

## Frequently Asked Questions

We have received tremendous interest in the University School, with many questions being raised. We welcome this discussion, as we proceed with our plans in as open a manner as possible. You will find some of the most frequently asked questions answered below, as fully as we currently can, but if your question does not appear please feel free to [contact us \(mailto:universityschool@contacts.bham.ac.uk\)](mailto:universityschool@contacts.bham.ac.uk). We aim to respond to all emails within 7 days but due to high levels of interest, this is not always possible.

### When will the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form open?

[Open all sections](#)

The University of Birmingham School will take in pupils to years 7 and 12 in September 2015, growing to full capacity of 1150 over 5 years.

### Where will the school be located?

The University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form will be opening in a new building in 2015. The proposal is for the purpose-built school to be on the University's Selly Oak site, close to the main Edgbaston campus and a wide range of University facilities. Developed in partnership between the Department for Education and the University, the building will help to deliver the School's vision of creating a learning community that will maximise the personal and academic achievement of all of its pupils.

### Why is there a need for this school?

More - and a wider choice of - secondary school places are needed in Birmingham for the future and the School is particularly targeting areas of under-supply of places. It will be free to attend and the admissions policy aims to provide opportunities for pupils from a number of different areas across Birmingham to enrol.

Teaching staff will be fully qualified and of the highest quality. They will be supported by trainee teachers in order to increase the ratio of staff to pupils.

As well as offering an excellent academic curriculum, the School will support the personal development of pupils by providing the necessary opportunities for them to develop as well rounded individuals with strong character.

### What is a University Training School?

The School will be one of the country's first University Training Schools. It will be a centre for initial teacher training, ongoing teacher education and research into improving educational practice. The curriculum will be informed by the latest research on education, character development and school improvement, plus the School itself will be a site for cutting-edge educational research. The School will be an active member of the community of schools in Birmingham and the region, sharing with and learning from these organisations.

### What are the aims of the school?

Its key aim is to transform lives by creating a learning community equipped to maximise the personal and academic achievement of all its pupils. It is setting out to bring together pupils from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, with differing abilities, to create an environment that reflects the diversity of Birmingham – providing opportunities for everyone to excel.

### Is a detailed curriculum for the school available?

No, the curriculum has not yet been finalised because the newly-appointed Principal will not be in post until after Easter 2014, and he will work with the University and other stakeholders to shape and influence the exact curriculum.

The School will offer a broad curriculum, including Sciences, Technology, English, Maths, Humanities (including History and Geography), Creative and Performing Arts, Sport and Foreign Languages.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8, for ages 11–13) will aim to give each pupil the support they need to achieve their maximum potential, ensuring all pupils receive the broad academic foundation that will encourage success in many careers.

At Key Stage 4 (Years 9, 10 and 11, ages 13 to 16) the School will offer a curriculum based on core subjects that will provide a basis for various routes in life. At this stage of learning, it is important that pupils keep their options as wide as possible.

The School will provide excellent teaching across the curriculum in Science, Technology, English, Maths, Humanities (including History and Geography) and maintain an emphasis on Foreign Languages and the Arts. The majority of pupils will take three science subjects and a foreign language at GCSE.

At Sixth Form, the emphasis will be on academic achievement at a high level, targeted towards university entry. The Sixth Form will offer a broad but focused range of A-levels, emphasising the core disciplines preferred by selective universities. Subjects may include Maths, Further Maths, English, Languages, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, Computer Science, Art and Design, Psychology, Law, Economics, Politics and RE.

Academic excellence will be complemented by personal development and will support pupils to develop the characteristics they need to succeed in all walks of adult life. These include a sense of identity and purpose, responsibility, honesty, self-reliance and self-discipline.

Extracurricular opportunities (eg, sports, creative and performing arts, community activities) will be integral to the pupil experience, complementing the curriculum. The School will have an extended school day (to 16.30) to allow students to engage in extracurricular activities and to participate in supervised study time.

### Will there be extra-curricular opportunities?

Yes, extracurricular opportunities (e.g. sports, creative and performing arts, community activities) will be integral to the pupil experience, complementing the curriculum. The School will have an extended school day (to 4.30pm) to allow students to engage in extracurricular activities and to participate in supervised study time.

### What is the admissions policy?

The University of Birmingham School will have a nodal admissions policy. Please see the [Admissions Policy \(/university/university-school/admissions.aspx\)](#) page for full details.

### What does 'node' mean?

The node is defined by a specific postcode (the selected postcodes are as detailed below). Year 7 school places will be allocated according to the distance between the applicant's home address and the main entrance of the node.

Other than for the area immediately surrounding the School site itself, train stations have been chosen as the nodal points, as they are easily identifiable and stable.

### Where are the nodes and how many pupils will come from each of these?

The selected points and proportion of year 7 places allocated to each node are set out below:

- The University School site itself (B29 6QW) - 50.0%
- Hall Green Rail Station (B28 8AA) - 16.7%
- Small Heath Station (B10 0DP) - 16.7%
- Jewellery Quarter Station (B18 6LE) - 16.7%

The nodes have been carefully selected to help ensure that pupil intake is representative of the city and that the opportunity to attend is open to a large number of pupils across Birmingham, whilst recognising that the School should also benefit the community in which it is located. The nodes also target those areas where there is a need for secondary school places over the next 10 years.

The distances of the successful applicants from the nodes will depend on the number of people who apply. Therefore at this stage we cannot determine the precise area from which the successful applicants will come.

The proportions are only allocated to the nodes in the case of over-subscription. If the School is under-subscribed at Year 7, everyone eligible for a place will get one.

### Who will run the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form?

The School will be set up and run by the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form Trust which is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The Directors of the Trust are responsible for day to day management and administration, and over time will become the Governors of the School.

Before the School opens, the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form Trust and Secretary of State for Education must enter into a Funding Agreement (a contract under which the Trust agrees to establish, maintain and run the School and the Secretary of State agrees to provide funding for it). The [Model Funding Agreement \(http://www.education.gov.uk/a0074737/funding-agreement\)](http://www.education.gov.uk/a0074737/funding-agreement) is published by the Department for Education.

The Funding Agreement for the University of Birmingham School, as a University Training School, will be slightly different from the Mainstream Free School model. To ensure that there will always be a close and strong relationship between the University and the School, the University will maintain the ability to appoint the majority of the School's Board of Governors.

### What are the Sixth Form entry criteria?

To be eligible for entry into the Sixth Form both internal and external pupils will be expected to have met the minimum academic entry requirements for the Sixth Form. These are:

- Pupils will have at least 5 GCSEs at Grade B or above.
- Pupils will have at least a Grade C at GCSE in English and Maths.

In order to follow their chosen AS/ A-level course, pupils will be expected to have obtained at least a Grade B at GCSE in the subjects (or associated subjects) that they select to study.

You can read the full detail of the Sixth Form admissions on the [admissions web pages \(/university/university-school/admissions.aspx\)](#).

### What transport arrangements will there be for my child?

The School is aware of the need for pupils to have easy access to safe and affordable travel. A number of options are currently being considered and will be discussed with prospective parents at our consultation events. Once these views have been assimilated, we will advise all parents of the intended arrangements.

Flexible travel arrangements will be in place for those pupils who are involved in extracurricular activities as described above.

### What is the proposed construction programme for the school?

Before any construction can begin, detailed planning and consultation will be undertaken (please see next section for public consultation details).

The intention is that construction will take place through 2014, finishing in Spring 2015. More detailed construction plans will be available in due course.

### When will you begin recruiting staff to the school?

Michael Roden, Head of King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in Birmingham, has been appointed as Principal of the University of Birmingham School. He will take up the post from April 2014 and will be involved with recruiting for other positions. We will seek to recruit nationally to secure the very best candidates to an exciting and dynamic working environment. Except for the Principal, most positions will begin from the opening of the school in September 2015, and the number of teaching and administrative staff will climb annually until the school reaches its full complement of students, probably in 2019/20.

The proposals for the School are currently available for planning consultation via [Birmingham City Council website \(http://eplanning.birmingham.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/StdDetails.aspx?PT=Planning%20Applications%20On-Line&TYPE=PL/PlanningPK.xml&PARAM0=609776&XSLT=Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/Birmingham/xslt/PL/PLDetails.xslt&FT=Planning%20Application%20Details&PUBLIC=Y&XMLSIDE=Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/Birmingham/Menus/PL.xml&DAURI=PLANNING\)](http://eplanning.birmingham.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/StdDetails.aspx?PT=Planning%20Applications%20On-Line&TYPE=PL/PlanningPK.xml&PARAM0=609776&XSLT=Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/Birmingham/xslt/PL/PLDetails.xslt&FT=Planning%20Application%20Details&PUBLIC=Y&XMLSIDE=Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/Birmingham/Menus/PL.xml&DAURI=PLANNING); learn more on the [Site and Building page \(university/university-school/building.aspx\)](#).