



**The
Access
Project**

2020
IMPACT REPORT

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“Our students are now four times as likely to go to a top university as similar peers...”

Welcome

WELCOME



At The Access Project we like to ask hard questions of ourselves. Are we helping the right young people? How strong is our impact? How do we improve our offering?

It is a process of self-examination that has led to our unique programme of personalised tuition and in-school support. It is proven to boost the proportion of students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds who make it to a top university.

TAP's journey from a local initiative by a passionate north London school-teacher, to an organisation helping hundreds of young people, across three regions, has been swift. It has been made possible because of the passion and dedication of our staff, more than a thousand volunteer tutors, our partner schools, universities, our business partners and donors. I'm delighted that this report demonstrates how that commitment translates into impact: our students are now four times as likely to go to a top university as similar peers.

In 2018/19 we reached more young people than ever. We connected

with more schools and more volunteer tutors joined our ranks, motivated by a passion to improve the life chances of our students. While this has been happening, we have continued to ask ourselves how we can improve the programme to help them make the most of education. We are proud of the strides TAP is making as an organisation.

The greatest testament to our success is the young people who are thriving with the help of the programme. The students who had never previously considered a selective university, who with TAP's help, come to see that they too belong at top-ranking institutions. The alumni who are forging ahead with successful careers across a wide range of sectors, and finding the time to join our Board in a few cases. We hope they inspire our partners who have made their achievements possible and encourage others to join our efforts. ■

Nathan Sansom
TAP Chief Executive

Why we are needed

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are

six times less likely

to attend top universities than those from wealthier backgrounds.

(Office for Students 2020)



The average attainment gap between students from the most advantaged and most disadvantaged backgrounds is

18 months

by the end of key stage four.

(Education Policy Institute 2019)



The route to the top 40 to 50 universities in the UK is

difficult to navigate

without a support network.



Students from wealthy backgrounds are still more likely to go on from university to

secure high paying jobs

and occupy positions of influence.



How TAP helps

OUR VISION

That every young person, regardless of background, can make the most of education – unlocking their potential & creating a fairer society.

OUR MISSION

We support students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access top universities, through a unique combination of tuition and in-school mentoring. We work with them to make good applications, get the grades and transition to university.

Our programme is made possible by the collaboration between our community of students, schools, universities, business partners and volunteers. Our partners encourage their staff to train as academic tutors to our students. Schools allow our staff to work alongside theirs,

focusing on boosting attainment. Businesses, universities, grant makers and individual funders provide funding for our work with students. Their support is vital to our goal of improving social mobility and making a difference to the life chances of our young people. ■



“

Their programme of tutoring and impartial advice is a great example of the sustained, targeted, collaborative and robustly evaluated work we need into the future. Most importantly, it is demonstrably helping young people to unlock their potential by achieving the grades they need to get into the university of their choice.”

Chris Millward, Director of Widening Participation and Fair Access, the Office for Students

”

The Programme

Our trained volunteer tutors work with students for an hour a week focusing on a key subject to **help improve grades**. They have an A-Level or degree level qualification in the subject.

Our University Access Officers work in-school to **help students understand the steps to getting to university**. Developing self-belief around their studies, like effective revision skills, is key. They also offer guidance on personal statements and mentoring for entrance exams.

We **organise visits to top universities** and we run an Oxbridge Society and a Medicine and Dentistry Society.

TAP's programme is unique because it involves the **support of trained tutors and in-school mentors**. We believe that it's this combination that maximises our students' chances of going to a top university.

TAP Societies

Our Oxbridge and Medicine and Dentistry societies are for ambitious students prepared to work hard on university applications. We run a series of events each year. They help students to develop the additional skills and knowledge they need to make highly competitive applications. Time is spent preparing applications, on mock interviews, university visits and networking with graduates. They also raise students' awareness of courses, colleges, and future careers.



Halima

Halima is a student ambassador for The Access Project, she's from Birmingham and is in year 10 at Holte School. Halima spoke to us about the transformative power of the TAP programme.

Tell us about yourself

I come from a low-income area which means without the support of The Access Project it might not even be possible for me to go to university. Receiving tuition wouldn't be available to me otherwise, because I know how expensive it is. I am the first person in my direct family aiming to go to university.

this programme would help me improve. My tutor is so helpful, I'm now working 3 grades above where I started at the beginning of tutorials!

Tell us about your hopes for the future

I want to go to a top university to study politics and then pursue this as a career. Politics affects every single part of our lives. I'd really love to give back to my community and make a difference having seen the struggles people like me go through. TAP's broken down the stigma around top universities not being attainable and it's given me a sense of direction. ■

Tell us about your experience on The Access Project

It encourages me, provides mentoring, and inspires me to believe that I can achieve my dreams. In previous years at school I'd really struggled with Maths and I knew being on

“My tutor is so helpful, I'm now working 3 grades above where I started...”

Students with the Access Project are

four times
as likely to attend top universities



as similarly disadvantaged students.

External analysis by Boston Consulting Group shows our GCSE students make on average

half a grade more



progress than all their classmates, in tutored subjects.

0.6%
OF A GRADE MORE



progress at GCSE could be the difference between a grade 6 (B) and 7 (A), a grade 7 (A) and 8 (A*), or a grade 8 (A*) and 9 (A**).

The programme we offer not only increases students' chances of attending a top third university, it also raises the aspirations of students throughout the schools in which we work. It helps to transform our schools' overall post-18 student destination profiles. Headteacher Andrew Burns, Principal of Ormiston Forge Academy, says: "The work that we do with The Access Project is seamless, the team work with our students in delivering value and extra support exactly where it is needed."

The Access Project's Impact Team analyse internal data to make sure that the programme works effectively. The team seeks regular feedback from schools, students and tutors and routinely checks that students are engaging effectively with the programme.

For the last four years TAP has also joined forces with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to measure the impact of our programme. We compare the university outcomes of our students against a control group specially

developed for us by UCAS. The control group was created by sampling students from the National Pupil Database (NPD), who are from similar backgrounds as students working with The Access Project.

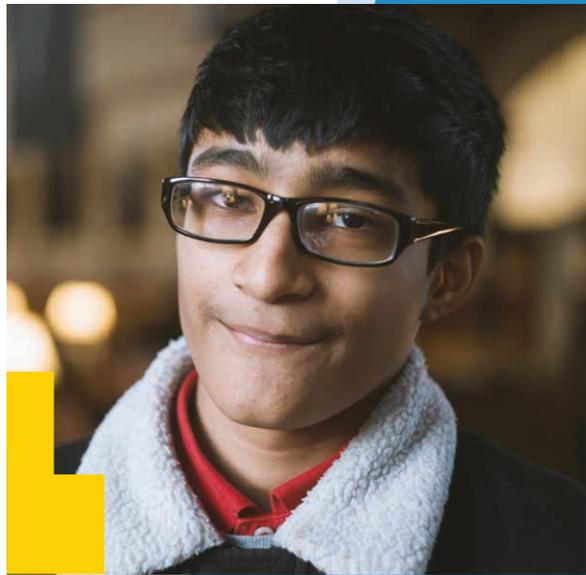
In addition to this the Boston Consulting Group assesses how much progress each year 11 & year 13 TAP student makes in their tutored subject and how this compares to the average progress of their class.



The Access Project helps more students access top universities every year.



I feel really supported by my University Access Officer in school...



Mohammad

Mohammad is tutored in Maths and is in year 10 at King Solomon Academy in central London. Mohammad's self-belief has been boosted by both the in-school mentoring he receives and the support of his tutor.

Tell us about yourself

I'm a year 10 student at King Solomon Academy in London. I live at home with my 3 sisters and my parents. My dad works as a driver and my mum stays at home. I have an older brother who is now at university and this is something I now want to do.

What difference does The Access Project make?

I feel really supported by my University Access Officer in school as she makes sure we are on track with our studies. My tutor has helped to inspire me to go to university, I've been able to see what

I can ultimately do with my knowledge. Being on The Access Project has made me more confident, independent, motivated, and organised.

Tell us about your hopes for the future

I want to study Maths and Business at university. I know it is a challenging subject but will equip me with some important life skills. I know I need to improve my maths grades and my tutor is always challenging me. I need to make the most of this opportunity, because I am lucky to have the support. ■



Rebecca spoke to the BBC and ITV in the East Midlands about her offer to study at Oxford and the success of The Access Project in supporting students like her.

Rebecca

Rebecca is a student at Ashfield School in the East Midlands, she is tutored in History. Rebecca has been offered a place to study Archaeology and Anthropology at Oxford University. Working with TAP gave her the confidence she needed throughout the application process.

What were your reservations about applying to Oxbridge?

A lot of students decide that they wouldn't be able to get in before trying. Oxford can sometimes seem unattainable because it has such a high level of prestige and huge entry requirements. My first worry was grades, especially when gaining higher levels in A level is so difficult.

What difference did The Access Project make?

The Access Project (TAP) has given me experience of mock interviews and the Oxbridge Society brought me into contact with Oxbridge

students. I'm incredibly fortunate to have an experienced tutor who's also helped with interview preparation, reading material and with my personal statement. The extra support from TAP made me feel more relaxed and comfortable with my application.

How have your goals changed?

TAP helped me to make my dream of applying to Oxford a realistic possibility. I now have an offer which my TAP tutor is helping to make the grades for in History. I'm now hoping I can achieve what I need to get there. ■

TAP helped me to make my dream of applying to Oxford a realistic possibility.

2018/2019 in numbers

In total there were

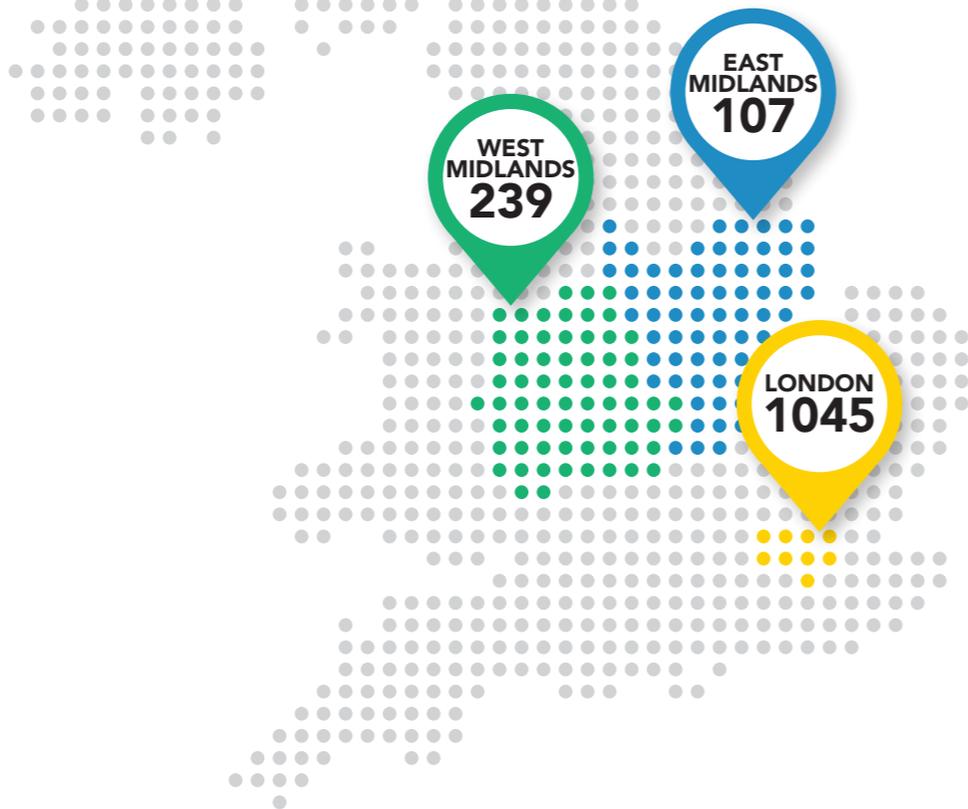
1391
STUDENTS
 on The Access Project programme in 2018/19

We worked with

31
SCHOOLS
 across London, the West Midlands and the East Midlands


1,302
TUTORS
 (AY 2018/19)

Regional breakdown student numbers

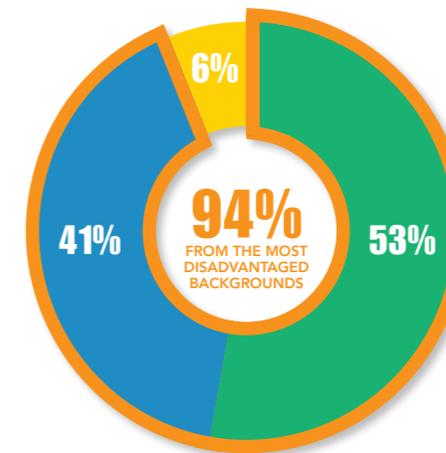


2018/2019 IN NUMBERS

Who we work with

The Access Project is committed to working with students who are least likely to be represented at top universities in the UK. In 2018/19 94% of TAP's students came from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

We aim to support students on free school meals, those in care or care leavers, pupil premium pupils or those young people in an area of low access to Higher Education. ■



- PRIORITY PLUS** Free School Meals or In LEA Care/Care leaver or Pupil Premium and living in an area of low access to HE
- PRIORITY** Pupil Premium or Living in an area of low access to HE
- NONE** Does not meet formal disadvantage criteria

Our Dual Approach

Gaining a place at one of the country's top universities is about getting the grades of course, but it is also about making a good application. To do this, our students need to have the confidence to apply and knowledge about how the process works. Our students work in school with a University Access Officer, who is a member of TAP staff, as well as being tutored by volunteers from some of the country's leading employers. This boosts their self-belief and hones their soft skills, which are key to gaining a place at and successfully transitioning to university. Students are introduced to the world of work through their tutors and can see the opportunities their studies open up to them. ■



Ellen Coughlan

Tutor Ellen is a Programme Manager with The Health Foundation, a charity committed to better health and health care in the UK. She tutors her student in Biology.

Tell us about you

I grew up in the fortunate position of having a huge amount of privilege, attending a private secondary school and I wanted to do something to help level the playing field in education. That's why I applied to be a tutor for The Access Project.

I've seen my student's confidence grow hugely over the time I've been supporting her. She used to be very anxious before going into any mock exam and now she is incredibly confident and no longer doubts herself.

Tell us about your tutoring experience

I always really enjoyed school and that's something that's helped me to bond with my student. Being able to build a relationship with a young person is a great way to exercise interpersonal skills and improve my communication skills. It's an area connected to my job, which helps my student associate it with the world of work.

Why would you recommend volunteering with TAP?

I've learned so much about myself and the kind of relationships I can build. I've honed my interpersonal skills and we've both gained so much. There's such a sense of urgency about getting things done nowadays, but tutoring helps to give me perspective on life. ■



Freya Smith

Freya is a University Access Officer at St George's Roman Catholic School in Maida Vale.

Tell us about your job

The best thing about my role is being able to work directly with students. As a UAO we get to see how much the programme is making a difference to our students. The mentoring side of our work is really valuable. As our students progress and grow in confidence from year 10 to year 13, you see them grow and blossom into ambitious and hardworking adults.

is really rewarding. We encourage them to set achievable goals and get into effective working habits, which we hope will serve them well at university.

What are the benefits for the tutors you support?

For tutors I want them to feel they are making a tangible difference to students on our programme. It is a valuable way for tutors to step out of their working world and reassess any prior conceptions they may have about education and access. Our tutors and students often develop a strong rapport. I hope they can see the impact the sessions are having. ■

What do you gain from working for TAP?

Knowing my students can come and find me in school to talk about studying or their tutorials, and being able to give them advice and guidance,

Developing self-belief is a key part of TAP's one to ones. In last year's survey students told us that TAP helps them to feel more...

confident **75%**
independent **83%**
positive **87%**

When asked if the programme made them feel more motivated about attending a top university **84% agreed**. It's important that they understand & take on board the skills we teach them. 'Self-efficacy' relates to improved performance, particularly at A-Level.

84%
of students feel more motivated

Inspiring Alumni

For many schools, their partnership with The Access Project helps them to send students to the most selective universities for the very first time. It frequently means that their students are the first in their families to attend university. Our schools have many inspiring alumni whose achievements TAP students can realistically aspire to. ■

TAP helped me to make my dream of applying to Oxford a realistic possibility.



Eduardo Estevez

Eduardo Estevez, a former student at Ark Globe Academy in Elephant and Castle, is studying Biological Sciences at The University of Oxford.

Tell us about yourself

I was born in Spain and moved to the UK when I was 11 years old, so English is my second language. I lived with my mum who is a cleaner and none of my family went to university. Growing up I always felt blessed as I had the simple things in life that enabled me to get on, but life was tough economically and it was hard being judged for not speaking English.

Tell us about your experience on TAP

I can't think of any way that being on The Access Project didn't benefit me. I wasn't even considering going to university before speaking with my UAO. TAP made me realise what I really wanted to do would involve going to university.

They helped me choose the right course for me based on my interests and choose the institutions that were best suited to me. I don't think I would have got into Oxford without their support and advice!

Tell us about your hopes for the future

I have seen a lack of social justice and diversity in my life and still feel like we could do better in terms of representation. Because of this I think I would like to get involved in working with media, promoting social justice. People feel like they are different from me because I study at Oxford, but I am no different. Six years ago I couldn't speak any English and I am now here. ■



Fatos Nacakgedigi

From student, to tutor, to trustee. Fatos is a Mergers and Acquisitions Technology Consultant at KPMG. Following the TAP programme she studied Spanish at the University of Bristol. Fatos became a TAP trustee in 2018.

Tell us about yourself

Like most other students at Highbury Grove School, there was no chance my family could ever afford private tuition, so when I was 15 I keenly agreed to take part and became part of the first cohort of students to be tutored by The Access Project.

Tell us about your experience with TAP

My tutors were amazing. They were successful women who gave me a glimpse of what my career could look like in the future, making me work even harder at school. Academic support is only a part of what TAP provides, it also gives students a chance to improve their cultural

capital and commercial awareness. Everything from my tutors' jobs, the offices they were based at and their experiences at work motivated me to work hard on my studies.

What happened next?

Between university and into my first year at my new job I tried my best to keep in touch with TAP. As soon as I finished my A-levels I decided I wanted to be a TAP tutor. In 2018 I joined the board. It is important to me to help The Access Project with its mission to improve social mobility, because of how much they helped me. I'm living proof that the programme works! ■

TAP's Alumni Programme

We support students with their transition to university. Members of the programme can meet others going to the same university as them and have the opportunity to be mentored by a TAP student at their university. Our Prepare for University event offers tips and advice, as does the termly newsletter. They can also build skills by becoming an Alumni Ambassador working with TAP schools. We signpost careers opportunities and programmes with business partners.

Improvements continue

The Access Project's achievements have come about because of an ongoing process of self-reflection. In 2014, supported by Impetus, we undertook a thorough review of our mission, programme methodology and approach to impact. Since then we have become accustomed to questioning how effective the programme is.

Supporting those in need:

TAP recognised that it needed to work harder to identify pupils who needed the extra support to get into university. In 2014 the team committed to increasing the proportion of pupils from a disadvantaged background from 56% to 80% within three years. In 2018/19, as we've seen, that proportion reached 94%.

A longer programme: Following a review of our mission, which began in 2014, the programme was extended to four years in all schools and the intensity stepped up, with more tutoring hours and content tailored to the individual pupil. The university applications process was standardised across TAP schools. An improved system was installed to track the progress of each pupil.

An online experiment: Our East Midlands online tuition programme was launched because we struggled to recruit volunteers in a social mobility cold spot. TAP students there make the same level of

progress as students who receive face to face tuition elsewhere. It enabled TAP to act in an agile and efficient manner during the early days of the Coronavirus outbreak, moving face to face pairings online.

Measuring data: So that we can understand the impact of one to one tuition on student attainment The Access Project has commissioned an external evaluation by FFT Education Datalab. We hope to continue to commission this type of impact analysis from Education Datalab in the longer term.

More to do: TAP is committed to further improving performance at A-Level. We are also working to strengthen our support for those students who have transitioned to university and build a stronger alumni community.

Plus, we want to work with more schools to support young people in the most need. Despite these uncertain times, a new strategy will guide our work from the 2020/21 academic year onwards. ■

94% of Tap students come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds



Following workshops in 2014/15 the programme was extended to



4 YEARS

in all schools and the intensity stepped up



East Midlands programme launched in 2017

New ways of working

The Access Project was quick to react to the Coronavirus crisis. We recognised the need to halt face to face contact between students and tutors to help stop the spread of the virus, but we were committed to continuing our support for students. TAP committed to finding a virtual platform, Bramble, that met safeguarding guidelines and allowed tutorials to be recorded. Hundreds of pairings were moved online in a matter of weeks. TAP has also been working with other tutoring organisations to share best practice as they move programmes online. Nick Bent of Tutor Trust said: "TAP's advice was a huge boost to our prep for starting a pilot of online tuition". ■



Natasha Bray

Natasha is a Senior Editor at Nature Reviews Neuroscience, she and her student Fredrick are now carrying out their Biology tutorials via Bramble.

Why was it important to you to continue tutoring online?

Although I completely agree with the social distancing measures put in place, I was disappointed that they meant that our tutorials couldn't continue as normal. So, I was really pleased when the online platform became available to us, as there was no reason not to carry on supporting my student over the internet.

How are you finding using the online platform?

The online platform has been brilliant. It's very intuitive to use, and lets you upload images from your computer and write and draw in different colours. The video cam feature is good to have too – we tend to use it at the beginning of the session for some general chit-chat before

we start the main activities of the tutorial.

Why do you think it is important we continue providing tuition via the internet?

Without the added pressure of exams, I imagine it could be hard for students to remain incentivised or motivated to continue studying over this period. My hope is that the online tutorials will help students to keep interested and to carry on learning, without getting stuck or bored. Also, now that social interaction is limited, I find it refreshing to talk to someone else once a week!

Natasha's student Fredrick Duncan, from Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys, says the online tutorials have provided some security during a worrying time. ■

Working with universities

The Access Project is building strong relationships with universities to help deepen our impact. In the last year we have forged exciting partnerships between TAP schools and top universities, facilitating a deep and impactful relationship between the institution and the students that is sustained over time.

Year 2018/2019 saw the launch of The Access Project's first university partnership with Keble College, Oxford at Colmers School, in the Rednal area of Birmingham.

These partnerships help via:

- Our university partners commit to supporting TAP's embedded work in schools over several years.
- Tailored student visits to university and university representatives visiting schools.
- Increasing the profile of top universities in school, and the profile of the school within universities.
- Targeted contact with academics and outreach staff, including workshops and seminars.

- Assisting students to make strong applications and give effective interviews.
- In the case of Oxbridge, helping students to prepare for admissions tests.

Sir Jonathan Phillips, Warden of Keble College, said: "Not enough bright and motivated young people from less advantaged backgrounds are getting into the best universities. This is true in the West Midlands as in some other areas. We want to attract the most talented students to come to Keble and other institutions from the widest possible range of backgrounds and to realise their full academic potential."

"This partnership with The Access Project will deepen Keble's long-term commitment to schools and students in the West Midlands."

Since the Keble College launch, The Access Project has also partnered with UCL at Holte School in the West Midlands and Magdalen College, Oxford, at Ashfield School in the East Midlands.



TAP is due to launch a new partnership with Imperial College London at Ormiston Forge Academy in The Black Country later this year.

Now more than ever TAP's aim is to develop relationships that will help create a successful pathway for our students from school to university. Our university partnerships help to bolster TAP's approach of raising attainment and building self-belief. ■



Working with schools

Andrew Burns

Headteacher Andrew Burns is Principal of Ormiston Forge Academy in the West Midlands. He says that The Access Project programme is a "model of best practice".

How does the school work with TAP?

The TAP University Access Officer becomes one of our staff and understands how the academy works and what makes our students tick. We work together to ensure that students on the project get the support they need both with academic study and applications for higher education - this all happens in a way which ensures that students become highly aspirational.

How effective is the relationship?

The results and the value for money speak for themselves, which is why we have extended our relationship/contract with TAP twice. There is nowhere else our students could get this level of academic

support and mentoring and have expert support for their journey into Higher Education.

What impact has the relationship had on student attainment and destinations?

Before TAP around 50% of students went to university, now almost 75% of the graduating cohort go to university each year. They now go to higher ranked universities, most in the top third and a good proportion to Russell Group universities. In the last two years we have had a student turning down Oxbridge to take a once in a lifetime bursary at Brown in the US and our first student going to Oxford. None of this would have been possible without TAP.



“The results and the value for money speak for themselves...”

Thank you

We would like to thank our supporters for the 2018/19 academic year:

Alta Advisers	Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation – IICF
Aston University	The Ironmongers’ Foundation
Bain & Company	The John Armitage Charitable Trust
Bain Capital	John Lyon’s Charity
Bank of America	Keble College, University of Oxford
Barclays	KPMG
Boston Consulting Group	Linklaters
The Charterhouse Charitable Trust	Neil Cosgrove
CHK Foundation	Nesta
Civil Service	OxFizz
CMS	Quadrature Capital
DANCOP	Queen Mary University of London
David Farnham Memorial Gift	Rothschild & Co
The Drapers’ Charitable Fund	Slaughter and May
The EQ Foundation	Trailstone
The Golden Bottle Trust	Which?
Impetus	The Worshipful Company of Founders



“Despite these uncertain times, a new strategy will guide our work from the 2020/21 academic year onwards.”



The Dock, Tobacco Quay,
Wapping Lane, London E1W 2SF

www.theaccessproject.org.uk