

# The Scholars Programme

Independent Impact Evaluation Update 2021/22

UCAS

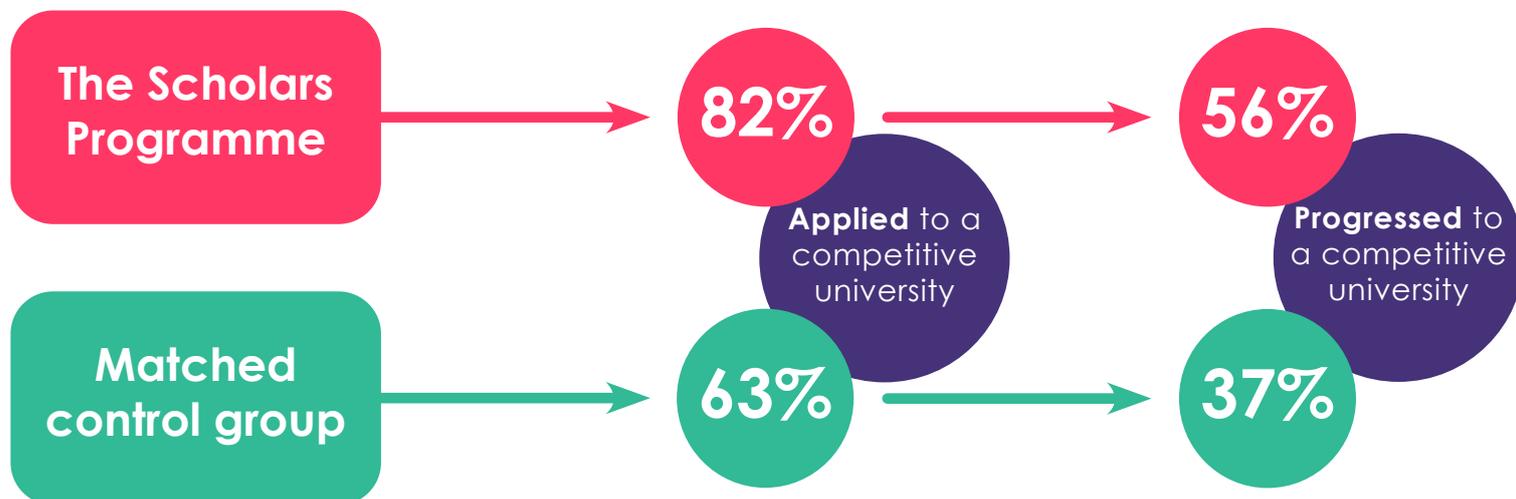


Our mission for our national access programme, [The Scholars Programme](#), is to support students from less advantaged backgrounds to secure a place at a competitive university. For the last six years, we have worked with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service ([UCAS](#)) to independently evaluate the impact of The Scholars Programme on progression to higher education.

We recognise that it is particularly important to understand the impact of our programme in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our latest data is from the 2021/22 university application cycle where students applied based on teacher assessed grades.

Through UCAS, we were able to track the university applications of over 500 Year 12 students who took part in The Scholars Programme in 2019/20 and understand whether they were more likely to progress to a competitive university compared to students who did not take part in the programme. The students in the comparison group were matched with our Scholars Programme graduates on a number of key variables, including ethnicity, postcode and GCSE attainment. This [type of evidence](#) is considered one of the most robust evaluation methods for understanding causal impact.

Year 12 students who complete The Scholars Programme are **statistically significantly more likely to apply and progress to a competitive university** than students from similar backgrounds.



Out of the Scholars Programme graduates who applied to university, **9 in 10** applied to a competitive university.

9 in 10



**1 in 2** students eligible for Pupil Premium who graduated from The Scholars Programme progressed to a competitive university.

1 in 2

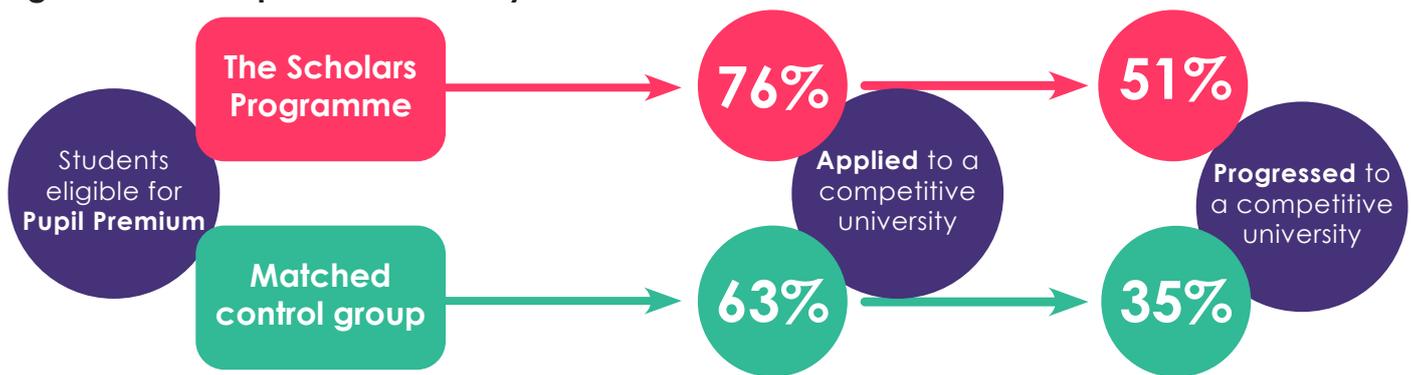


Scholars Programme graduates, including those eligible for Pupil Premium, apply to Oxbridge at **more than double the rate** of their peers from similar backgrounds.

x2

### Supporting students from less advantaged backgrounds:

The Scholars Programme targets students eligible for Pupil Premium. Graduates of the programme eligible for **Pupil Premium** are statistically significantly more likely to **apply and progress to a competitive university**.



This finding also holds true for our other two targeting criteria; Scholars Programme graduates who had **no parental history of higher education** and Scholars Programme graduates who lived in areas with **high levels of deprivation** (income deprivation by postcode).

### Reaching students across the UK:

Scholars Programme graduates from schools in **rural or coastal areas** are significantly more likely to progress to competitive universities than students from matched control groups in these areas. This finding also holds for Scholars Programme graduates from areas with **low university participation rates** (POLAR4 Q1/Q2).

UCAS ran the analysis separately for students from different regions of the UK. For each region, UCAS found that Year 12 Scholars Programme graduates progressed to university at a higher rate than they expected for peers with similar backgrounds.



77%

### Widening access to our university partners:

The Brilliant Club works in partnership with 43 competitive universities across the UK. Scholars Programme graduates are statistically significantly **more likely to apply to one of our partner universities** than students from similar backgrounds.

Applied

### Achieving on The Scholars Programme:

Students' achievements on The Scholars Programme are associated with higher rates of progression; Scholars Programme graduates who achieved a 1st or 2:1 in their final assignment progressed to a competitive university at a higher rate than their peers.

### Access and success

Whilst our latest university progression statistics are encouraging, we know that it is not just about getting students into university but also making sure that they thrive when they get there. Alongside our flagship access programme, The Scholars Programme, we have launched a brand new programme, **Join the Dots**, which is a national initiative that brings schools and universities together to develop a network of support for students during the transition to university. As part of our new strategy, we will continue to work with UCAS, as well as the Higher Education Access Tracker (**HEAT**), to understand how our programmes impact both access to and success at university.

Details about the design of the evaluation can be found in this [technical note](#). For more information about this evaluation or about how The Brilliant Club measures its impact for students and stakeholders, please email the charity's Impact and Analysis Manager, Lottie Norton at: [lottie.norton@thebrilliantclub.org](mailto:lottie.norton@thebrilliantclub.org).