



University of Birmingham's Academic Enrichment Programme

July 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A study of over 600 pupils, published in the British Educational Research Journal, has found that Year 12 students from less privileged backgrounds and from non-selective state schools in the West Midlands who attend the University of Birmingham's five-day Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) are as likely to attend a prestigious Russell Group university as students from independent sector schools.

Our Academic Enrichment Programme

The University of Birmingham's Academic Enrichment Programme which has run since 2007 is an immersive five-day residential in the summer holiday period that gives students an insight into the full university experience. It includes taster lectures in a range of academic subjects, living in accommodation and new social experiences. Throughout the residential, there is also a team of current undergraduate student ambassadors on hand to provide support and advice. The AEP Programme is only available to students who live inside the greater West Midlands region and are currently in Year 12.

In the following Autumn Term, students attend the first of two study support sessions. In addition during Year 13, students are also paired up with a current undergraduate from the University and have further support through e-mentoring on a weekly basis.

Applications are encouraged from Year 12 students who meet at least three of the following criteria:

- Have had experience of public care.
- Attend or attended a school or college that performs below the national average at Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 5.
- Currently live in a low progression area.
- Are in the first generation of their immediate family to attend higher education.
- Their household income is below the national average (below £42,875).
- They have a disability and are in receipt of a personal independence payment.
- They are estranged from both of their parents or guardians.

Students who successfully complete the Academic Enrichment Programme and apply to the University of Birmingham also receive special consideration from admissions tutors and if they are successful, receive two offers from the University of Birmingham, the standard offer and a Pathways to Birmingham offer (typically a two grade reduction e.g. BBB rather than AAB).

"The Academic Enrichment Programme gave me the self-belief and determination that I had the potential to study at a Russell Group university. During the programme, I was able to grow personally, including boosting my self-belief and confidence, as well as learning a host of academic skills which I still use now I'm studying at the University of Birmingham. The online mentoring support I received after the programme really helped me with the application process to universities and allowed me understand more about university life. I have also continued to be supported by the programme now I am at university. I am currently on a summer school at the National University of Singapore for two months through a university scholarship. My participation on the AEP programme both allowed me to apply for this life-changing experience and also equipped me with the skills and attitudes needed to take on this endeavour. The AEP programme has truly changed my life; it made me realise that anyone can access a Russell Group university and pushed me to achieve."

Dan Guest, 1st year Political Science student, former participant in the Academic Enrichment Programme

The British Educational Research Journal study

A study published in the British Educational Research Journal looked at 6 cohorts of students on the Academic Enrichment Programme between 2010/11 and 2015/16, totalling 604 students, and which university they went to, and then compared those rates to national and regional figures. It found that almost half (48%) of all students who attend the University's Academic Enrichment Programme go on to a Russell Group university, compared to 11% of state school pupils in the region.

The study also demonstrates that a greater proportion of Year 12 students completing the Academic Enrichment Programme progress to a Russell Group University than pupils from the independent sector schools across the UK - 48% compared to 38%.

The study used the Theory of Change approach to evaluate the Academic Enrichment Programme to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programme on widening access to selective universities.

"I am delighted that this evaluation demonstrates the success of the Academic Enrichment Programme. This programme changes the lives of so many young people who gain the tools and self-confidence to realise their full academic and career potential. Students from this programme have gone on to become successful barristers, dentists, solicitors, chartered accountants and doctors and we are proud of the small but important part the University of Birmingham has played in helping them to realise their ambitions."

Mohammed Ansar, Outreach Officer and Co-ordinator of the Programme at the University of Birmingham

The University's broader programme of outreach and widening participation

The University's broader outreach activities also engage [primary, secondary and post-16 schools and pupils](#). Our Outreach and Student Recruitment teams work with schools and colleges to help students explore the world of higher education and decide on the best route for their future. We work particularly

closely with state schools in the West Midlands on a range of outreach activities to raise aspirations, improve motivation and encourage students to consider university.

The Academic Enrichment Programme is just one of our [Pathways to Birmingham](#) programmes which offer Year 12 and 13 students an insight into higher education, professional career routes and support students throughout the university application process.

"The Academic Enrichment Programme is just one part of our commitment to widening participation and improving access. 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 Access to Birmingham scheme. We work with over 250 schools and 25,000 pupils each year to raise aspirations and encourage students to make supported and educated decisions about their future in higher education and will continue to ensure that students from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds can benefit from a University education."

Cathy Gilbert, Director of External Relations at the University of Birmingham

Find out more

Academic Enrichment Programme

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/teachers/pupil-opportunities/post-16/Academic-Enrichment-Programme.aspx>

Please note applications for summer 2019 are now closed. Applications for summer 2020 will open in January; the programme is disseminated to schools in the region.

The University's broader programme of outreach activities

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/teachers/pupil-opportunities/index.aspx>

Contact

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