



# Outreach Impact Report

2024-2025



St Edmund  
Hall

# Introduction

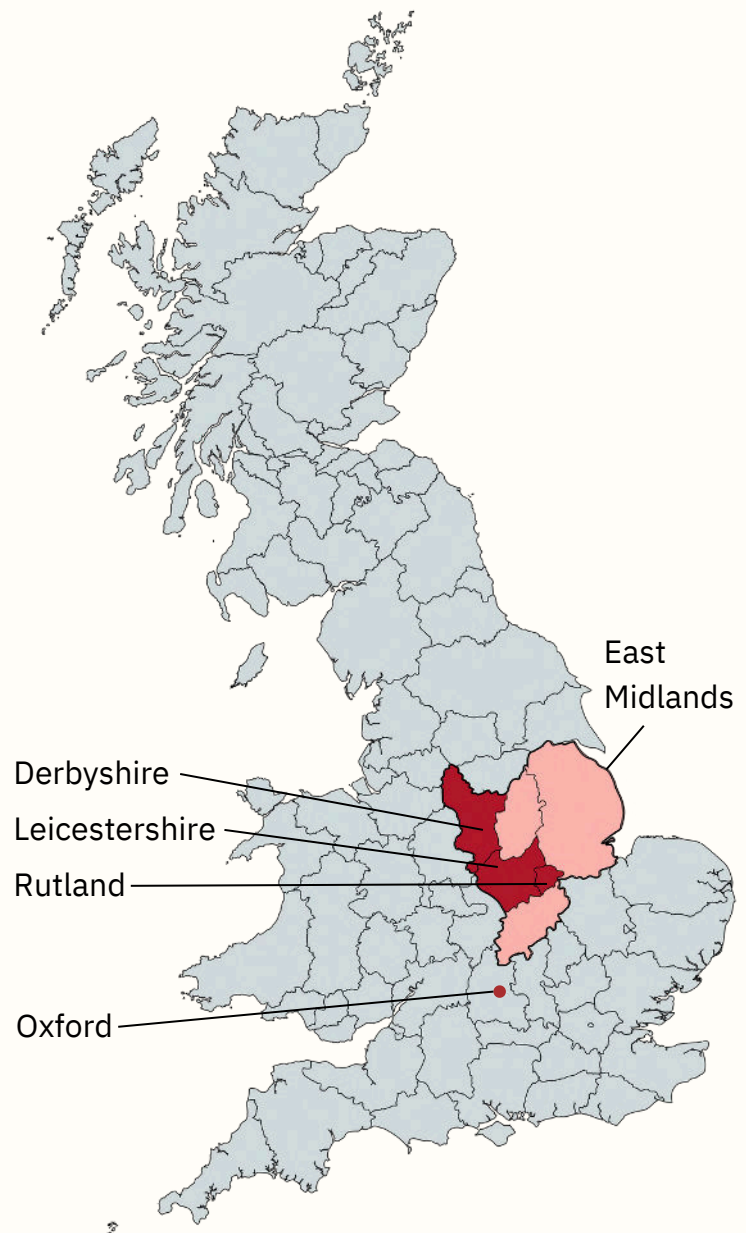


As part of the University's Regionalisation Programme, the College works primarily with state schools in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland.

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.

Despite staff absences that saw no formal outreach take place from October to December 2024, the College has still seen growth in several outreach programmes:

- Over 2500 students were reached
- Entries to the Big Think Competition increased by 12%
- 209 attended the Unlock Oxford residentials, 12% more than 2024
- 168 hours of volunteer time contributed by ambassadors
- 80 offer holders attended Offer Holder Day, with 100% leaving with a positive impression of St Edmund Hall
- Over 1500 prospective students visited during Open Days



This report covers the period 1 September 2024 to 31 July 2025.



# 221

students taking part in the Rural strand

# 7

schools involved in the Rural strand

“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 strand of Unlock Oxford offers 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.

Plans are underway to expand the provision for targeted rural schools, with a revised programme due to launch in 2025-2026. This will see Year 11 students take part in an enhanced visit to Oxford which will introduce students to Oxford colleges, A-level choices, provide a subject taster session, and include a critical thinking session that reflects the Oxford tutorial style of teaching.



# 209

students attended  
the residentials

(12% more than 2024)

# 10

schools participated  
in the residential  
programme

# 4

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

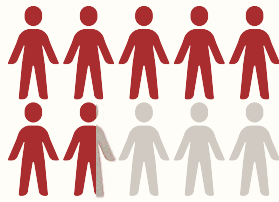
“This is the best  
residential and  
outreach  
programme I have  
been involved with  
across both Oxford  
and Cambridge, in  
over 20 years.”

– Executive Director of  
Post-16 Education,  
Spencer Academies Trust

# Unlock Oxford

## Urban

In March 2025, 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 91% of attendees meeting at least one measure of disadvantage.



### 66%

of attendees live in areas  
of **socioeconomic  
deprivation**

(Acorn 4 & 5 or IMD 1 & 2)

### 82%

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

(70% before)

Students experienced an expanded timetable compared to previous years, with further chances to enjoy academic sessions and tasters. Year 10 enjoyed a workshop from Oxplore, 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.

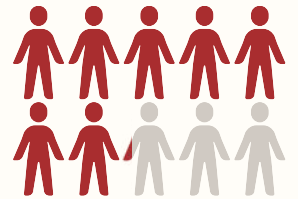
### 91%

of attendees met at least  
**one measure of  
disadvantage**

(65% 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:**

### 89%

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

(42% before)

**YEAR 12 ATTENDEES:**

### 75%

felt they had a **good  
understanding of the  
Oxford application process**

(11% before)

# 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 various workshops focusing on admissions tests and interviews. This proved invaluable to students, with 95% 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 2025, thirteen questions, representing many of the subjects offered at St Edmund Hall, were available to challenge students.

With 272 entries, the competition has grown further, with entrants hailing from Falkirk to Plymouth. The quality of entries was exceptional and 15 winners were awarded prizes, with a further 30 students recognised with a special commendation for their efforts, more than ever before. A Prizewinners' Day was held in June, allowing the winners to meet tutors who marked their entries, 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

13

subject-specific  
questions on  
offer

272

entries

(12% more than 2024)

22%

of entrants lived either in  
an area of higher  
deprivation (IMD quintiles  
1 and 2)



# Offer-Holders' Day

In February 2025, 80 offer-holders from across the UK were welcomed to St Edmund Hall for Offer-Holders' Day.

As interview candidates do 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.

**100%**

of surveyed attendees left with a **positive impression** of St Edmund Hall

**84%**

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

Offer-holders were able to hear from the Outreach & Admissions Manager, 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, and hope to see them begin their studies at St Edmund Hall soon!



“Really amazing! Fell in love with Teddy Hall immediately.”

“We really appreciated the opportunity to hear more about Teddy Hall from students and staff, to see more of the buildings, and particularly to meet some of the other offer-holders.”

– 2025 Offer-Holders



# School Visits

In 2024-2025, 38 schools and colleges visited St Edmund Hall from our link regions. Each school received a programme of sessions tailored to their needs, and groups from Year 8 to Year 13 benefited from first-hand experience of an Oxford college. Several schools received a hands-on academic workshop as part of their visit, with others visiting one of the University museums.

This year, the Outreach team delivered 62 in-school sessions in Leicestershire and Derbyshire, covering a number of topics, including introductions to university and Oxbridge, student finance, informed A-level choices, and interviews. Every autumn, the team visits schools across our link regions for a week as part of an Outreach Roadshow, alongside four student ambassadors. In October 2024, we visited nine schools across Leicestershire and Derbyshire, interacting with over 600 students.

Staff absence in autumn and College sittings of examinations in May and June resulted in a lower number of inbound and outbound school visits in the 2024-2025 academic year.



38

visits to St  
Edmund Hall

62

sessions in  
schools

2

outbound  
roadshows

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

– Year 10 teacher, Leicestershire

# 66

trained student  
ambassadors

# 168

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.”

– Executive Director of  
Post-16 Education,  
Spencer Academies  
Trust

# 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 2024-2025 academic year, 14 new ambassadors were recruited, totalling 66 ambassadors for the academic year. In total, approximately 168 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 June 2025, the annual Student Ambassador Formal took place, with 14 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.

A huge thank you to all our ambassadors for their fantastic work over the last academic year!



# Primary School Twinning

In collaboration with the Oxford Hub, St Edmund Hall has partnered with a local primary school: Orchard Meadow in Blackbird Leys. This school serves an area of high socioeconomic disadvantage, with many pupils having never left the estate where they live. The twinning programme is comprised of in-school mentoring and enrichment visits held at St Edmund Hall.

Students from the undergraduate and postgraduate communities have signed up to deliver mentoring sessions at Orchard Meadow, with 96 of these taking place over the 2024-2025 academic year. In May, a group of Year 3 students visited St Edmund Hall and enjoyed a treasure hunt, an engaging talk on fossils from Dr Luke Parry and then headed over the road to explore the Botanic Gardens. It was a '5-star trip' according to one of the pupils and was very well received by senior staff at the school.

"I have really enjoyed taking time out of my week to volunteer and read with the students at Orchard Meadow. It is a great opportunity to get out of the Oxford bubble, doing something outside of my degree whilst simultaneously giving back!"

– Abi Lovelock-Blair (2024, Geography)

5

SEH students  
trained as  
volunteers

96

mentoring  
sessions  
delivered

42%

of pupils eligible for Free  
School Meals, significantly  
higher than national  
average of 26%



“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*



# Acknowledgements

The outreach work that takes place at St Edmund Hall would not be possible without the support of so 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, Chiara, Belinda, Molly, Craig, Laura, Claire, Scarlett, Andrew, 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  
Calum Stewart  
August 2025



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*University of Oxford*

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