 7–11

RAISE

(Raising Aspirations in Secondary Education) Programme

A range of fun, interactive lectures, workshops and competitive subject based events for Years 7–11. They are designed to support students' motivation and commitment to secondary education, and in the long term support achievement raising at GCSE.

Subjects have included Physics, History, Biology, Sport and Exercise Science, Chemistry and Archaeology. For further information please go to www.birmingham.ac.uk/raise

Years 8–11

Forward Thinking

Forward Thinking is a progressive programme we run with groups of local schools. Each year the schools involved select five Year 8 students to take part in the programme. They are all Gifted and Talented students who meet Widening Participation criteria. The students take part in a programme of activity through to Year 11 supported by a range of information and advice materials. They are then encouraged to continue to engage in wider activities available to students in Years 12 and 13.

Students are encouraged to think about their future education and career path in order to make informed decisions about progression to university, and to help motivate them to succeed at school and achieve their potential. This programme has a particular focus on looking at progression to selective institutions such as the University of Birmingham and other Russell Group universities, and considers what academic study and student life might be like.

Years 7–13

On-campus school visits

We organise tailored school visits for groups of up to 50 targeted students, all aimed at raising the aspirations of students and providing them with important information, advice and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about their future.

A typical day runs from 10.00am–2.30pm, with lunch and refreshments included.

For further information please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach

We also run UCAS days for Year 12 and 13 students, supporting work carried out at school or college in relation to the UCAS application process. We are happy to welcome larger groups for this type of day. Information will include student finance, tips for applicants, and the importance of qualifications.

‘Seeing what the University is like showed me how exciting coming to university is!’

Year 9 student



Enjoying lunch on campus during residential



Summer Residential

‘Activities got students that don’t normally work with or talk to each other working well together and got them to think outside their normal range’

Year 9 teacher

Years 9–13 Mentoring

We recruit, train and support a team of undergraduates to work in local schools and colleges, providing one-to-one mentoring support for pupils in Years 9–13.

How can mentoring help?

Mentoring can help raise standards and achievements at key stages 3 and 4 and mentors can:

- Help pupils develop study skills and independent learning techniques
- Help improve a pupil's attendance, punctuality, classroom behaviour and relationships with peers and staff
- Provide pupils with individual support and guidance
- Provide positive role models for pupils and help them aspire to higher education

As a result, pupils gain confidence, motivation and improved self-esteem.

Mentoring sessions:

- Are confidential and delivered on a one-to-one basis
- Take place at your school or college in a secure setting outside the classroom
- Last between 40 minutes and one hour depending on the school timetable
- Allow mentors to see up to five pupils or students each

‘Talks at the beginning were the right length and were valuable in getting students thinking early’

Sixth Form tutor

Aimhigher

We are a member of the local Aimhigher partnership and have a number of mentors who provide face-to-face and online support and encouragement to learners as they encounter the various transition milestones between Year 9 and Year 13. Mentors normally work with five learners each and hold meetings on a weekly basis for approximately 15 weeks. If you are interested in finding out more about Aimhigher mentoring, please go to www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk

Academic mentoring

Would your students benefit from extra subject-specific support? We have a small number of mentors who can provide this support to post-16 students. We are particularly interested in working with students who are hoping to apply to the University of Birmingham through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme. In particular we are looking to target those students who with some additional support should be aiming to achieve an A or B grade in their subject area. Mentors usually work with three to five learners each and hold individual face to face meetings on a weekly basis, for approximately 15 weeks. For more information please go to www.birmingham.ac.uk/mentoring

‘This scheme gets better and better for our learners.’

Head of Year 10

Year 10 Residentials

Our Year 10 Summer Residential programmes provide a fantastic opportunity for able students with no history of higher education in their family to consider university as a viable option for their future, and to experience it first hand by staying on campus and going to lectures like university students. To find out more information, please go to www.birmingham.ac.uk/summerschools



Workshop activity

Post-16

Masterclasses

Masterclasses at Birmingham are designed to stimulate enquiry and broaden knowledge of the subject area covered. They provide an opportunity to raise the aspirations and attainment of your Widening Participation cohort, and to stretch your Gifted and Talented students.

We run over 40 Masterclasses a year; some relate closely to the school curriculum, others are broader and introduce new topics found in higher education study. They provide your students the opportunity to take part in a learning experience in a higher education setting. The majority of Masterclasses are aimed at Years 12 and 13, with some aimed at Years 10 and 11. For further information please visit our website www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses

Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP)

The AEP helps to encourage young people, who have no family history of higher education, to apply to a leading research university, supporting and guiding them through the process.

The programme has four main components: a week-long residential at the University campus in Edgbaston in the summer of Year 12; ongoing, one-to-one e-mentoring from current undergraduates; study-skills sessions at key points in Year 13; and a celebratory 'graduation' event.

The summer school is the core activity of the AEP. Participating students 'live' in our University halls of residence, attend lectures

and seminars, and participate in a variety of social activities, replicating the experience they would have as enrolled students.

The e-mentoring scheme in Year 13 with our undergraduates provides invaluable assistance and support during a critical time, when students are assessing their options and preparing UCAS applications (from our latest cohort, over 500 emails were exchanged with mentors in advance of applications). Students return to campus for two study and revision workshops, to assist in maximising their chances in their final examinations. This is followed by a 'graduation' ceremony.

The AEP builds a relationship with the University, involving parents, carers and teachers. It inspires pride and raises aspirations and confidence.

For further information, please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/aep

Access to Birmingham (A2B)

The A2B scheme is designed to help students from families and communities in the West Midlands who have little or no experience of higher education find out about what studying at university involves.

The University of Birmingham has a long history of welcoming students from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds. We were one of the first universities to set up a fair access scheme for local students in 2000, and are proud to be able to offer prospective applicants the support of our A2B scheme if they are studying at one of our partner institutions. As a result of the scheme's success, we are actively involved in supporting the development of such schemes in other UK universities.

To be eligible to apply, students must meet certain criteria. Further information can be found at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/a2b

'My son achieved disappointing AS results, but thanks to the encouragement and ongoing support of the AEP team, he is back to his predicted grades.'

Parent of AEP student



Workshop activity

Realising Opportunities

The University is a member of Realising Opportunities. This is a collaboration of 12 leading universities promoting fair access to higher education and encouraging social mobility for able students from under-represented groups. The Realising Opportunities programme is designed to support students through their post-16 studies with skills development and guidance, as well as allowing students to demonstrate their potential to study at a research-intensive university. The programme enables students to make informed decisions about their future. For further information, please visit www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk

'The Academic Enrichment Programme will allow me to pursue my goals in life. I learned that you shouldn't be hindered by your background, past or others' expectations of you.'

AEP student

'The A2B scheme has been one of the biggest contributors to my success to date; it has provided me with contacts, experiences and, most of all, motivation to achieve the best.'

Eiranpreet, BSc Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Third Year

We support teachers in various ways. We can provide training sessions on tips for writing UCAS references, topical issues in higher education, preparing students for university study and access for mature learners.

Resources

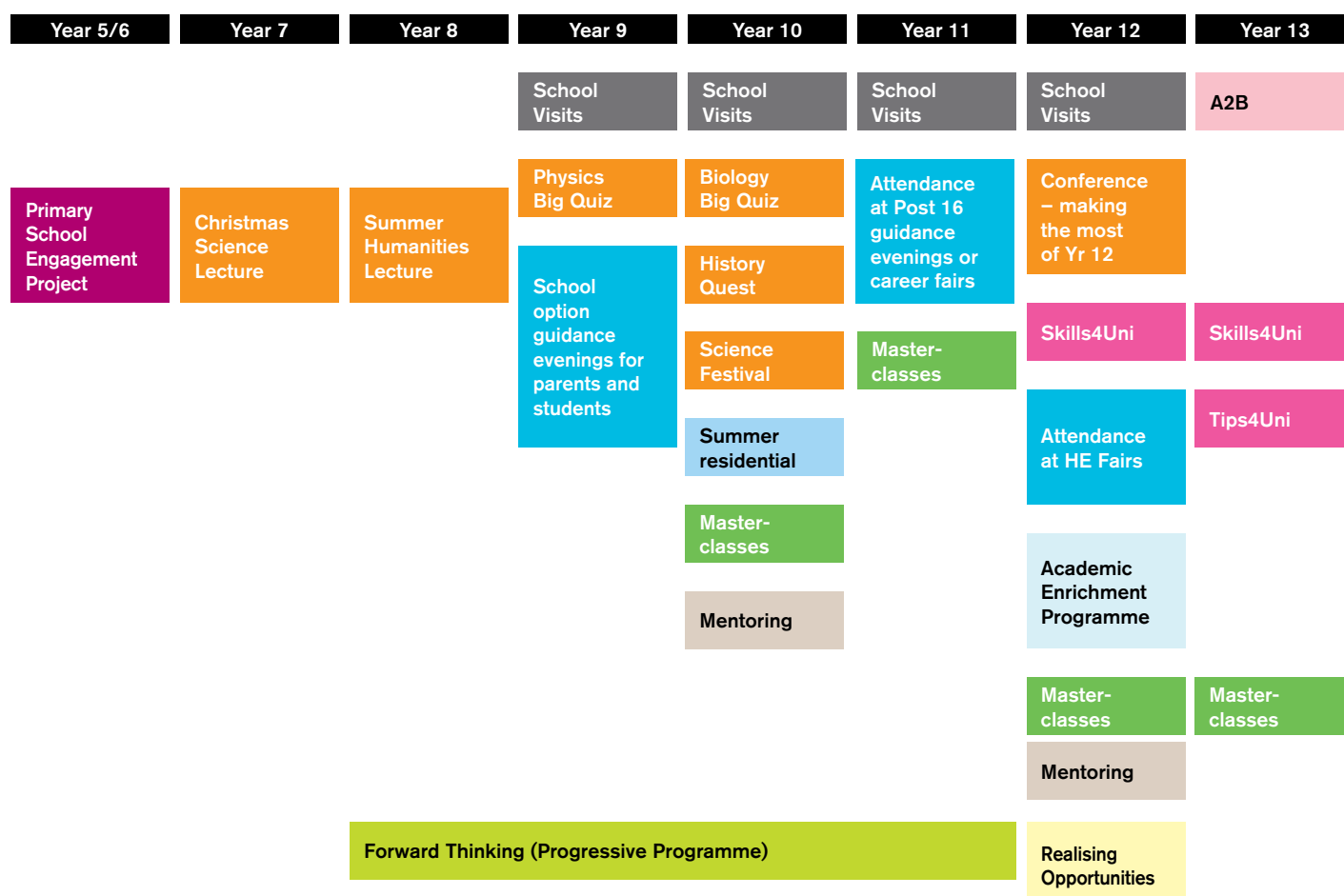
An online study support module, designed with the help of Year 12 and Year 13 students. It offers lots of advice about making the change from school to academic study at university. The module can be viewed at www.skills4uni.bham.ac.uk

Tips4uni is an interactive online programme covering all aspects of the university application process and useful resources to help students make informed decisions, as well as advice on the application process and completing personal statements. Please contact outreach@bham.ac.uk if you would like access to these materials.

We are keen to work with local schools and colleges to raise awareness and aspirations to higher education. Our activities are designed



so that you can construct a programme for your pupils beginning at the transition from primary to secondary school, through the secondary phase to preparation for the transition to higher education. The diagram below shows our activity, and how it might link together into a programme for students. Please contact outreach@bham.ac.uk if you would like to talk about this further.



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