



Birmingham
Bristol
Cambridge
Cardiff
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Imperial College
King's College London
Leeds
Liverpool
London School of Economics
Manchester
Newcastle
Nottingham
Oxford
Sheffield
Southampton
University College London
Warwick

Widening Participation in Russell Group Universities November 2003

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The Russell Group Association for Widening Participation was founded in June 2000 and all Russell Group universities are actively involved. The Association's members are united in their primary aim of widening participation in research-led universities. This report provides examples of specific activities currently being undertaken by Russell Group universities.

The Russell Group universities believe that it is part of their social responsibility to increase and widen participation in higher education. The educational opportunities offered by the leading universities that form the Russell Group are distinctive, especially in relation to subjects such as Medicine, and the Group is concerned to ensure that a wide range of students can benefit from these opportunities.

The Russell Group universities are also very active in raising aspirations and awareness of potential students on behalf of the whole HE sector. They have made significant and substantial contributions to date. Examples can be provided in detail to interested parties.

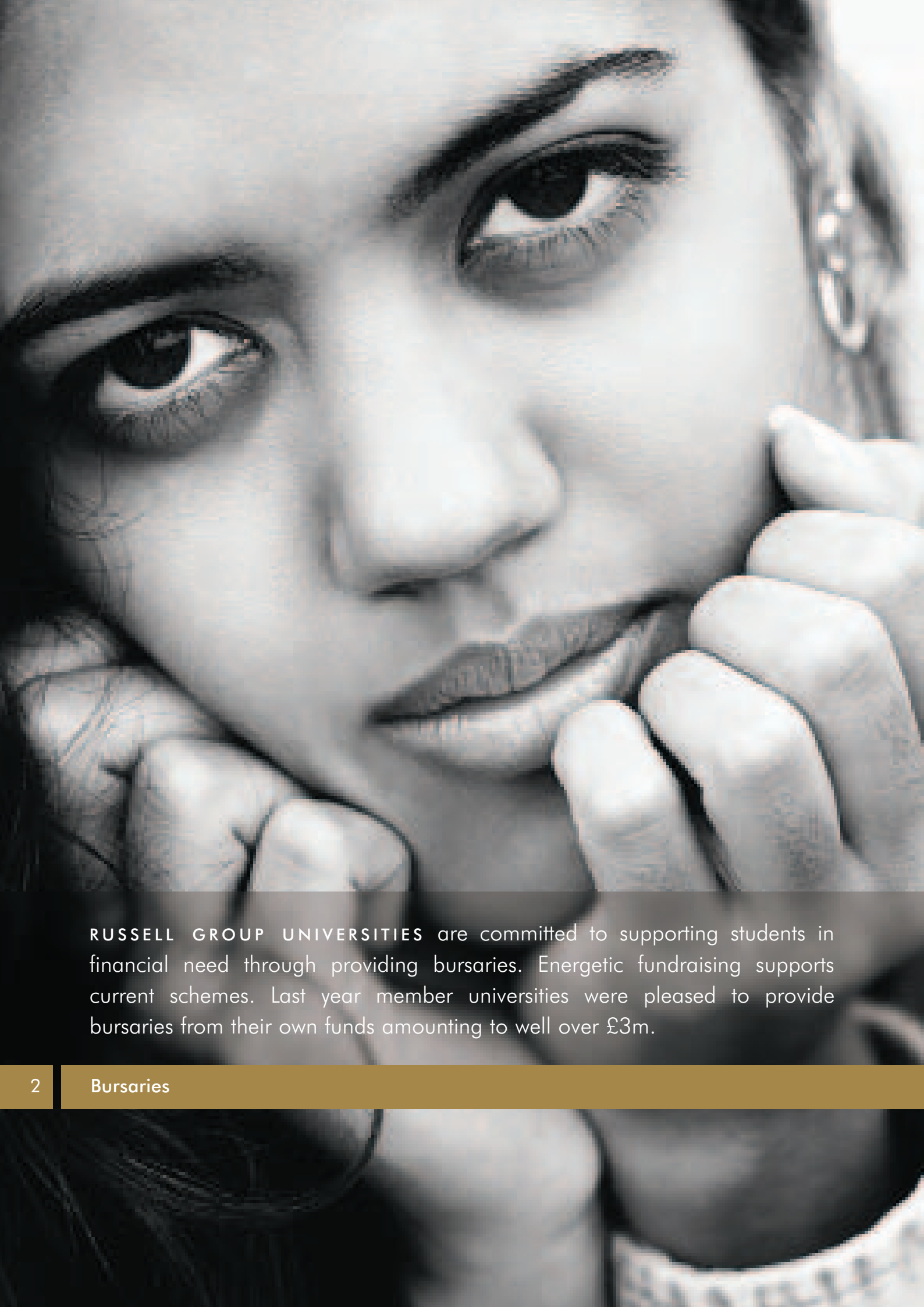
The Russell Group welcomes the publication of Professor Stephen Schwartz's consultation paper on admissions. Russell Group universities are committed to ensuring fair admissions and continually seek to improve relevant processes, as recommended in the Quality Assurance Agency code of practice on admissions.

Russell Group universities already commit significant resources to their outreach programmes. A new Russell Group officer for widening participation will extend and co-ordinate joint activities. This post will also be a central information point about opportunities for study in Russell Group universities.

While debate about the details of the Office for Fair Access and access agreements continues, the Russell Group recognises the principle that widening participation programmes should be managed effectively and have measurable outcomes. Russell Group universities are committed to supporting students in financial need through providing bursaries.

The following sections give some examples of the widening participation work currently under way, but do not constitute a complete or exhaustive list. Key contacts for further information are listed on the back cover.

Meeting our social responsibilities



RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES are committed to supporting students in financial need through providing bursaries. Energetic fundraising supports current schemes. Last year member universities were pleased to provide bursaries from their own funds amounting to well over £3m.

At **Leeds**, the bursary schemes include the Robert Ogden Scholarships (which was the model used for EMAs and has already committed over £1m) and the Skipton Building Society Scholarships (with over 100 scholarships) which are both awarded to pupils entering sixth form and University study. The Boulwood Scholarships also offer funding to undergraduates in particular subject areas. // **Cardiff University** promotes a Part-time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme for people who are unemployed or in receipt of DSS benefits. Approximately 116 annual bursaries are granted to assist students with independent status and with illness, disability and dyslexia.

Since 2001, **Bristol** has allocated around 12 bursaries each year valued at £1,500 per year. The University also pays interview and travel expenses for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. // At **Cambridge**, all undergraduates who receive full fee remission are eligible for Newton Trust Bursaries of up to £1,000 per year. In addition, University and College awards are available for students in need of financial support. In total, £4 million was provided towards student support during 2002/03. // **Edinburgh** University allocates £1,000 for each year of study for 100 students whose personal or financial circumstances might prevent them enrolling at the University.

At **Glasgow**, 15 Access Bursaries worth £1,000 have been made available for undergraduate students from GOALS Schools/DACE Access Courses in 2003/04. // **Imperial College** allocates 32 Opportunity Bursaries and around 12 study support bursaries of between £500 and £1,000 per year. // **The London School of Economics** runs an Undergraduate Student Support Scheme that is open to all offer holders, with a maximum award of £7,000 per year. // At **Manchester**, two awards (Gateway to Learning and Centenary Scholarships) have been created to provide financial support for students from target groups. During 2002/03, the University allocated £59,000 to 86 recipients of the Gateway to Learning awards. // Fundraising for bursaries is a current priority of the Alumni Association at **Newcastle** University which allocates Opportunity Bursaries and Access Bursaries (around 150 at £2,000) and Welcome Bursaries (60 at £2,000). // At **Nottingham**, the First-in-the-Family (FiFs) and Jubilee Scholarships target regional students without a family tradition of higher education and with limited financial resources. FiFs provide £1,000 each year for the duration of study and around 20 are awarded each year. Two Jubilee scholarships, worth £4,000 per year are awarded annually. Two other new scholarships have recently been developed.

Sheffield University uses a variety of funding schemes to financially support students, including the Hardship Fund, Alumni Foundation, Compact scheme & SOAMS bursaries, Opportunity bursaries and Enough to Learn On schemes. // The **Oxford** Bursary Scheme ensures that every Home/EU undergraduate with full fee remission receives a bursary worth £2,000 or more. Student-aid officers are also available in every Oxford college and in the central University. // At **Southampton**, all Widening Access to Medicine students receive a University-funded bursary of £1,200 per student per year in their first year. There are also individual bursaries in some academic schools – for example, the Robin Saunders bursary for applicants to Geology. // **University College London** provides 20 residence bursaries worth £3,000 for local students to cover the cost of their first year accommodation.

Meanwhile, **Liverpool** has a First in Family link to its bursaries. // In 2003/04 **Warwick** awarded 75 Warwick Graduates Association Scholarships which provide £2,000 for each year of study. The University is aiming to increase the number of awards it makes each year. // At **King's**, 142 Opportunity Bursaries and 100 King's Applicant bursaries of £500 each have been allocated during 2003/04.





RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES have long been oversubscribed, with up to 10 applications for each place. Most of these applications are from well-qualified, enthusiastic people. This means that admissions tutors and other admissions staff have considerable experience in selecting students with the ability and potential to succeed in their chosen course. In recent years, significant efforts have been made to agree university-wide policies, to share good practice across institutions and to learn from international examples.

Manchester is undertaking a three-year project to evaluate the use of psychological measures. Trials of different psychological measures (eg. of ability, personality, learning style) are being held with current undergraduates and some local school students, and their results considered along with other performance indicators such as previous and ongoing academic attainment. If such measures are shown to have value, it is hoped that their potential benefits may include the provision of additional information to admissions and teaching staff to facilitate selection decisions, student development activities, and teaching strategies. // **Edinburgh** is also investigating the development of new methodologies for assessing potential. // **Cambridge** has developed a 'Thinking skills' test for use at interview that has already been used on Computer Science applicants. // A number of subjects at **Cambridge** and **Oxford** use a series of short written tests designed to test aptitude and potential rather than factual knowledge. From November 2003, all applicants to the Oxford Medical School or the Physiological Sciences course will take the Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT) in common with candidates applying to the Royal Free and UCL Medical School, the Medical School of Cambridge and the Cambridge Veterinary School. The test is conducted by UCLES and will be taken in the candidate's own school or college. Specifications and a sample test are available on a dedicated website at www.bmat.org.uk // **Glasgow** and **Edinburgh** are taking part in pilot psychometric testing, based on an Australian model, run by all the Scottish Medical Schools.

Aptitude testing

Interviews are used to help assess most applicants to **Cambridge**, **Oxford** and **UCL**. Other Russell Group universities use interviews in some subjects and/or with some applicants. Interviews are used particularly in the case of mature applicants and those from non-traditional backgrounds or with vocational qualifications. // The majority of **Cardiff's** University Schools assess the potential of non-traditional applicants by means of an interview.

Interviews

Cambridge, **Oxford**, **Southampton**, **Bristol** and **UCL** give formal training to their admissions tutors in interview techniques, Bristol provides refresher training every three years. UCL offers local Year 13 pupils practice in interview techniques via a half-day conference. // **Oxford** produces a guide to interviews, which is sent to all interviewees, and incorporates details about interviews into its schools/colleges liaison activities.

A number of Russell Group universities provide coaching or written advice for students in interview techniques.

School performance and contextual factors

Nottingham's flexible admissions scheme enables admissions tutors to take fuller account of factors beyond an applicant's A level scores, but without lowering standards. Admissions staff use more complex assessment processes to help identify supporting skills and experience and the context of a student's achievement. // **University College London** provides admissions tutors with information about school background and performance. It also provides training for UCL Admissions Tutors in widening participation and cultural awareness issues. // Admissions staff at **Bristol** use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual candidates, taking a number of factors into consideration, including educational and social context. In particular, where information is available, the school performance can be considered in deciding upon the level of offer. // **Edinburgh** is undertaking a study into the impact on admissions of taking school performance into account. // **Cambridge** Admissions Tutors take applicants' school/college background and performance into account, and are developing a database with information on school/college performance, involvement in widening participation and aspiration raising initiatives and number of applicants to the university.

Credit and special consideration

A number of universities allow students to earn additional credit towards their application. Credit is earned through successful completion of assessed academic programmes run either throughout the school year or in school holidays. Such schemes include:

- Access to **Birmingham**
- Access to **Leeds**
- Top-Up (**Glasgow**, with other HEIs in the West of Scotland)
- PARTNERS (**Newcastle**)
- PUSS Pre-University Summer School (**Glasgow**)

Special entry pathways

Programmes to encourage and facilitate entry to medical courses have been developed in a number of Russell Group universities, including **Leeds**, **Edinburgh**, **King's**, **Southampton** and **Sheffield**. Some courses at some Russell Group universities already accept students with vocational qualifications, with no special arrangements or bridging courses involved.

Pathways targeting students at FE colleges who have studied vocational courses include the following:

- Foundation courses in various subjects at **Leeds**, **Bristol**, **Manchester** and **Southampton**
- 1+3 and 2+2 progression opportunities offered by **Liverpool** to local FE colleges
- Foundation Degrees and 2+2 programs offered by **Warwick** with local FE Colleges
- New entry routes developed by **Birmingham** and **Leeds**
- The SWAPWest Programme at **Glasgow**

At **Sheffield**, agreements are in place with 83 local schools and colleges that allow special consideration for applicants. // Discussions are continuing between **King's** with its local authority partners about how to modify admissions procedures to measure the student's potential rather than learning experience. // A new admissions procedure seeks to set a framework for admissions to address the **University of Edinburgh's** commitment to encouraging diversity in the student population.

Other Measures

Applicants to **Warwick** are encouraged to use the AWARDS application system to provide additional evidence of their achievements and potential if this cannot be demonstrated fully on their UCAS form. Warwick's recently expanded recruitment team provides advice and support. // **Manchester's** admissions activities include special admissions incentives (including guaranteed interviews) for Targeted Access Scheme participants; and a project exploring the use of complementary measures of potential in admissions. // In **Southampton**, a Working Group is examining the existing Compact scheme and potential linkage with a programme of assessed aspiration raising activities.

BY WORKING TO RAISE ASPIRATIONS towards Higher Education generally, the Russell Group universities benefit the whole HE sector. The Russell Group works in partnership with Aimhigher: Partnerships for Progression/Excellence Challenge and a range of other educational and community organisations to achieve these important aims. Much of this work is of a long-term nature – for example, projects with primary school children.



Sheffield's 'Early Outreach Programme' Y9–11 includes school visits by University staff, visits to the University and family evenings. Meanwhile, the Raising Higher Education Ethnic Minority Achievement project (RHEMA) for Y6–11 works with students in seven schools in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service of Sheffield City Council. // **Birmingham** runs an Introduction to Medicine for Year 9 and Year 12 pupils. // Among the aspiration-raising programmes at **Edinburgh** are the Fife Wider Access Project, an outreach collaborative programme, LEAPS Schools Programme relating to all aspects of the Higher Education experience using role model student volunteers, and an Initiative in Primary Schools – to introduce further and higher education to younger age groups.

The approach at **Liverpool** is to develop 'supply chains of support' for young people from primary school age to entry into higher education, and for adults returning to education. The university targets those who are the first in their family to choose to go to higher education, prioritising those who are disadvantaged but who show ability and leadership potential. Among the initiatives are a Children's University, Community Outreach Programme, links to US Council for Opportunity in Education and TRiO Programmes, Subjects into Schools (academic departments working in schools) and Year 7 visits. // **Manchester's** initiatives include the Targeted Access Scheme, run with the city's 23 high schools; a student tutoring scheme; training for career workers and teachers; subject specific mentoring schemes (eg. medicine); and short taster courses for adults.

King's is working closely with its local Excellence in Cities boroughs to raise aspirations and attainment of local students and to facilitate their entry into higher education. The College's Access to the Professions programmes explicitly links the programme to high profile jobs. Furthermore, the Access to Medicine programme and Access to Law programmes involve early identification of potential candidates, extra pre-entry support and reasoning tests. These flagship programmes are complemented by a year's academic English course for 50 students to help London's refugee and overseas populations to enter universities commensurate with their academic abilities. Additional pioneering schemes include a National Science and Engineering Ambassador Scheme; Number Crunchers, a Maths and ICT study club; and work experience for local pupils in both academic and administrative departments.

In **Cardiff**, a Mobile Exhibition Unit delivers a programme of over 120 visits to schools with little progression to higher education, providing an insight into university life. Cardiff also provides pupil mentoring to 270 pupils in six inner-city schools and numerous subject-specific schemes are in operation.

Bristol co-ordinates the training of student ambassadors, mentors and tutors across five sub-regional HEIs as well as special work with primary schools and conventional Aimhigher activity with secondary schools and FE colleges. // Aspiration raising activities at **Cambridge** include aspiration day visits for Years 9-11, the GEEMA initiative (the Group to Encourage Ethnic Minority Applications), and Children into University, Young People into Higher Education (YPiHE) regional initiative.

Imperial College's widening participation strategy for 2001-04 focuses on raising aspirations among potentially very able students in the state sector and encouraging them to fulfil their potential. A good example is the Pimlico Connection Student Tutoring Scheme that encourages greater interest in science, engineering and medicine from low participation neighbourhoods with students visiting schools and assisting teachers in the classroom. //

Glasgow's SHEFC-funded GOALS (Greater Opportunities for Access and Learning with Schools) project involves collaboration between all of the HEIs in the West of Scotland; 299 schools (48,000 pupils) are involved in the project. // The Regional Recruitment programme at **Nottingham** worked with over 8,000 regional students last year through information workshops, taster sessions, master-classes, and hands-on lab work for students in Years 7-13. The programme also includes dedicated sessions for ethnic minority students.

Leeds boasts one of the UK's largest schools volunteering programmes with 400-plus student volunteers in over 50 schools. Activities include tutoring, mentoring, out-of-school activities, study support centres, changing classrooms, outreach work, and museum and employer visits. // **UCL** activities include master-classes for Year 12 and 13 students in subjects like history, chemistry and mathematics; student summer work placements; and student tutoring, mentoring and student ambassador programmes. In addition, there's outreach work with primary and secondary schools and community groups by UCL Museums and Collections and UCL Bloomsbury Theatre including music and poetry performances.

Under the banner of AWARDS (Access to Warwick Degrees) **Warwick** offers a programme of activities to provide ongoing contact between schools/colleges and the University. Examples of activities include targeted outreach work and an annual summer school in association with the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY).

Students into Schools Project is a joint project between **Newcastle** and Northumbria University where 700 undergraduates tutor in state schools and colleges offering positive role models and classroom assistance. Tutoring contributes to student retention and employability. The PARTNERS Programme comprises partnerships between Newcastle, 47 schools and 9 FE colleges – providing visits, taster events, student shadowing, and a supported entry route. // Over 4,000 younger students have attended aspiration raising events in **Oxford** since May 2002. Meanwhile, mentoring projects in local schools include Reach Up, a mentoring scheme for looked-after children.

Finally, **LSE** organises school/college visits, presentations and workshops as well as running an e-mentoring project, whereby Year 10 pupils are paired with a LSE student, involving three meetings a year.



SUMMER SCHOOLS OFFER potential students first-hand experience of university life. While academic programmes enable participants to either try out new subjects or to increase their knowledge of familiar subjects through intensive study, summer schools also provide a para-academic programme of study skills and advice about university and the application process.

Summer schools also offer personal development and social activities – from African drumming to DJ skills – that students might not have experienced previously, and help students to get to know each other. For many, it is the first time they have been away from home without their family. English Russell Group universities provide Hefce summer schools for Year 11 pupils and many operate additional summer schools – for example, Sutton Trust summer schools for Year 12 pupils, generously sponsored by Sir Peter Lampl.

At **Birmingham**, there is a Year 11 summer school, and the Widening Participation Unit organises a summer school for colleges, a summer programme for Year 9 pupils, and a residential Easter school for students from Excellence Challenge areas around the country. // **Bristol's** summer school provision includes Hefce Year 11 (50 students), Sutton Trust Year 12 (120 students) alongside Hefce specialist summer schools in law and archaeology. Other summer schools include languages and engineering for girls. // At **King's**, the Global Citizen 2003 summer school gave Year 11 Londoners a taster of university life and was based around the theme of global citizenship. Throughout the week the students attended a range of lectures, seminars and special events covering global aspects of subjects within the ten Schools of study. // **Cambridge** operates summer schools for students and teachers from maintained schools and colleges. These include subject-focussed weeks for 140 Year 12 pupils, a week's introduction to HE for 60 students from FE, three-day courses for 30 mature students, and generic one-week courses for 55 Year 11 pupils and 40 Year 11 pupils from ethnic minorities.

Cardiff's summer schools include Valleys Law Project, Engineering Challenge, Engineering for Girls, Business School and Mathematics. // Established in 1986, the **Glasgow** Pre-University Summer School benefits 200 participants each year. A flexible curriculum allows students to follow parts of the first-year syllabus and provides student membership of many university facilities. // **Southampton** runs Aimhigher Sub-Regional (Hampshire & Isle of Wight) Summer Schools (residential and non-residential) for Years 8-12 and the FE2HE Healthcare Summer School. These actively recruit over 500 students annually.

At **Edinburgh**, the LEAPS Summer School is an eight-week part-time summer school for 140 students and Girls Get Set is a residential week that highlights courses and careers in Science to 100 S3 girls. // **Imperial College** takes a huge number of students onto its summer schools and master-classes lasting from one day to two weeks. In a typical year, Imperial will have as many as 450 Year 13s, 550 Year 12s and 800 Year 9s.

Summer School Update

At **LSE**, the Aimhigher Summer Schools take 150 Year 11 students from Greater London for one week, and 80 Year 10 students for three days. Also two externally funded summer schools offer 140 Year 12 students a one-week residential course. // During 2003, **Manchester** held three summer schools. The largest involved 155 Year 11 students living on campus for a week and engaging in curriculum, sporting and social activities.

Newcastle's summer school provision includes Hefce Higher Education Summer School (Year 11); PARTNERS University Survival Guide (Year 12); and PARTNERS Assessed Summer School (which forms part of the entry requirements). // Sutton Trust and Hefce summer schools give 190 young people a taste of student life at **Nottingham** alongside the Headstart Engineering Summer School. // **Sheffield** runs three main residential summer schools: SOAMS (25 students); Engineering (80 students); and a generic programme (90 students). There are additional short residential periods in some of the other schemes. // **UCL's** summer schools include a joint UCL/British Museum summer school in Egyptology (for 30 Year 12 students); a generic, non-residential Higher Education Summer School (for 60 Year 11 students); and taster courses offered by 10 UCL departments.

Finally, **King's**, **Liverpool** and **Oxford** run a range of summer schools for various age groups.




GIVEN THE GENERALLY HIGH ENTRY REQUIREMENTS at Russell Group universities, helping students to achieve academically is a priority. Much work in this area is conducted in partnership with Excellence Challenge and Excellence in Cities programmes. Russell Group universities run master-classes in many subjects and Saturday schools in subjects such as maths, English, and chemistry. They also offer one-off, subject-based enrichment events. These are generally offered to students in the final two years of school/college. Summer schools, student-tutoring and mentoring are offered to students from a wider age range.



The **LSE's** innovative Saturday School Scheme involves 250 Year 13 students from seven London Boroughs. During 22 Saturday mornings, there is additional A-level tuition in economics, mathematics and sociology, and use of the LSE library and computing facilities. // At **Sheffield**, the Villiers Park Educational Trust is developing as a regional centre for Y12 and teacher-focused activities in Arts and Humanities. In addition, the University runs Excellence Challenge Master-classes in 12 subjects for Y12 and Y13 groups. // A range of work is underway at **Manchester** that seeks to address the gap between the average attainment levels of the target group and what is normally required for University admission – including master-classes, revision workshops, guest lectures and insight days. // **Cambridge** offers a programme of aspiration day visits to the University for Year 10 students mainly from Excellence Challenge areas; visits to Cambridge and to schools and colleges for ethnic minority students through GEEMA (the Group to Encourage Ethnic Minority Applications); aspiration-raising web-based resources; and initiatives for students from Year 7 upwards in specific subject areas (such as maths).

Newcastle works with St James' Park Learning Centre to deliver an IT-based programme focusing on literacy, numeracy and ICT within a football context. // **Leeds** is the Villiers Park Centre for Excellence in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, and its out-of-school programme offers a variety of curriculum-enhancing activities such as sports, arts and ICT. // A DfES-sponsored long-term mathematics extension programme for inner-city children is underway at **Nottingham** – each cohort starts at Year 6 and will continue through to Year 13. // **Warwick** works with EiC and Excellence Challenge areas through the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. // Educational programmes are offered in **Oxford University's** museums and are tied to the National Curriculum. // Loanboxes and workshops are offered to primary and secondary school age students by **UCL's** museums and collections and the UCL Bloomsbury Theatre. // **Bristol** offers mentoring for students in local schools and subject-specific tutoring as well as leading the P4P mentoring project. Mentoring schemes are also provided to local schools with a high ethnic minority population.

From Year 10, all **University of Liverpool** activities target cohorts with realistic potential to progress to, and succeed in higher education and in particular to the University's own provision. These include young women/women accessing science, the Bright Boys (working title) project and Year 12 Master-classes. // **Imperial College** has developed the METRIC 2 scheme to provide support for the study of A-level mathematics to bright students from under-represented groups in partnership with FE colleges and state schools.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS isn't just about enabling individuals to attain high grades. The Russell Group believes that students need to become familiar with the realities of higher education – and require the full range of information to make appropriate choices. Each of the Russell Group universities is striving in different ways to achieve this common goal.

Oxford runs regional conferences jointly with **Cambridge** at major sporting venues – with over 10,000 students and teachers attending in 2003. Regional targeting by **Oxford** colleges includes Access Cymru, a scheme to encourage applications from students in schools in Wales. Two student-led groups – the Oxford Access Scheme and Target Schools run programmes to encourage students from non-traditional backgrounds, which include school and college visiting and shadowing schemes. Furthermore, the Sutton Trust In-service Week for Teachers enables 150 teachers from maintained sector schools and colleges to spend a week in Oxford. Elsewhere, there are several department-based initiatives such as special open days and an Admissions Information Centre providing a ‘drop in’ service for potential applicants – it has seen over 3,500 visitors in its first 18 months. At **Cambridge**, the Open Days and Information Days include specific days for FE, mature and ethnic minority students. There are also visits to maintained schools and colleges across the UK and the Students’ Union runs a Target Campaign Shadowing Scheme for Year 12 students.

At **Birmingham**, the pre-entry support programme supports learning in schools and colleges through tutorial support for students taking GCSE and A-level programmes. The University also works with the Aimhigher: P4P/Excellence Challenge, and Excellence in Cities partnership.

Pre-entry support at **Sheffield** includes developing a regional centre for Year 12 and teacher-focused activities in Arts and Humanities – the new Longley Park Sixth Form Centre in the deprived North East of Sheffield is a special initiative to provide a high quality destination for regional feeder schools. // **Nottingham** has created ‘Get On.’ magazine to inform regional students of the benefits of Higher Education, supplemented by ‘The parents’ guide to university’.

Pre-entry guidance is provided by **Cardiff’s** individual schools. Students’ Services also deliver a programme of seminars and workshops in local schools and FE Colleges on Student Finances, Bursaries and Support Services. // **UCL** has launched a widening participation website alongside an interview technique conference for Year 13 pupils. // Meanwhile, Year 12 pupils can request to shadow a current student at **LSE** for half a day.



THE RUSSELL GROUP UNIVERSITIES have a long and proud tradition of adult education provision – from pioneering night classes for miners a century ago, to contemporary programmes tailored to the career aspirations of today's single parents. We have diversified our programmes considerably and now offer access to a wide range of disciplines at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as providing entry pathways to 'mainstream' degree courses.



Pathways targeting mature students with few or no formal qualifications include **Edinburgh's** Access course (available part-time). // Elsewhere, Schools of Continuing Education/Adult Education/Lifelong Learning offer part-time degrees in selected subject areas (at **Nottingham**, for example) or progression via certificate and diploma study into 'mainstream' courses. // **Liverpool** works with adult learners in schemes like Parents as Learners, Women Accessing Science, and Go Higher. // The **Cardiff** Centre for Lifelong Learning delivers part-time courses, day workshops and summer schools for around 16,000 students on campus and in 60 community locations in SE Wales. // At **Birmingham**, the mature students' entry route provides the opportunity for mature students on Access programmes to submit a later application supported by tutor references and examples of academic work. // Four mature undergraduate Colleges at **Cambridge** are working with the FE Access Officer and the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) to offer support to mature learners, particularly those in the Eastern Region.

Through its School of Continuing Education and Office of Part Time Education, **Leeds** offers a wide programme for adult learners – working in partnership with trade unions, tenants' organisations and community groups among others. // **Edinburgh's** College Access course is a one-year part time access course for mature students with no experience of full-time higher education. Other access courses include Credit for Entry (a part-time route to many full-time degree courses) and New Horizons (increasing confidence of adults returning to education). // At **Glasgow**, the Department of Adult and Continuing Education has been pioneering widening participation among adults through its 'University Introduction to Study for Mature Students' course since 1979. A one-year evening study Access Course (Social Science and Science) is also aimed at mature students. // With a dedicated enquiry and pre-entry support service for mature students, including student shadowing, **Newcastle** also holds a mature students' orientation week and there are support services post-entry, including a mentoring scheme. // **Southampton** has appointed a Mature Students Co-ordinator and organised a Mature Students Welcome Day. // **Warwick** has forged ongoing links with FE colleges to develop a range of progression routes into HE. Experience Days, outreach events and advisory sessions are also co-ordinated through Warwick's Centre for Lifelong Learning. // The Community Links Team at **Nottingham** offers taster sessions and tailored courses in community settings that aim to attract new students to HE. // **LSE** has a dedicated member of staff to liaise with FE and Sixth Form colleges and to continually monitor Access course academic content. // **Bristol** holds both mature student induction days and open days, and has mature student ambassadors. // At **Sheffield**, mature access and part-time programmes are available.



BEGINNING A NEW LIFE AT UNIVERSITY can be a daunting experience – especially if you come from a background that may be unfamiliar with what to expect from higher education. The Russell Group universities seek to make this transition less stressful with a number of innovative schemes.

At **LSE**, a London Pre-Registration Event is held each year with students and guardians from Greater London invited. All first year students are allocated a second year student mentor. // In 2002/03, **Birmingham** ran a Sutton Trust-funded FE Project to facilitate access by FE students followed by a skills programme.

Bristol operates a computer book and loan scheme for undergraduates who do not pay fees. There is also a Jobshop, skills development and careers support for students from non-traditional backgrounds. The Teaching Support Unit and the Student's Union have dedicated project workers to assess appropriate levels of support. // **Liverpool** offers ongoing support for First in Family students both on entry and during transition. // **Southampton** has created a student entitlement framework where working groups provide guidance on 'quality', 'student-centred learning' and 'research led teaching.' Alongside developments of plans for academic skills provision across the University, they are building on existing practice, developing and embedding institutional-wide models of student evaluation and feedback. The Development of Learning Centre is due to open in February 2004.

Cardiff University Schools operate a variety of practices appropriate to each academic discipline – for example, Buddy Schemes, Group Tasking and Personal Tutorials. // The Progress Files project at **Nottingham** is part-funded by the Widening Participation budget and interfaces with the WP team's work as well as with City schools. The WP team is also contributing to the successful transition of local students through the Welcome Event, which this year involved over 200 local students. // **Imperial** runs student support, health and welfare programmes. METRIC, for example, helps Imperial College students who are under-prepared mathematically to progress successfully through the development of the METRIC project. This initiative offers interactive web-based mathematics courses to all students. // **Newcastle's** transition runs mainly through the PARTNERS programme and the Single Programme HE/FE Progression Project. // At **UCL**, the establishment of a Partnership for Excellence with City and Islington College Sixth Form focuses on student aspiration, curriculum development with particular emphasis on transition.

Moving On is an eight-day pre-freshers week transition course to prepare 50 students from widening participation backgrounds for study at **Edinburgh**.



RETENTION RATES at Russell Group universities are very high indeed. Excellent teaching and a range of support measures – some targeting particular groups – aim to give all students the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Both **Cambridge** and **Oxford** colleges offer accommodation often throughout undergraduate courses, and provide individual academic and pastoral care support. // As well as the First in Family cohort, **Liverpool** runs a Leadership Programme to support individuals and a shadowing/mentoring scheme with links to academic departments. // At **Birmingham**, each University School is developing a programme of additional support for students tailored to the needs of different disciplines.

Glasgow has a Student Network – an informal peer-support network available to all first year undergraduates but targeted at school leavers entering the University from non-traditional routes. // At **Newcastle**, there is a review of first year teaching and learning and personal tutor systems; development of maths support; mentoring schemes; support for students living at home; and welfare support services. // **UCL** offers tutors for academic literacy and information technology, as well as an E-counselling service.

A new scheme of drop-in sessions is currently being piloted at **Nottingham**, providing regional students with informal information sessions about the services and facilities on offer to them. // **Cardiff** runs seminars, welfare support, dyslexia support; disability support; IT training and student personal development sessions. // At **Edinburgh**, M-Power is a structured mentoring programme for 100 first year entrants from under-represented groups. In addition, the university's Study Development Adviser develops and co-ordinates support available to all students, particularly those from under-represented groups.



A RUSSELL GROUP EDUCATION confers an advantage in the graduate employment market. We actively seek to equip all students, and particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds, with the knowledge and skills to meet their career aspirations.

The Careers Service at **Birmingham** monitors employment outcomes and reports to the Widening Participation Advisory Board. // At **Cambridge**, the Careers Service offers support and contacts to all students while at University and beyond. In 2002, 53% of graduates were in full employment and 37% went on to further study six months after graduating.

The Go Wales Project at **Cardiff** provides guidance on employability and career development for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The service provides workshops, interview seminars and personal consultations.

Southampton aims to dovetail student life cycle activities with employers' needs in the NHS through focus on health and social care subjects, working with Partnership for Learning and 14-19 Pathfinder Project. Information, advice and guidance activities also take place under the Aimhigher Sub-Regional initiative. // Employability is a key factor for the WP cohort at **Liverpool** where particular emphasis is put upon under-represented groups. This is linked to developing FE partnerships.

At **Nottingham**, a part-time secondment in the Centre for Career Development is developing specialist support for students from non-traditional backgrounds. // Finally, a key focus at **Newcastle** is the development of students through a wide range of modules in enterprise, work-based and work-related learning, including the opportunity to contribute directly to widening participation activities through student tutoring and community work.

**Russell Group Association
for Widening Participation**
Key contacts for further information

Dr Penelope Griffin

Widening Participation Officer
University of Nottingham

penelope.griffin@nottingham.ac.uk

Tel: 0115 951 3995

Ms Ceri Nursaw

Head of Widening Participation
University of Leeds

c.nursaw@leeds.ac.uk

Tel: 0113 343 4109