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Academic Enrichment Programme

The Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) helps to encourage young people, who have no family history of higher education, to apply to a leading research university, and supports and guides them through the process. Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we offer this life-changing widening participation programme to ensure that disadvantaged young people are motivated to make the most of their talents. The Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) has resulted in almost 100 young people becoming undergraduates at our University.

> Stephanie Freeman, BSc Psychology (2011) and AEP student, on her graduation day "This is one of the happiest days of my life. I never thought that I would ever be a graduate and the support I received on the Academic Enrichment Programme made me realise that I had the potential to aspire to a Russell Group university"

In 2010/11 we had 226 applications from 70 different schools across the West Midlands region. 104 students attended our residential week on campus. We had 58 applications to the University of Birmingham, with 42 offers made through the **A2B (/alumni/giving/A2B.aspx)** scheme.

As well as engaging them with higher education, the AEP improves participants' confidence, their sense of ability to succeed, decision-making skills, self-esteem, determination, and personal satisfaction – all important, transferable life-skills that improve the quality of life and are important for all future careers.

Help provide a life-changing opportunity, and **give online today (/alumni/giving/givenow.aspx)** or text CIRC06 followed by your chosen amount to 70070 e.g. CIRC06 £5. Or to find out more information, please contact **Laura Fairbanks (mailto:giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk)** [+44(0)121 414 9984].

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Who is it for and how does it work?

Young people on the programme are the first in their family to attend university; they have parents in non-professional occupations; they attend a state-maintained school or college; and they attend schools or colleges which have little history of sending pupils to research-intensive universities.

The AEP has four main components: a week-long residential school at the University campus in Edgbaston in the summer of Year 12; ongoing, one-to-one 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 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.

Success! AEP students graduate from Birmingham

In the summer of 2011, we celebrated the graduation of those students who had been part of our first AEP cohort in 2008. Stephanie Freeman graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. During her time as an undergraduate, Stephanie was a student ambassador for the AEP, ensuring that new students got the same advice and guidance that had made such a difference to her.

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