

The Scholars Programme – Independent Impact Evaluation Update

For the last three 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 927 school leavers who completed The Scholars Programme as Year 12 pupils in 2015, 2016 and 2017. 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 in Year 12 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:



Phase 2: Control Group Comparison

For the third year running, UCAS evaluated the application, offer and progression rates of pupils who completed The Scholars Programme against those of 500 control groups of a similar size. This was to ensure that the perceived impact of the programme was not the result of bias in school or pupil selection. 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.

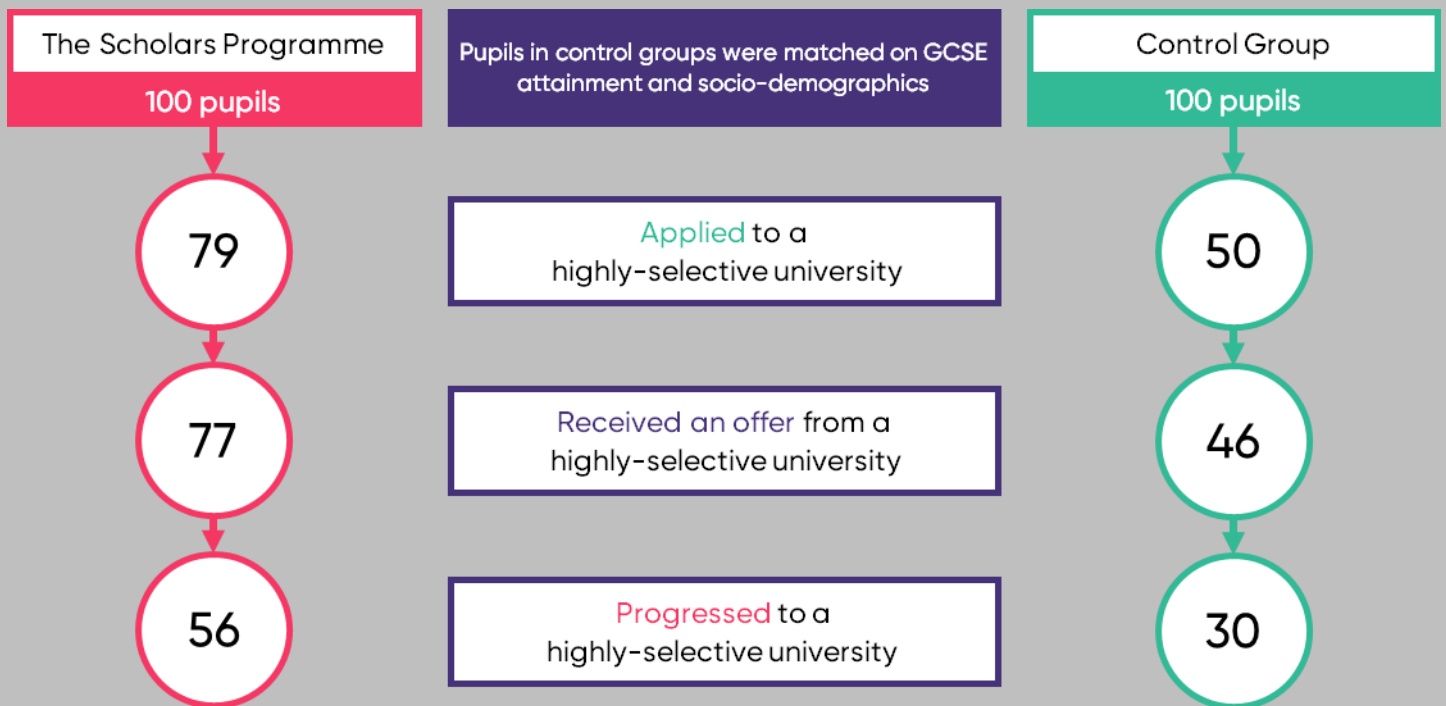
This year's cohort was made up of 242 pupils who completed The Scholars Programme in Summer 2017, and left school the following year.

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 Impact and Reporting Manager, Paul Rünz at paul.ruenz@thebrilliantclub.org.

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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 (Y12 Pupils)		Control Group	Comparison
	Total	%	%	Statistical Significance
Initial Cohort	242	-	-	n/a
Applied	190	79%	50%	Very significantly high
Offered (out of applied)	185	97%	91%	Very significantly high
Progressed (out of applied)	135	71%	60%	Very 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, 79% 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	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 .
National Average	National data has been taken from the DfE's statistical report ' Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils: 2017 ', published in 2018.