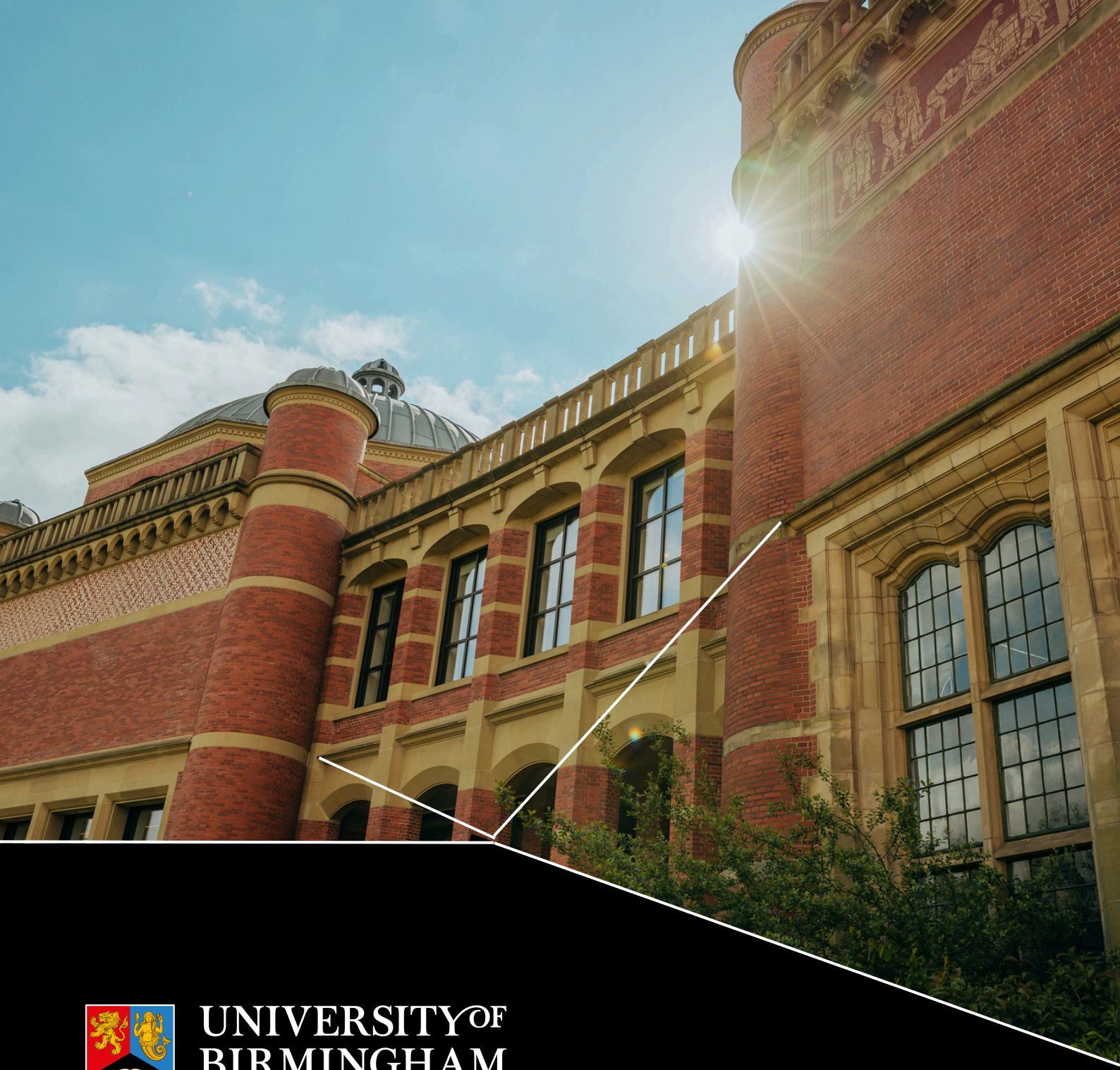




UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham in Action

Impact report 2025/26

We support
We activate

birmingham.ac.uk

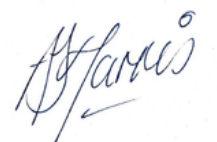
What we have achieved together

The University of Birmingham was founded on philanthropy over a century ago and this spirit continues to define us today. Through the Birmingham in Action campaign, the remarkable generosity of our community of supporters – both those who give time and money – is enabling students to excel, advancing research with global impact and creating the spaces where extraordinary ideas take shape.

This report offers just a snapshot of the lives transformed by your generosity. From research that leads to groundbreaking discoveries and influences national policy, to student experiences which shape futures and the iconic places that make up our campus, each story reflects the profound impact of our collective support.

We have achieved so much together, yet there is more to do.

Scholarships and research will increasingly depend on continued generosity. Your support ensures that our university, our city and the wider world continue to grow and flourish.



Andrew Harris
Director of Development and Alumni Relations



The generosity of an alumnus has completely changed my life.

The PhD funding allowed for a collaborative and flexible project, drawing on immunology experts at the dental and medical schools, to contribute to the global efforts to understand COVID-19.

I am now about to begin a post-doctoral research position in Sweden, highly related to my PhD, which would not have been accessible to me without the support I received to fund my doctorate.

Peter Smith

PhD student, exploring how to improve quality of life and survivability for patients with COVID-19



Your impact in numbers

6,480 students

have received a scholarship funded by donations since the campaign began



- **751** students at the University are receiving a **Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) scholarship**. P2B is the University's flagship access scheme.
- Birmingham is a University of Sanctuary and is offering scholarships to students seeking refuge in the UK. Since 2022, donations from alumni and friends have supported **16 Sanctuary Scholars from 10 countries across 3 continents**.
- **97** students have received financial support through the **young carer and care leaver awards** since 2019.
- **Over 100 student and recent graduate businesses** have benefitted from the **UoB Elevate programme**, including philanthropic and mentoring support from alumni and friends.
- In the 2024/25 academic year, **93 students took part in a range of opportunities** across 20 countries through **global mobility scholarships**.



Almost **100 postgraduate researchers** have taken their work to audiences at conferences worldwide through the **125th Anniversary International Travel Fund**, set up in 2025 thanks to donations from alumni and friends.

Our community of supporters



24 Chancellor's Guild of Benefactors members, who have generously donated over £1 million



109 Chamberlain Circle members, who have kindly donated over £100,000



503 Rowbotham members, who have pledged to leave a gift in their will



7,364 alumni and friends have volunteered their time since the campaign began

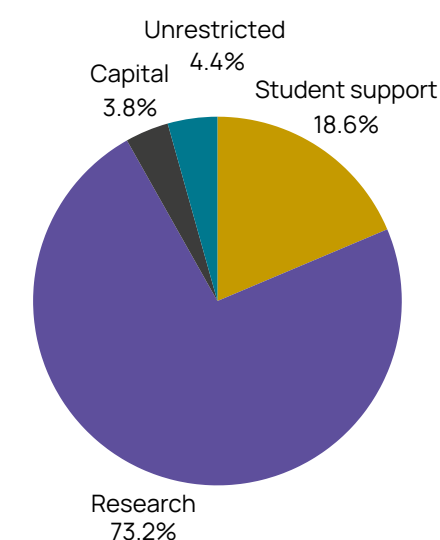


11,547 donors have supported the campaign, including alumni, staff, trusts, charitable organisations and companies



Volunteers and donors come from **125 countries** around the world

What do our philanthropic donors and charitable organisations support?



The University's global community raised **£218,667** in support of students and research in 2025 as part of **Birmingham Gives**, the University's giving day.

The statistics and articles in this report are accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of print in June 2026.

Over 100

PhD students have been funded during the campaign to date



Traditional research grants often only fund ideas already partially proven, meaning some of the most exciting, potentially transformative science can go unfunded. PhD students are perfectly placed to take on bold, high-risk research, and philanthropic funding is increasingly crucial to making this possible.

Helping students thrive

Education is the gift that lasts a lifetime and it shapes a young person’s future, opening the world to more opportunities. Yet the maximum student maintenance loan now covers only half a student’s basic living costs. Working part-time only covers another quarter, making studying at university more challenging for those who cannot rely on support from home. Scholarships help ease the financial burden for students, giving them time to focus on their studies and the confidence to succeed.

Alumni and friends support a breadth of scholarships, bursaries and awards. Pathways to Birmingham (P2B) is the University’s flagship access scheme, helping talented students under-represented in higher education apply to and thrive at Birmingham. While the programme provides practical support before university, the P2B scholarship – funded by donations – reduces financial barriers while they are here. There are also scholarships to support those who have caring responsibilities, those who have left care and those who have sought refuge in the UK.

Pathways to Birmingham graduates paying it forward

Born in Birmingham, Esuri’s goal was always to study at the University and, while here, she made the most of every opportunity that came her way, including an internship in Saint Lucia. She graduated in 2024 with a degree in Politics and International Relations and is now working at the Caribbean Elective, which offers life-changing experiences for students in the Caribbean. In 2025, she gave back by sharing her insights and advice with current P2B students coming up behind her as part of a panel discussion.



P2B played an important role in helping me develop the confidence, skills and professional network that have supported my career journey. The opportunities and guidance I received through the programme helped me gain valuable experience and perspective, which have contributed to where I am today as Senior Operations and Partnerships Manager at Caribbean Elective.

I was very pleased to return to Birmingham and volunteer on the P2B panel because I wanted to give back to a programme that had such a positive impact on my own development. It was a privilege to share my experiences with current students and hopefully provide encouragement and practical insights as they begin their own professional journeys.

To the donors who support P2B, I would like to say a sincere thank you. Your support creates opportunities that can have a lasting impact on students and graduates, helping them build confidence, develop professionally and access experiences that may otherwise not be possible. I am grateful to have benefitted from this support and to now be in a position where I can give back and support the next generation of students.

Esuri
(BA Politics and International Relations, 2024), former P2B scholar



Scan the QR code to hear more from Esuri and her three friends who met through the P2B scheme or visit our YouTube channel: youtube.com/UniversityofBirminghamAlumni



Esuri (right) with the other panelists

Thank you to everyone who picked up the phone to our student callers in 2025. A grand total of **£140,845** was raised in support of P2B scholarships. This is enough to fund **93 P2B scholarships** for one year!

Leaving a lasting legacy for future students

Megan Field-Minter (LLB Law, 2012) has chosen to leave a gift in her will to support students at the Law School, inspired by the life-changing opportunity the University gave her.



I was considered a mature student despite only being 21 at the time, having had a more unusual route to higher education. I hadn’t achieved the traditional GCSE and A levels due to health problems. I completed an Access to HE course at my local college and Birmingham gave me a chance, despite not meeting their standard offer. For this, I am forever grateful as I completed that Law degree with a 2:1.

Having the opportunity to learn is very important to me, and leaving a gift to Birmingham Law School is a way to say thank you for giving me a chance all those years ago. Without it, I wouldn’t be where I am today. I know how much university education can change a life for the better and I would love to contribute to that for someone else.

Gifts in wills create a lasting legacy which shapes the future of our University and the lives we touch through education and research. If you have chosen to leave a gift in your will to the University, we’d love to hear from you. It helps us ensure your wishes are met later on.

To find out more visit birmingham.ac.uk/legacies or email legacies@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

 **Over £7 million**

received through gifts in wills since the campaign began

Connecting students with inspiring alumni

Lunch with a Leader is a flagship volunteering programme at the University, open to all disciplines and degree levels, connecting students with senior alumni through small roundtable discussions. Helping to bridge the gap between academia and the professional world, the programme provides vital industry insights, gives a unique chance for cross-disciplinary networking and refines professional communication skills. Perhaps most importantly, it empowers students with the confidence and understanding needed to successfully apply their degrees to their future careers.

In March 2026, Raffaella Goodby (BSc Psychology, 2001), Chief People Officer of Birmingham Women’s and Children’s Hospital, generously gave her time to host a Lunch with a Leader session. She met with several students from a variety of disciplines including medicine, business management and psychology. The conversation was wide ranging, with attendees discussing a variety of topics including the post-COVID-19 healthcare landscape, wellbeing within the healthcare sector and centring compassion as a leader. A former psychology student, Raffaella was also able to speak about the value of transferable skills, emphasising to students that they shouldn’t be afraid to follow their interests after graduation.

When reflecting on the session, Raffaella said: ‘I loved talking to these amazing young people and sharing some of my memories from my time at Birmingham, reflecting with very clever people on their own aspirations. I was pleased to be able to share how I had used my Psychology degree and my experiences at University to help others in the NHS and public service. I would highly recommend it if you get the opportunity to be involved.’

Find out more about volunteering your time at birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/volunteer or email alumni-volunteers@contacts.bham.ac.uk



Alumni giving back to the next generation

Collinson Group has generously supported students at Birmingham since 2020, donating £119,000 to date towards scholarships as well as giving in-kind support, offering advice to student businesses.

In 2026, they hosted a group of scholars in their London office and arranged two activities for them: a hackathon – a rapid, time-bound, collaborative invention session – and speed-networking with senior staff to develop confidence in relationship building. During the hackathon, the students were challenged to design a concept for a travel ecosystem client to transform or prevent travel disruption for travellers; a unique brief that encouraged creativity, teamwork and problem solving.

Alumnus David Evans (BCom Accounting, 1998), Group Managing Director, shared more about Collinson Group and their ethos, as well as reflecting on his time at Birmingham and his own career advice. He was joined by fellow alumni and staff Mark Jackson (BSocSc Political Science, 1998) and Mark Melody (BEng Manufacturing Eng and Commerce, 1996).



Students with Collinson Group staff including David (second from left)



I owe a great deal to Birmingham. It broadened my horizons, opened my eyes, and gave me a wonderful start to my adult journey on many levels – the friendships I made there are still among the closest in my life. Pathways to Birmingham makes sure that opportunity is open to everyone, whatever their background or circumstance. Supporting the programme reflects what we believe at Collinson as a business: that talent is everywhere, and helping people find a foothold to discover theirs is one of the most worthwhile things any of us can do.

David Evans

(BCom Accounting, 1998), Group Managing Director, Collinson Group



Hearing everyone's career journeys at Collinson Group made me feel more settled and assured that I am not tied by my degree area, but rather I can keep exploring until I find where I belong and learn what I excel at. I also realised that if I wanted to do something completely different, then I can take small steps towards it because career shifts aren't impossible as long as I am willing to learn.

Nohaa

P2B scholar and third year Psychology student

Supporting life-changing research

Birmingham researchers are seeking solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing our generation and the next, from improving cancer treatments and making surgery safer, to investigating the impact of climate change on our forests and creating a fairer world.

The research funding climate is becoming increasingly challenging and competitive, meaning more and more research will depend on philanthropy.

Keeping young people safe online

The generous support of our donors is ensuring that the University of Birmingham remains at the forefront of digital safety and wellbeing for young people, during these uncertain times of rapid technological advancement.

Dr Anna Lavis, Associate Professor in Medical Anthropology, is addressing a gap in research regarding the online experiences of children aged seven to 11 (Key Stage 2). Focus groups in London and Birmingham schools revealed that these children use online spaces that are far more adult-oriented than expected, including gaming communities and content influenced by artificial intelligence. These children often carry an emotional burden to keep themselves safe, believing adults are unaware of their online realities. Dr Lavis has provided evidence to Ofcom for the Online Safety Act and also sits on two global advisory boards for Meta (which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp). She strongly advocates that tech platforms should be held accountable rather than blaming children, while working with schools and community organisations to ensure that children and their families are supported to navigate online harms.

Professor Victoria Goodyear, Professor of Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing, and an expert in school-based and youth-focussed research, examines how smartphones and social media affect youth mental health, exercise and education. Her recent National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funded SMART Schools study investigated school phone policies. The findings show that restrictive phone policies are not a 'silver bullet'. They don't improve health or educational outcomes and they alter how students use devices outside school hours. Professor Goodyear argues that bans fail to give children the skills they need for a digital society. Instead, she calls for a rights-based approach combining age-appropriate design, digital education and training for parents and teachers. Her findings regularly inform government consultations and international health guidelines.

Philanthropic support ensures Dr Lavis and Professor Goodyear can gather extensive data over longer periods, tracking online threats as they evolve.

Sustained support has allowed the team to react immediately to new digital risks in a fast-moving space. Together, these researchers provide a clear picture of how to protect young people while supporting their long-term wellbeing.

Both Dr Lavis and Professor Goodyear continue to lead major studies, ensuring that Birmingham remains central to global efforts to improve young digital lives.



Professor Vicky Goodyear (centre) and Dr Anna Lavis (right) sharing their research at a Bringing Birmingham to You event, bringing Birmingham academics to our global alumni community.

We're so grateful for the support of David and Collinson Group. Could you host a student trip like this in your workplace, or are you interested in supporting students? If so, please get in touch at alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk.



Scan the QR code to hear more from Professor Goodyear on the topic of school smartphone policies and youth mental health and wellbeing, or visit our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/unibirmingham](https://www.youtube.com/unibirmingham)

Detecting, managing and delaying type 1 diabetes in children

Over 25 per cent of children with type 1 diabetes are not diagnosed until they develop diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), a potentially fatal condition that requires urgent hospital treatment. Spotting type 1 diabetes early shifts the experience from a traumatic emergency diagnosis to a period of informed, planned care and structured family support.

The Early Surveillance for Autoimmune Diabetes (ELSA) study, led by Professor Parth Narendran and his team at the University, has demonstrated that a national screening programme for type 1 diabetes in children is feasible and prevents families from experiencing the trauma of an emergency diagnosis.

Of the first 17,283 children screened in ELSA 1, 160 had early-stage type 1 diabetes, 75 showed an increased future risk, and seven had undiagnosed type 1 diabetes requiring immediate insulin. Research highlighted that screen-detected diabetes is caught much earlier, allowing for personalised insulin regimens with lower daily doses.

Early detection also opens the door to new immunotherapy treatment. In August 2025, teplizumab was officially licensed in the UK. It is the first immunotherapy capable of delaying the need for insulin by approximately three years. Although it is not yet available through the NHS, it was made available through a managed access programme run by the manufacturer. Birmingham was the first UK city to treat a child with this breakthrough treatment, offering families a reprieve from daily injections.

Building on these results, the second phase of the research, ELSA 2, launched in May 2026. This phase expands the screening age range from two to 17 years, aiming to recruit a further 30,000 children across the UK and establish dedicated NHS Early-Stage Type 1 Diabetes Clinics. These clinics will provide a full, formal care pathway including clinical monitoring, education and psychological support. There are already plans underway for the next phase, ELSA 3, which will ensure the programme is fully scalable.

The generosity of our donors has helped to fund research that simply was not happening anywhere else. This work is now helping us change national policy and establish a permanent, UK-wide childhood screening programme.



We are extremely grateful to all the families who have participated in the study and generously given their time to help understand how a UK-wide screening programme could be developed. Together with Diabetes UK, Breakthrough T1D and the National Institute for Health and Care Research, we are working towards a future where type 1 diabetes can be detected in a timely manner and families appropriately supported and treated with medicines to delay the need for insulin.

Professor Parth Narendran
Professor of Diabetes Medicine



Dr Parth Narendran and his team deserve huge credit; and this breakthrough shows what we can achieve in Birmingham. We have world-class clinicians and scientists working side-by-side, backed by great innovation infrastructure and a vibrant, diverse and affordable city - and, as a result, we are changing lives with next generation diagnostics, therapeutics and clinical care.

Professor Neil Hanley
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Medicine and Health

Find out more about ELSA and how to take part in the trial at www.elsadiabetes.nhs.uk/taking-part

Bridging the gap for talented medical researchers

Talented medical early career researchers often face a cliff edge once they reach the end of their post-doctoral research and it is often the hardest point in their career. It can be challenging to take the next step without funding or protected time to collate data and evidence to make applications for grants, only aggravated by increasingly restricted funding.

The Springboard Fellowship scheme, funded by donations from alumni and friends who support health research at Birmingham, is bridging this gap. It gives ambitious researchers the time, resources and support they need to secure major funding and establish their own research groups tackling major health challenges locally and globally. As well as financial support, the Fellows receive mentoring from senior researchers and access to high-quality labs and equipment.

Over **140** applications since it was launched in 2024

with **6** successful Fellows to date

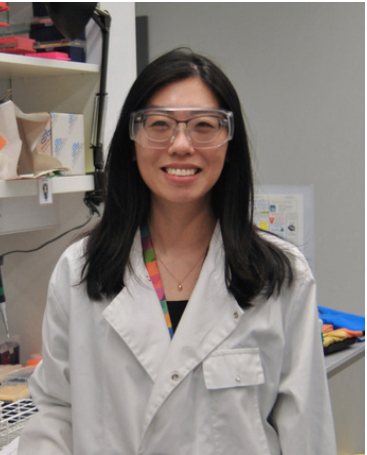
Dr Tianyi Zhang, part of the first cohort in 2024, is looking at gene regulation – the process of switching genes on and off. Mutations and disruptions in gene expression can weaken normal development of blood cells and lead to cancer. However, as gene expression changes are dynamic and reversible, epigenetic therapies (which aim to correct disruptions in gene expression) are a highly promising field in medicine. By investigating this, Tianyi is trying to understand the underlying causes of two types of blood cancers: acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and multiple myeloma. The Fellowship gave her the protected time to work with senior colleagues to develop her independent research programme, build collaborations and apply for research funding. Crucially, it has helped leverage further funding which would not have been possible otherwise.



I'm delighted to say I was recently awarded a Wellcome Career Development Award, which will fund my group's research for the next eight years. I will use this to build collaborations with oncologists and researchers working in drug design and haematology. My long-term aim is that together we'll better understand the complex reasons for cancer relapse and inform the development of new therapies.

Research and innovation are driven by people and ideas. I would like to thank the donors for supporting valuable programmes like the Springboard Fellowship, which supports young scientists at a critical time and gives us the opportunity to tackle important problems in health research.

Dr Tianyi Zhang
Birmingham Springboard Fellow



Joseph Wragg was also part of the first cohort, looking into childhood sarcoma therapy resistance, specifically new treatment options for incurable childhood cancers.

He said: 'The Springboard Fellowship has been invaluable in giving me the time needed to uncover a previously unappreciated mechanism of therapy resistance in childhood cancers, where cancer cells imitate other cell types. I am thrilled to have now secured a Medical Research Council Career Development Award to establish my independent research group, thanks in large part to the support I received from the Springboard Fellowship scheme.

'Birmingham is a fantastic place to do this research with expertise in cancer, cardiovascular, metabolism, immunology and developmental biology, all key elements of my project. It is also a leading centre for paediatric cancer clinical trials facilitating the translation of key outputs of my project to help more patients.'



Scan the QR code to read more about the latest cohort of Fellows who began in 2026 or visit birmingham.ac.uk/news/2025/birmingham-announces-recipients-of-2026-springboard-fellowships

Creating the spaces where extraordinary ideas take shape

Philanthropy has played an important role in shaping the University since it was founded in 1900 – including the iconic buildings that make up our Edgbaston campus.

- Old Joe's clockface and bells were created thanks to a generous gift from Thomas Rowbotham, the local builder who built the tower.
- Winterbourne House and Garden was bequeathed to the University in 1944 by John MacDonald Nicolson in his will.
- The Alan Walters Building, home to the Birmingham Business School, was generously supported by Lady Paddie Walters in memory of her husband, and celebrates his long and distinguished career, including his academic career at Birmingham.
- The generous support of alumni, friends and charitable trusts, including a transformational donation from the Liz and Terry Bramall Charitable Trust, made the Bramall Music Building a reality.

New buildings, refurbishments and equipment ensure that our campus facilities are fit for purpose in undertaking ground-breaking research and helps Birmingham attract talent globally.



Ensuring clinical teaching and training facilities are fit for purpose

The University's Medical School building, now nearly 90 years old after it opened in 1938, struggles with the high numbers of healthcare students passing through each year. The University is therefore investing in a brand new anatomy, surgical and clinical skills facility for healthcare education and training, which will combine state-of-the-art facilities and technologically enhanced learning with real human material, thereby providing the best and most varied learning for students at all levels.

A recent donation of £50,000 has enabled the purchase of a specialist virtual reality (VR) system that will allow healthcare students to practise and apply their learning through simulated scenarios.



We are delighted to receive this generous donation which is being used to purchase a flexible, state-of-the-art VR system. This will allow us to create innovative training simulations and 360-degree video scenarios where our students across many healthcare disciplines can immerse themselves in a realistic but safe environment to enhance and practise, for example, their clinical and communication skills. The equipment can further be incorporated into postgraduate clinical training of surgeons and other healthcare professionals as an adjunct to hands-on practical training. We are excited to start using the system!

Professor Tracey Wilkinson

Sands Cox Chair of Anatomy

Unlocking the power of art, music and education

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts is currently undergoing a major transformation to make its Grade I listed building more accessible, welcoming and fit for the future. The project includes a new level-access entrance, accessible facilities and improvements to the foyer, shop and gallery spaces, helping more people enjoy the Barber's world-class collections and programmes.

At the heart of the redevelopment is the reopening of the Art Deco Concert Hall, which has been closed since 2020. A new fresh-air circulation system and increased accessible seating will allow the renowned Barber Concert series to return to the building, bringing live music back to the Barber.

The transformation will also enhance the main galleries through new wall coverings, upgraded lighting and improved environmental systems to better protect the collection. Alongside this, plans for a new learning wing will create dedicated spaces for workshops, practical art classes and public events, welcoming schools, students, families and visitors of all ages in new and engaging ways.

Philanthropic support has been instrumental in enabling this work to happen, and we are grateful to everyone who has supported this project, both regional and national funders, as well as individual donors who are passionate about supporting the arts.



Extending the terrace to create a new access route



Philanthropy plays a vital role in shaping the future of cultural institutions like the Barber. Through the generosity of our donors and funding partners, ambitious plans are becoming lasting realities – creating spaces that will present world class art, music and inspiring programmes that bring people and ideas together.

Professor Jennifer Powell

Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts



An artists impression of the completed study space in the learning wing

Did you know...

100% of your donation to the University funds the person or project you choose to support?

For more information about making a donation, volunteering or leaving a legacy in your will, contact us:

+44 (0)121 414 4724

alumnioffice@contacts.bham.ac.uk

www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Scan the QR code and let us know what you think of this impact report. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Development and Alumni Relations Office
Birmingham Research Park, Vincent Drive,
Birmingham, B15 2SQ, UK

 giving@contacts.bham.ac.uk
 birmingham.ac.uk/alumni
 University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends
   @birminghamalum

The University of Birmingham is an Exempt Charity, No. X7237

 Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR