



The Scholars Programme

Evaluation Update 2023/24

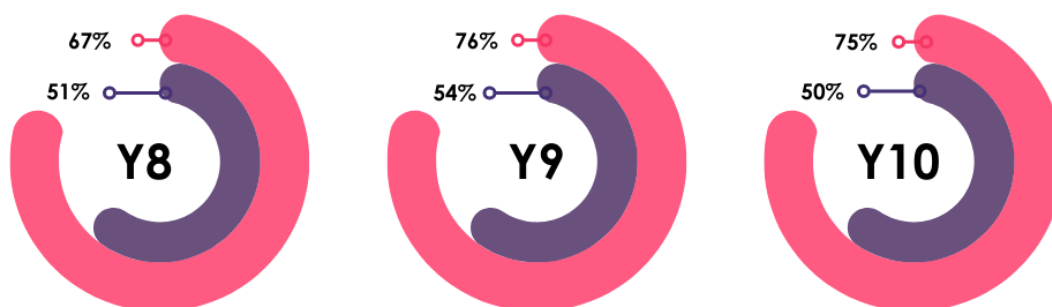
GCSE attainment outcomes

Attainment is the single [biggest predictor](#) of progressing to university and, through our collaboration with the Higher Education Access Tracker ([HEAT](#)), we are able to examine the impact of [The Scholars Programme](#) on GCSE attainment.



Methodology: Using data from HEAT we can compare the percentage of Scholars Programme students achieving a 9-5 in maths and English, with the percentage of students from the same schools achieving a 9-5 in maths and English. Crucially, the analysis accounts for prior attainment at Key Stage 2 to ensure that we are comparing similar groups of students. For 2023/24, the sample included 1,115 students who participated in the programme in Year 8, 9 or 10 and who took their GCSE exams in 2022.

Findings: The findings showed that students who participated in The Scholars Programme in Year 10 were 25 percentage points more likely to achieve a 9-5 in maths and English at GCSE than students within their schools who scored similarly at Key Stage 2. The findings also showed that students who participated in The Scholars Programme in Year 8 or 9 were also more likely to achieve a 9-5 in maths and English at GCSE than students within their schools who scored similarly at Key Stage 2, as shown in the figure below:

Students who did The Scholars Programme in Year 8, 9 or 10, were more likely to achieve a 9-5 in maths and English than students who scored similarly at Key Stage 2 within their schools.



Percentage of students who scored 9-5 in maths and English at GCSE, with similar prior attainment at Key Stage 2

-  Scholars Programme Students
-  Scholars Programme Schools

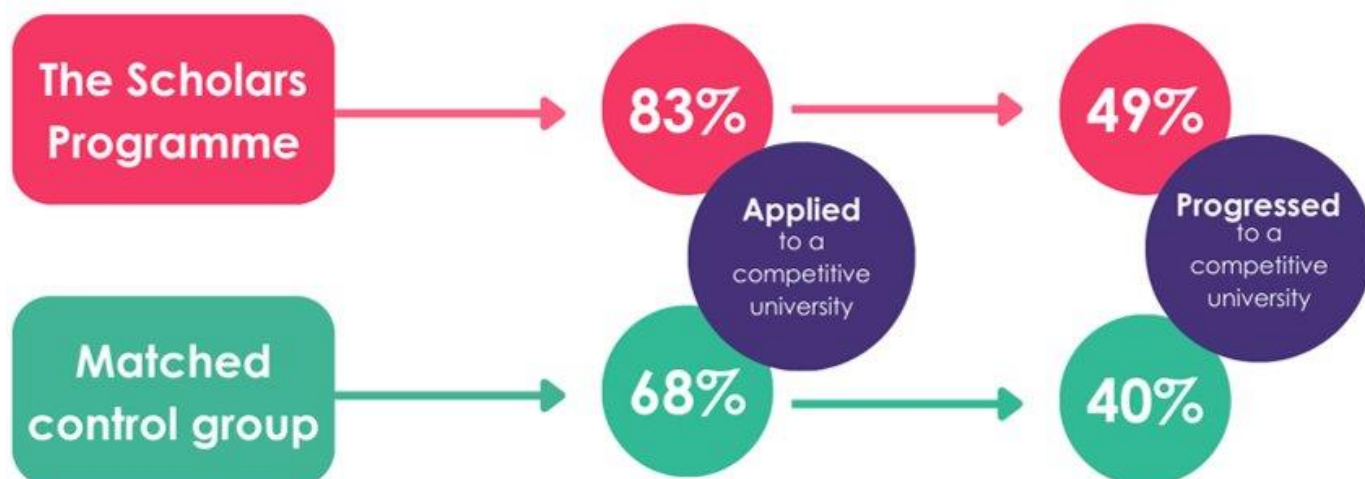
University progression outcomes

For the last eight years, we have commissioned UCAS, via their [Outreach Evaluator](#) service, to independently evaluate the impact of The Scholars Programme on progression to university. Our latest evaluation is based on students who progressed to university in the Autumn 2023/24 term. This cohort was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and specifically the use of [Teacher Assessed Grades](#).

Methodology: UCAS compared the university applications of 955 Year 12 students who took part in The Scholars Programme in 2021/22 to a matched control group. UCAS created the comparison group by matching on several key variables, including ethnicity, postcode and GCSE attainment. From this, we can see whether Scholars Programme graduates are more likely to progress to a competitive university than similar students who did not take part in the programme.

This type of evidence is considered one of the most robust evaluation methods for understanding causal impact. However, we should be mindful that because students were matched on Teacher Assessed Grades as opposed to grades that students received through sitting GCSEs, the precision of the matching may have been impacted. Nonetheless, we still think it is important that we continue to run evaluations of this nature, and over time we will be able to report on longitudinal trends as well.

Findings: We found that Year 12 students who complete The Scholars Programme, including those eligible for Pupil Premium, are statistically significantly more likely to apply to a competitive university than students from similar backgrounds, and as a result they also progress to a competitive university at a higher rate.



IMPORTANT: This UCAS evaluation, and specifically the creation of the matched control group, was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, caution should be taken when generalising the findings outside of this context. For information about the impact of our programme, you can read our [previous UCAS evaluations](#).

Getting in contact: If you would like to speak with us further about our evaluation work with HEAT and UCAS or our programmes evaluation work more widely, please contact: Dr Madison Kerr, Programmes Evaluation Manager: madison.kerr@thebrilliantclub.org