



ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON



Royal Holloway

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN: EVALUATION REPORT

2024-25 academic year



ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (APP) INTERVENTIONS

2024-25 academic year

Intervention Strategy 1:

Improving access to Royal Holloway for students from lower socio-economic groups via outreach work

Spring university

Summer university

Royal Holloway Link

Intervention Strategy 3:

Raising attainment for underrepresented groups through academic collaborative outreach

Languages For All (LFA)

English and Maths Attainment Raising (EMAR)

Intervention Strategy 4:

Supporting students to continue their studies

Financial support

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OVERVIEW

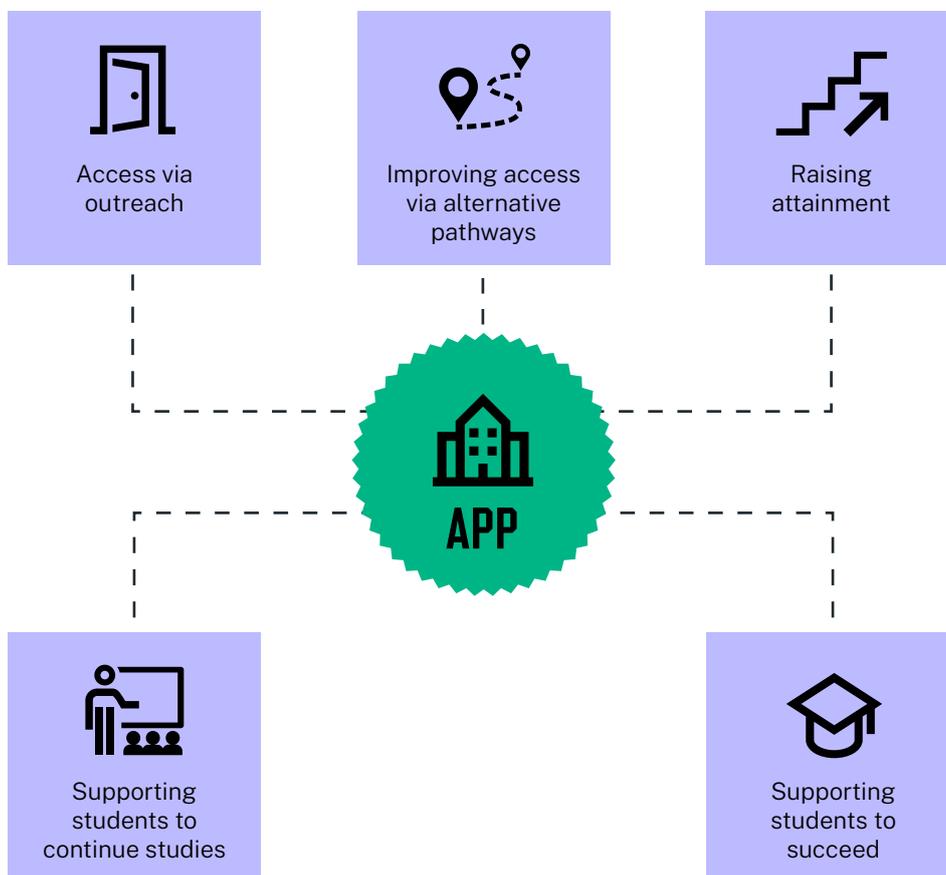
Royal Holloway is a historic, inclusive university with a diverse student population, based close to London. It has its roots in two London colleges founded in the 1800s, both among the first in the UK to offer higher education to women. Creating opportunities to access, succeed in and progress from higher education has therefore been fundamental to Royal Holloway from the beginning.

Our founding values of inclusion, social justice, and educational excellence are reflected in the statement of our core values: Daring; Open; Respectful; Innovative. Our new strategy to take Royal Holloway into the 2030s establishes us as a university of social purpose, with a bold and brave vision for the future. We are student centred and research intensive, and place inclusive education and research at the heart of everything we do.

Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2025 to 2029 sets out our plans to improve equality of

opportunity across the whole student journey from access to university, success in continuing and completing studies to a high level, and progression to graduate-level employment or further study.

This report provides an update on interventions that took place during the pilot year of 2024/25 in preparation for our new APP. It does not include a report on all interventions included in the plan, which is due to be launched in 2025/26.



SPRING UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW



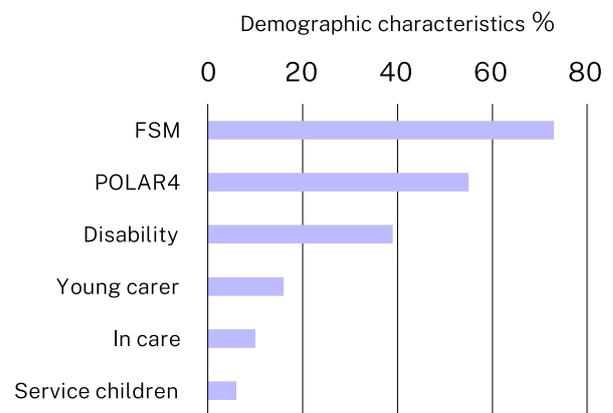
Spring University overview

Royal Holloway and the Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON) ran a joint three-day residential programme for Year 10 and 11 students in April 2025. The programme covered a wide range of activities aiming to help students better understand their future options and what University would be like, as well as raising attainment and increasing self-confidence.

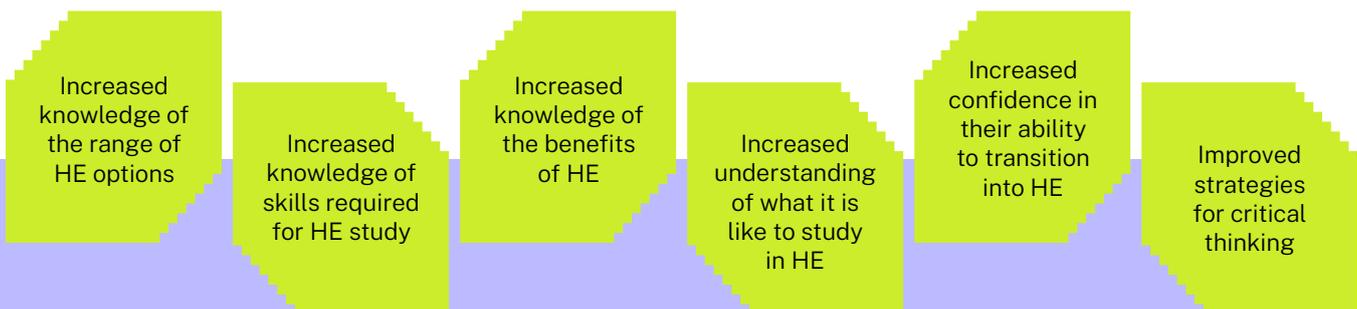
Maths revision	Campus tour	Creative tiling	Electronic engineering	True crime	Student life project
Active lifestyle and sport	Smart phone filming	Murder mystery	Quiz night	Economic geology	English revision skills

51 students were selected to attend based on pre-defined widening participation criteria; see chart for further details of the proportion from each key group.

Evaluation is based on the results of a pre-and post-event survey completed by students, as well as insights taken from their reflective journals and emails.



Intended outcomes (short-term)



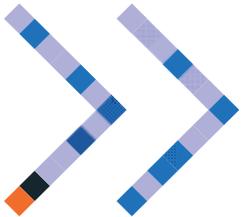
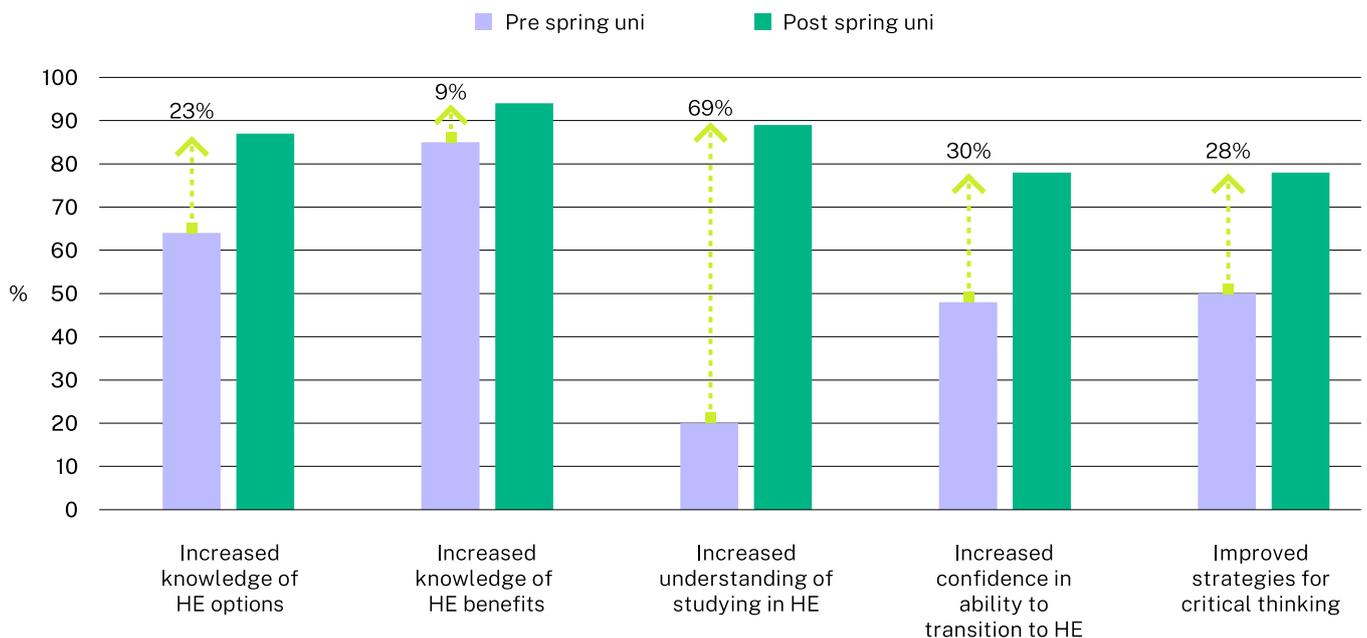
SPRING UNIVERSITY EVALUATION



Responses pre- and post-intervention show a strong increase in all areas, with all outcomes indicating significant change ($t < 0.05$) based on responses from 47 participants.

The chart below shows responses to 5 questions that relate to the key outcomes shown on the previous slide, with the % improvement in responses shown by the green arrows.

Responses before and after Spring University (Spring Uni)



“It was an amazing experience and opportunity for future planning to get ready for university”

“I now have a visual idea of how university could potentially work out and how easy it can be to make new friends and socialise.”

“It helped me understand more about the importance of higher education, the opportunities it would give me in life”

Learnings for 2025/26

- We will respond to feedback from participants in the pilot scheme by continuing with the addition of English and Maths revision sessions which were identified as the most useful by participants, and by changing the activities which did not have a majority rating them as either fun or useful (Electronic Engineering and Economic Geology).
- Also in response to feedback, we will increase involvement from Active Lifestyle and Sport across the residential as this was found to be the most enjoyable activity of all.

SUMMER UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW

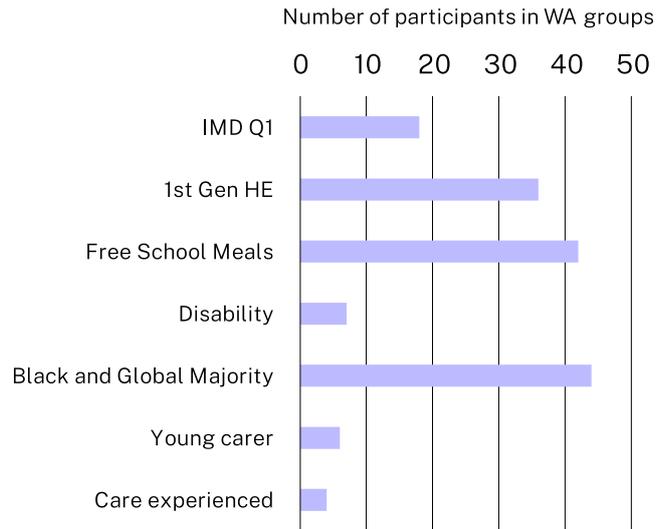


Summer University overview

This residential activity is for Year 12 students and includes subject insight sessions, an opportunity to meet current university students, and to take part in social activities. Participants stay in Royal Holloway accommodation and experience life as a university student.

2024/25 Programme

- In June 2025, the Widening Access (WA) team hosted **51** Year 12 students from **28** different schools, predominantly in London and the South-East.
- The event was run across two days which included a variety of sessions all designed by our WA team to provide participants with a better understanding of the university experience.
- Students are required to meet at least one of our widening access criteria to be eligible to take part in this programme.



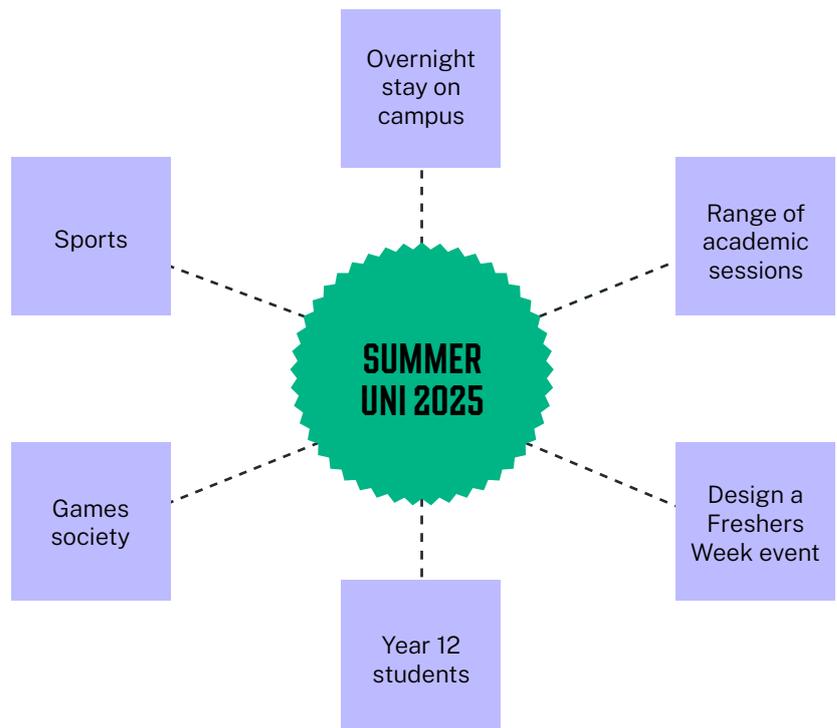
* Note that participants may be shown more than once if they are part of multiple groups

100%
of participants
agreed that Summer
Uni was fun

94%
of participants
agreed that Summer
Uni was useful



Summer University (Summer Uni) experience overview

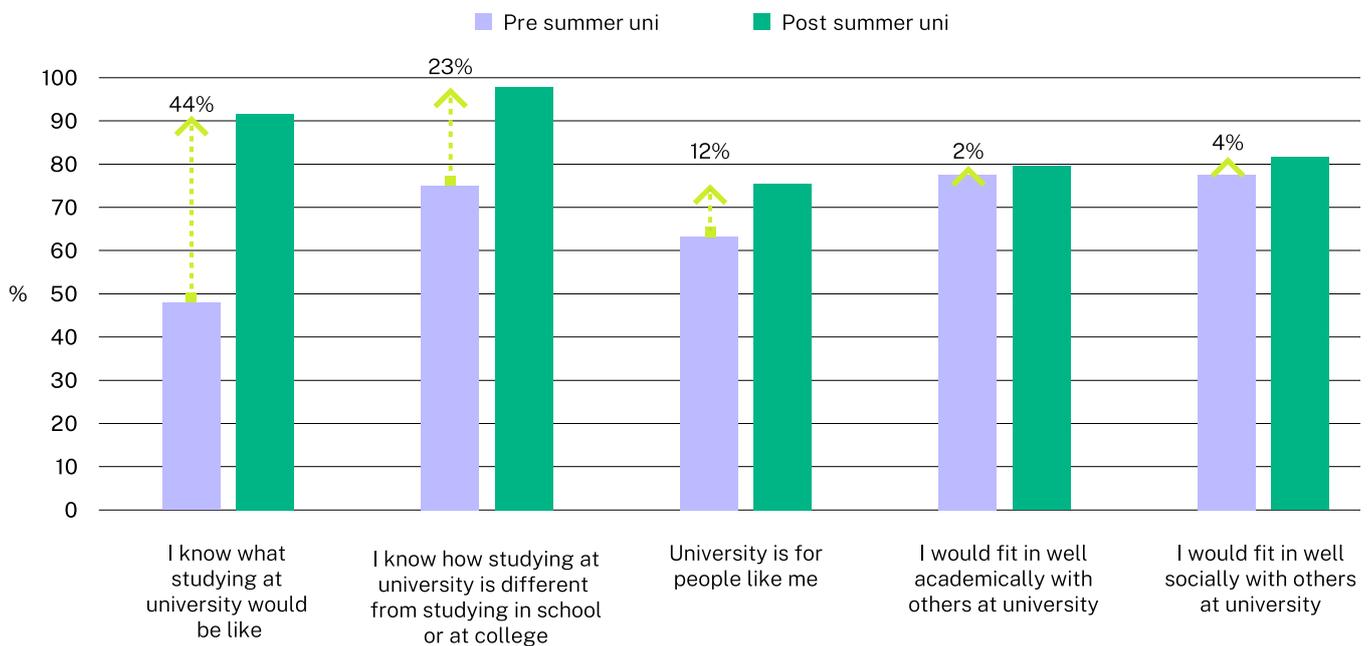


SUMMER UNIVERSITY EVALUATION



- Responses pre-and post-intervention show a strong increase in questions related to an increased knowledge of Higher Education (covered by the first two questions shown below) which is a key short-term outcome for this intervention.
- Questions on the remaining short-term outcomes, related to increased sense of belonging and increased sense of social self-efficacy, indicate smaller but positive improvements as shown.

Responses before and after Summer University (Summer Uni)



“I’ve learnt how to gain better confidence and to participate in discussions more”



Teamwork, collaboration and learning more about university life”

“I got to know new people and make new friends. I got a better understanding of university”

Learnings for 2025/26

- We will make the scheme more accessible by improving travel arrangement options.
- We will re-design the creative session to improve engagement in this area.
- We will build on the success of incorporating more Royal Holloway departments into our sessions (for example Hall Life) as this worked well this year.
- We will update the participant widening participation criteria to align more closely to our new contextual offer.

RH LINK OVERVIEW



Overview

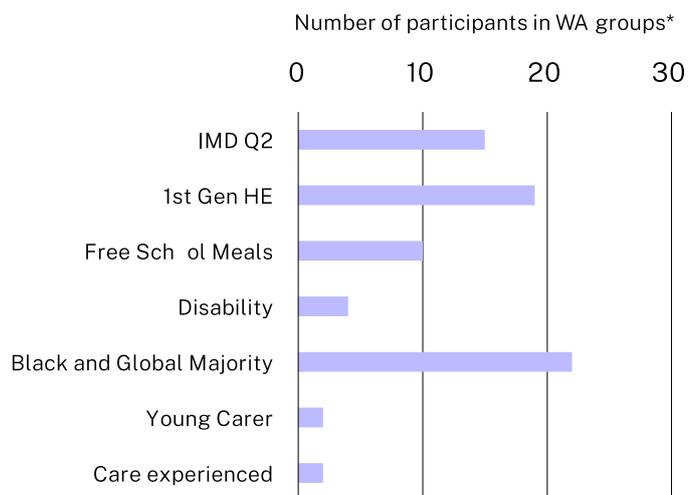
- RH Link is a repeat contact programme of mentoring and revision skills workshops for Y13 pupils in their final year of school or college. It includes Information and Guidance (IAG) sessions, a campus tour, and Q&A with Student Ambassadors.
- Key intervention outcomes in the short-term are; an increased knowledge of HE; increased motivation and sense of belonging; increased knowledge of support available within HE.

2024/25 Programme

In 2024/25 our Widening Access (WA) team ran 6 sessions for Y13 students as part of RH Link, with 5 online sessions and 1 in-person event.

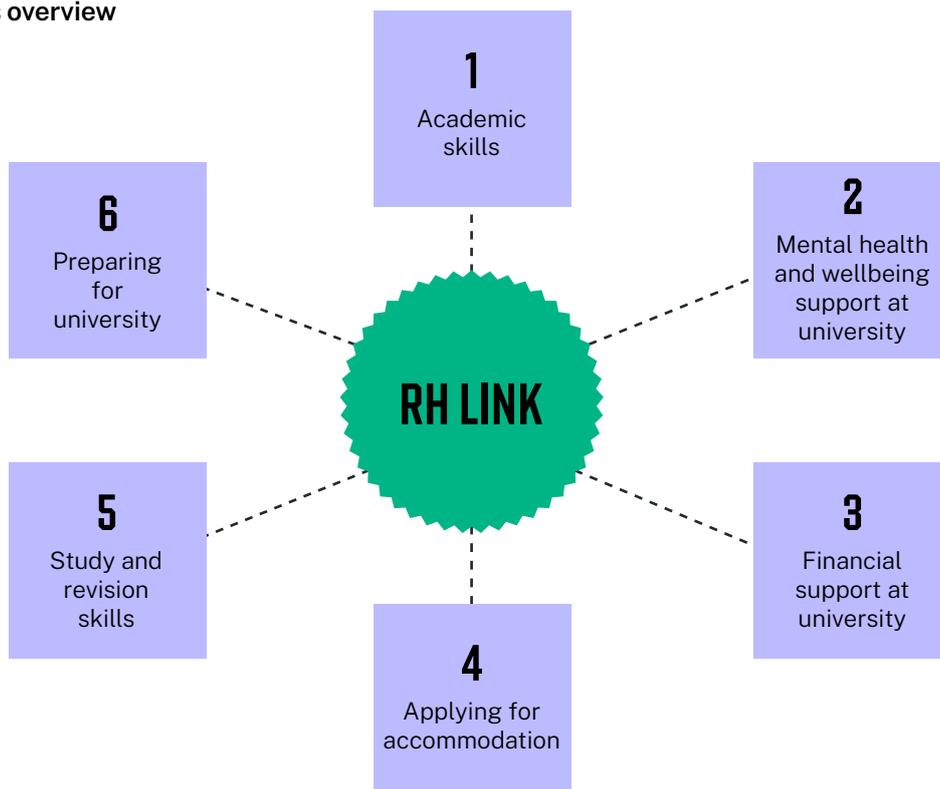
30 students were accepted onto the programme, from 17 schools across 11 different local authorities.

Eligibility for the programme is based on specific underrepresented groups, as shown by the chart.



* Note that participants may be shown more than once if they are part of multiple groups

RH Link sessions overview



RH LINK IMPACT AND LEARNING



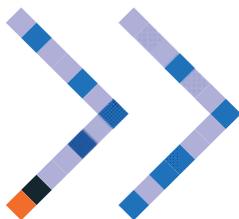
Engagement challenges

Based on attendance data only 25 of the 30 selected students actively engaged in the intervention, with engagement decreasing across its duration.

Due to the drop out rate we struggled to gather evaluation data in the later stages of the programme. The low attendance levels also meant that we were only able to collect pre/post-intervention survey data from 4 of our participants. Due to the small numbers it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of this intervention.

Learnings for 2025/26

- For the next year's RH Link (25/26) we will prioritise participants from our Y12 summer university residential, as this will not only provide a larger cohort, but will also enable students to benefit from attending both programmes for more sustained intervention.
- For 25/26 we are restructuring the programme and session content to retain the engaged cohort beyond the UCAS deadline. This includes moving the on-campus session to earlier in the programme to encourage more participants to attend.
- We will ensure the evaluation outcome questions are well aligned with the programme content, so that the impact on students' understanding of key APP outcomes (for example: support available at university) can be well understood.



“The session was very interesting; I really enjoyed the session as I was able to understand fully about the finance side of university”

“I enjoyed looking around campus and learning about uni life”



“Loved the friendly atmosphere when I joined the call. So happy with what I learnt”

70%
of participants applied to Royal Holloway

95%
of applicants received an offer

21 of the original 30 participants applied to study at Royal Holloway, and 20 of these were made an offer.

LANGUAGES FOR ALL (LFA) OVERVIEW



Overview

- The partnership between Royal Holloway and [Languages for All \(LFA\)](#) aims to increase the number of students taking languages at A-level in local state schools, and at university. The intervention is prompted by falling A-level entry rates across the country, with state schools often unable to offer advanced level languages study due to financial constraints. As a result, students from disadvantaged areas may miss out on the benefits linked to learning a second language.
- Royal Holloway and the Reach Foundation in Hounslow are working with Year 11 – Year 13 pupils who are studying GCSE and A-level modern languages at 13 local schools. In the short-term, this intervention aims to improve pupils' attitudes to language study, and their self-efficacy.
- In the intermediate to long-term, the LFA partnership aims to improve student GCSE attainment by providing speaking practice for oral exams, enable more schools to offer A-levels in modern languages, and increase the numbers studying languages at A-level and degree level.

2024/25 Programme

The problem

- Fair access to studying languages is getting worse
- Linguistic talent is not equitably developed across the state school system
- There is a shortage of modern language teachers and the pipeline is drying up

Barriers

We listened to students and teachers to identify what stopped them choosing modern languages after GCSE. Here is what we heard:

- **Attitude:** Students don't think a language is relevant for their lives, their future, or they think it's too hard
- **Access:** It costs many schools too much to run A-levels in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) because classes are smaller

Our offer

- After-school and online **A-level tuition** that schools can sign individual students up for to reduce the cost barriers
- Language-focused trips to employers and abroad to make language learning more relevant and appealing through our **Global Languages Ambassador Award**
- Information, advice and guidance for **GCSE students** on what it's like to study A-level and language degrees
- A trip to Royal Holloway for taster and careers sessions, (to link languages to high aspirations!)
- A GCSE Speaking Exam Masterclass Workshop led by Royal Holloway undergraduates

Outcomes

In the **short term** we'd expect to see...

- Pupils' attitudes to languages and self-efficacy improving

Then...

- Student attainment in MFL increases
- More of our partner schools offering A-levels in MFL because the LFA model has provided a financially sustainable way to deliver the subject

In the **long term** we want to...

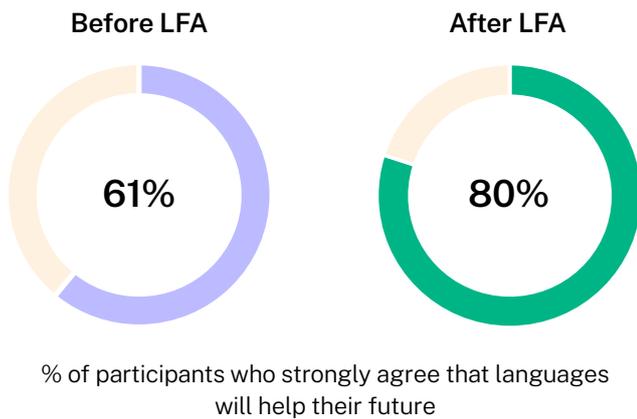
- Increase the attainment and number of students studying MFL at GCSE and A-level
- Increase the numbers of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds studying MFL at degree level
- Increase positive attitudes towards language learning among students in our partner schools

LANGUAGES FOR ALL (LFA) EVALUATION



Evaluation of short-term outcomes

In line with the short-term aims of this intervention, student **attitudes to languages have improved**, with those 'strongly agreeing' that languages will help their future rising from 61% to 80%. Students also report improved self-efficacy, with enhanced confidence, resilience, and critical thinking skills, with 32% of students feeling more confident talking to native speakers after residential.



After the trip to Google, I learnt the value of languages in all career fields and how they unlock opportunities to immerse yourself in foreign cultures and make lasting memories. It's rewarding to realise that learning other languages is not just a skill but also a way to connect with others, show respect, and build relationships."

Evie, 16 years old

Evaluation of longer-term outcomes

We have seen strong sustained growth in our longer-term goals of increasing the number of schools offering, and students studying, A-level modern languages.

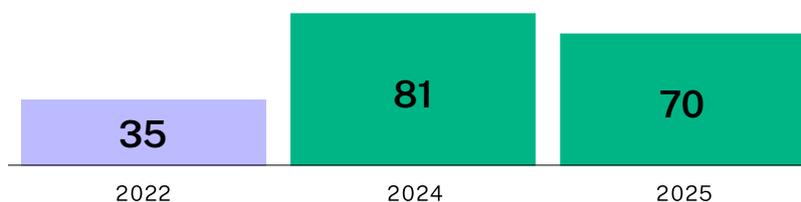
The number of local state schools able to offer A-level modern languages has **tripled** from 4 in 2022 to 12 in 2025.

Schools offering A-level languages



The number of Year 12 A-level students has **doubled** from 35 in 2022 to 70 in 2025. A recent survey of Year 13 LFA students at partner schools showed that 39% of respondents plan to apply to study languages at university.

Students studying A-level languages



ENGLISH AND MATHS ATTAINMENT RAISING (EMAR) OVERVIEW



Overview

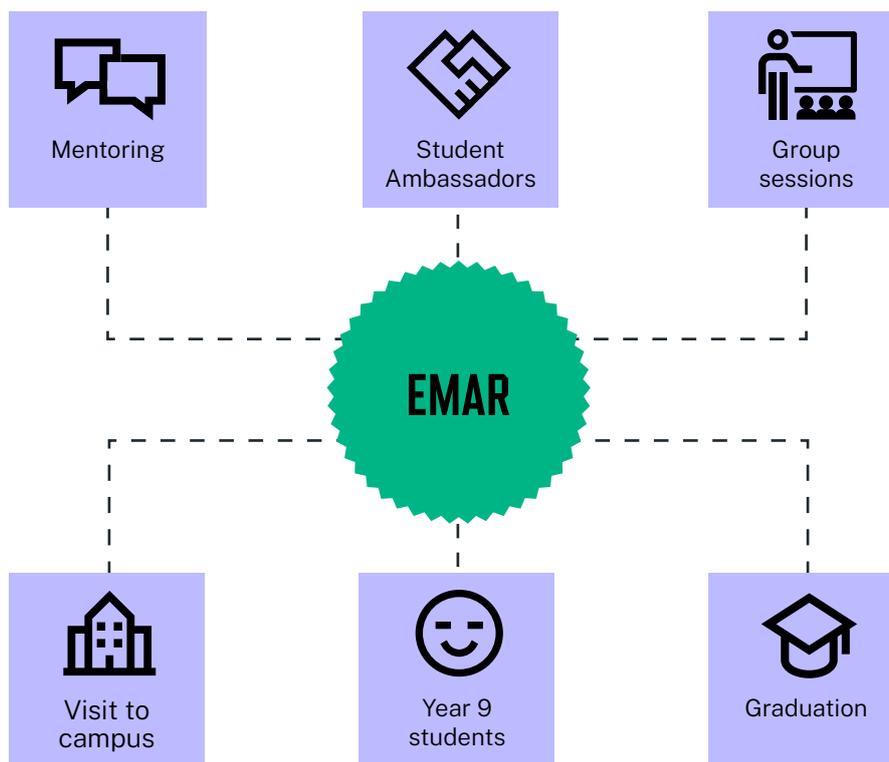
This intervention is a programme of English and Maths attainment raising activities with Year 9 students. The scheme involves two different subject streams for English and Maths and includes 1:1 mentoring sessions run by current Royal Holloway students.

The overall aims are the improvement of participants' self-efficacy, study strategies, motivation and subject knowledge.

2024/25 Programme

The 24/25 pilot scheme was based on a successful programme run by our partner officer at HEON, and had 14 Year 9 student participants. We ran the programme with Slough and Eton Church of England Business and Enterprise College, and all students selected to participate were eligible for free school meals or pupil premium.

The pilot included an introductory group session, four 1:1 mentoring sessions and a final visit to campus for a graduation day.



Learnings for 2025/26

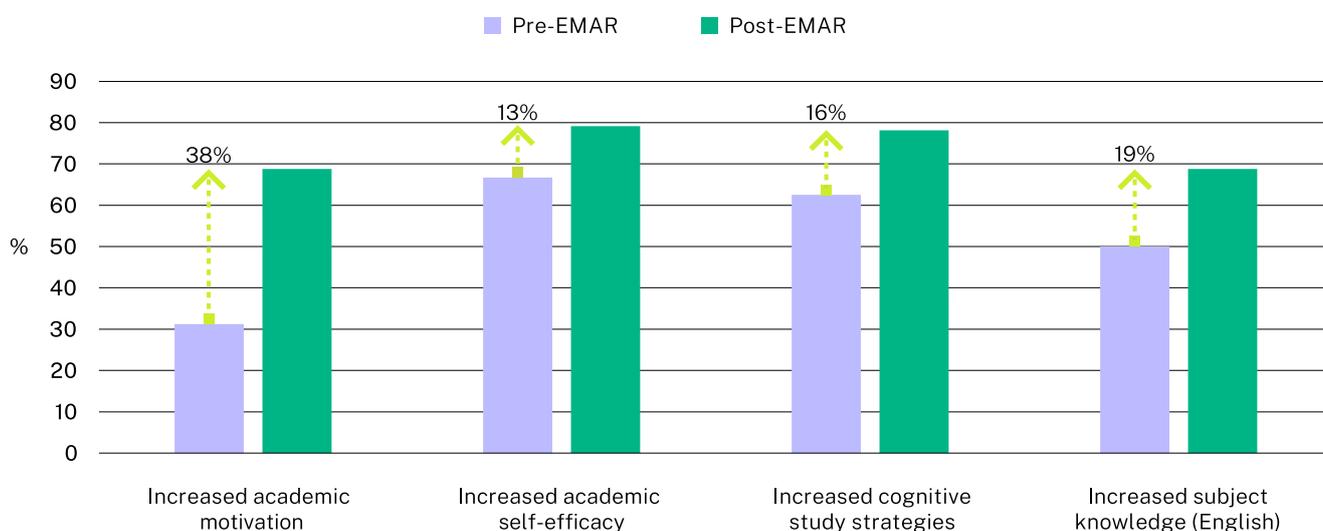
- We will increase the number of schools and the number of students we work with as we believe this will make the programme more impactful.
- We will also increase the number of group sessions with the aim of improving engagement and allowing participants to get to know their mentor groups better.

ENGLISH AND MATHS ATTAINMENT RAISING (EMAR) EVALUATION



- Responses pre-and post-intervention show a strong increase in almost all outcome areas for the English group, with academic motivation in particular increasing from 31% of participants showing agreement / strong agreement before the intervention, to 69% afterwards.
- It is unfortunately not possible to show responses for the Maths group due to low numbers in the group, and low numbers of responses.

Responses before and after EMAR intervention



“I learnt new ways of examining poems and how to analyse texts.”

“I have stronger revision skills”

Outcome	Response statement	% change
Increased academic motivation	I have a good understanding of different revision techniques	25
	I know which revision techniques work best for me	50
Increased academic self-efficacy	I am confident that I can get the exam results required to progress to university	0
	I could manage with the level of study required at university	-13
	I have the academic ability to do well at university	50
Increased cognitive study strategies	I can clearly explain my ideas, even when writing about complicated things	38
	I can confidently explain my ideas when talking to others	13
	I can tell how reliable information is when I read something	13
	I can tell which information is most important when I study	0
Increased subject knowledge (English)	I have a good understanding of analysing text	25
	I have a good understanding of spoken English	13
	I have a good understanding of vocabulary and grammar	13
	I have a good understanding of writing effectively	25

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OVERVIEW

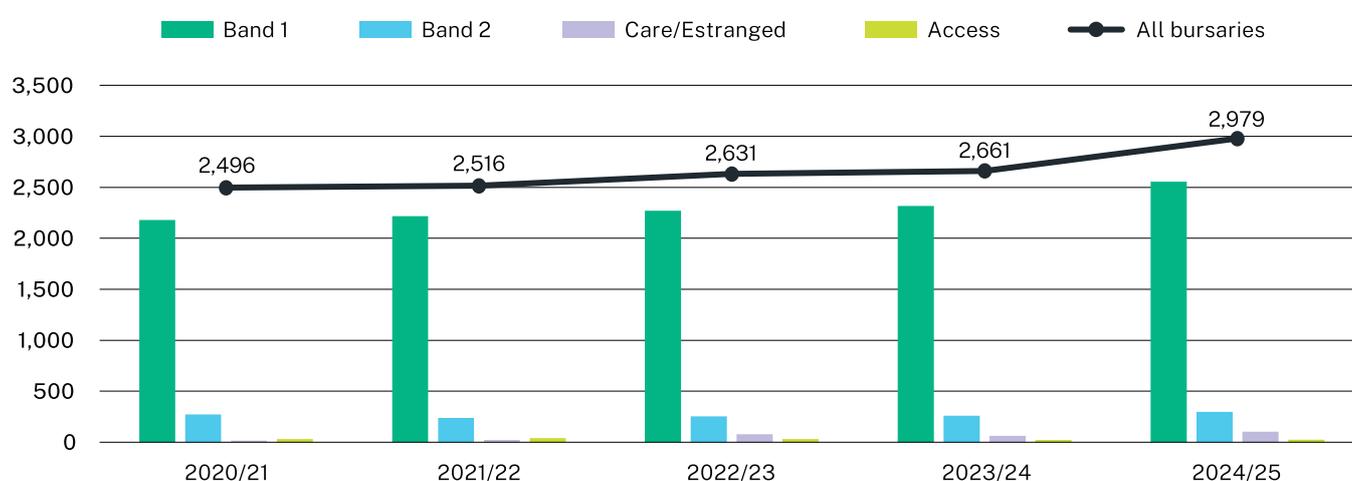


Overview

Financial support for students is offered in a range of ways at Royal Holloway, including via bursaries, the Study Support Grant and guidance from Money & Funding Advisers.

There are a range of bursaries available, and all aim to improve outcomes for students from specific underrepresented groups, supporting them to remain on course and to engage in university life.

Number of bursaries awarded from 2020/21-2024/25



Name	Amount	Payment	Eligibility
Royal Holloway Bursary (Band 1)	£1,300	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom Household income verified by SLC as below £25,000 Eligible for a full maintenance loan
Royal Holloway Bursary (Band 2)	£500	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom Household income verified by SLC as between £25,000 and £30,000 Eligible for a partial maintenance loan
Access entry bursary	£1,000	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom Household income verified by SLC as £25,000 or below 21 years old or over at commencement of degree Completed a QAA recognised Access to Higher Education diploma
Care leavers and Estranged students bursary	£3,000	Provided each academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinarily resident in United Kingdom 18 to 25 years old Looked after by the state for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 or Have 'independent-other' status on Student Finance England

FINANCIAL SUPPORT EVALUATION



Evaluation

In order to evaluate the impact of bursaries, the following analysis has been completed:

- Students' rates of continuation have been analysed using the Office for Students (OfS) financial support evaluation toolkit, which includes both a statistical tool and a survey tool. As all students with a household income (HHI) below a certain threshold automatically receive a bursary, a control group of students whose HHI is just above the threshold has been used for comparison (£30k-£40k).
- Students' attendance rates have been compared to assess the difference between students in receipt of bursaries, and those with no bursary provision.

Outcomes

Continuation

Statistical analysis using binary logistic regression in SPSS showed that in the most recent year **there was no statistically significant association between HHI and continuation rates**. Based on the OfS toolkit, we conclude that this indicates that **financial support is effective in supporting students to continue their studies**.

This is supported by positive responses to the OfS survey, with 91% of students indicating that their bursary was important or very important for their ability to financially continue with their studies.

91%
of respondents
see bursaries
as important or
very important*

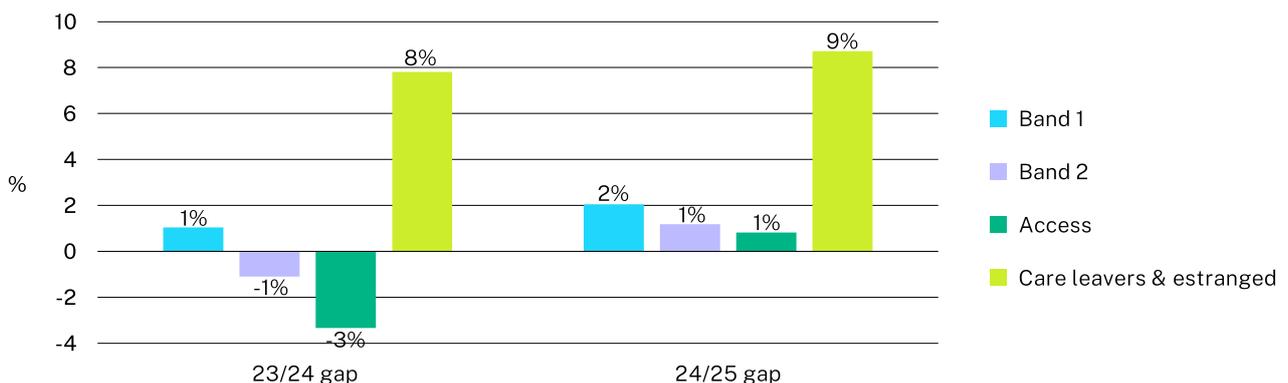
* Responses 4 and 5 on a scale where 1 = 1 not at all important and 5 = very important.

Attendance

A comparison of attendance rates shows that there are **no significant differences** between rates for Band 1 and Band 2 bursary recipients (bursary based on low HHI) and students with no bursary. This indicates that for these groups, **financial support is effective in maintaining similar levels of attendance**.

However care leavers and estranged students have significantly lower attendance than the comparison group, indicating that **financial support is ineffective in overcoming the underlying effects of disadvantage for these groups**.

Gap (difference) between average attendance rates



APP INTERVENTIONS IN 2025/26

The pilot year of 2024/25 has provided us with an opportunity to trial new interventions and extend existing ones as we look forwards to the full launch of the plan for 2025/26.

Intervention leads for all activities will reflect on learnings from this pilot year and will be applying them as we move forwards with the new APP.

2025/26 will see the launch of further planned APP interventions across all intervention strategies, as detailed in our [full plan](#).

