



Outreach Impact Report

2023-2024



St Edmund
Hall

Introduction

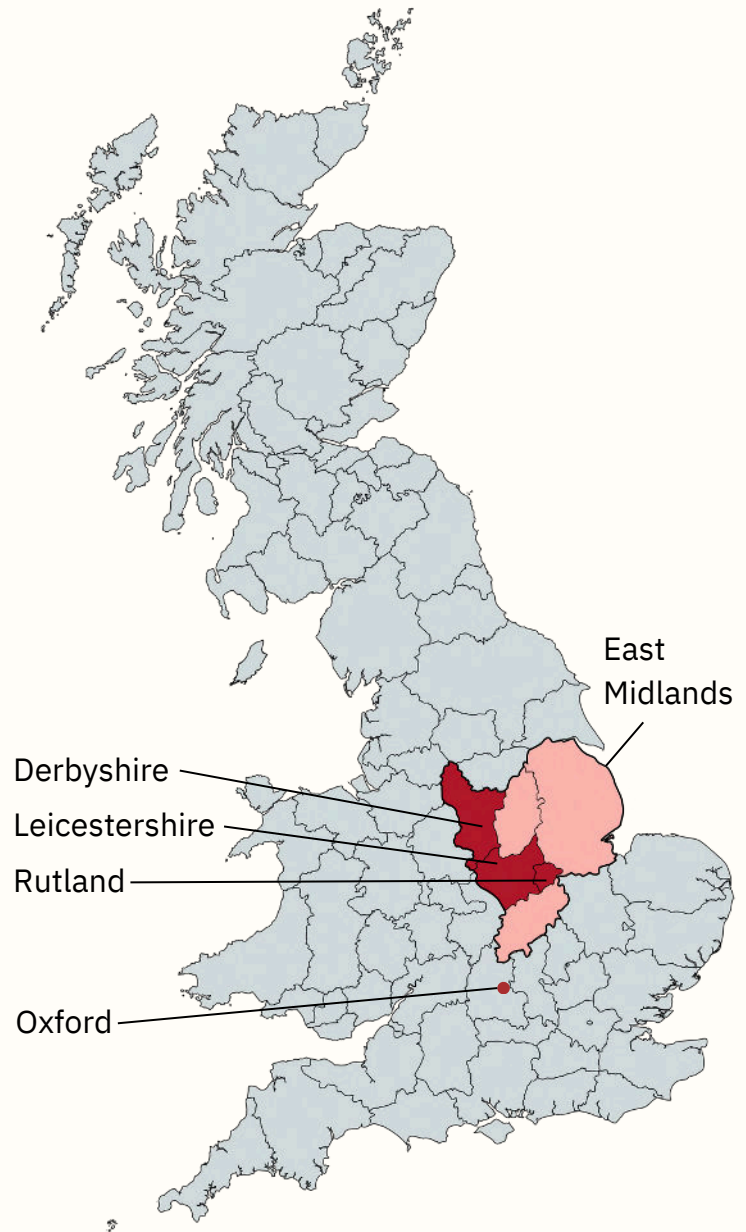


As part of the University's Regionalisation Programme, the College works primarily with state schools in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland.

In addition, St Edmund Hall is a member of Oxford for East Midlands, a consortium in partnership with Magdalen and Lincoln colleges that affords us the opportunity to work in the wider East Midlands region.

Outreach at the College has gone from strength to strength this year, with growth in nearly every measurable metric:

- A record 4115 students were reached, an increase of 48% over 2022-23
- Entries to the Big Think Competition increased by 187%
- The number of students on the Unlock Oxford Rural strand increased by 249%
- Two new residentials offered
- A 14% increase in coverage of our link regions of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland
- A 30% increase in the number of outbound visits led in schools



This report covers the period 1 September 2023 to 31 July 2024.



615

students taking part in the Rural strand

(249% more than 2023)

13

schools involved in the Rural strand

(62% more than 2023)

“It was a truly wonderful experience and our students have grown so much in their confidence and self-belief as a result. Please also pass on our thanks to the ambassadors who were also wonderful and made everybody feel at ease.”

— *School Careers Leader, Derby*

Unlock Oxford

Unlock Oxford is a targeted, sustained-contact outreach programme for students in Years 10 to 13 across our link regions. The programme is divided into two main strands: Urban, for schools in Derby and Leicester, and Rural, for schools in wider Derbyshire and Leicestershire.

Rural

The Rural stream of Unlock Oxford has grown immensely over the past year, with almost double the number of schools on the programme.

The Rural strand of Unlock Oxford is a sustained-contact programme, offering an interaction with students on the programme every year between Year 10 and Year 13, focusing on information on student finance, making informed A-level choices and the university application process. Students also have the opportunity to visit St Edmund Hall and learn more about Oxford as part of the programme. Five new schools formally enrolled on the programme with more anticipated to join in 2024-25.



182

students attended
the residentials

(27% more than 2023)

12

schools participated
in the residential
programme

(50% more than 2023)

4

two-day
residentials held for
schools in inner-city
Derby and Leicester

(1 more than 2023)

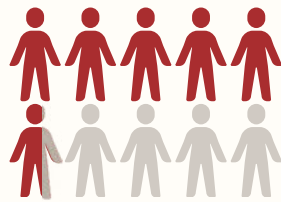
“Thank you for
such a fantastic
opportunity! Your
sessions have
really got them
thinking about
university life and
their future
aspirations.”

– Year 10 teacher,
Derby

Unlock Oxford

Urban

In March 2024, the Unlock Oxford Urban programme offered four residentials, split across Year 10 and Year 12 students in Derby and Leicester. Students were selected on key measures of deprivation, with 95% of attendees meeting at least one measure of disadvantage.



57%

of attendees live in areas
of **socioeconomic**
deprivation (Acorn 4 & 5)

77%

of attendees said they
were **likely to apply to**
Oxford in future

(66% before)

Students experienced an expanded timetable compared to in 2022-2023, with further chances to enjoy academic sessions and tasters. Year 10 enjoyed a workshop from Oxplore, the Home of Big Questions, as well as a subject taster session and workshops on student finance and A-level choices. Year 12 were able to meet current tutors, try out tutorial-style academic tasters, and learn about several aspects of the Oxbridge application process.

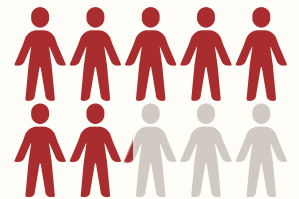
95%

of attendees met at least
one measure of
disadvantage

(64% met two or more)

72%

of attendees identified as
Black, Asian or another
ethnic minority group



Quantitative analysis of attendees' pre- and post- intervention survey responses showed a significant positive impact on almost all aspects measured, including participants' understanding of university and their motivation and desire to apply to Oxford. You can read more about this in our [Unlock Oxford Urban Impact Infographic](#).

YEAR 10 ATTENDEES:

88%

felt well-equipped to make
informed A-level choices
after the residential

(38% before)

YEAR 12 ATTENDEES:

95%

felt **motivated** to do well in
their A-levels after the
residential

(85% before)

“I enjoyed the experience overall and it was a great form of motivation and a driving factor to make me work even harder so that I have a chance of getting into a top university.”

— *Unlock Oxford residential participant*



Oxford NextGen



St Edmund Hall works with Magdalen and Lincoln colleges as part of Oxford for East Midlands, supporting schools across the region. Our targeted and sustained-contact outreach programme, Oxford NextGen, works with students from Year 10 through to Year 13 in eight schools across the East Midlands.

St Edmund Hall welcomed five visits to the College from schools across the East Midlands as part of Oxford NextGen, and led 5 visits to the East Midlands, working primarily in Northampton, Derby and Leicester.

A particular highlight of the year however was welcoming Year 13 students onto a residential opportunity in September. Students were able to stay overnight in College accommodation before attending the September Open Day. They also had the opportunity to gain subject-specific application advice in a number of different workshops focusing on admissions tests and interviews. This proved invaluable to students, with 91% of attendees rating the residential as useful.

“I just wanted to express my thanks for the organisation of the residential and your work over the last four years. This is a really exciting project and I know there are students who would never have considered applying if they had not had this experience.”

– *Assistant Principal,
Northampton Academy*



Big Think Competition

Open to state school students in Years 11 to 13, the Big Think Competition invites students to answer one of our tutors' tutorial-style questions with a five-minute video essay. In 2024, fifteen questions, representing nearly all the subjects offered at St Edmund Hall, were available to challenge students.

With 243 entries, the competition has grown significantly, with entrants hailing from Mid Glamorgan to Bournemouth. The quality of entries was exceptional and 17 winners were awarded prizes, with a further 10 students recognised with a special commendation for their efforts. A Prizewinners' Day was held in June, allowing the winners to meet the tutor who marked their entry, chat with current students and experience Oxford.

“Thank you again for setting up and organising the competition and the Prizewinners' Day, it was an amazing opportunity and a really special day for me - it's definitely boosted my confidence and belief in myself, so thank you and everyone else involved.”

– *Competition Winner*

15

subject-specific
questions on
offer

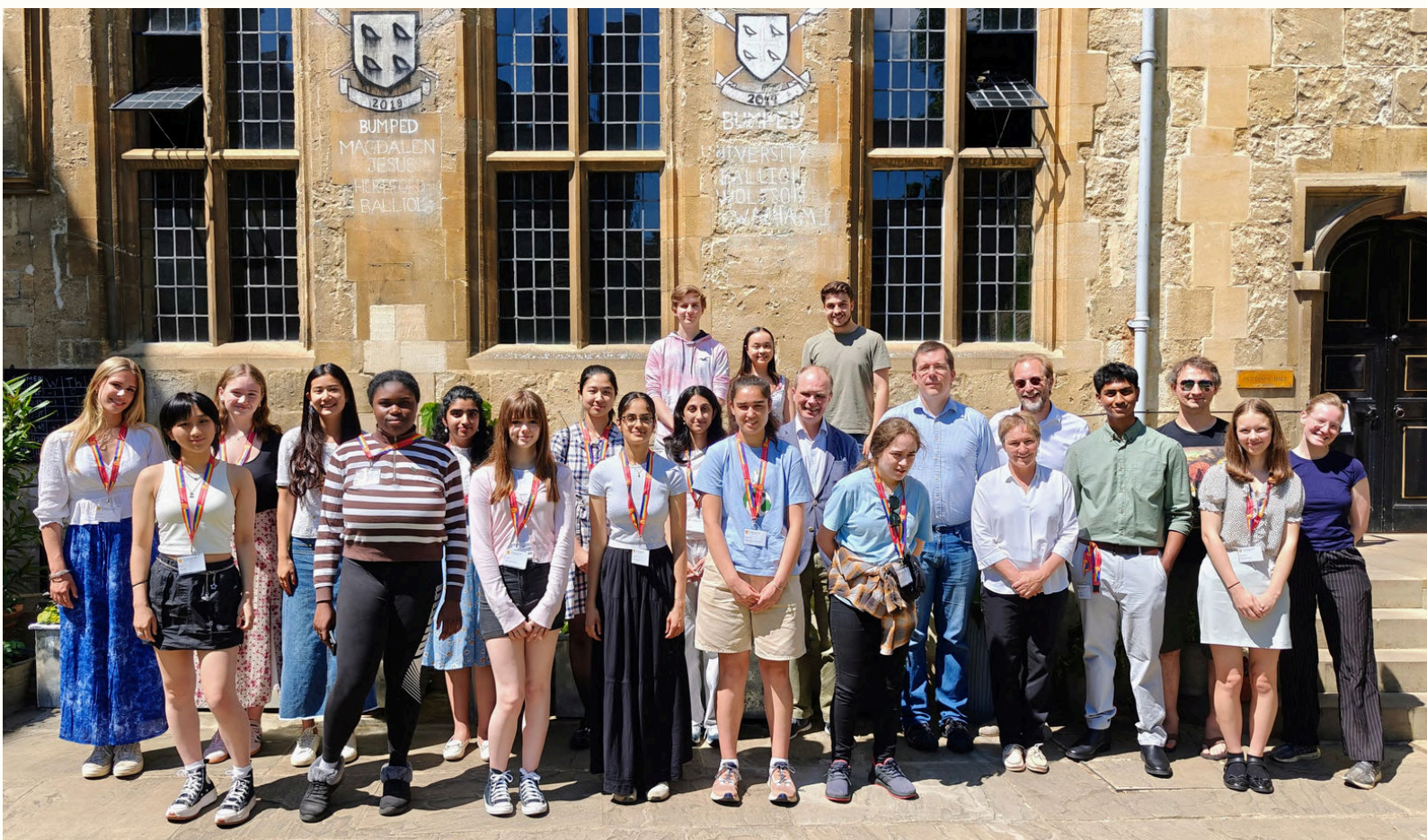
243

entries

(187% more than 2023)

20%

of entrants lived either in
an area of low progression
to university or low
socioeconomic advantage



Offer-Holders' Day

In February 2024 we held our inaugural Offer-Holders' Day, welcoming over 70 offer-holders from across the UK and beyond to St Edmund Hall.

As interview candidates did not have the opportunity to visit St Edmund Hall during their interviews, the Offer-Holders' Day allowed offer-holders and their supporters to familiarise themselves with the College ahead of receiving their results and Freshers' Week.

98%

of attendees rated the day as **Good or Excellent**

81%

felt they were **more likely to accept their offer**

Offer-holders were able to hear from the Tutor for Undergraduates, the College Registrar, JCR President and representatives from the Admissions Office. Attendees also had the opportunity to meet key members of staff and current students, enjoy lunch in the Wolfson Hall and have a tour around the College and Oxford city centre.

We wish our offer-holders the best of luck in their exams, and hope to see them begin their studies at St Edmund Hall soon!



“All the staff and student ambassadors were so amazing and helpful.”

– 2024 Offer-Holder

“I had a really lovely day and it made me so excited to start in October.”

– 2024 Offer-Holder



School Visits

In 2023-2024, we hosted 55 visits to St Edmund Hall for schools and colleges in our link regions. With each school who visits receiving a programme of sessions tailored to their needs, groups from Year 9 to Year 12 have benefitted from first-hand experience of Oxford. Several schools received a hands-on academic workshop as part of their visit, with others visiting one of the University museums.

This year, we ran 43 visits to schools in Leicestershire and Derbyshire to deliver sessions on a number of topics, including introductions to university and Oxbridge, student finance, informed A-level choices, interviews and more. Every autumn, the Outreach Roadshow sees us visiting schools across our link regions for a week with student ambassadors in tow. In October 2023, we visited twelve schools across Leicestershire and Derbyshire, interacting with over 600 students.



55

visits to St
Edmund Hall

89

sessions in
schools
(30% more than 2023)

15

online sessions

The Outreach Team ran 15 online events this year, including interview and admissions workshops, parents and carers events for the Unlock Oxford programme, and a 'Meet the College' event for Opportunity Oxford offer-holders.

“The friendliest of staff and student ambassadors - our students were very impressed and have come away feeling inspired!”

– Year 10 teacher, Leicestershire

82

trained student
ambassadors

229

hours of volunteer
time contributed
by ambassadors

“In 20 years of school visits to Oxford these were the best student ambassadors I have encountered. It makes such a difference who our students meet when in Oxford and being spoken to in such an open and unpatronising way helped inspire them.”

— MAT Careers
Lead, Derby

Student Ambassadors

Student ambassadors are an integral part of the outreach work carried out at St Edmund Hall, providing friendly positive role models for pupils, and supporting key outreach events.

Providing prospective students with a relatable experience of Oxford, student ambassadors lead tours of the College and run Q&A sessions as part of inbound school visits, as well as assist with online outreach sessions on an ad-hoc basis.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, 21 new ambassadors were recruited, totalling 82 ambassadors for the academic year. In total, approximately 229 hours of volunteer time were contributed by St Edmund Hall student ambassadors. To recognise their dedication, six ambassadors were selected for Ambassador of the Term awards.

In April 2024, the second Student Ambassador Formal took place, with 19 of the most engaged student ambassadors in attendance. The event allowed us to celebrate ambassadors' achievements and served as a small token of gratitude for the time they volunteered over the course of the year.





Digital Outreach

The Outreach Team strive to deliver innovative and engaging online content alongside face-to-face interaction, providing information to young people, their families and their teachers.

Alongside the St Edmund Hall social media, the Outreach Team also share their efforts via X (formerly Twitter) and with several email newsletters for teachers and students in our link regions.

A huge thank you to the Hall's Communications Manager, Claire, and her maternity cover, Laura, for all their insights and work on the below.

PROJECTS	DETAILS
Parents' Guide	We refreshed our online guide to university and higher education for parents, carers and teachers.
Videos	We released our video tour of St Edmund Hall on YouTube in September 2023, where it currently has 4000 views. In May 2024, we filmed a new video with several current students, which we hope to release in the 2024-2025 academic year.
Sharia-Compliant Student Finance Guide	We published a guide detailing information on Sharia-compliant student finance for students, their families and schools.
Language Miracles Workshops	In July 2024, tutors in Modern Languages at St Edmund Hall led a series of online taster workshops for Year 12 state school students across the UK, reaching students from Northern Ireland to Cornwall.

“Your expertise in the application process has undoubtedly equipped our students with the knowledge and confidence they need to navigate their future applications successfully.”

— Year 13 teacher, Derbyshire



“I was really pleased with my experience and I have definitely been convinced to apply for university, more specifically Oxford or Cambridge. All the student ambassadors and organisers were brilliant and really made the experience memorable.”

— Year 10 residential participant, Derbyshire



Past and Future Goals

We are pleased to report that much progress has been made on the goals set in the 2022-23 Impact Report, as detailed below. Continuing on this, more work is planned to increase the number of schools taking part in the Unlock Oxford Rural programme, as well as with our digital outreach. In addition to this, three new goals have been set for 2024-25 and beyond, working to expand our reach in practical and achievable ways.

2023 Goals

- Conduct a data-driven reprioritisation of schools
- Increase the number of schools offered a residential opportunity in Leicester and Derby (up 50%)
- Double the number of schools on the Unlock Oxford Rural programme (up 62%)
- Enhance delivery of digital outreach (work ongoing)

1

Continue the successes of national outreach engagement through The Big Think Competition.

After entries to the Big Think Competition increased twofold in 2024, it is paramount that we maintain this momentum whilst also exploring ways to recognise as many strong entries as possible with awards and recognition. We hope this will forge a link with a broader range of prospective students which may in turn increase applications down the line.

2

Expand and investigate additional routes for digital outreach

Following a number of successful online initiatives in 2023-24, we hope to investigate and expand digital resources for our link regions and beyond. Finding ways to maximise technology to reach a wide range of capable students will be key in driving engagement as information access moves beyond traditional media.

3

Explore new ways to work with schools in the furthest reaches of our link regions

For many schools in North Derbyshire and the Peak District, a day visit to Oxford is not practical. Whilst we have previously worked with these schools through outbound visits, we hope to explore options that would allow in-person visits to the College.

Acknowledgements

The outreach work that takes place at St Edmund Hall would not be possible without the support of many individuals. A huge thank you to the teachers, staff and students at the many schools with whom we work.

Thank you also to all the tutors and fellows at St Edmund Hall, especially those who have generously given their time to deliver taster sessions, join tutor panels and contribute to the Big Think Competition.

We would also like to thank our wonderful student ambassadors, as well as key staff including Sue, Belinda, Molly, Craig, Claire, Laura, Scarlett, Alice, Melody and Robert.

Thank you also to the Library, the Lodge, the Servery, the Kitchen, and the Housekeeping and Maintenance teams for all their work in making visits to St Edmund Hall such a success.

Luke Maw
Rebecca Smithson
August 2024



St Edmund Hall
University of Oxford

Outreach & Admissions Office
St Edmund Hall
Queen's Lane
Oxford
OX1 4AR

schools.liaison@seh.ox.ac.uk
seh.ac/outreach



@sehaccess