

Supporting Students into PG study via Access Postgrad

Increasing participation of undergraduate students from non-traditional backgrounds in postgraduate study through the [Access Postgrad scheme](#) at the University of Bristol.

A Widening Participation Scheme

'Access Postgrad' runs annually from November to May. Undergraduate (UG) participants receive 1-1 mentoring from current postgraduate (PG) students and skills/knowledge development sessions from teams across the University. Participants can also attend taster lectures on their PG programme of interest.

All UG students who take part are from a non-traditional background. Applications are assessed against widening participation (WP) criteria relating to ethnicity, gender, parental education, disability, socio-economic status, caring responsibilities, care experience/parental estrangement, refugee status and time spent out of education between further and higher education.

Fee Waivers

After graduation in 2023, 12 participants will be eligible to receive a £5,000 alumni-funded fee-waiver for postgraduate taught study at the University of Bristol'. This aims to alleviate any financial barriers students may have for their academic progression. Since the scheme's introduction (and including this year's graduating cohort) £269,000 has been available to graduating participants.

Most of the scheme's participants do not receive a fee waiver, but gain benefits from mentoring, development sessions and sample teaching.

Increasing Confidence

Evidence demonstrates that participants are graduating from the scheme with an increased awareness and confidence to apply for PG study. One student who completed the scheme in 2020/21 says:

'I was very unsure of which course to study for a Masters and my mentor discussed what her thought process was when choosing and even invited one of her friends to give additional advice. I was also concerned about finances and the programme provided a summary of our options.'

Whilst another comments:

'It made me feel a lot more confident in knowing I could go forward with postgrad study; I had limited support from my family so that was a really big thing for me.'

The popularity of 'Access Postgrad' has grown annually which is a testament to the fantastic results produced by the scheme since its launch in 2017 with just 5 participants. In 2022/23

the scheme offered support to 30 UGs and in total to date there have been 64 Access Postgrad graduates.

Next Steps

In 2023/24 we hope to work with University of Bristol colleagues to increase awareness of the work of the Postgraduate Recruitment Team and increase the knowledge of the challenges faced by widening participation students entering and thriving during postgraduate study.

To find out more about the Access Postgrad scheme, contact:

Alice Brereton (she/her)

Postgraduate Recruitment Manager

alice.brereton@bristol.ac.uk

Jules Chamberlain (she/her)

Widening Participation and Postgraduate Recruitment Officer

julie.c.chamberlain@bristol.ac.uk