

The Scholars Programme – Independent Impact Evaluation Update

For the last two years, The Brilliant Club has worked with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to evaluate the impact of its programmes on progression to highly-selective universities.

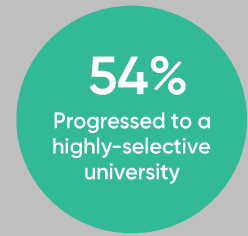
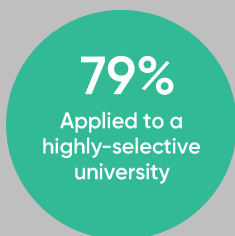
The project had two phases. First, UCAS has analysed the destination data from the cohort of 685 school leavers who completed The Scholars Programme in 2015 and 2016. Second, each year, UCAS compares the progress of pupils completing the programme against control groups with similar characteristics.

Phase 1: Destination Data

The UCAS data shows that pupils who completed The Scholars Programme applied, received offers from and progressed to highly-selective universities at the following rates:

UCAS reported the following impact for The Scholars Programme:

And of Ever6FSM pupils:



Compared to a national progression rate of 12%

Phase 2: Control Group Comparison

For the second year running, to ensure that this impact was not the result of bias in school or pupil selection, UCAS evaluated the effect of The Scholars Programme against 500 control groups of a similar size. This year's cohort was made up of 362 pupils who completed The Scholars Programme in Summer 2016, and left school the following year.

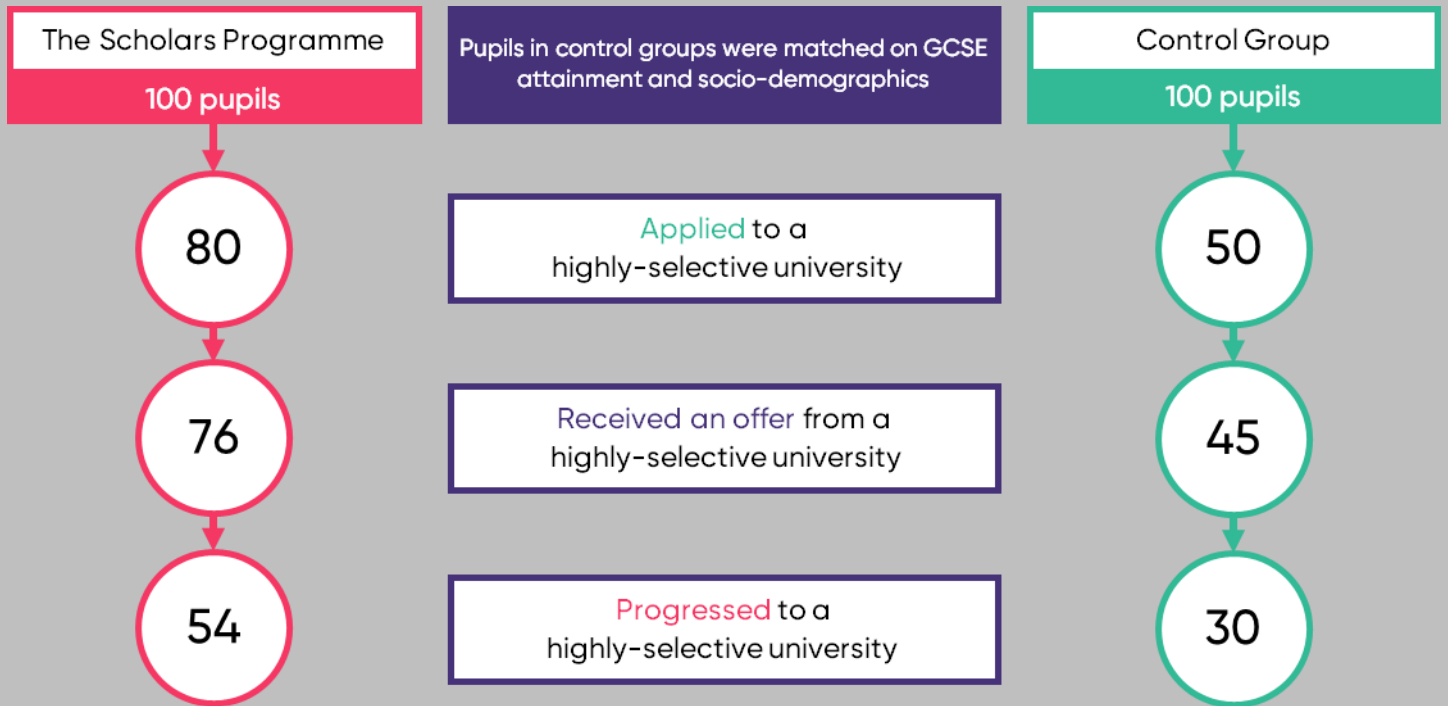
To provide a counter-factual analysis, pupils in the control groups were matched for a range of characteristics, including ethnicity, postcode and prior attainment at GCSE.

When compared to a control group, pupils who had completed The Scholars Programme were:



This analysis found that pupils who completed The Scholars Programme were significantly more likely to progress to a highly-selective university, having made the conditions of their offer including their A-Level grades.

In the diagram below, we illustrate what these significant results mean for a typical group of 100 pupils who completed The Scholars Programme compared to 100 pupils who did not participate in the programme.



Further Information

For more information about this impact evaluation, or about how The Brilliant Club measures its impact for pupils and stakeholders, please email the charity's Research and Impact Director, Dr Lauren Bellaera at lauren.bellaera@thebrilliantclub.org.

Technical Notes

Control Group Analysis

For this year's control group analysis, UCAS compared the intervention group to 500 matched groups with similar characteristics. Differences between the groups are assessed for statistical significance. The headline statistics for both groups are reported below:

Measure	The Scholars Programme (Intervention Group Means)		Control Group Means	Comparison
	Total	%	%	Statistical Significance
Initial Cohort	362	-	-	n/a
Applied	290	80%	50%	Very significantly high
Offered (out of applied)	275	95%	89%	Very significantly high
Progressed (out of applied)	195	67%	60%	Significantly high

Definitions

UCAS STROBE	UCAS completed this work as part of their STROBE service. More information is available at https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/analytical-data-services/strobe
Control Group	<p>UCAS used two data sources to build their control groups: First, a database of potential applicants was used to benchmark the application rate of the intervention group. Pupils were matched in terms of age, socio-demographics of the home address, and proportion of their nearest school being eligible for free school meals.</p> <p>Second, the UCAS application database was used to benchmark the progress of the intervention group through the application process (offer and progression rates). Pupils were matched by age, ethnicity, gender, socio-demographics of the home address, proportion of their school being eligible for free school meals, and GCSE attainment.</p>
Significance Level	A significant result refers to a difference between groups, which is unlikely due to chance. This suggests that there is a 'real difference' between groups and the populations they are drawn from. A mildly significant result is more than 1 standard deviation from the mean, a significant result is more than 2 standard deviations from the mean, and a very significant result is more than 3 standard deviations from the mean. For example, 80% of pupils on The Scholars Programme applied to a highly-selective university compared to 50% of pupils in the control group. This was a very significantly high difference meaning that the result was more than 3 standard deviations from the mean.
Highly-selective Universities	<p>The Brilliant Club's mission is to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities, as outlined in our strategy, The Path to Outcomes. To define those universities, The Brilliant Club uses the 'top third' list by the Department for Education, which can be found here.</p> <p>Please note, this measure differs from the one used in our previous control group comparison carried out by UCAS in 2015/16, which used UCAS' high tariff grouping.</p>
National Average	National data has been taken from the DfE's statistical report ' Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils: 2016 ', published in 2017.