

# Activities Guide for Schools and Colleges in the West Midlands



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.

Outreach Office

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[www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach)

# 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](http://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 or who are young carers

## Aimhigher West Midlands

The Outreach Team plays a key role in the Aimhigher West Midlands partnership, a network of 12 regional universities and colleges who work together to develop and deliver widening participation activities, and help schools engage more effectively in the support available. In addition to hosting the Aimhigher coordination team we are delivery partners in the initiative's collaborative Mentoring, UniFest summer school, Primary Outreach and Teacher CPD programmes. For more information visit [www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk)



Students on Academic Enrichment Programme

# Primary

We work with Year 6 primary school children, introducing them to the concept and vocabulary of higher education through fun games and activities. The Move On Up primary initiative is run in collaboration with our Aimhigher partnership.

Around 300 Year 6 children from primary schools across the West Midlands are invited on to the University campus for a morning or afternoon activity designed not only to introduce HE in an accessible way but also to help counter some of the fears they may be experiencing with their imminent move to secondary school. The children are encouraged to discuss the transition to secondary school and will watch a performance designed to help them overcome some of these fears. Following a mini-campus tour the children will get their hands dirty with a session of junk modelling, where the students will design and build their own university.

For further information please contact [outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



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](http://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](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/outreach)

## Years 7–13

### Visits out to schools

Young people's decisions relating to subject choices and progression post-16 can be critical to future progression to Higher Education; therefore we are keen to support schools with attendance at guidance and progression evenings where we can. We can also deliver a variety of presentations around why go to university, the importance of qualifications, how to choose a course, finance and student life, to support your work. Please contact us at [outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk) if you would like us to attend an event at your school.



On-campus school visit

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

Year 9 student



Summer Residential

## Years 8–13

### Mentoring

We are a member of the local Aimhigher Partnership and 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, 4 and 5.

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 30–40 minutes depending on the school timetable
- Enable each mentor to work with up to five pupils
- Are held on a weekly basis for approximately 12–15 weeks

#### Academic mentoring

Would your students benefit from extra subject-specific support? We have a small number of mentors who can provide this support to Year 13 students.

We are particularly interested in working with students who are applying to the University of Birmingham through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) scheme. Mentors usually work with three to five learners each and hold individual face to face meetings on a weekly basis, for approximately 12–15 weeks.

For more information please go to [www.birmingham.ac.uk/mentoring](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/mentoring)

**'This scheme gets better and better for our learners.'**

Head of Year 10

## Year 10

### Insight into the Professions

Engaging and informative events designed to give Year 10 students an insight into careers in medicine and the legal profession. The events aim to raise the aspirations of students to pursue professional careers as well as providing relevant information to help them make informed choices to realise their aspirations.

Our events have included Insight into Medicine and Insight into Law. During the day students hear from careers advisors, current medical and law students, doctors and lawyers as well as taking part in interactive lectures and workshops. For further information please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/routes](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/routes)



Workshop activity

## Year 10

### Residential

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](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/summerschools)

# Post-16

## Visits on campus

We run UCAS days for Year 12 and 13 students supporting work in school or college in relation to the UCAS applications process. Information will include student finance, tips for applicants, the importance of qualifications and our Access to Birmingham Programme.

We also hold an annual twilight conference on campus to support transition into sixth form and making the best of Year 12. For further information please contact [outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

## Visits to schools

We offer a range of talks for sixth form students including tips for applicants, writing your personal statement, how to choose a course, student life and finance. Please contact [outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@contacts.bham.ac.uk) if you would like to request a member of the Outreach team to visit your school.

## 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. The majority of Masterclasses are aimed at Years 12 and 13, with some aimed at Years 8–11. For further information please visit our website [www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses)

## Routes to the Professions (R2P)

The R2P programme supports students from under-represented groups to access courses that lead to professional careers in medicine and law.

The programme offers students a unique opportunity to get a real insight into studying medicine or law at the University of Birmingham as well as receiving tailored advice, guidance and support at key points throughout their university application process.

Students join the programme in Year 12 and receive a range of support through to Year 13 including: careers advice, support with UCAS personal statements, interview preparation, work placement opportunities, mentoring by current undergraduate students, and the opportunity to shadow current medical and law students during lectures. For eligibility criteria and further information about the programme, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/routes](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/routes)

## 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.

The AEP builds a relationship with the University, involving parents, carers and teachers. It raises aspirations and develops confidence so that students are motivated to achieve their full potential. For further information, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/aep](http://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. A2B gives students an alternative offer and a chance to get a scholarship. For students who are likely to apply through A2B, we run activities in Year 12 to encourage them to get involved, called A2B Link.

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

## Realising Opportunities

The University is a member of Realising Opportunities. This is a collaboration of 15 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](http://www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk)



# Support for teachers

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.

We can also come into schools to deliver talks on various aspects of preparing for higher education, as well as attending guidance evenings for Years 9, 11 and 12.

## Resources

The Student Recruitment and Outreach team have developed a number of resources to support parents, teachers and careers advisers, to access and download these resources please go to <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/advice/services/resources>

Skills4Uni

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](http://www.skills4uni.bham.ac.uk)



## HE Guidance Event

## Tailored activity for schools

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](mailto:outreach@bham.ac.uk) if you would like to talk about this further.

Years 5/6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
			School Visits	School Visits	School Visits	School Visits	A2B
						A2B Link	
Primary School Engagement Project	Christmas Science Lecture	Summer Humanities Lecture	Physics Big Quiz	Biology Big Quiz	Attendance at Post-16 guidance evenings or career fairs	Year 12 Conference	
		Masterclasses	School option guidance evenings for parents and students	History Quest	Masterclasses	Skills4Uni	Skills4Uni
		Mentoring		Science Festival		Attendance at HE Fairs	
				Summer Residential			
			Masterclasses	Masterclasses		Academic Enrichment Programme	
			Mentoring	Mentoring		Masterclasses	Masterclasses
				Insight into the Professions		Mentoring	Mentoring
Forward Thinking (Progressive Programme)					Realising Opportunities		
					Routes to the Professions		

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