

Sutton Trust Summer Schools

Targeting (2014 cohort) and Progression (2012 cohort) Report

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Introduction

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) has received a grant from the Sutton Trust to develop and operate a Common Evaluation Framework for the Trust's programmes. The aims of the framework are:

1. *Adding value to programmes, both through effective evaluation and monitoring, and through enabling learning between programmes*
2. *Benchmarking costs and impact*
3. *Helping to build the evidence of what works most effectively*
4. *Creating long term data sets on interventions, and promoting innovative research and insights in areas of interest to the Trust and its research partners*

This report addresses these aims through:

1. Monitoring and evaluating the **targeting** of the Summer Schools programme in 2014
2. Monitoring the **progression** to higher education of the programme's 2012 cohort

The targeting analysis will look at both applicants and attendees of the programme. Analysis of applications will indicate whether the programme is reaching the schools and students at which it is aimed, and whether there are any 'gaps' in reach where promotion of the programme could be better targeted in future years.

Analysis of attendees will indicate whether places are being offered in accordance with the programme's admission criteria, and will show which types of students are accessing the programme.

Sutton Trust Summer Schools

The Sutton Trust Summer Schools are residential programmes for Year 12 students from UK state-maintained schools. They are targeted at students who will be the first generation in their family to attend university. Attendees have high academic potential but might not have the support to realise that potential. The Summer Schools give students a taste of university life, comprising subject-specific academic sessions, social activities and skills- and information-based sessions designed to prepare students to make a successful university application.

Summer Schools are offered across a wide range of subject streams in arts, social sciences and sciences, including medicine and veterinary medicine at some institutions. Sessions are delivered by academic staff at the institutions, often replicating the kind of study that a student would undertake in their first year as an undergraduate.

Institutions are supported in delivering the Summer Schools by undergraduate student 'ambassadors'. These current undergraduates assist with many elements of the Summer Schools and give attendees an authentic perspective on student life at a research-led university. Many of these ambassadors have less advantaged backgrounds themselves, and some are former Summer School attendees. They play an important role in helping attendees to see themselves as potential university students.

In 2014 the Summer School was offered at ten institutions: the University of Bristol, the University of Cambridge, Durham University, the University of Edinburgh, Imperial College, King's College London, the University of Nottingham, the Royal Veterinary College, the University of St Andrews and University College London (UCL).

Applications

The application process

The application period for the 2014 Summer Schools was January – March 2014. Applications are made through an online application portal which in 2014 was administrated by UCAS and hosted on the Sutton Trust website.

Applicants select which Summer School institution and academic subject stream they would like to attend at the point of application. The first Summer School of the year took place in early July and the last at the end of August, with residential weeks spread through these months. Four of the ten institutions offered more than one residential week, with different subject streams available each week. Applicant choice of institution may have been constrained by applicant availability over the summer in relation to their preferred subject streams.

Applicants are only able to apply to one Summer School and if their application is unsuccessful they are not considered by other institutions.

Following the end of the application period, UCAS provides each institution with the applications to their institution. The datasheet includes variables illustrating whether the applicant has met each of the eligibility criteria.

Applicant characteristics

In total data was provided on 9,778 applicants for the 2014 Sutton Trust Summer Schools. Of these, 1,836 students (18.8%) attended a Summer School at one of the ten institutions.

Figure 1: Proportion of applicants going on to attend a Summer School

In keeping with previous years, female students were more likely to apply to the Summer Schools than male students. In 2014 there were 6,511 female applicants (66.6%) and 3,267

male applicants (33.4%). This proportion was reflected in the numbers of successful applicants, with 1,190 females (64.8% of successful applicants) and 646 males (35.2% of successful applicants) attending a Summer School.

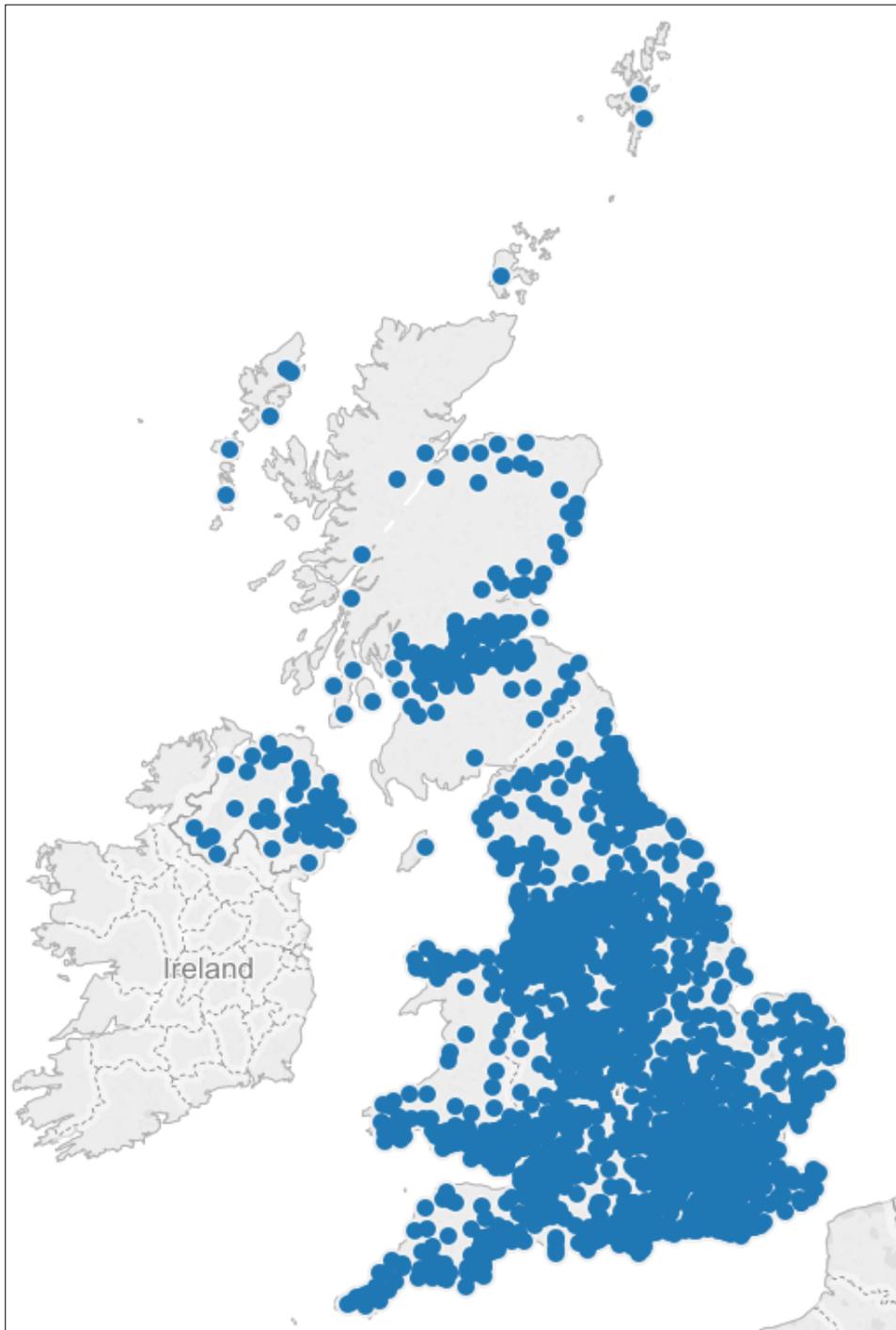
***Figure 2: Number of applicants
by gender***

***Figure 3: Number of attendees
by gender***

Information on ethnicity and disability is also collected on application. As with gender, the distribution of ethnicity and disability status was very similar amongst the pool of applicants and those selected as attendees.

Applications came from all areas of the UK, as illustrated below. The map uses applicant 'outcode', which is the first part of the postcode. Each dot indicates that there is at least one applicant in that outcode area; many will have several applicants.

Figure 4: All applicants mapped by outcode (first part of postcode)



Admissions criteria

The Sutton Trust Summer Schools are targeted at applicants meeting “all or most” of the following criteria:

- will be the first generation in their family to attend university
- have achieved at least 5 As or A*s at GCSE, 5 credit passes at Standard Grade or equivalent
- are taking subjects in relation to the subject stream they are applying for
- attend schools or colleges with a low overall A-Level, Higher/Advanced Higher (or equivalent) point score and/or schools or colleges with low progression rates to higher education
- come from neighbourhoods with low overall progression rates to higher education or high levels of socio economic deprivation
- are (or have been) looked after, accommodated or in care
- are under the age of 18 at the time of the summer school

<http://www.suttontrust.com/programmes/uk-summer-school-2/eligibility-selection-criteria/>

UCAS (as administrators of the online application process) provides institutions with the information provided by applicants at the point of application, including a binary (yes/no) indicator of whether they meet five of these eligibility criteria:

- whether neither parent/carer has a degree (i.e. if the applicant has answered no to the question “Have either of your parents/carers completed a university degree course or equivalent e.g. BA, BSc or higher? This includes degrees completed in the UK, overseas and/or by distance learning”)
- whether a student has achieved at least 5 As or A*s at GCSE, or 5 credit passes at Standard Grade (where students have alternative qualifications the binary indicator is blank and full details are provided)
- whether the student’s current school’s A level points score per student (averaged over the past three years) is below the national average over those three years; or for schools in Scotland whether the percentage of the S4 cohort achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 6 or higher at S5 (averaged over the past three years) is below the national average over those three years. (If data are not available, for example if the school is new, the binary indicator is blank)
- whether the student’s home postcode is in quintile 1 or 2 on the POLAR2 classification (which measures the participation rate of young people in higher education (HE) by Census Area Statistic ward)¹
- whether the student answered yes to the question “Have you ever spent a period of three months or more in care?”

These criteria will form the main part of our analysis of Summer School admissions.

¹ Some current UK postcodes, for example those for recently built housing, do not appear in the POLAR2 classification. In the data provided by UCAS these postcodes were erroneously scored as 0 (i.e. not meeting that criterion) rather than marked as missing data. Therefore we have treated them the same way in this analysis to replicate the information provided to institutions.

It should be noted that these five binary criteria do not map to the full range of admission criteria published by the Sutton Trust. In particular, institutions will make qualitative decisions about whether the subjects an applicant is studying at A-level or equivalent are sufficiently close to those required to study their chosen subject stream at that institution. UCAS does not provide data on the progression rates of schools and many institutions will use data sourced by their Widening Participation department from government datasets and/or their own institutional data on schools to inform their decisions alongside the data provided by UCAS. Additionally, some institutions choose to use additional measures of home postcode deprivation, such as the Mosaic classification provided by Experian.

Alongside the student application, teachers have the opportunity to provide a statement of contextual information that may support the application (for example, if a student has not achieved the required grades at GCSE due to risk factors at home but has the potential to succeed in HE, or has a parent who holds a university degree but they are no longer in touch with that parent, the statement can be an opportunity to explain this).

Therefore, while we would expect institutions to make broadly similar decisions based on the five criteria provided to them, there may be good reasons for some variation within these criteria.

Applicants meeting the admissions criteria

Out of 9,778 applicants to the Summer Schools, only 83 students (0.8%) reported that they had been in care for more than three months. Moreover, less than half of the students who had been in care resided in a lower progression area (POLAR2) (28 students, 34%) and less than half attended low performing schools (38 students, 46%). Therefore we would only expect a very small number of applicants to meet all five eligibility criteria.

Figure 5 below illustrates the number of criteria met by applicants to the programme. The majority meet two or three of the criteria.

Figure 5: Percentage of applicants meeting 'n' eligibility criteria

With reference to individual criteria, the most likely to be met was the grades requirement, with 85.5% of applicants having the required grades at GCSE or Standard Grade. This indicates that applicants could reasonably aspire to attend a Summer School institution for degree-level study, given that their current academic attainment is generally high.

59.5% of applicants met the 'first generation' criterion and a similar proportion came from schools with lower than average A level or Higher Grade attainment at 54.8%. 29.9% of applicants resided in POLAR2 quintile 1 or 2.

Figure 6: Proportion of applicants meeting each eligibility criterion

The proportion of applicants meeting each of the criteria was evenly distributed across institutions, as indicated by the low standard deviations in table 1 below. (We have not reported on the 'in care' criterion here due to the very low number of students meeting this criterion.)

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of percentage of applicants meeting criteria

Criterion	Mean percentage of applicants meeting criterion across institutions	Standard deviation of percentage of applicants meeting criterion across institutions
Grades	82.2%	5.7%
First generation	63.0%	3.7%
Low school attainment	58.3%	4.3%
POLAR2 Q1/2	30.5%	3.1%

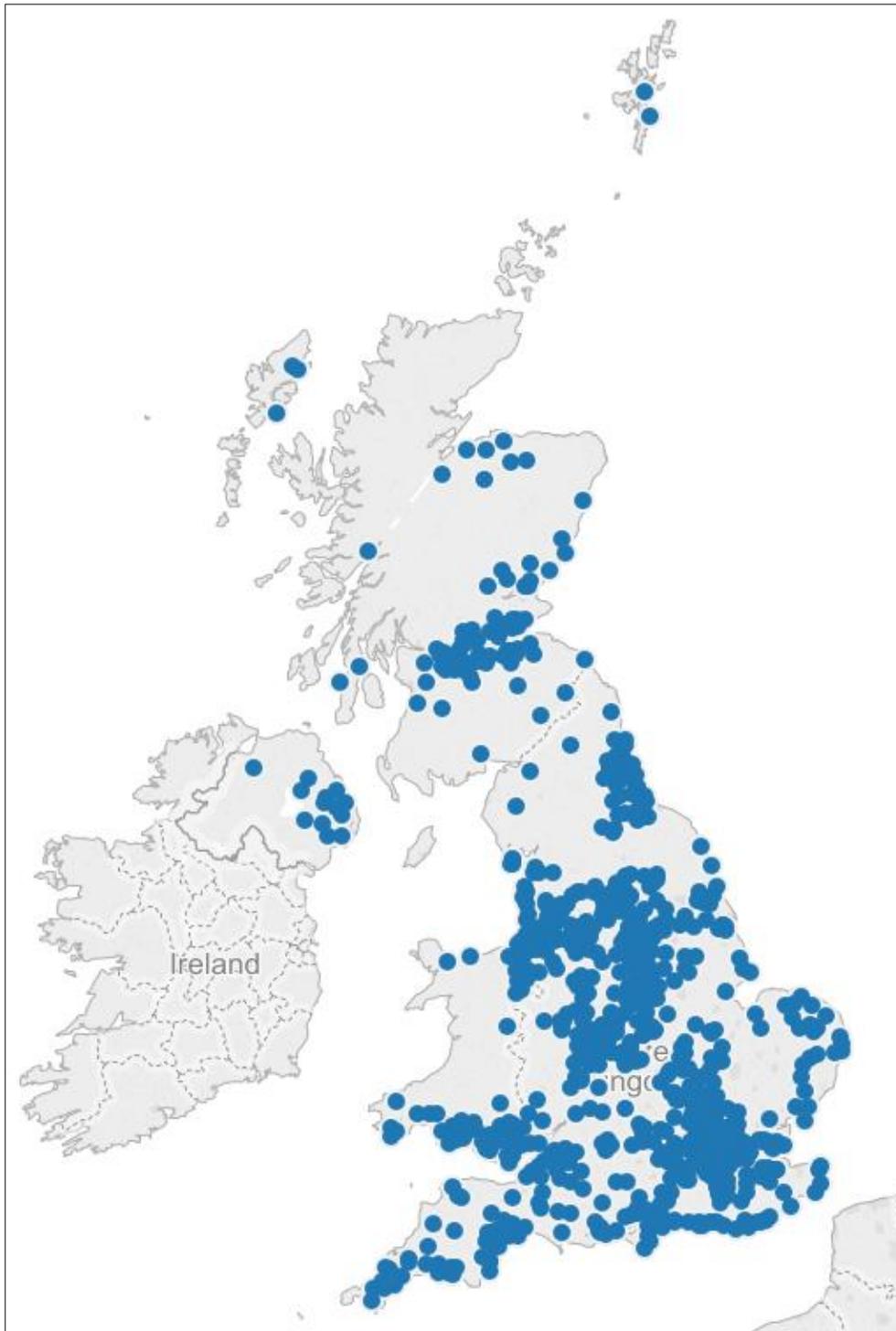
Attendees

The Summer Schools offered by the ten institutions vary in size, with three institutions (Durham, Imperial and Nottingham) offering two separate residential weeks and Cambridge offering four.

Figure 7: Number of attendees at each institution

As with applications, programme attendees came from all areas of the UK. The map uses applicant 'outcode', which is the first part of the postcode. Each dot indicates that there is at least one attendee in that outcode area.

Figure 8: Attendees mapped by outcode (first part of postcode)



Attendees meeting the admissions criteria

Looking at the number of eligibility criteria met by attendees at the Summer Schools, we see a shift in distribution from the applicant data. While the majority of applicants met two or three of the eligibility criteria, the majority of attendees are meeting three or four (as discussed above, it is very rare for any applicant to meet all five criteria).

Figure 9: Percentage of attendees meeting 'n' eligibility criteria

This is a positive picture with 77% of attendees meeting at least three eligibility criteria.

Figure 10 below shows the percentage of attendees meeting each of the eligibility criteria for the programme overall.

Figure 10: Percentage of attendees meeting each eligibility criterion

Mirroring the characteristics at the point of application, the most likely criterion to be met was the grades requirement, with 96% of attendees having the required grades at GCSE or Standard Grade. During observations and other conversations, we were informed that institutions will often treat the grades criterion as necessary for participation, as if an applicant has not achieved these grades then they are unlikely to meet the requirements for undergraduate study at the institution. Exceptions to this 'rule' could be made where an applicant has extenuating circumstances for not achieving the required grades, as evidenced by teachers' supporting statements.

Targeting conclusions

Overall the targeting of the Summer Schools seems to be working well. University admissions is a competitive, high stakes process for students and as such, we would always expect to see applications from students who do not meet the eligibility criteria but are eager to access any support available in obtaining a university place.

Statistical analysis (not presented here) supports what has been shown in this report: that students attending a Summer School meet significantly more of the eligibility criteria than applicants who do not attend. This difference between the proportion of applicants and attendees shows that institutions are making choices about which students to invite to attend the programme in the right direction, based on the eligibility criteria. To further highlight this the 'first generation' criterion was met by 85% of attendees; this means that over 1500 students whose parents haven't completed a university degree now have first-hand experience of a leading research-led institution.

The students who attended the Summer School in 2014 will be making applications to university this year. The Common Evaluation Framework will track these students' higher education outcomes to further evaluate the success of the Summer Schools in later reports.

Progression: 2012 cohort

Data were provided by UCAS on the progression to higher education of the 2012 Summer Schools cohort. Students in this cohort attended a Summer School in July – August 2012, applied for university places in late 2012, sat their A levels or Higher Grades mid-2013 and took up places at university in autumn 2013.

It should be noted that in the data provided by UCAS, any cells with counts of less than 3 were reported as 0 and all other counts were rounded to the nearest 5. Therefore all values in this report should be considered as a representative approximation of the true figures, based on the best available data at this stage.

Seven institutions offered Summer Schools in 2012: the University of Bristol, the University of Cambridge, Durham University, Imperial College London, the University of Nottingham, the University of St Andrews and University College London (UCL).

In total, 1,215 students attended a Summer School, the largest being in Cambridge (425 students) and the smallest at UCL (40 students). Table 2 shows the number of students attending each Summer School institution.

Table 2: The number of Summer School attendees by institution in 2012

Institution	Attendees
Bristol	155
Cambridge	425
Durham	170
Imperial	95
Nottingham	200
St Andrews	130
UCL	40
Total	1215

Of the students who attended a Summer School, 1,010 were identified in the UCAS database. This implies that around 210 students did not make an application to a UK university for 2013, as UCAS is the sole route for application to UK HE institutions (although a minority of students may not have been matched due to a change of name between Summer School application and UCAS application). The students not identified may have decided to take a gap year and make an application to university for 2014 after having received their results, may have decided to move straight into work or another option.

Overall, 89% of students who attended a Summer School and made a UCAS application were accepted (i.e. took up a place) at an HE institution, with a proportion of these being accepted to Russell Group universities and Summer School institutions.

Russell Group institutions

After attending the Summer School, **94% of those who applied to university chose to apply to at least one Russell Group institution** (78% of the total cohort). 83% of university applicants² received an offer from at least one Russell Group institution and **58% of university applicants (585 students) were accepted (i.e. took up a place) at a Russell Group institution.**

Figure 11: Percentage of university applicants from the Summer School cohort: Russell Group institutions

² Where the phrase 'university applicants' is used this refers to students from the Summer Schools cohort who chose to apply to university for 2013 (not the total population of UK university applicants).

Summer School host institutions

51% of those making applications chose to apply to the institution where they had attended the Summer School (42% of the total cohort). Around half of those students, 26% of university applicants, received an offer from their host institution. 16% of university applicants made the offer from their host institution their conditional firm offer (i.e. their first choice of university destination were they to meet the requirements of their offer) and a further 3% of applicants used the offer from their host institution as an insurance offer. In total, **125 students who had attended a Summer School went on to accept a place at their host institution** (10% of the cohort and 12% of those who made an application to university that year).

Figure 12: Percentage of university applicants from the Summer School cohort: host institution

A possible issue of concern around Summer School attendance is that as the scheme is intended to develop and raise aspirations; students may become unrealistic in this and apply to universities where they have limited chance of meeting the requirements of an admissions offer. We looked at the rate of students accepted at institutions through clearing as a proxy measure of students not meeting the requirements of their firm offers.

Across the Summer School institutions 7.92% of programme attendees who made a university application were accepted through clearing³ (with 31.25% of clearing applications being made to a Russell Group university). The rate of applications via clearing for all UCAS applicants nationally was 8.54% in the 2013 cycle, so from this we can infer that students who attend a Summer School met the conditions of their offer at a slightly higher rate than the general population and therefore were not making unrealistic applications.

³ None of those who had attended St Andrews were accepted through clearing – perhaps because they were more likely to be taking Scottish Highers rather than A levels and therefore more likely to hold unconditional offers.

The Summer School experience

As part of the Common Evaluation Framework we conducted a survey of Summer School attendees following their residential programme. Full analysis of the responses will be presented in a forthcoming report. Here we present a selection of responses to the question “Please add any further comments or thoughts about the Summer School you have attended, and university application”.