

Widening Participation at the University of Bristol and Bristol Scholars

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The journey so far

- A reputation for being ‘symbolically posh’
- 2001: Criticised for ‘social engineering’ and discrimination. Head Masters’ Conference proposed application boycott
- Innovative outreach programmes but disconnect between practice and admissions policy
- 2009: 59% of our intake from state schools; 12% from low participation neighbourhoods; 27% from ‘aspiring state schools and colleges’
- Lower retention rates and progression to further study or employment between ‘WP’ and ‘non-WP’ students’

Vision and Strategy

Actions. **We will:**

- **Significantly increase recruitment of high-potential students from local schools through a new Bristol Scholars programme** that will provide guaranteed places for the schools' top students, and will be developed and delivered in partnership with those schools
- **Roll out a new, contextual offer system** of up to two grades below our standard offer for high-potential students from aspiring state schools
- **Provide students from under-represented backgrounds with a tailored package of academic and pastoral support** to guide their development and ensure they thrive at Bristol
- **Review all curricula** to ensure that they are inclusive in scope and delivery

Bristol Scholars

University welcomes first Bristol Scholars

Press release issued: 22 September 2017

The first cohort of a pioneering new scheme, introduced by the University of Bristol to identify academic talent locally, will start their university journey this week.

The [Bristol Scholars](#) initiative involves the University making lower offers to high potential local pupils - moving away from the traditional focus on grades and instead looking at the student's potential as assessed by their teachers, taking into account any form of educational disadvantage.

It was launched in December 2016 by the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, to improve social mobility in a city where one in four children lives in poverty.



Some of the Bristol Scholars with Professor Judith Squires, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education, and Professor Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Bristol.

Justine Greening  @JustineGreening · 15 Dec 2016
Real pleasure to be in Bristol today helping launch @BristolUni's #BristolScholars giving local pupils the chance to realise their potential



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New Insights on WP: Bristol scholars

22 August 2017

By Judith Squires

On 14 August 2017, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and the social mobility charity [Brightside](#) jointly published a collection of essays by senior higher education figures entitled ['Where next for widening participation and fair access? New insights from leading thinkers.'](#)

Since last week, we have been showcasing the contents of this collection of essays in a dedicated blog series entitled 'New Insights on Widening Participation'.

This blog, the sixth in the series, features the chapter written by Judith Squires, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) at the University of Bristol, on Bristol scholars.

Bristol Scholars - what

- About working in partnership with partner schools and colleges
- Tailored offer of up to four grades below the standard offer
- Tuition provided by a local tutoring company
- Regular gatherings of the cohort
- Additional support at Confirmation

Bristol Scholars – who?

- 118 Bristol Scholars have enrolled at the University since the programme launched in September 2017
- The students have faced a huge range of challenging circumstances
- All schools in Bristol have the opportunity to nominate
- They are in all Schools of the University

Support at Bristol

Provide Bristol Scholars with **a tailored package of academic and pastoral support to guide their development and ensure they thrive at Bristol:**

- Week-long pre-arrival transitional programme
- Free full sports pass
- Residential Conference
- Monthly socials
- Online learning resource
- Additional opportunities such as Fulbright Summer programme
- End of year celebration event

Bristol Scholars are supported by a dedicated member of staff who offers one to one coaching throughout their time here.



Bristol Scholars – success

- Prospective students from the Bristol area, who would otherwise not be able to access the University, apply and achieve a place.
- Students make a successful transition to the University of Bristol (continuation rates are in line with peers).
- Students' attainment is in line with peers.
- Progression to employment or further study is in line with peers

Bristol Scholars – NERUPI

- The aims of the programme are in line with the aims from the NERUPI Evaluation Framework.
- Activities aim to meet the objectives of the NERUPI Framework.
- E.G. Aim: Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment (Level 4):

BUILDING UP TO BRISTOL – Academic Readiness Course Mon 16th Sept- Fri 20th Sept 2019

This course aims to explore the expectations of university study in a very active and practical way. You will work with others to uncover the underlying principles that shape academic life - its language and culture. This greater understanding of why you will be asked to behave in certain ways will give you greater confidence in tackling the everyday challenges of a Bristol student.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9.30-11.00	Introductions: Becoming a community of practice (fun games)	Bloomin' Learning: Thinking critically about Bloom's taxonomy of learning	Learning to Listen: Preparing to get the best out of academic lectures	Writing with flair How audience and purpose affect content, organisation and language	Reflections on Learning: Integrating theory and practice; Applying a model to experience
BREAK					
11.30-13.00	Discovering Difference: Getting to know yourself, each other (skills) and the university values	Building on the Shoulders of Giants: Why reading is critical	Listening to Learn: Academic lecture & follow up task	The Craft of Writing: Preparing, planning, reviewing, revising	Getting Going and Keeping Going: Looking at motivation and resilience Target setting
LUNCH & GUEST SPEAKERS					
14:00-15:30	How to write an effective job application for student jobs, e.g. Student Ambassador	Building on the Shoulders of Giants: Preparing for a lecture	Seminars explained: The co-construction of knowledge	Constructing an argument: Taking your reader/listener by the hand	FREE