



Title: Widening Access to The University of Manchester

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Audience: All University of Manchester staff; most useful to colleagues involved in student recruitment, outreach and pre entry work to help articulate the support available should students chose to apply to Manchester.

Purpose: This document was created by the central Student Recruitment and Widening Participation team in the Division of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment. It aims to outline all of the ways the University supports widening access to the institution and the support in place for current UG students whilst on course, including the support available for specific groups of students.

Edits or additions: For updates, additions or corrections, please contact [Rachel Bailey](#)

Widening Access to The University of Manchester

At Manchester we believe there should be **no barriers to studying and no boundaries to learning**. We want to recruit the **best students** regardless of their social or educational background.

We do a lot of this work in **partnership with other organisations and charities**. The students you speak to may have heard of these, been involved in them at school or college, or ask about them:

[Care Leaver Covenant](#)
[Uni Connect Partnerships](#)

[IntoUniversity](#)
[University of Sanctuary](#)

[ReachOut](#)
[Article 26](#)

[Stand Alone](#)
[The Brilliant Club](#)

Our [Access Manchester](#) website is the one stop shop for all our access schemes and is relevant for Year 10 students upwards and their parents, carers and advisors: www.access.manchester.ac.uk

Our Year 12 programmes: [The Manchester Access Programme](#), [Pathways to Law](#), [Pre-University courses in Social Sciences](#) and the Preston Widening Access Programme (Medicine). If you speak to students on these programmes, they should have a contact at UoM for their programme and understand how the programme works. Direct any queries to the relevant UoM team:
map@manchester.ac.uk; pathways-law@manchester.ac.uk; tom.mccunnie@manchester.ac.uk

Year 13: How we can support students' applications to Manchester

Contextual data: contextualdata@manchester.ac.uk

Contextual data is additional information we use alongside the UCAS application to assess applications for UK applicants under the age of 21. We use:

- **Home post code**- we check this against two datasets (which look at the level of progression to HE for that area (LPN) and also a geodemographic indicator (called ACORN))
- Whether an applicant has **been in care for more than 3 months or has refugee status** (as indicated by them on their UCAS form)
- The **performance of the school or college** where they took their **GCSEs or equivalents**- and how this compares to the national average across multiple years
- The **performance of the school or college** where they took their **Level 3 qualifications** (e.g. A levels, BTEC)- and how this compares to the national average across multiple years

If they meet either of the post code indicators, they receive a WP flag. This means their application is recommended for further consideration and applicants may receive an **aspirational offer**, even if their predicted grades are below our entry requirements (*Example:* student's predicted grades: BBB, standard entry requirements: ABB, WP flag aspirational offer: ABB).

If they meet the post code indicator and at least one of the education indicators, they receive a WP plus flag. If they have been in care for more than 3 months or have refugee status, they will automatically receive a WP plus PLUS flag.

This means they may be made a **contextual offer**, which for WP plus applicants is usually one grade lower than the standard offer and for WP plus PLUS applicants this can be up to two grades lower than the standard offer, which will apply as either a firm or insurance choice.

It is not a guaranteed offer: subject requirements need to be in place, additional selection requirements stand and predicted grades need to be within two grades of our minimum entry requirements. Contextual offers are only made for courses where the minimum entry requirements are ABB or above and not made for the FSE foundation studies.

[Manchester Distance Access Scheme \(MDAS\): mdas@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mdas@manchester.ac.uk)

MDAS is an online access programme for students who are made an offer of a place to study at Manchester on a selection of courses. MDAS looks specifically at **home postcode** to gauge eligibility. MDAS takes place from June to the beginning of August of Year 13. **Students who are eligible for MDAS will be contacted directly about taking part and we strongly encourage them to do so!**

MDAS has two elements:

- An **online study skills module**
- An academic piece of work related to the subject they have applied for: e.g. a **written academic assignment, online assessed module or problem solving**

Students who successfully complete MDAS receive a **one grade reduction** on their current offer which could mean up to **two grades in total for students** who already had a contextual offer (or **three grades for WP plus PLUS** students).

Students studying a course in **Social Sciences** will be invited to take part in the [Arthur Lewis Assignment](#) instead of MDAS.

[Care experienced and estranged students](#)

We are signed up to the [Stand Alone pledge](#) and the [Care Leaver covenant](#) and are in the process of finalising our [NNECL Quality Mark](#). We have a **named contact** for any students who are considering making an application to Manchester who are care experienced or estranged from their families. We **contact all applicants** who indicate that they are care experienced on their UCAS form after they apply- but we **don't currently have this information for estranged students** so we really do *encourage these students to get in touch with us directly.*

We offer **52 week accommodation contracts**, meaning students have a place in our halls for all holiday periods, including the summer break, and we fast track care experienced and estranged **students into a student ambassador role**, which is a paid flexible part time role at the University supporting our outreach activities. A **named contact remains in place throughout their studies** within the [Student Support team: studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk)

[Adults returning to education and asylum and sanctuary seekers and refugees](#) can arrange a one to one guidance session with a member of University staff at any point in their application journey.

Current UGs: How we can support students while they are with us

[Financial support: 2021 bursary and scholarship information](#)

- **The Manchester Bursary:** up to £2000 a year of non-repayable support based on household income
- **UG Access Scholarship:** an additional **£1000 a year** for **care experienced and estranged students** and students who have successfully completed the **Manchester Access Programme**.
- **The Article 26 scholarship:** intended to help those who have sought refuge in the UK to progress into higher education. This scholarship includes: full cost of tuition, £5,000 a year living cost bursary and free accommodation in one of the University's Halls of Residence for the duration of study. Applications are taken for this and it is a **selective process**; for 2021 entry we had 5 awards available.
- **[Living Cost Support Fund](#):** additional financial support on course, via an application process to support students who find themselves in **financial difficulties** whilst studying with us
- **[Support with IT access](#)**- we have introduced support with IT access which has included a **laptop loan scheme** and provision of dongles to support internet access

Student support

These are just some of the additional support services in place for **all students** when studying with us which make up a wide network of help and support:

- **Disability Advisory and Support Service**: offers an accessible and inclusive service to help students with additional needs succeed in their studies, and their wider University experience.
- **Student Wellbeing team**: with a focus on well-being and the 6 ways to well-being: Connect, Give, Take Notice, Be Active, Be Healthy and Learn and Discover.
- **Counselling and MH Service**: offer both **appointments** for confidential help with any issues relating to work, self-esteem, relationships, sexuality, mental health and general well-being and **workshops** on topics such as managing anxiety; exam stress; procrastination; assertiveness; confidence and self-esteem; low mood; and speaking out in groups.
- **Student Union societies**: are a great way to connect with other students, develop your support network and or meet like-minded students. For example, we have an active living at home society for our commuter students.
- **Peer assisted study support**: there will be a focus on this in first year either through a peer mentor or as part of a peer assisted study group.
- **The Library**: **My Learning Essentials**: the Library's programme of skills support to aid personal and professional development and the **Library Peer Network**: student developed resources to support transition to Year 1 study
- Some Academic Schools have grouped together content on their website outlining specific support in WP students [e.g. SEED](#).

Current UGs: How we support employability for WP students

Work experience bursaries: to help with the cost of careers related work experienced specifically for WP students which we recognise might low pay or involve travel or accommodation.

Student Experience Internships: these are paid roles at the university or in a charity or non for profit organisation usually in the summer of their second year of study which builds up their work experience and supports employability; specifically aimed at WP students.

Manchester Masters' Bursary: the bursaries aim to widen access to Master's courses by removing barriers to postgraduate education for students from underrepresented groups. For courses starting in 2020, we made 100 awards of £4,000 of non-repayable support.

Find out more

www.access.manchester.ac.uk

www.manchester.ac.uk/contextualdata

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/contextual-admissions

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/experience/student-support

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