

# UNIVERSITY DESTINATION DATA



**IMPACT REPORT 2024**

# Executive Summary



We are delighted to present this year's university destination report which demonstrates that Universify's work has contributed to young people from underrepresented and low socio-economic backgrounds accessing university at rates higher than those from similar

backgrounds, successfully tackling the key risks identified by the Office for Students which prevent young people from reaching higher education.

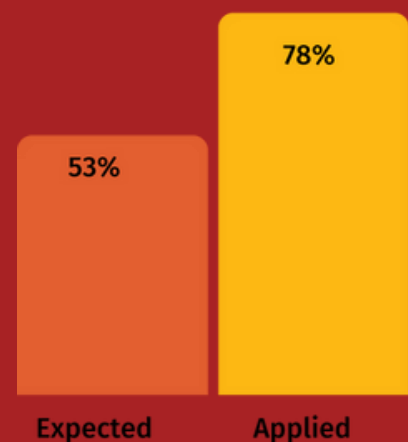
Our programme starts earlier, at age 15, to raise GCSE attainment, help participants overcome self-limiting beliefs around individual aspirations, and to equip them with the skills and confidence to realise their potential.

Universify participants apply to and take up places at the most selective universities at rates higher than expected for young people from similar backgrounds. These highly-selective universities are the institutions where the barriers to access, but also the social mobility benefits are often greatest, such as Oxford and Cambridge universities where our programmes are currently hosted.

As we look to expand our programme and partner with more universities to meet the growing demand for our work, it is compelling to see our participants apply to our partner institutions at a rate significantly higher than expected. I invite you to read on to hear about this success in context, from Alex Dunn, one of our alumni, who has shared how the programme shaped his journey to getting into Oxford.



of those eligible for Free School Meals



**More Universify participants applied to university than expected**

**Alex Whitton, CEO, Universify Education**

# Increasing Access to Universities

## HOW UNIVERSIFY SUPPORTS ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Our programme features two university residentials, enabling young people to get first-hand experience of the academic environment and make more informed decisions about their future pathways, including whether to pursue a degree. Increasing familiarity with university early on in a young person's education helps to tackle the development of limiting beliefs, such as 'university is not a place for people like me', which many underrepresented groups report as a significant barrier to access.[1]

Moreover, hosting our programme residentials at high-tariff universities like Oxford and Cambridge encourages our participants to seriously consider studying at these institutions specifically, which is reflected in our Cohort 4 participants making significantly higher applications to Oxbridge than would be expected.[2]

**Hosting our programme at high-tariff universities... encourages our participants to seriously consider studying at these institutions specifically.**



*'I really liked the fact we were able to stay at university and have a mini experience as a university student. There weren't any other programmes like that and it cemented that I did want to go to university.'*

**Tawana, 2019-2020 programme participant**

[1] Free School Meals (FSM) are a means tested benefit and indicator of low household income. Young people eligible for Free School Meals are significantly underrepresented at universities, particularly those with the most selective entry requirements.

Parliamentary Research Briefing, 'Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England'. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9195/CBP-9195.pdf>. Accessed 14 May 2024

[2] High-tariff universities are the top third of universities ranked according to their entry tariff points score by UCAS. They represent the universities which are most selective.

# Our Impact

**This report presents the university destination data for Cohort 4 (148 participants), who took part in our year-long programme in 2019-2020.**

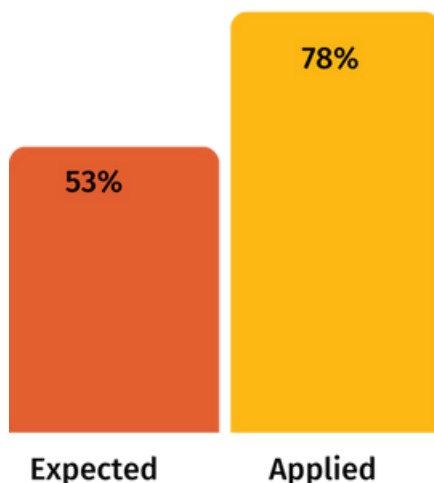
Data provided by the UCAS Outreach Evaluator tracked the progression of University participants to higher education across the 2022 and 2023 admission cycles. [3] The Outreach Evaluator provides us with a tailored benchmark of students and statistically evaluates differences in the rates of university progression between University participants and students from similar backgrounds.[4]

**Universities where three or more Cohort 4 participants accepted offers:**

- Cardiff University
- University of Exeter
- University of Kent
- University of Manchester
- University of Sheffield
- University of Surrey
- University of Warwick

## INCREASED APPLICATIONS TO UNIVERSITY

The number of University Cohort 4 participants who applied to university across 2022 and 2023 admissions cycles was statistically 'very high' compared to the UCAS benchmark. Of the 148 Cohort 4 participants, 78% applied to university compared to 53% which would be expected according to the UCAS tailored benchmark.



**University participants applied to university at a significantly higher rate than expected**



[3] UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, is the UK's shared admissions service for higher education. The Outreach Evaluator provides statistical evidence on the impacts of engagement activities for higher education providers and charitable organisations. <https://www.ucas.com/providers/our-products-and-services/data-products-and-solutions/outreach-evaluator-tracking-results>. Accessed 14 May 2024

[4] Our impact data is further validated by an independent evaluator to ensure accuracy and robustness.

## MORE STUDENTS APPLIED TO HIGH-TARIFF UNIVERSITIES

The number of Universify participants who applied to high-tariff, Russell Group and Oxbridge universities was statistically ‘very high’ compared to the UCAS benchmark. Of the 148 Cohort 4 participants, 54% applied to high-tariff universities compared to the benchmark of 29%, 54% applied to Russell Group universities compared to the benchmark of 31%, and 10% applied to Oxbridge compared to the benchmark of 2%.

*‘I decided to apply to Oxford after the [Universify] programme, when before I wasn’t thinking of applying. Mainly because the programme made it seem like somewhere I could go even though I was from a state school.’*

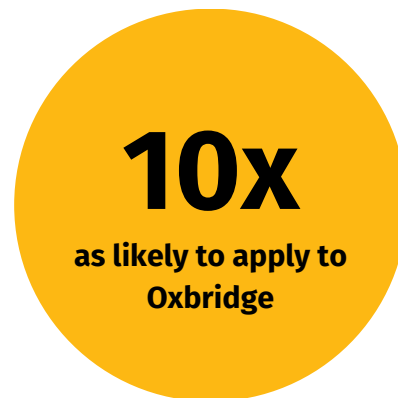
Tawana, 2019 - 2020 programme participant

## INCREASED FSM ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS APPLIED TO UNIVERSITY

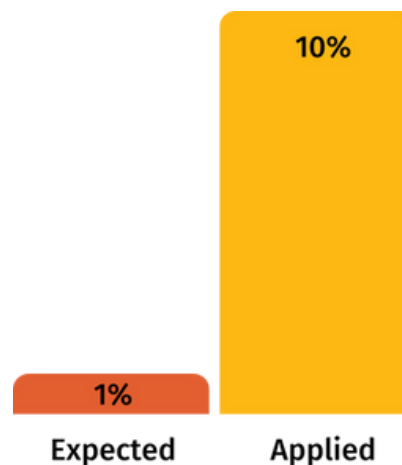
Of the 148 students in Cohort 4, 48 were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), a means tested benefit and indicator of low household income.

UCAS data shows that a ‘significantly high’ number of FSM participants from Cohort 4 applied to university (73%) compared to a tailored benchmark (54%).

Universify Cohort 4 participants eligible for Free School Meals progressed to high-tariff universities at a rate almost twice that of FSM students nationally (6% vs 3.4%), and, for the first time, a ‘very significantly high’ number of Universify FSM students applied to Oxbridge (10% vs 1%).



of those eligible for Free School Meals



Significantly more Free School Meals participants applied to Oxbridge than expected



# Why University Access Matters

Our programme is designed to increase access to universities because they remain significant vehicles for social mobility. Degree qualifications open pathways into skilled professions that are otherwise inaccessible, such as law, medicine, education, STEM, and research. On average graduates have significantly higher lifetime earnings with the median 40-year-old graduate earning twice as much as someone qualified to GCSE level or below.[5] This increased earning potential increases graduates capacity to reinvest in their communities helping to reduce cycles of poverty.



The underrepresentation of talented people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds in these fields represents a waste of potential for not just the individual, but also wider society. Improving access to higher education can therefore help to redress systemic inequalities and reduce cycles of deprivation. By encouraging more young people to apply to university, more students from underrepresented backgrounds are accepted onto degree courses enabling them to gain the benefits of higher education.

Cohort 4 participants who were eligible for Free School Meals progressed to high-tariff universities at a rate almost

**2x**

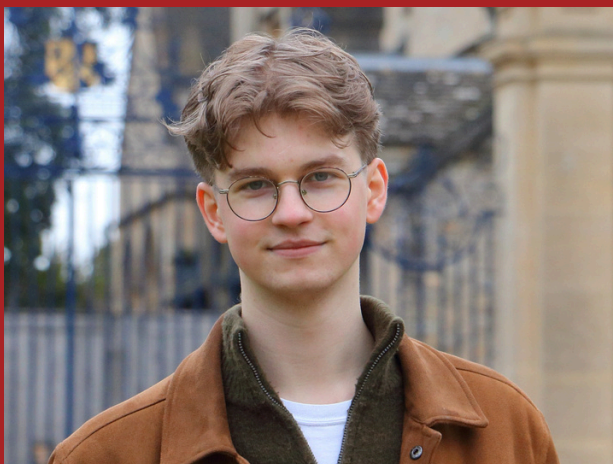
the national average (6% vs 3.4%)

**Hear our latest cohort of students' perspectives on why university access matters by watching our video [here](#).**



[5] Institute for Fiscal Studies, 'Education Inequalities: IFS Deaton Review'. <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Education-inequalities.pdf>. Accessed 14 May 2024.

# Universify Alumni: Alex's Story



Before starting our programme Alex had considered studying a degree in the future but was unsure about which subject to study or how to apply.

Alex is now studying French at the University of Oxford, a subject he nearly gave up after GCSE.

## “THE PROGRAMME DEFINITELY HELPED ME BUILD CONFIDENCE”

“At that point I didn’t know what A Levels I was going to choose...However, the programme definitely helped me build confidence and build a revision approach for studying French which I wasn’t necessarily planning to do at A level but after doing quite well at French GCSE, I did it for A Level and now I’m studying it at uni.”

## “UNIVERSIFY HELPED ME WITH MY GCSEs [...] WHICH INFLUENCED MY DECISIONS”

“In terms of choosing A Levels, I made this decision after getting my GCSE results, and indirectly I think Universify helped me with my GCSEs which got me my results which influenced my decisions.”

## “PREPARING YOU FOR THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE IS VERY MUCH THE STRENGTH OF THE PROGRAMME”

“In general, preparing you for the university experience is very much the strength of the programme as we’re brought into the university setting and we’re doing university-style things. It just kind of brings what you’ll be doing at university closer, and it gives you familiarity with that even before you decide to apply and end up in university, and that kind of preparation is helpful.”





OXFORD SUMMER COURSES



THE NISBET TRUST

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Academies Trust



SURVEYTECH



Fair  
Education  
Alliance

## How to get involved

We believe universities should be open to everyone, based on academic potential and regardless of background. If you would like to support our mission, please get in touch at [info@universifyeducation.com](mailto:info@universifyeducation.com), or sign up to our mailing list via the website.

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