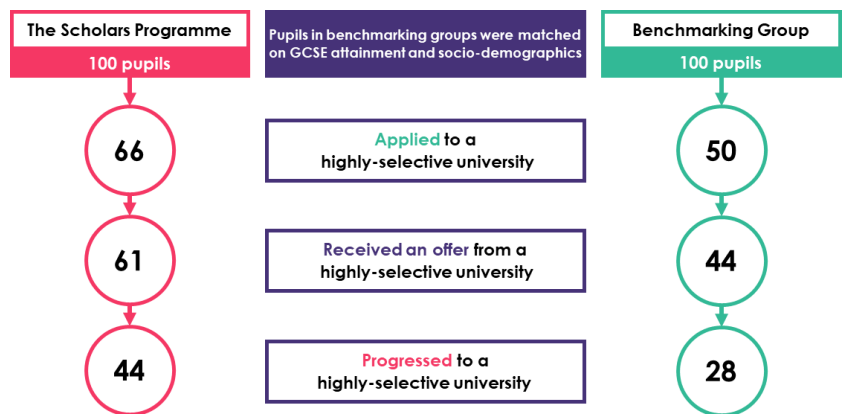


The Scholars Programme – Independent Impact Evaluation Update

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

For the fifth year running, pupils who completed The Scholars Programme are **statistically significantly more likely to apply to, receive an offer from and progress to a highly-selective university** than pupils from similar backgrounds.

In 2020, UCAS tracked university applications of more than 1360 Scholars Programme graduates who took part either as Year 10 pupils in 2016/17 or as Year 12 pupils in 2018/19. To provide a counter-factual for progression to 'DfE Top Third' highly-selective universities, Scholars Programme graduates were compared to similar pupils based on their attainment at GCSE, ethnicity and postcode.



For the first time this year, the sample size was big enough to run this benchmarking analysis separately for specific sub-groups of pupils on The Scholars Programme, such as pupils being eligible for Pupil Premium or pupils in rural or coastal areas.

Delivering results for all participants...

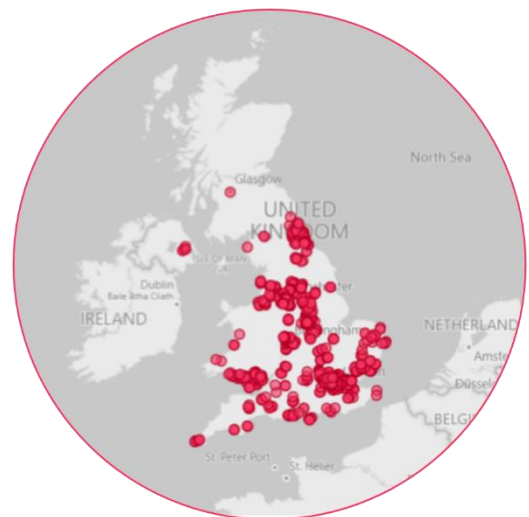


Pupils eligible for **Pupil Premium** who had graduated from The Scholars Programme in Year 12 were significantly more likely to apply and progress to highly-selective universities. This finding also holds for Scholars Programme graduates who had **no parental history of higher education** or Scholars Programme graduates who **lived in areas with high levels of deprivation**.

... and in every part of the country



Scholars Programme graduates from schools in **rural or coastal areas** were significantly more likely to apply and progress to highly-selective universities. This finding also holds for Scholars Programme graduates from areas with **low university participation rates (POLAR4 Q1/Q2)**.



Pupil locations at the time of participation in The Scholars Programme (includes all Scholars Programme graduates in the UCAS STROBE sample)

Additional findings from this year's UCAS STROBE analysis

Year 12 graduates of The Scholars Programme secured places at highly-selective universities at a particularly high rate, including those eligible for Pupil Premium.

- More than 1 in 2 Year 12 Scholars Programme graduates progressed to a highly-selective university, nearly double the rate that UCAS expects for pupils with similar backgrounds. This result holds when running the analysis just for pupils that were eligible for Pupil Premium: 48% of Y12 Scholars Programme graduates eligible for Pupil Premium progress to a highly-selective university.
- Results are mostly driven by higher application rates, but significant differences exist at offer and acceptance stages too. Out of those Y12 Scholars Programme graduates that have applied to universities through UCAS, 9 in 10 applied to a highly-selective university.
- Some 70% of Year 12 Scholars Programme graduates applied to one of The Brilliant Club's partner universities that hosted launch or graduation trips in 2018-19, the year in which the Year 12 cohort took part in The Scholars Programme. This compares to UCAS's expected application rate of 40% for pupils from similar backgrounds.

Year 10 Scholars Programme graduates were also significantly more likely to progress to highly-selective universities than their peers who did not take part in the programme.

- Year 10 Scholars Programme graduates were also statistically significantly more likely to apply to, receive offers from and to progress to highly-selective universities than their peers who did not take part in the programme. Some 38% of pupils who completed The Scholars Programme in Year 10 progressed to a highly-selective university.

Both boys and girls who graduated from The Scholars Programme are significantly more likely to progress to highly-selective universities than their peers who did not take part in the programme.

- UCAS ran the analysis separately for boys and for girls on the programme and found that they applied and progressed to highly-selective universities at similar rates.

The headline findings hold for various markers of under-representation, not just for Pupil Premium.

- UCAS ran the analysis separately for pupils with no parental history of higher education, pupils from deprived areas according to IDACI or WIMD and pupils from low participation areas (POLAR4 Q1-Q2). For each of these groups UCAS found that Scholars Programme graduates progressed to highly-selective universities at higher rates than they expected for peers with similar backgrounds.

The headline findings hold for various classifications of highly-selective universities.

- For most of the results reported here we used the DfE top third list to classify highly-selective universities. But we also asked UCAS to check that the headline findings hold for other classifications of highly-selective universities, including DfE high tariff, UCAS high tariff and the group of highly-selective universities that partner with The Brilliant Club and hosted launch or graduation trips. The headline finding that Scholars Programme graduates are significantly more likely to apply to, receive offers from and progress to highly-selective universities holds for all of these classifications.

Technical notes

Benchmarking analysis

For this year's control group analysis, UCAS compared the intervention group of Scholars Programme graduates to about 500 matched benchmarking groups of the same size with pupils from similar backgrounds. Differences between the groups are assessed for statistical significance. The headline statistics for applications to DfE top third universities of both groups are reported below:

Measure	The Scholars Programme (Y12 and Y10 pupils)		Average of matched groups	Comparison
	Total	%	%	Statistical significance
Initial Cohort	1368	-	-	n/a
Applied	900	66%	50%	Very significantly high
Offered (out of applied)	830	92%	87%	Very significantly high
Progressed (out of applied)	595	66%	56%	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
Benchmarking groups	UCAS used two data sources to build their benchmarking 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. 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.
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, 66% of pupils on The Scholars Programme applied to a highly-selective university compared to 50% of pupils in the benchmark 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 underrepresented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities, as outlined in our strategy, The Path to Outcomes . For the purpose of this evaluation, we used the 'top third' list by the Department for Education, which can be found here .

Further information

For more information about this 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