



**Durham**  
University

# Supporting Access to Higher Education

[durham.ac.uk/study](https://durham.ac.uk/study)



## Our focus

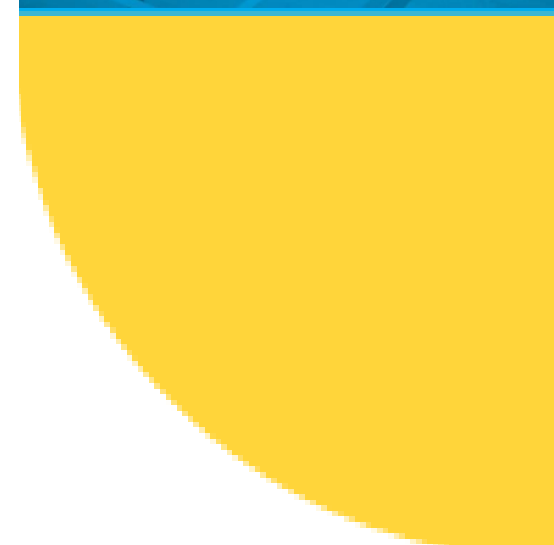
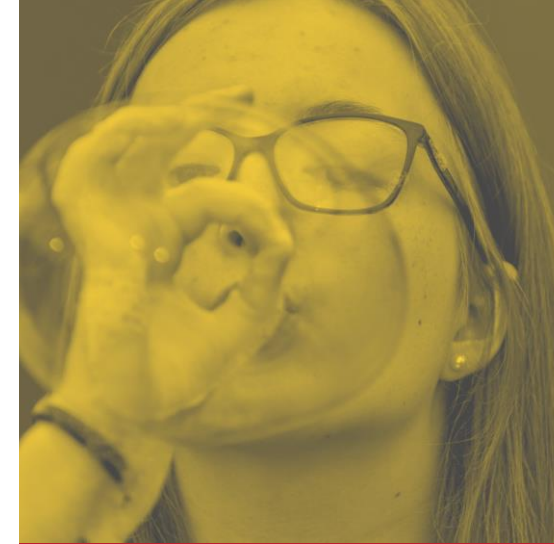
**Today, we're going to cover three areas that we believe students should know about.**

- Access programmes – what they are, how they work and how they can support you and your students.
- Contextual Offers.
- Open Day support.





# Access Programmes



## What are 'access programmes'?

- Access programmes usually provide one or two years of support/provision for students.
- Typically start in year 12. Applications can be early in the first term and usually close at some point in term 2.
- They may/may not include admissions support and some even include financial support or are free to attend.
- May have varying eligibility criteria between institutions but usually will seek to support students from underrepresented backgrounds at the institution delivering the event.





Durham  
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S\_CIAL  
MOBILITY  
F\_UNDATION®

Imperial College  
London





**Durham**  
University

Inspiring the extraordinary

**Year 12**

**Access programmes**

**at Durham**

**University**



# Access programmes at Durham



## Supported Progression (SP)

A programme for Year 12 students from the North East to show their potential.

**Applications open 21 January 2025 and close 20 March 2025.**

**Residential dates: 28 July 2025 - 1 August 2025.**

## Space to Explore Potential (STEP)

A dedicated space for young Black-heritage students in Year 12 to explore not only their own potential, but all that Durham has to offer.

**Applications open 28 January 2025 and close 11 April 2025.**

**Residential dates: 18 August 2025 - 22 August 2025.**

## Sutton Trust (ST)

Designed to give high-achieving Year 12 students from under-represented backgrounds the chance to experience what it is like to be a student at a leading university.

**Applications open 14 January 2025 and close 6 March 2025.**

**Residential dates: 4 August 2025 - 8 August 2025.**

- Stay in one of our Durham colleges and participate in a **varied social and academic programme** representative of university life
- Chat to current Durham students and **receive support with applying to university**
- **Guaranteed alternative offer** to Durham upon successful completion of one of our programmes (typically two grades lower than the usual entry requirements).



## Key benefits

- **A guaranteed, alternative offer** (typically two grades lower) if successfully complete the programme.
- Experience **student life** in a **safe and inclusive** environment during residential.
- Multiple events over Year 12 and 13 including a Summer webinar series, Summer School and Autumn webinar series.
- **Free to attend – costs such as food, accommodation, travel and resources are all provided by Durham.**





# What does a Summer School provide?

Academic  
timetable  
and sessions



Information,  
advice and  
Guidance  
sessions



Social  
activities



Immersive  
student life  
experience  
in a safe,  
controlled  
manner





# Who can apply?

## Applicants must :

- Be in **Year 12.**
- Be attending a **state school or college.**
- Be currently living in the UK for a **minimum of three years** prior to the time of applicant.
- Be a **UK national** or have “**settled status**”, except those on child student visa and student visa.

\*SP: only open to students based in the North East of England.

\*SP applicants must also have achieved at least eight GCSEs or equivalent at grade 6 or above including at least three at grade 7 or above and a strong level of achieve for relevant subjects.

\*\*STEP: only opened to Black-heritage students.





# How do students apply?

**Step 1:** Go to <https://www.durham.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fair-access-and-widening-participation/> .

**Step 2:** Click on the summer school that you are interested in.

**Step 3:** Check the eligibility criteria.

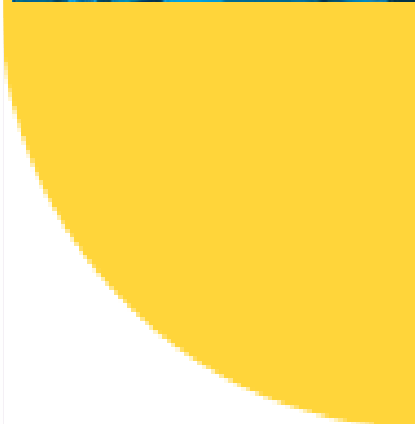
**Step 4:** Click the application link.

**Step 5:** Enter your information into the application form.

**Step 6:** Form is sent to your designated guardian to complete.

**Step 7:** Form is sent to your designated teacher to complete.

**Step 8:** Application is reviewed and outcome is sent (This can take around a month after applications close).

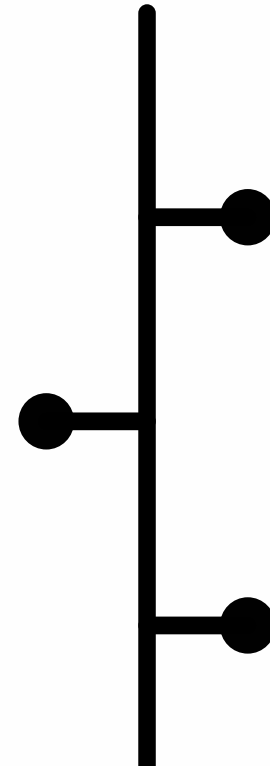


# Key dates



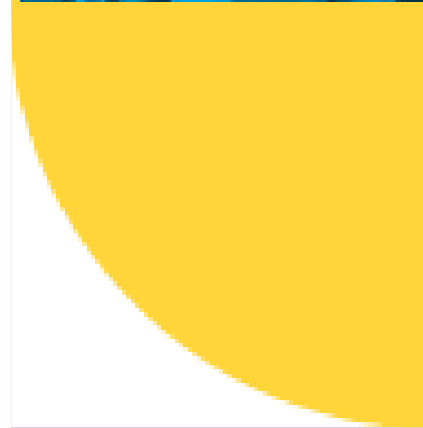
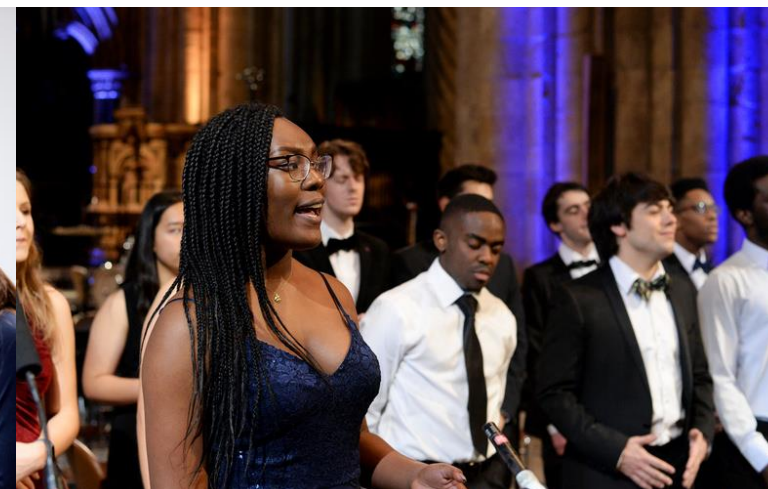
## Late July - August 2025 Summer Residentials

**Supported Progression:** 28 July - 1 August  
**Sutton Trust:** 4 August - 8 August  
**STEP:** 18 August - 22 August



## June-July 2025 Summer Webinar Series

## September - November 2025 Autumn Webinar Series





## Why do students choose Supported Progression?

“Having completed the Supported Progression programme, I was very much swayed towards studying at Durham! I also looked into the sports and extra-curricular events in universities, and the intercollegiate sport at Durham really helped me make my decision.”

Jack, from Chester-le-Street, is a former Physics student at Van Mildert College.





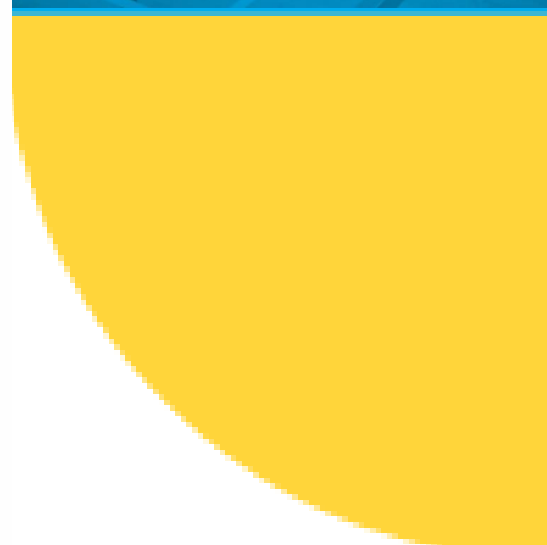


## How can access programmes help teachers and students?

- Can reduce the volume of individual IAGs needed in school for participants.
- Can provide a viable post-18 option for your students – reducing pressure for Year 13.
- Can reduce Year 13 worry – many have admissions or financial elements associated with them to support students.
- Can compliment in-school student CPD opportunities and skill development.



# Contextual Offers



# Contextual offers at Durham

A 'contextual offer' is an offer made to applicants who meet certain requirements at the University. You might find the requirements vary between different universities.

Contextual offers are available across all of our undergraduate courses. If your students meet the eligibility criteria for a contextual offer, the grades they need will need to achieve will be lower than our standard entry requirements.





# Contextual offers at Durham

## Eligibility:

- Be in receipt of free school meals.

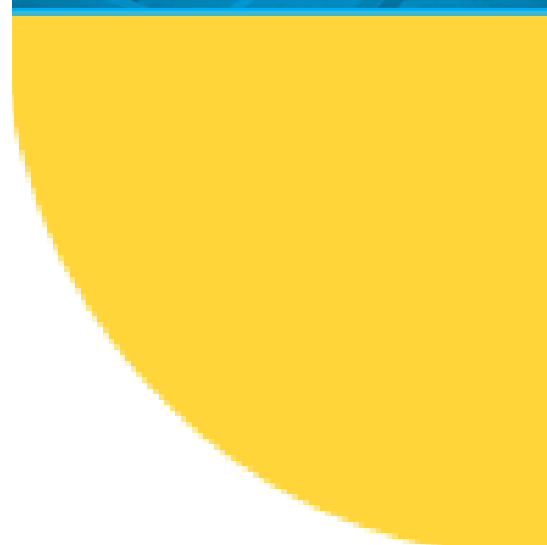
Or meet two (or more) of the following criteria:

- Your home address postcode is classified as Quintile 1 or 2 of POLAR4 [LPN](#)\*.
- Your home address postcode is classified as ACORN 5 or 6\*.
- Your current or most recently attended school is classified as a UK state school.
- You are care experienced.
- You are an estranged student.

Personal statements and references are also important, and students still need to meet any other admissions requirements needed by the course to be considered. These offers are also only available if students are classified as home students for the purposes of tuition fees.



# Open Day Support







# Making the most of Open Days

Encourage students to look for extra support:

- Durham University Open Day Travel Bursary.
- Open Day lunch vouchers.
- School group travel bursary - some do group support.
- Staff and students on hand to answer questions.

# Travel Bursary at Durham

An Event Bursary is available to assist with the cost of travel and accommodation for an applicant to attend an Undergraduate Recruitment Event. A maximum of £200 per applicant - £150 travel depending on mode of transport and £50 accommodation can be claimed per Undergraduate Recruitment Event.

## Eligibility

- Evidence which shows student is in receipt of government funded and income assessed financial support from college or sixth form such as a 16-19 bursary or free school meals. AND
- Evidence which shows student is at a state maintained school/college\*.  
or
- Evidence which shows student is care experienced and/or estranged (CEES).  
or
- Evidence which shows you are studying at an independent school and in receipt of a full scholarship awarded on the grounds of financial hardship.  
or
- Have successfully completed one of the following Access and Participation schemes with Durham University such as STEP, Sutton Trust Summer School or Supported Progression.





# Thank you for listening!

## Any questions?

[dur.ac.uk/study/askus](https://dur.ac.uk/study/askus)

