



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Widening
Participation
and Outreach

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Providing
opportunities
and nurturing
talent.

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Foreword



Professor Gavin Brown
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education

I am delighted to share with you our 2023 Widening Participation and Outreach Annual Report.

Building on our reputation as one of the leading Russell Group institutions for widening access to university, colleagues from the Widening Participation and Outreach team and across the University have intensified their efforts to deliver innovative outreach projects this year, attracting and supporting young people from diverse backgrounds. We have engaged with over 1,600 students in long term projects in 2022-23, providing a wide range of educational opportunities and nurturing talent.

Highlights include being awarded the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers Quality Mark in recognition of our support for care experienced students, the renewal and expansion of our local learning centres partnership with IntoUniversity and the expansion of our fundraised and alumni supported scholarships offer for current students.

In support of our new University strategy (Strategy 2031), we have also developed a series of research-connected outreach events on campus to inspire local young people to engage with research and explore how this improves lives and the environment. Topics covered have included climate changes, infectious diseases, and micro-organisms.

Recognising the value of paid employment opportunities for our students, we have also revitalised our Liverpool Advocate Scheme and continue to develop paid opportunities for trained students to provide information, advice and guidance to their peers, including our Disability Coaches, Career Coaches and Digital Coaches.

Our annual report on widening participation is structured around three core sections: Access, Student Success, and Progression.

This holistic approach to the student lifecycle is crucial for integrating widening participation into every aspect of our operations at the University of Liverpool.

We are committed to not only facilitating access to higher education but also ensuring academic and personal success, and progression onto rewarding employment or further study for our students. We remain determined to ensure that every individual with the academic potential has the opportunity to study at the University of Liverpool, regardless of their background, and the student case studies at the end of this report provides a vibrant reminder of what a remarkable set of students we have and of their inspiring educational journeys.

As we look forward, our commitment to ensuring that every individual can reach their potential and thrive at the University of Liverpool will continue to underpin our work in our new Access and Participation Plan for 2024-2028.

A Year in Widening Participation



During 2022-23, the Widening Participation and Outreach team delivered campus-visits for over **6,000** young people.

There are **1,600** young people registered on long-term outreach projects.



We have delivered

32

events with our partners, including local charities and organisations.



Our partner schools received

169

engagements, including campus visits, long-term projects and teacher events.



Over **£11,000,000**

has been invested in financial aid for students in 2022/23.



Across Widening Participation and Outreach, Shaping Futures and UK Recruitment, we provided

11,500

hours of paid work for our Liverpool Advocates.



The Student Life Cycle



The Student Life Cycle is a model used to describe a student's experience as they progress through higher education, including the support they might need. The Student Life Cycle is made up of three stages:



Access

Pre-entry

Access work focuses on providing students with the support they may need to enter Higher Education.



Success

Post-entry

Success activities focus on ensuring student's can continue with their studies, achieve their potential and make the most out of their Higher Education experience.



Progression

Post-entry and post-graduation

Progression initiatives support students to achieve their goals for future work and study.

Using the Student Life Cycle model, we can consider the student experience holistically, and ensure that a robust system of support is in place for all students at all stages of the Higher Education experience. This comprehensive approach is particularly important for widening participation students, who may face different barriers as they progress through university. This is why we've chosen to structure this report around Access, Success and Progression. Some initiatives will be specific to one stage, while others will run throughout all three.



NNECL Quality Mark



The University of Liverpool has been awarded a national quality mark recognising our high standards of support for care experienced students.



The prestigious national award from the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL), is a quality mark for higher education providers which demonstrates the institutions support for the access, success and progression of Care Experienced students. The award recognises the support available from academic and professional services staff before students join us, during their studies and following graduation.

NNECL highlighted the support provided for Care Experienced students prior to their entry as 'exceptional', commenting that the University has 'very well-established practices, and a clear, structured approach to the support of Care Experienced applicants.' The University admissions system was also highlighted as an area of good practice, with NNECL commenting 'a strong and well-established approach is evident, placing it firmly within the enhanced category' of the quality mark.

The work which led to the achievement of the NNECL Quality Mark is a fantastic example of support at each stage of the Student Life Cycle.



Below, you can see some of our work to support Care Experienced students in each stage of the life cycle.

Access

- Named contact for Care Experienced students within the Widening Participation and Outreach team to provide support and effective, bespoke, impartial guidance
- Access to the Disrupted Education programme (See page 11 for more detail)
- Care experienced students are eligible for contextual offers and additional consideration of their application
- Once a Care Experienced student is made an offer to study at the University, they receive a personalised email explaining the financial, academic and pastoral support available, both pre and post entry.

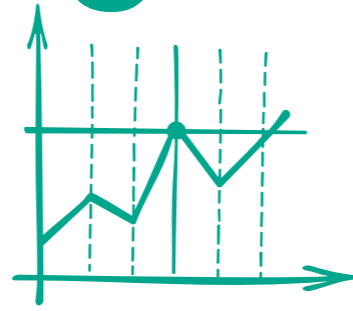
Success

- Named contact in student support, offering wellbeing appointments, advice about bursaries and acting as first point of contact for any issues
- Bespoke Welcome activities
- Prioritised for a paid role as a Liverpool Advocate
- Accommodation support, including a discount on fees, priority access, 365 day accommodation, flexible move in dates and support with requirements for a guarantor
- Care Leavers Opportunity Bursary of £3,000 per year, subject to eligibility.

Progression

- Prioritised for postgraduate courses
- Access to a Career Consultant, to discuss course specific employability support and next steps
- Prioritised for the Employability Support Award, an award of up to £500 to cover expenses such as travel or equipment needed for interviews or internships
- Prioritised for Unlock Your Potential (UP), a programme aimed at helping students from underrepresented backgrounds develop key skills, grow their networks and identify mentors.

Faculty Spotlight Science and Engineering



The Faculty of Science and Engineering supports a range of widening participation activity, delivered both with the Widening Participation and Outreach team and local community groups.

Working collaboratively across the Faculty, with other teams in the University and external partners allows for high quality, impactful work which reaches a broad audience and supports both the University's Access and Participation Plan and its commitment to civic engagement.

One innovative piece of collaborative work is the Communication Modules, available to undergraduate students on Computer Science, Chemistry and Maths courses with an interest in science communication. Students are supported by academic colleagues to develop a taster session, which is then delivered to local schools as part of Module Visit Days led by the Widening Participation and Outreach team.



Academic colleagues lead on various outreach activities, such as the Science is Cool lecture, led by Physics Outreach. This is a regular feature on pre-16 campus visits, giving thousands of students each year a taste of what learning at university might look like, challenging their pre-conceptions on science and getting them excited about studying STEM throughout the rest of their time at school and beyond.

Throughout the year, Faculty staff also deliver subject focussed days that promote the depth and content of these areas to young people considering studying in them. These have included annual STEM days for Year 6, Year 9 and Year 12, as well as Maths themed events for targeted groups, including female student and minority ethnic students. In keeping with our promotion of the University's research themes, we have also developed taster days with the Earth and Ocean Sciences department that spotlight climate futures as an area to explore.

The School of Engineering also supports Pathways to Engineering, a two-year access programme delivered in collaboration with the Widening Participation and Outreach team and the Sutton Trust.

Targeted at high-achieving WP students interested in highly selective courses, the Pathways programme focused on exposure to academics and undergraduates, developing academic skills and improving attainment and providing support with admissions and transitions. The programme culminates with an national conference, a residential event attended by all universities delivering the Pathways programme.

In July 2023, the Faculty held an Away Day, focusing on the development of new outreach activity and maximising the impact of existing sessions. As a result of conversations on the Away Day, taster sessions developed as part of the Communication Modules will be added the Widening Participation and Outreach team's campus visits beyond the Module Visit Days, allowing undergraduate students access to paid work opportunity and chances to build their science communication skills, improving their future employability.



Faculty Spotlight Humanities and Social Sciences



Funded by the Sutton Trust, the Widening Participation and Outreach team runs Pathways to Law in collaboration with the School of Law and Social Justice, and Pathways to Banking and Finance with the Management School, within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Sutton Trust is an educational charity which aims to improve social mobility and address educational disadvantage through research, policy influence and programmes like Pathways, which supports young people from less advantaged backgrounds to access leading universities and competitive careers. Each Pathways programme focuses on a different sector, giving students practical advice and experiences which leaves them feeling inspired and more confident about their future.

All students on a Pathways programme benefit from taster academic sessions, workshops on their chosen sector, visits to the University of Liverpool and universities further afield, work experience placements and sector specific visits, as well as A Level mentoring to ensure students can achieve the required grades to take up their degree place or degree apprenticeship offer.



Pathways to Banking and Finance students have taken part in visits to Deutsche Bank, work experience placements at Lloyds, Natwest, HSBC, PwC and the Bank of England, and explored the broad range of courses available in the Management School, including opportunities for a Year in Industry.

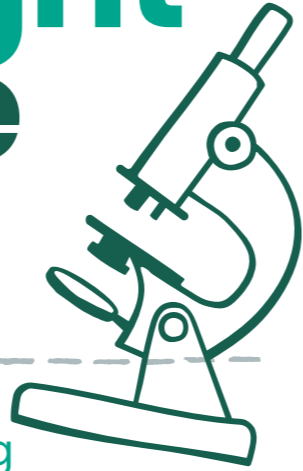
Pathways to Law students have visited the Inner Temple, completed work placements with Oriel Chambers, Natwest and Mishcon de Reya LLP, and toured the campus facilities available for students of the School of Law and Social Justice. They also explored additional opportunities available for them as part of their Law degree at University of Liverpool, including Law fairs and the Law Clinic.

A National Conference for each Pathways programme is hosted each year at the University of Warwick, allowing students a chance to network with each other, employers and universities.

Students who successfully complete a Pathways programme are offered a 2-grade reduction in their offer from Sutton Trust partner universities, ongoing support from the Pathways team at the University of Liverpool and access to the Sutton Trust alumni events and opportunities.

All Pathways programmes are completely free for students to attend, with all costs (including travel, accommodation, food and activities) paid for by the University of Liverpool and the Sutton Trust.

Faculty Spotlight Health and Life Sciences



The Health and Life Sciences (HLS) Faculty Widening Participation Committee is a long-standing group set up to explore national and institutional widening participation policy and how it can be implemented within the Faculty.

The group includes Widening Participation Leads from each undergraduate teaching school, representatives from the Widening Participation and Outreach team, the HLS Institutes and postgraduate programmes. This collaborative, innovative committee is an example of best practice within the Faculty.

The committee developed from a small group which focused on outreach and supporting the University partner schools, and now co-ordinates and develops HLS initiatives which support the University's current Access and Participation Plan, the University's Strategic Plan and the work of the Faculty Education Committee.

Expansion of the group's work focuses on identifying and minimising barriers to the access, success and progression of students within the HLS Faculty. This includes monitoring institution, Faculty and departmental data, to ensure initiatives are data driven and evidence informed. Each teaching school also completes an annual return addressing progress against set targets and with support, creates a bespoke action plan to address barriers and develop interventions.

The HLS Faculty offers a wide variety of programmes from the Schools of Health Sciences, Dentistry, Medicine, Psychology, Life Sciences and Veterinary Sciences, so bespoke places are needed to address both shared and disparate issues within each area, to ensure success.

Excellent progress has been made in addressing access issues across all targets, with significant increases in the recruitment of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods. The School of Life Sciences has already met their target, while Medicine, Veterinary Science and Psychology have made huge progress in this area. In 2022, approximately 12% of care-experienced students joining the University of Liverpool were joining the School of Medicine.

Much of our work is enabled by strong institutional policy and the Faculty's work with the Widening Participation and Outreach team locally in delivering Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists, and supporting the Liverpool Scholars and Realising Opportunities programmes.

However, clinical areas also support outreach nationally, with the School of Medicine supporting regional delivery of the Medical Schools Council Summer Schools and their Teacher and Advisor Conferences. The Schools of Dentistry and Veterinary Science recruit nationally to Summer Schools and the Vet Team in a Box initiative is a toolkit designed by the University of Liverpool in partnership with the Widening Participation Vet Network for schools across the country to deliver in a classroom.



Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists



Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists (MYHLS) is a programme for students in Years 9-11, interested in a career in Health and Life Sciences.



The programme covers six departments within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, and is designed to prepare students to make informed choices about their future course and career, and support them to achieve their aspirations. Students start broadly in Year 9, sampling multiple areas before narrowing their focus in Years 10 and 11, to allow them to specialise, deepen their knowledge about their chosen career and start to build the specific skills which will support with their application to their chosen course. After students specialise in Years 10 and 11, they benefit from smaller groups with higher pupil engagement and activities tailored to student needs and interest.

Strong links with the NHS, and University of Liverpool academic staff remain key elements of the programme, with students taking part in hospital visits and academic lectures and workshops throughout the three years of the programme.

Year 9: From the six available specialisms (Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Sciences, Psychology, Health Sciences and Life Sciences), students select three course areas of interest and throughout the year they gain a better understanding of what these courses and careers involve. They tour the relevant University facilities and explore what university teaching is like.

Years 10 and 11: Students choose one specialism to focus on, and take part in activities designed to develop the skills needed within their chosen specialism. This includes using the anatomy facilities to look at the body in detail through 3D anatomy and physiology technology (for students on the Health Sciences strand), trying out a lambing simulator (for students on the Veterinary Sciences strand) or using the Phantom Head Lab to practice filling teeth and taking impressions (for students on the Dentistry stand). Students also begin to consider and prepare for their application.

Alongside the core programme, students in Years 10 and 11 are able to access some extra opportunities such as GCSE Mentoring, work experience and events run in collaboration with partners, such as the Allied Health Professionals Careers Day and the Dentistry Open Day at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital.

There are currently 250 students across the three years of the programme, expanding to 300 in the academic year 2023/2024. Following completion of Merseyside Young Health and Life Scientists at the end of Year 11, students are encouraged to access supported admissions programmes such as the Liverpool Scholars programme and Realising Opportunities.

Partnerships



Partnership working enables us to deliver impactful, innovative widening participation work.



Schools/Colleges

We recognise the important role universities must play in supporting local schools/colleges, to work towards reducing the gaps between young people from underrepresented backgrounds and their more advantaged peers. We work closely with 44 partner schools in our local area, delivering 169 engagements to these schools over the academic year 2022/23.

OF THESE, 29 SCHOOLS RECEIVED THREE OR MORE ENGAGEMENTS, REPRESENTING A STRONG STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP.

Through teacher events, subject specific outreach activities, University of Liverpool staff volunteering in School Governor roles, our Disrupted Education project, and the University of Liverpool Maths School, we support our schools in 5 of the Department for Education's 7 Areas for Collaboration.



Children's University

The Liverpool Children's University is a charity working in partnership with schools to develop a love of learning in children, by encouraging and celebrating participation in extra-curricular activities. Through the innovative Children's University Passport to Learning, children from age 5 to 14 are encouraged to try new learning experiences at after school clubs, at home, in local libraries, museums or further afield.

Children's University Graduation events are hosted on the University of Liverpool campus, with over 400 young people and their parents in attendance over the year. Having parents on campus is a unique opportunity for the University to have important conversations with families about their child's educational journey and share positive messages about Higher Education.

A member of the Widening Participation and Outreach team also sits on the Children's University Steering Group and Dr Glenn Godenho, from the University of Liverpool's Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, is the Honorary Chancellor of the Liverpool Children's University.



Foundation Programmes

To support students with non-traditional qualifications, or students who do not meet typical entry requirements but have much to offer, we offer a range of innovative Foundation Year programmes with partner colleges in the local region. In collaboration with Carmel College, we offer Foundation Years providing pathways to degrees in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Working with Wirral Metropolitan College, we offer a 2+2 Psychology programme with Foundation Element.

"Carmel College has been a fantastic experience for me. The tutors are approachable and really have a passion for their subjects. They've helped me to hone my skills in Maths and Physics, ready to start my degree. I've also met some life-long friends!"

Year 0 Physical Sciences student, Carmel College



IntoUniversity iu

IntoUniversity

In 2017 we partnered with national educational charity IntoUniversity and the LFC Foundation to launch a learning centre in Anfield, supporting children and young people in North Liverpool to improve their educational attainment. Since opening the Centre has engaged with over 4,000 students in the local area.

As part of our support for the IntoUniversity centre, we host primary and secondary school events on campus and provide academic staff and current students to support in-centre work through session delivery and volunteering. This partnership work complements the existing outreach programme offered by the Widening Participation team, working with the same schools in recognition of the positive impact of repeated engagements with young people.

This year we have also announced Future Goals, a £3 million, five-year partnership between the LFC Foundation, Everton in the Community, the Steve Morgan Foundation, IntoUniversity and the University of Liverpool. Future Goals will fund a new learning centre in Autumn 2023, which will create life-changing educational opportunities for young people in Kirkby, as well as extending the successful partnership in Anfield.



REALISING OPPORTUNITIES
Working Together | Supporting Talent

Realising Opportunities

The University of Liverpool is a partner in the national Realising Opportunities (RO) programme, a unique collaboration of leading, research-intensive universities, working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from groups underrepresented in Higher Education. Students taking part in Realising Opportunities are provided with the skills and information to help them make informed decisions about their future and to raise their aspirations to progress to a research-intensive university.

Since we joined the scheme, 585 students have taken part in the project, with over 70% of students reporting they had an improved understanding of research-intensive universities after taking part in RO. Upon successful completion of the RO programme, students are eligible for the Realising Opportunities Award, a £2,000 bursary available as a cash award or programme fee waiver, as well as additional consideration of their application.



Shaping Futures

Shaping Futures is the Merseyside partnership of the national UniConnect programme. Formed by 12 local Higher Education providers and led by the University of Liverpool, Shaping Futures is an outreach programme offering impartial higher education-related activities and progression advice to target learners in priority secondary schools and across partner Further Education /Sixth Form Colleges. The University of Liverpool hosts the Shaping Futures team on campus and contributes to Communities of Practice focused on underrepresented groups and collaborative outreach projects such as Inclusive Transitions, a resource designed to support students with special educational needs and disabilities in their progression to Higher Education.



Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust champions social mobility through programmes, research and policy influence. In partnership with universities and employers, they run engaging programmes to support young people from less advantaged backgrounds to access leading universities and careers, and leave them feeling inspired and more confident about their future. We partner with the Sutton Trust on the Year 12 programmes: Pathways to Banking and Finance, Pathways to Law and Pathways to Engineering.

Open Days

There's no better way to get a feel for our campus and academic departments than to visit in person.



We appreciate not all students will be able to take part in in-person activities and so we provide a range of online events and on-demand content, including two Online Open Weeks and an Online Discovery Week for offer holders, which includes presentations on student support, careers, sports, societies, and accommodation.

OUR ON-DEMAND OFFER INCLUDES SUBJECT SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS, VIRTUAL TOURS OF FACILITIES AND STUDENT LIFE CONTENT CREATED BY CURRENT UNDERGRADUATES.

We also have on-demand content focused on finance, preparing for university, and content specifically for parents and supporters, as we appreciate these can be areas of concern for students from a Widening Participation background.



Open Days take place four times a year, providing a chance to find out more about subject areas, look around accommodation, join campus tours led by current students as well as explore libraries, the Sports and Fitness Centre, Career Studio and the Guild of Students. In addition, University staff are available at Information stands to chat about Student Services (including mental wellbeing, disability support, financial advice), foundation programmes, global opportunities and admissions.

Prospective students are encouraged to register, with the option to disclose experience of Local Authority Care, estrangement from parents, caring responsibilities or Refugee/Asylum Seeker status.

Where this is the case, students are signposted to a dedicated staff member with responsibility for Disrupted Education, who provides additional support during Open Days and throughout the application process.

Students holding offers are also invited to Applicant Discovery Days, providing a chance to explore departmental facilities in depth, take part in subject-based activities and meet friendly staff and students from the relevant subject area.

Prospective Students attending any of our recruitment events are also invited to disclose any access requirements so we can support their visit.



Disrupted Education

The Widening Participation and Outreach team offer a well established support programme for young people who have faced a Disrupted Education, which has supported over 250 students since it's inception.

This programme supports young people who have experienced significant personal barriers to their education, such as:

- Care experienced young people
- Young people estranged from their families
- Young adult carers
- Children of military families
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees
- Young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Young people who have faced medical issues during their time at school/college.

Young people benefiting from the Disrupted Education programme receive pre-entry support including bespoke information and guidance about course choice and transition to university, support with transport to attend Open Days and Applicant Discovery Days and personalised campus visits to discuss what support would be available for the young person once they are studying at the University of Liverpool.

Once on course, students who have experienced a Disrupted Education can access support including 365-day accommodation with priority access, financial support (subject to eligibility), the opportunity to work as a Liverpool Advocate and additional academic support.

Contextual Admissions

Contextual information and data is provided by applicants in their UCAS applications.

This information can be used by universities to assess an applicant's achievements while considering their socio-economic background and societal barriers they may have faced. The aim of contextual admissions is to provide a deeper understanding of the characteristics of an individual applicant and to identify any barriers they may have faced while studying.

The University of Liverpool is keen to identify potential and support the admission and success of applicants who experience barriers to their education. The University has embedded a contextual admissions strategy for eligible UK students by adopting the use of contextual offers for applicants in the main UCAS recruitment cycle.

This can provide up to a 2-grade reduction from the standard offer for the following under-represented groups:

- Students from English neighbourhoods with historically low participation in higher education (known as POLAR 4 Quintile 1 postcodes, the dataset used by the Office for Students to track this metric)
- UK Care Experienced students (i.e. qualifying students who have spent any amount of time in Local Authority care and meet associated eligibility criteria used nationally).

FOR PROGRAMMES THAT ENTER CLEARING WE WILL OFFER A ONE GRADE REDUCTION, FROM THE STANDARD CLEARING OFFER.



Applicants who do not meet the criteria for contextual admissions but have experienced disadvantage or disruption during their studies, can apply to the Disrupted Studies programme or inform the university that they have Mitigating Circumstances.

Clinical Admissions use contextual information during the selection for interview process and can use this information during admissions however, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences have detailed information on how contextual information is used in their respective admissions policies.

Liverpool Advocates



Liverpool Advocates are current University of Liverpool students supporting the work of the Widening Participation and Outreach, UK Recruitment and Shaping Futures teams.

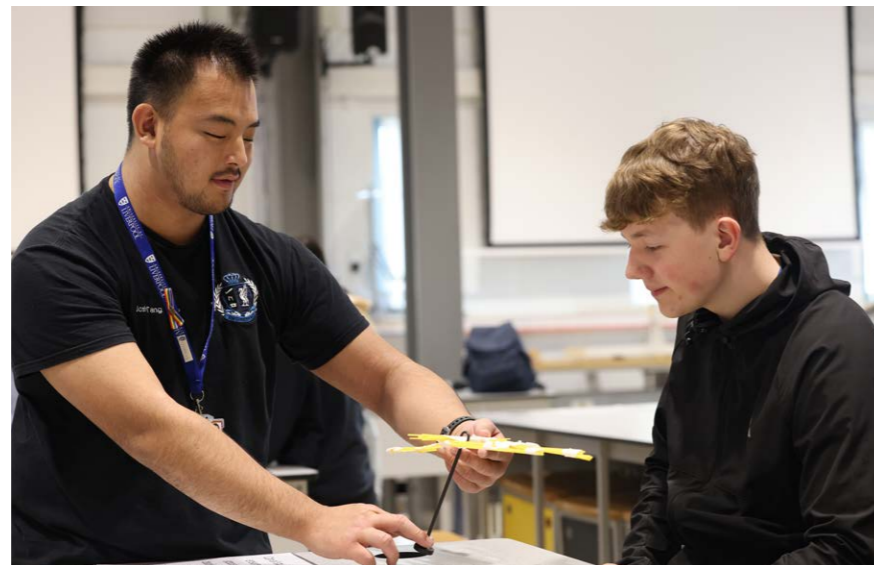


They lead campus tours, support classroom sessions, deliver talks, support Open Days and much more – they play key roles such as summer school support, events assistants, session facilitators and attainment mentors, supporting school and college students to prepare for their exams.

“My favourite part of the role is all the friends I’ve made – there’s a number of Liverpool Advocates who have become very close friends over the past year!”

Liverpool Advocate

They inspire the young people we work with by sharing their journeys to Higher Education, acting as positive role models, and acting as a bridge between school/college and university. We currently have over 230 Liverpool Advocates, representing all Faculties and all levels of study at the University of Liverpool. Students from Widening Participation backgrounds are prioritised in recruitment for Liverpool Advocates and over 25% of our Liverpool Advocate pool were previously involved in an outreach programme with the Widening Participation team, such as the Liverpool Scholars programme.



The Liverpool Advocate role is a casual, paid role created to fit around academic commitments. In the academic year 2022/23, we provided 11,500 hours of paid work for our Liverpool Advocates.

Through working as a Liverpool Advocate, students develop valuable transferable skills to support them in their future careers and can take advantage of a variety of training opportunities such as First Aid, safeguarding and diversity and equality. Advocates can also take on additional responsibilities, such as developing and delivering sessions, or working as Night Supervisors on summer schools.

“I’ve developed a lot of skills which I think will massively aid me in the future, such as public speaking, taking initiative, patience with children, the ability to work under pressure and being able to create content and resources for certain age groups!”

Liverpool Advocate

Guild Volunteering



The Liverpool Guild of Students works to provide excellent opportunities for all students at the University of Liverpool, providing them with the best experience and equipping them to change the world.

As part of this, the Guild provides an extensive volunteering programme, helping students to find their perfect volunteering opportunity in an area they are passionate about. Whether it's climate change, protecting animals or helping children learn to read, they provide a chance for students to live their values through volunteering, while also developing valuable skills to support them in their studies and future employment.

60% OF STUDENT VOLUNTEERS STRONGLY AGREED OR AGREE THAT PARTICIPATION IN GUILD VOLUNTEERING HAS IMPROVED THEIR EMPLOYABILITY.



The Guild offers their own volunteering programmes, including:

- Green Fingers Volunteer, giving students the opportunity to engage with the University of Liverpool Children's Centre to run interactive gardening activities
- Schools Volunteer, offering students the chance to deliver workshops to Primary and Secondary schools through Science in Schools, Sustainability in Schools and Societies in Schools
- Gardening Volunteer, where students build, plant and maintain the Guild's green spaces
- Curriculum Mapping Volunteer, a project with SOS UK to map individual undergraduate course modules against the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals
- Leave Liverpool Tidy Volunteer, in collaboration with the British Heart Foundation, where volunteers help to reduce, reuse and recycle the way to a tidier Liverpool.

Alongside this, an innovative Volunteering Platform indexes opportunities from 155 organisations as of the end of academic year 2022/23. Students can apply for opportunities directly through the platform, as well as submit timesheets for the organisation to approve, allowing their engagement to be uploaded to their Higher Education Achievement Report.

As part of registering for the platform, students complete a short profile, allowing the Guild to actively seek opportunities which match the areas of interests and skills students are looking to develop, maximising the impact of the platform.

To support students with volunteering and other Guild initiatives a wide range of training and support is offered, covering meeting skills, risk assessments, finance and participatory budgeting, safeguarding, consensus decision making, charity law, media law and bystander intervention training, enabling students to develop a broad range of skills and experiences beyond their academic study.

The Guild's Volunteering Platform has engaged over 6,000 student volunteers since its inception, with 1,086 active students registered at the end of the 2022/23 academic year. Alongside students registered on the volunteering platform, 1,176 Society Committee Members, 28 Spend It Panel Members, 600 Course Representatives, 3 Student Trustees and 178 other delegates volunteer their time to support Guild initiatives, alongside their studies.



Scholarships and Bursaries



The University of Liverpool has a strong track record in widening access to Higher Education, and recognises that for many students from underrepresented backgrounds, finances can be a huge barrier.

With this in mind, we offer a range of scholarships and bursaries to support talented students from every background, including the Divock Origi Scholarship, which covers tuition fees and provides a maintenance stipend of £3,000 per year for a student permanently residing in the City of Liverpool and the Asylum Seekers Scholarship, which offers tuition fee and maintenance support for up to four undergraduate students who have sought protection in the UK.

Spotlight on... The Cowrie Scholarship Foundation

COWRIE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The University of Liverpool and the Cowrie Scholarship Foundation offer a scholarship to support Black African and Caribbean heritage applicants from socio-economically underrepresented backgrounds, as part of the Cowrie Scholarship Foundations mission to fund 100 Black British students through UK universities in the next decade.

Students in receipt of this scholarship will have their fees covered by the University, while the Cowrie Scholarship Foundation provide a maintenance stipend totalling £8,000 per year when combined with the Liverpool Bursary.



The Foundation also provides Cowrie Scholars with a range of benefits, including:

- Support from at least two personal Cowrie Scholarship Foundation Mentors
- Workshops with partner companies
- Work shadowing activities
- Training and skills development activities
- Annual conferences.

The Foundation was set up by University of Liverpool alumnus and Professor of Musculoskeletal Science at the University of Southampton, Professor Richard Oreffo (BSc Biochemistry, 1983). Professor Oreffo said "Access to university should not be limited by your race or social class, but unfortunately this is not the case for all in our society."

While many issues are at play in why more Black British students do not attend leading universities, the Cowrie Scholarship Foundation seeks to address a significant barrier: the financial cost of university education."

OUR SCHOLARSHIP OFFER CONTINUES TO EXPAND, WITH FOUR NEW SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24, AS WELL AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT OFFER FOR OUR SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS.

Many of our scholarship students also take advantage of a range of other opportunities within the University, including those offered by our Global Opportunities team.

"Studying abroad at the University of Georgia has been great so far! I haven't been here that long but I'm enjoying connecting with people (which is quite easy to do since everyone is so friendly) and seeing how different American university culture is to the UK. By the end of the semester, I hope to have developed my soft skills and made some connections which I will find useful in future endeavours. Thank you to everyone who made this semester abroad possible!"

Lidia Tembo
Cowrie Foundation Scholar



Career Coaches



With the introduction of the Career Studio, the UK's first university-based peer-to-peer employability space, the University of Liverpool Careers and Employability team revolutionised the way students access careers support, providing immediate support without the need for prior appointments.

Strategically located at the heart of the campus, the Career Studio's visibility, supported by powerful social media campaigns, ensures students are aware of and engaged with the services we can offer.

At its core is a dedicated team of Career Coaches, current students working part time, who work hand-in-hand with employability experts. This collaborative effort guarantees that every student is presented with the right opportunities to hone their skills and expertise, not just during their university journey but also as they embark on their early career paths.

Our Career Coaches, trained to cater to each phase of the employability journey, are the foundations of this initiative. They champion the essence of peer-to-peer learning, offering invaluable support in areas like career planning, application processes, networking, and sector-specific research.

The Studio's support is structured around three pivotal themes:

1. Exploring career aspirations,
2. Connecting with potential employers and opportunities
3. Applying for and securing these opportunities.

Career Coaches can also support all students with access to Handshake, our online careers platform, available 24/7 where they can access exclusive and targeted employer events, use interactive careers resources, and search and apply for placements, internships, part-time jobs, and graduate vacancies, opening up continuous support wherever students and graduates are based.

“Joining the Careers and Employability team was the most rewarding experience of my entire time at university. The opportunity to help others in the same way people have helped me has been life changing!”

Katie, Career Coach

“I had a very positive experience at the Studio I got very detailed feedback and I feel more confident for future applications!”

Student feedback



“The coaches helped me create a LinkedIn account that looked really professional and organised. I now feel confident in using this platform to further my career opportunities!”

Student feedback



Disability Coaches



In early 2023, Student Services launched the Disability Coaches initiative. The 12 coaches, who are all current undergraduate or masters students with lived experience of different disabilities, are trained to assist with student disability support.

This includes:

- Initial support enquiries
- Eligibility for support
- Support plans
- Services available
- Obtaining medical evidence
- Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) applications and queries
- Disabled Students Allowance equipment orders
- Contacting Disabled Students Allowance non-medical help providers
- Assistive Technology Support.

The coaches host in person drop in sessions each day during term time, and via live chat, so Disabled Students are always able to access the support they need to make the most of their time at the University of Liverpool. In the 2023/24 academic year they will also be providing departmental talks throughout the year, to reach more students.



“Living with hypermobility and hypotonia has given me first-hand experience in navigating these higher education systems and overcoming the challenges that come with them. I’m incredibly passionate about ensuring that everyone has access to the support they need to succeed. Whether it’s sharing my own experiences or lending a helping hand, I’m here to make sure that no student feels left behind.”

Jack, Disability Coach

Digital Accelerator 2023



The Digital Accelerator programme recruited undergraduate commuter students, training them to become Digital Coaches through an 8-week development programme with Agent Academy. The programme included sessions in Digital Marketing, Data Analysis, Social Media, UX/UI, SEO and a range of other vital digital skills.



Each Digital Coach will deliver at least four sessions, open to fellow students via Handshake, and will represent the Digital Coach programme at key University events such as Welcome.

A celebration event marked the end of the programme, hosted at the Victoria Gallery and Museum. At the event the Digital Coaches presented their research on the EDI challenges of Integrating Diverse Graduate Talent into the Workplace, exploring inclusive recruitment, onboarding and support strategies, as well as the EDI challenges facing graduates. The event, attended by staff from across the University and a diverse range of employers from the Liverpool City Region, also included a Reverse Careers Fair, where Digital Coaches had the opportunity to showcase their work and skills to the employers in attendance.

“It opened my eyes to how many opportunities (both using my degree and not using it) that I could pursue in the city I love.

Meeting other commuter students gave me a sense of belonging in the university as we built our own mini network that still stands today.”

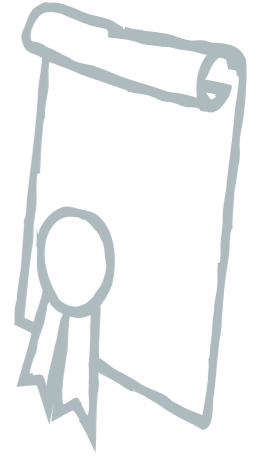
18 Digital Coaches were recruited, representing a diverse cross section of the University population and including both Mature and Disabled students. Digital Coaches received a bursary, as part of the Employment Support award, to enable them to attend training days and cover expenses related to travel and technology, as well as being paid for training and receiving additional funds for specific digital tools such as Chatgpt 4 and Canva Pro.

As Digital Coaches, students put their new skills to the test, investigating a brief on Understanding EDI Approaches for Liverpool City Region Employers.

As part of this they engaged with business and recent graduates, to understand their challenges, and understand wants and needs. Their research will be cascaded to the University of Liverpool and local employers, providing a valuable, long-lasting resource for the wider student community and wider Liverpool City Region business community.

After expanding their knowledge base and skillset, the Digital Coaches have developed digital coaching sessions to share their learning with their peers in the academic year 2023-24.

Student Spotlights... Muhammad



From Liverpool Scholars to Automotive Engineer!

Ever since I learned what university was, I always wanted to study at one. I knew I would be interested in an engineering course, since I liked designing and creating things, and my dream was to become an engineer and make things that would change the world. However, during secondary school I had a challenging period which I thought would ruin my chances of going to university. Then, I was introduced to the Liverpool Scholars programme while at Sixth Form.

INITIALLY, I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SCHOLARS PROGRAMME, BUT THE THINGS I LEARNED AND SUPPORT I RECEIVED WERE SOME OF THE MOST VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MY UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE.

Scholars supported me with my UCAS application; this part of the process always seemed complicated, but Scholars helped me navigate it, which made it much less stressful. I received a reduced offer after completing Scholars, which helped me to get into university to do the Engineering degree I dreamt of. As part of Scholars, I also completed an academic assignment, which helped me feel more confident with the teaching style I'd experience at university.

My experience at university was everything I'd hoped for, and more! The social aspect was really special, meeting and making friends with so many people from across the country and beyond, creating some of my best memories.

I was also able to take part in some very interesting and unique experiences during my degree. One of my favourite, and most unforgettable projects was Formula Student, where I designed and built



a race car with my friends, which we took to Silverstone International Race Circuit to compete against other universities.

My involvement with Scholars didn't end when I got into university, as I secured a role as a Liverpool Advocate. I worked on the Scholars programme helping aspiring students like me, as well as Open Days, campus tours and mentoring. My biggest gain from being a Liverpool Advocate was the boost in confidence with public speaking – speaking to a room full of hundreds of people was something I would never have thought I would do!

Since graduating, I have started working as an engineer at Briggs Automotive Company (BAC), where I continue with my dream of designing and building things that change the world. I helped to design one of the world's fastest super cars, pushing the limits of technology further and further. This is only the beginning of my career, and I can't wait to see what the future holds!



Student Spotlights...

Andreea



I was also involved with the Bar Society, where I competed in the Annual Mooting competition, winning in my second year and then taking the lead on organising it in my third year. The Bar Society allowed me to make connections and gain valuable skills which I will be further developing during my Bar Course.

In my third year I was able to celebrate my achievements alongside fellow Law students in the Hague, courtesy of the Law School and Student Experience team. There, we witnessed the International Court of Justice hearings in the Russia v. Ukraine case, whilst also being privy to an ongoing trial from the International Criminal Court concerned with war crimes in Sudan. This opportunity was the perfect reward for the hard work which went into my degree.

Today, I am a step closer to fulfilling my dream as I have begun a Barrister Training Course. This opportunity was only possible due to the financial support provided by the collaborative scholarship scheme of the University of Liverpool and University of Law. Hopefully, by the end of the year I will be a proud owner of a wig and gown, preparing for the final step on my long and winding journey to becoming a Barrister.



From Pathways to Law to becoming a Trainee Barrister!

When I was younger, I was often intimidated by other students and didn't have the confidence to speak up in class. As a shy student, I preferred to stay back and speak to teachers one to one. One day, I was told about Pathways to Law, a programme offered by the University of Liverpool and funded by the Sutton Trust, to support students to learn more about the legal sector and routes into legal careers. I was intrigued and apprehensive, as I was not very comfortable in new environments, but after thinking it through I decided to apply.

My two years on Pathways really helped me realise my passion for Law, and that I wanted to eventually become a Barrister. Without the support of Pathways, I do not believe I would be on this path today. The work experience with the Crown Prosecution Service, trips to the Inner Temple and all of the visits to different universities helped me make informed decisions about my future whilst getting a real taste of the legal sector and the work it entails.

This support carried on during my Law degree at the University of Liverpool, where I was able to take up a role as a Liverpool Advocate, supporting students in the same position I was and making friends I will cherish for the rest of my life. The scheme, alongside other experiences at University, have really helped me to develop; when looking in the mirror, whilst the person I see may resemble the shy student I once was, I no longer see her fears and doubts about achieving her goals.

The three years of my studies have certainly been a rollercoaster. By the time things began to get back to normal after the pandemic, I was already half way through my second year. And yet, the last 18 months have been so full of experiences, I don't feel as though I've missed a beat.

Law students are always busy and that's certainly been the case for me. Throughout my degree, I was involved in an array of opportunities, including the Law Clinic, where I practiced on Asylum and Immigration cases alongside Judith Carter, an in-house solicitor and lecturer at the University. This has been an amazing part of my university experience, and I know for certain I will greatly miss my interactions with fellow students and staff members at the clinic.

Student Spotlights...

Shakir



I am Shakir Atoyebi, a PhD student in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, and a recipient of the Duncan Norman Research Scholarship.

My research focuses on improving the information available to guide drug use in pregnancy. Currently, there is limited information on the safety and efficacy of many drugs in pregnancy, but many pregnant women require medications, so drug use in pregnancy cannot be wished away.

I work on developing and using computation models that can describe drug behaviour in the body, so we can then ascertain if the general dosing strategy would likely give similar treatment outcomes in pregnancy or otherwise. Where the usual dosing strategy is predicted to be inadequate, we may be able to suggest modifications to the dose which may improve treatment outcomes. I have had opportunities to present my research at four international conferences and a manuscript based on my work is currently under review for publication.

I grew up in Nigeria, where I obtained my first two degrees. During my Masters, my supervisor would often gush about his experiences studying for his Masters and PhD at the University of Liverpool. This piqued my interest in studying here, but finances were an enormous barrier for me. In April 2020, during the pandemic I was at a very low ebb. However, I was not deterred and applied for the Duncan Norman Research Scholarship. The rest is history.

BEING AWARDED THE DUNCAN NORMAN RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP HAS BEEN LIFE CHANGING.



Shakir and Professor Tim Jones, the Vice-Chancellor, at the 2023 Thank You Garden Party

It has facilitated remarkable opportunities for me to learn, grow and contribute to research and teaching. I have demonstrated on seven undergraduate modules in the School of Life Sciences, volunteered on public engagement programmes such as 'Meet the Scientists' and tutored nearly twenty undergraduate and postgraduate students on improving their academic writing under the Writing@Liverpool scheme. As a Liverpool Advocate, I have participated in welcoming and showcasing the University to prospective students on Open Days, and mentored a Year 13 student preparing for her Chemistry A Level. At the end of the six week programme, it was deeply satisfying to learn that our sessions had made her feel more confident in sitting her A Level exams.

The level of support I have enjoyed within the University has been enormous and studying here has been a dream come true. I have been able to broaden my knowledge, improve upon my skills and participate in programmes dear to me, which also gave me opportunities to impact the immediate and wider global community. I am now more confident in my abilities and my capacity to bring about positive change. I am so grateful to the generous individuals, who donate to the University and create funding opportunities which are so transformative to lives like mine. I am glad to say my expectations of University have been met and surpassed. The University of Liverpool has been a perfect choice for me. Such a great place to learn, grow and impact the world.

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