







**Access schemes run by Russell Group universities:
Examples of best practice**

Access schemes (sometimes also known as ‘compact schemes’) allow students from under-represented backgrounds to learn more about higher education, encourage them to consider and apply to university and enrich the education they receive at school. A number of schemes also provide supported entry routes into university. There are different types of access courses – those that aim to widen participation through the provision of information and guidance, others that assess the potential of the participants to succeed on a university course and those that further provide pupils with an alternative offer to the university. This alternative offer is based on successful completion of a given programme, which provides additional weight to an application. Many Russell Group universities also run separate foundation years for students who have the ability to succeed on the course but did not have the necessary grades or subjects to progress directly through the traditional route.

 <p>UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM</p>	<p>The A2B (Access to Birmingham)* scheme is open to students from socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds in the West Midlands region. It consists of an online study support module to help with academic writing skills, a student shadowing experience that helps students find out more about the style of teaching they can expect at university and an essay specific to the course applied for, set and marked by university tutors, completed after summer exams. If the A2B application is successful, Birmingham will make an alternative scheme offer, as well as the standard prospectus offer. The scheme offer will typically amount to a reduction of up to two A-level grades (e.g. BBB rather than AAB) together with satisfactory completion of the A2B Higher Education Learning Module.</p>
 <p>University of BRISTOL</p>	<p>Access to Bristol is a programme of eight afternoon sessions designed to give prospective students a taste of being a student at the university. The sessions are aimed at year 12 students and priority is given to students who are the first in their family to go to university.</p>

	<p>Cambridge Special Access Scheme (CSAS) is a university-wide initiative designed to ensure that all colleges have the information they require in order to assess applicants who have experienced particular personal, social or educational disadvantage. Schools or colleges wishing one or more applicants to be considered through the scheme are asked to complete a CSAS form for each applicant.</p>
	<p>The Step-Up to Health Compact Scheme operates over 3 years starting in year 11. It gives pupils a number of opportunities to learn more about higher education with a particular focus on health courses and health professions. The scheme incorporates activities such as student mentoring and mentor shadowing, and events including a one-day conference on applying to university, a summer school and a presentation evening.</p>
	<p>Pathways to the Professions encourages progression by under-represented school students into professional courses in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Law, and subsequently into the professions themselves. Working with university departments, professional bodies, state schools and families, the programme was initiated and developed across all 46 state schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians and has over 600 school students registered. One strand of the scheme, <i>Pathways to Law</i>, has been extended to five other universities across the country, including the University of Leeds, the London School of Economics & Political Science, University of Manchester, University of Southampton and University of Warwick.</p>
	<p>The Top-Up Programme has been designed to help Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 school pupils who are considering entering higher education. The programme helps students prepare for the transition from school to university or college and make informed choices about their futures. In addition to equipping students for higher education, the programme provides a student profile and graded certificate based on their participation in the programme, which can be taken into account later if the student applies to the university.</p>

	<p>Outreach for Medicine encourages young people from London, Kent & Medway to consider a career in the health professions. Around 1,800 students from nearly 100 different schools participate in the programme of outreach events and activities each year.</p>
	<p>Access to Leeds* is an institution-wide entry scheme providing an alternative offer to applicants from educationally and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Eligible students are flagged on application to the University or may apply directly through the Access to Leeds scheme's existing mechanisms.</p>
	<p>The Liverpool Scholars Scheme* is a specifically targeted programme for year 12 students from the widening participation cohort. Scholars are given advice and support to help with gaining a place at a research intensive university, which aids the transition between further and higher education. On successful completion of the project, which includes an academic assignment, applicants are given the equivalent of up to 40 UCAS points towards entry. Becoming a Scholar also gives young people the maximum financial bursary from the university.</p>
	<p>LSE CHOICE is a programme of Saturday morning sessions and a summer school designed to give talented young people from London state schools the tools to successfully apply to competitive universities. Every year the programme engages with 180 non-traditional students, encouraging them to aspire to higher education.</p>
	<p>The Manchester Access Programme* is a structured scheme for local post-16 students who meet specific academic and background criteria. The aim of the programme is to support entry to a research-intensive university, supporting students in completing a portfolio of work demonstrating specific knowledge and skills through a series of activities and tasks. Students who successfully complete the programme gain 40 UCAS points towards entry to Manchester and have a portfolio of additional evidence that the university can take into account when making an offer of a place.</p>

	<p>The PARTNERS* programme at Newcastle University aims to increase the aspirations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide a supported entry route into university. University student ambassadors who previously participated in PARTNERS give talks in schools and colleges on course choices and completing UCAS forms, and the scheme also offers participants the opportunity to shadow current students to see what life at university is like.</p>
	<p>The University of Nottingham's Academic Enrichment Programme is an initiative open to all students in year 12 or equivalent at state maintained schools or colleges in the East Midlands. This free year-long programme develops the skills that help students succeed in their A-levels and provides on-going guidance on higher education. Programme participants are flagged up in the admissions process and those that enrol as undergraduates are guaranteed an additional £1000 bursary.</p> <p>The University uses comparable contextual information on home postcode and school performance in assessing all UK applicants. This allows WP applicants to be flagged up and given preferential treatment in the admissions process.</p>
	<p>The Oxford Young Ambassador Programme is a four-year programme for those pupils from under-represented backgrounds at state schools selected using ACORN data who have the potential to go on to study at the university. It starts with students in year 10, and provides them with the opportunity to become an Ambassador for higher and further education. The programme equips the Ambassadors to go back to their schools and communities and directly share their Oxford experiences with their own peers. The programme passes on skills such as public speaking and debating, and knowledge regarding university in general, specific courses and budgeting, for example. After the first graduation at least 9 former participants are now studying at universities around the country.</p>

 <p>The University Of Sheffield.</p>	<p>Sheffield's Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme (SOAMS) provides support and guidance to local year 9-13 students with an interest in medicine or science, through a range of programmes and activities aimed at raising awareness, aspirations and levels of achievement. Students who have completed the scheme are eligible for a guaranteed interview at Sheffield's School of Medicine. Successful applicants are then considered for one of 20 places ring-fenced to widen participation.</p> <p>The compact scheme also offers support to individual applicants whose schools/colleges identify them as deserving special consideration.</p>
	<p>The A2S (Access to Southampton)* scheme is piloting a programme in certain courses which provides an alternative entry route into the university. A2S consists of a three day Summer University event in year 12, including an assessed assignment, and the 'Get Ready to Go' event in year 13 which assists prospective students in developing skills for higher education. In addition, the participants are provided with a University of Southampton e-Mentor in year 13 and, if their application is successful, a 'buddy' in their first semester at the university.</p>
	<p>Warwick AWARDS was established to enable prospective students to provide the university with information to supplement the UCAS form. Often, it is not easy to explain personal circumstances on the UCAS form, so Warwick provides an opportunity for pupils to do so. The university then takes this information into account when considering the application.</p>

* Alternative offers are provided through successful completion of these programmes.