

ADVANCING
ACCESS

24 leading universities
working together with
schools and colleges

Introducing Advancing Access



Advancing Access

- Our university partners
- Aims of the project
- Programme content
- Video case studies
- Virtual conferences

University of Birmingham / University of Bristol / University of Cambridge
Cardiff University / Durham University / University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter / University of Glasgow / Imperial College London
King's College London / University of Leeds / University of Liverpool



London School of Economics and Political Science / University of Manchester
Newcastle University / University of Nottingham / University of Oxford
Queen Mary University of London / Queen's University Belfast
University of Sheffield / University of Southampton / University College London
University of Warwick / University of York

Aims and objectives:

- Work in **partnership** with teachers and advisers
- Provide **CPD** for those supporting **KS4, KS5 and uni** decision-making
- Facilitate progression to **selective universities and courses**
- Increase **confidence** and **knowledge**
- Ensure resources and events are **free, easy to use and online.**

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Online resources



www.advancingaccess.ac.uk

Strands of CPD

- How do I help my students choose a university and course?
- How do I help my students apply to university?
- How do admissions processes work?
- How do I help my students make the right choices for post-16 study?



Each strand includes:

- a presentation for peer to peer CPD
- an interactive guidebook
- quick reference sheets
- worksheets for staff reflection evaluation
- activities for use with learners
- video case studies.





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A 'gathered field' approach

Many courses operate a gathered field approach in order to consider all applicants together. This means that admissions staff wait until the closing date to start assessing applications for a course, which can lead to a long wait for students who apply early.

Other courses may assess applications as they arrive and begin making admissions decisions earlier in the process.

Regardless of the approach taken to assess applications, all students applying by the deadline will be given equal consideration and assessed against the same criteria as all other applicants.

Leading universities often receive many more applications than the number of places available.

As a result, many highly selective universities are unable to make offers to all those who are predicted to achieve (or have already achieved) the basic entry requirements. It takes time to consider the additional information, including:

- additional achievements
- information within the personal statement and academic reference
- contextual information
- results from tests or interviews.

Admissions processes vary across leading universities and between courses.

The processes have been designed to ensure that:

- all applicants are considered equally and fairly
- there is an assessment of each applicant's talent, potential and ability to succeed on the course
- they admit the best students from the many thousands who apply.



Consideration of contextual information

Leading universities are likely to consider contextual data.

They want to identify candidates with the most talent, ability and potential to excel on their courses, whatever their social or educational background. Although qualifications and predicted grades are a key source of information about academic ability, universities take a range of other factors into account in order to understand the applicant's achievements in context.

In the past, this focused on health issues or particular family circumstances that may have affected an applicant's ability to fully demonstrate their potential. For over a decade, this has been extended by many leading universities to include the social and educational background of applicants, recognising that this too can impact on their ability to demonstrate aptitude for study.

The use of contextual information is informed by the latest research and guidance showing the impact of socio-economic factors on a student's academic success. This is provided by UCAS[®], the Higher Education Funding Council for England[®], Supporting Professionalism in Admissions[®], the Sutton Trust[®] and institutional evaluations. A recent overview of this research is available in a Supporting Professionalism in Admissions[®] report, Contextual admissions: Examining the evidence (2013)[®]. This report highlights research showing that students from state schools and colleges get better degree classifications than those from independent schools with equivalent entry qualifications. It also highlights that students admitted using contextual data succeed when in higher education, overall, achieving as well as other students. The Russell Group's report, Opening Doors[®], explores the root causes of under-representation of students from poorer backgrounds at leading universities.



Academic references

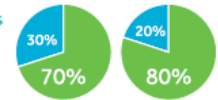
Top tips for writing an academic reference


- The reference should be honest and provide admissions staff with a fair and accurate picture of the applicant.
- It should include an explanation if the student's past exam results do not reflect current performance and predicted achievement at A-level (or equivalent).
- It should include an explanation if any special or mitigating circumstances (such as caring responsibilities, difficult family circumstances or illness) have affected actual or predicted grades and how the student has overcome any difficulties.
- If it is your school policy not to offer AS-subjects, include this information in any reference.
- It should place the student's performance in context, not just about saying whether an applicant is good or bad, but also information about your school and its context.
- It should include evidence that the candidate has researched the area, and is well-suited to the subject.
- It should build a picture of the student, their interests, attitude and approach to study.
- It should include details of any widening participation initiatives the student has been involved in.
- It should include any information about the student's performance at the school.
- You should keep a copy of the reference for your records and monitoring success.


Developing your students' skills and knowledge prior to application

To make a strong application your students need to develop their subject knowledge, interests and relevant experience. The balance between subject knowledge, skills and experience will depend on which universities and courses they are applying for.

In general, around 70% to 80% of a personal statement should relate directly to the courses applied for and focus on academic interests, knowledge and ability.



Knowledge of the subject 

Transferrable skills 

Work experience 

Knowledge of the subject

Frequently used tests

Universities	Tests				
	BMAT	LNAT	STEP	TSA	UKCAT
University of Birmingham					✓
University of Bristol		✓	*		✓
University of Cambridge	✓		✓	✓	
Cardiff University					✓
Durham University		✓			✓
University of Edinburgh					✓
University of Exeter					✓
University of Glasgow		✓			✓
Imperial College London	✓		*		
King's College London		✓	*		✓
University of Leeds	✓				
University of Liverpool					✓
London School of Economics and Political Science					
University of Manchester					✓
Newcastle University					✓
University of Nottingham		✓	*		✓
University of Oxford	✓	✓		✓	
Queen Mary University of London					✓

Knowledge of the subject and become further interested in that subject. They should be able to express their views and opinions in that subject.

Resources to help build your students' knowledge. Here are our top sources:



Keep up to date with the latest developments and thinking in your subject, on different topic areas (for example, science) on

Read certain publications that are then made available to students to share their views on these latest developments.

Go right into the subject. For example, psychology and those interested in science could read New Scientist magazine, so a subscription is not always

Check out subject lists for some first-year courses. This material is available at university level.

Resources that provide subject resources. Future Learn has a list of resources with articles and revision guides for most subjects. Developed online learning programmes that are available about particular subjects. Future Learn has a list

A guide to leading universities' use of contextual information

Contextual information is the additional data, such as school performance data and socio-economic markers, universities use to provide context for a student's university application and achievements. Universities also use this information when selecting students for contextual admissions schemes that provide a range of activities to help students prepare for their transition to university study.

Each of our university partners has provided a statement on how they currently use contextual information below.

University of Birmingham

Students from state schools and colleges in the West Midlands applying to the Access to

Results day – new decisions

For those with new decisions to make, there are four situations:

- Adjustment
- Near miss
- Alternative offer
- Clearing.



Supporting students through the applications process / 11

Admissions glossary

Access agreement

An access agreement is a document setting out how a university or college charging higher fees intends to safeguard and promote fair access to higher education through its outreach work, access initiatives and financial support. It also includes targets and milestones set by the university or college itself.

Adjustment

Adjustment provides an opportunity for those who meet and exceed the conditions of their firm choice to reconsider where and what to study. Students can look for a course at a different provider while still holding their confirmed place.

Alternative offer

If admissions staff are unable to offer a place on the course the student has applied for, they may make an alternative offer for a different course often

1. Session overview

This presentation will help teachers and advisers who support the UCAS applications process in their school or college. It has been designed to support the professional development of teachers and advisers and should form part of peer-to-peer training sessions.

In addition to providing essential information, the presentation contains a series of optional activities to encourage your colleagues to engage in discussion and share their ideas and experiences of best practice.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, colleagues will have:

- a deeper understanding of the decisions students need to make after universities have responded to their applications
- identified ways to support students' decision-making processes
- considered ways to improve the support they provide on results day.

2. Session plan

This session plan should be used alongside the PowerPoint presentation.

Supporting students through the application process and Advancing Access guidebook, **How do admissions processes work?** .

Indicative timings are provided as a guide only.

3. Resources

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Online events



Virtual Conference for teachers and advisers

- Hear first-hand from university staff.
- Similar to an 'on the ground' conferences without the requirement for travel.
- Access from your desktop, laptop, tablet or phone.
- No need to download any special software.

Welcome to the Exhibition Hall

Each of the 24 universities in the Russell Group has a virtual stand staff by a representative. This means you have access to staff from all 24 universities right now. Visit the individual stands and ask your questions using the text-based chat boxes. More than 40 members of staff are waiting to answer your questions.

Roll over the tiles to explore the universities and speak with a representatives



There is also a range of materials to download on topics such as student accommodation, entry requirements, summer schools and outreach programmes, and scholarships and bursaries. If the resource you're looking for is not available, use the text-based chat box to ask the university representative for more information.

Exhibitor list

Stand 99
Advancing Access

Stand 1
University of Birmingham

Stand 2
University of Bristol

Stand 3
University of Cambridge

Stand 13
London School of Economics and Political Science

Stand 14
University of Manchester

Stand 15
Newcastle University

Stand 16
University of Nottingham

24 universities in one place at one time

Exhibition Hall

Cambridge University

About

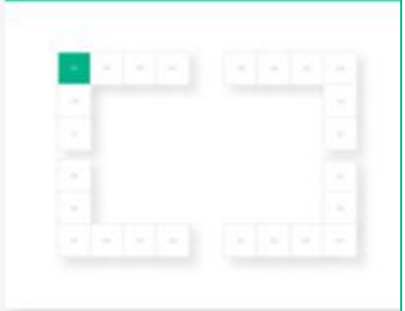


With more than 18,000 students from all walks of life and all corners of the world, nearly 9,000 staff, 31 Colleges and 150 Departments, Faculties, Schools and other institutions, no two days are ever the same at the University of Cambridge.

Videos



Floorplan



Downloads



Undergraduate 2014

Ask me a question



Alison Brown
Senior Lecturer
Cambridge University

You
Endiam et assusamet eiciae incilic
tem faccaboria dolorepe peratur
eperum |

Alison ? 0 2

Online presentations

- Writing personal statements
- Writing academic references
- Applying to Oxford and Cambridge
- Applying to medicine
- Preparing for university interviews
- Preparing for admissions tests





Webinar Hall | Exhibition Hall | Staff Room | Help

What makes a successful personal statement?

Liam Dowson | Tom Weaver

16:05

An Admissions Process

For example, this is the selection process for Medicine at Bristol:

- Step 1: All candidates assessed for the minimum entry requirements of AAA - AAB at A-Level and 5 A grades at GCSE. Those that do not meet these requirements receive an 'unsuccessful' decision.
- Step 2: Remaining candidates have their personal statements (70% weighting), UKCAT results (10% weighting) and academics (20% weighting) scored. Those with lower scores receive an 'unsuccessful decision'
- Step 3: Remaining candidates are invited to interview. The top performers at interview are then offered a place.

Description

This presentation is delivered by staff from the University of Bristol and King's College London.

The session provides an overview of what admissions tutors and staff are looking for in a personal statement. We also offer advice on how to help your students in pitching their statements when applying for highly competitive courses.

This session includes information relevant to the University of Bristol and King's College London.

Ask a question

MR Hello, I was wondering when the webinars will be made available to us either as a download or a copy?

JS Is there going to be a recording of the webinar to watch later?

MS Thank you that was very beneficial

MS Thank you that was very beneficial

Hi Rebecca and Gemma, Advancing Access have informed me they will send you copies of the webinar after the event.

Activity Feed

AL Alex has Advanc

MR Mahmu [Webina success

Sophie the Univ Exhibit

Sophie the Univ Exhibit

Sophie the Univ Exhibit

Sophie the Univ Exhibit

JS Jyldyz Advanc

JS Jyldyz Advanc

Webinar in action...

Welcome to the Staff Room

Here you have an opportunity to learn from your school sector colleagues through an online discussion forum. Use the chat box below to share your ideas and ask any questions not already answered in other parts of the conference.

We have set a question to help get the discussion started but you should free to free to ask, or comment on, anything you wish.

There are several senior members of staff are here to help facilitate discussion and answer your questions.


Have your say

How has continuing professional development helped you support students in your school or college with progression to university?

- WD

Just a quick appreciation of this event - being able to hear from direct from the uni frontlines on what they are after in applicants, as well as being able to fire questions at them, has been most helpful.
- TA

That's great - thank you
- EK

Ok thanks for letting me know
- 

Hi Theresa and Emma. You will be able to access the webinars after the event. We will email you with instructions as soon as they are available.
- TA

Hi, I would like to download the materials too please
- EK

Sorry if this has already been asked but how do I download the presentations from each of the webinars?
- MS

Thank you I will follow up on the leads. Maryam

Facilitators

Karl Devincenzi
Outreach Manager
University of Exeter



[VIEW BIOGRAPHY](#)

Scott McKenzie
Widening Participation Manager
Cardiff University



[VIEW BIOGRAPHY](#)

Penelope Griffin
Head of Widening Participation
and Outreach
University of Nottingham



[VIEW BIOGRAPHY](#)

Rebecca Clark
Project Manager
Advancing Access



[VIEW BIOGRAPHY](#)

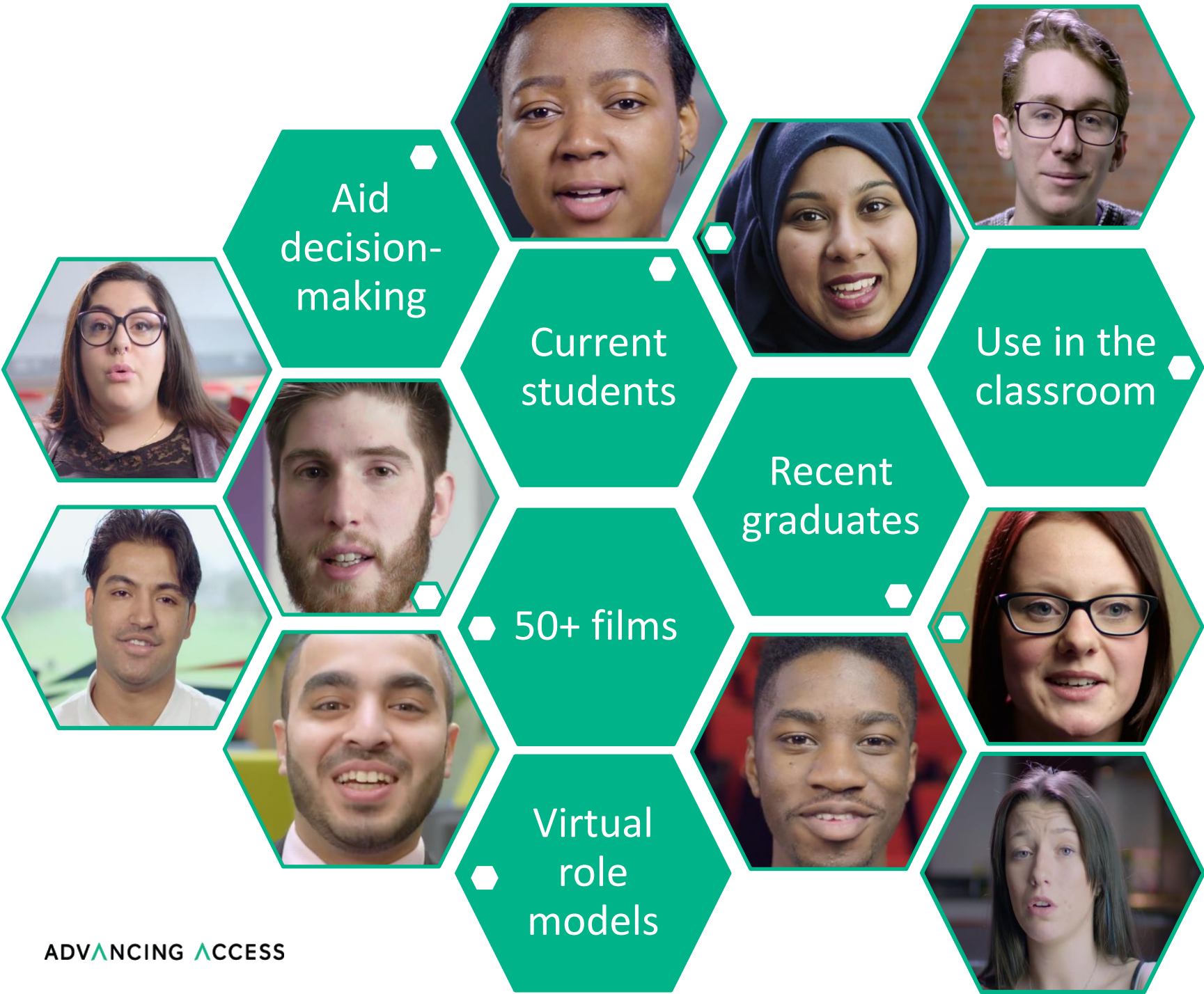
Share ideas, ask questions, debate!

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Online video case studies





Aid
decision-
making

Current
students

Use in the
classroom

Recent
graduates

50+ films

Virtual
role
models



Questions for the classroom

Advancing Access film case studies feature current students and recent graduates from one of our university partners. Our films are provided as a resource for teachers and advisers to use with students. We have suggested possible questions for your students below to help generate discussion in the classroom.

1. What was Josh's biggest worry about going to university and why did this change?
2. What do you know about student finance? Do you need £9000 to go to university?
3. How did Josh decide what subject he wanted to study at university?
4. What was important to Josh when choosing a university?
5. What has Josh's experience of university been like?
6. What can you learn from Josh's experience?

Film information

Name
Josh
Status
Student
University
Newcastle University
Degree subject
Computer Science

Topics covered
Choosing a course
Results day
Choosing a university
Student finance
Student life
Choosing qualification subject options
Subject area
Technology

Case study example

Orin's story - Final year law student at Oxford

Josh's story - Second year computer science student at Newcastle

Mayowa's story - Final year English literature student at King's

Richard's story - Third year economics and finance student at York

Rob's story - Medicine graduate from Nottingham

Matt's story – Third year linguistics student at UCL

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Working with schools and colleges



Regional CPD events

- CPD event for **cold spot schools**.
- Hosted by Newcastle-under-Lyme College in **Stoke-on-Trent**.
- Opportunities to make new links with RGUs.
- Workshops covering:
 - making **informed choices**
 - **working with universities**
 - **supra-curricular** opportunities
 - university **admissions** processes and applying to **Oxford and Cambridge**.

“The **best CPD** I have been on in a long time.”

92% of delegates said they would change the way they **provide support for students** choosing a university and course as a result of attending the event.

“A really great concept and I loved the fact that so many leading providers came together in one local venue.”

Get involved!

**Register your free account at
www.advancingaccess.ac.uk**

**Get in touch with us:
enquiries@advancingaccess.ac.uk**

Follow us on Twitter @AdvancingAccess