

First Generation

A year of impact
2021/22

“THANK YOU SO MUCH. WITH THE SUPPORT OF FIRST GENERATION MY UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE WAS TRANSFORMED. I’VE URGED MY FRIENDS DECIDING ON WHERE TO STUDY AT UNIVERSITY TO JOIN OUR FIRST GENERATION FAMILY AT MANCHESTER MET, AND THEY DON’T REGRET IT.”

Esther, LLB (Hons), year one



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Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan is an outstanding university with a genuine commitment to delivering high-quality education for all those with the potential to succeed.

As one of the largest universities in the UK, located in a vibrant and cosmopolitan city, and with state-of-the-art facilities, it is an inspiring place to study, realise ambitions and fulfil potential.

With students placed at the heart of everything we do, Manchester Met continues to deliver an excellent education and a great university experience that is transforming lives and this year has been no exception.

Thanks to our community of supporters, alumni and friends, philanthropic giving is enabling us to respond to the wider issues of diversity and inclusion across our society.

Through the creation of scholarships for students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, for first generation students, and for those with care experience, we are seeking to have an even greater impact.

Manchester Met has a variety of donor-funded initiatives. The young people that these support – given the right opportunities – are the future talent of entrepreneurs, artists, journalists, politicians, policymakers, and researchers who will go on to make a positive contribution to their society and in turn to the next generation.



In the recent results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) we were delighted to be recognised as one of the very best universities in the UK for the quality and power of our research in areas such as art and design (2nd), sport (6th), English (8th) and education (9th).

These results cement our position as a leading modern university and place us on a par with research-intensive institutions in terms of the volume and quality of our world leading research.

We are also proud to have achieved the silver award in the Teaching Excellence Framework, see an increase in our scores in the National Student Survey, and be named the UK's greenest university as ranked by the People and Planet sustainability league tables.

We are extremely delighted and grateful for all we have achieved together so far, but this is just the beginning, and we are determined to do more.

Our purpose is to transform lives through the power of education and research, and we cannot do this without your support.



First Generation Scholarship Programme

Since its launch to schools and colleges in 2017, the First Generation Scholarship Programme has been about getting talented young people from less advantaged backgrounds across the North West, where over half of our undergraduate students come from, into university and onto a successful career path.

The [award-winning](#)¹ Programme delivers practical pre-entry support and application guidance to Year 12 and Year 13 students to help them access and transition to university, including residential and non-residential 'University Taster' sessions, and peer mentorship from students and alumni with similar life experience.

Once enrolled with us here at Manchester Metropolitan, Scholars receive a cash bursary to help with living costs and expenses related to their course, as well as bespoke employability opportunities and ongoing support from our dedicated First Generation team.

Through tailored on-course support, the Programme has an excellent track record in student retention; encouraging students to achieve their ambitions, successfully complete

their studies, and be ready to make their mark after graduation.

Enjoying a university experience which is relevant to a student's current interests and future goals encourages a real sense of belonging.

Developing supportive relationships with peers, fostering meaningful interaction, and building on key skills, confidence and a sense of identity, the First Generation Scholarship Programme is forming a long-lasting community that students will be a part of for decades to come.

We are delighted to present our annual impact report detailing how the First Generation Scholarship Programme is truly helping to shape lives and highlighting some of the notable successes from the past year.

¹ [Awards Success for First Generation November 2021](#)

Progress and achievements

2021/22 was a successful year for First Generation and last September we welcomed 127 new Scholars onto the Programme.

The Programme continues to grow its reach and impact year-on-year and since welcoming our very first cohort of Scholars in September 2018, First Generation has provided vital support to 422 Scholars at Manchester Metropolitan University.

This summer, 71 First Generation students completed their studies and graduated as Class of 2022 Scholars. As they join our global alumni community of 330,000, many will now be taking the first steps in their careers, through either full-time employment, placements, or internships, while some have decided to continue their studies at postgraduate level with us here at Manchester Met or elsewhere.

This means we will be able to access comprehensive and valuable national graduate outcomes data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which will enable us to evaluate the Programme's impact on Scholars' progression.

We know that students from lower socio-economic groups tend to be more likely to drop out of their

degree courses and are less likely to pursue postgraduate study – Manchester Met addresses this head on through initiatives like the award-winning First Generation Scholarship Programme. 91.3% of the cohort joining us in 2020 progressed from first year to second year. This was better than a comparator group of similar students (86.8%) and Manchester Met overall (84.3%).

The First Generation Scholarship Programme provides opportunities for talented students who, without additional support, may not benefit from higher education. Learning how to question, solve problems and to think creatively are valuable and life-enriching skills.

We continue to champion equality, diversity, and inclusion through a transformative student journey, with 35% of undergraduate students and 70% of First Generation Scholars enrolled at Manchester Met, identifying as from a Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic background. Furthermore, 15% of students who joined us in 2021/22 identify as having a disability.

We are recognised as leaders in the sector for helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Over half our UK undergraduate students are among the first in their family to progress to higher education, we enrol the highest number of estranged students and care leavers when compared to all other Universities in the UK, and almost 40% of our students come from families with a low-income background (annual income of less than £25,000), and this rises to 65% when looking at First Generation Scholars alone.

In 2021, the nationwide professional organisation supporting those involved in widening access to Higher Education, NEON (National Education Opportunities Network), awarded the First Generation Scholarship Programme the Award for Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Progression). Hot on the heels of this win we were also successful in the 2021 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, in the category of Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year.

These accolades are welcome recognition from across the sector of the dynamic programme we have developed; however, our First Generation Scholars, and their stories, remain central to everything we do.



GOOD HONOURS

Our first cohort of 38 Scholars, who joined us in 2018, graduated. 78.9% achieved good honours, compared with 75.8% for a comparator group of similar students*.



PROGRESSION SUCCESS

91.3% of the cohort joining us in 2020 progressed from first year to second year. This was better than a comparator group of similar students (86.8%) and Manchester Met overall (84.3%)*.

84%

of our Scholars are from areas with low participation in higher education, compared to 45% for all other students*.

*Manchester Metropolitan University
Strategic Planning Office, 2021.

Engagement

The past year has been a time for positive change and progress towards our mission to deliver an excellent education and a great university experience for our students, which transforms their lives and leads to successful careers.

We have witnessed unprecedented change within the higher education sector over the last few years, and political, economic, and technological developments continue to make the innovation that universities generate more important than ever.

Scholars on the First Generation Programme continue to fill us with pride by showing their determination, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness. During the last academic year, they have demonstrated their creativity by taking part in virtual projects; showed their diligence by continuing to engage in online activity; and acted as exceptional ambassadors for the University.

To reflect the changing needs of Scholars in relation to the challenges they faced because of the pandemic, our Widening Participation Team added a number of workshops to the Programme, including Improving Motivation and Managing Isolation; Confidence; Wellbeing (with a specific focus on easing out of lockdown); and a number of virtual social activities.

Whilst we have continued to capitalise on the flexibility which digital and virtual activity can give us, this year our Scholars have also enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect face-to-face.

Students from across the entire Programme were offered the opportunity to take part in a donor-funded London workplace residential, which comprised of two weeks of exciting activities from business visits to cultural outings which gave our Scholars the chance to develop their social capital, along with their employability and professional skills.

Alumni and stakeholders of the University have also supported First Generation Scholars by hosting industry panel sessions, and taking part in the mentoring programme.

London workplace residential

University isn't just about academia, it's about the wider experiences, the contacts you make, the communities you become part of, and connecting with people who are willing to share their experiences and offer helpful careers advice.

During this year's London Residential a variety of workplace visits, cultural activities, and time to socialise with other Scholars, former students, and professionals in the city, helped to equip students with life experience, networks, and valuable insights.

This combination will go on to help them secure graduate-level employment, giving them the confidence to consider work and placement options they may not have previously contemplated.

Students visited a plethora of incredible organisations, including:

Addleshaw Goddard, Amazon, Barclays, BUPA, Christies, Citi Bank, Dentons, hVivo, Ento Cycle, Mayer Brown, Pentland, State Street Global, the Supreme Court, Vodafone, and Walt Disney

all with the aim to widen their knowledge of the types of roles and careers that exist.

"It was great to meet a group of Manchester Met's First Generation Scholars and give them an overview of the many and varied exciting career opportunities available to graduates at one of the largest financial services organisations, State Street. It's a pleasure to be associated with the excellent First Generation programme."

Tim Carey, BA (Hons) Social Policy, 1995, Vice President State Street Global



Amazon workplace visit, June 2022

First Generation Scholars

The following pages contain quotes and updates from a number of our First Generation Scholars on their experience of the Programme and their first year of study here at Manchester Metropolitan, as well as messages of thanks to all those who have supported them.

“The First Generation Scholarship Programme has impacted me in the best way possible, and without it I think I would’ve been lost. The cash bursary was a big financial help that provided me with the ability to get materials for my course and helped me adjust to university life. I have completed my first year with grades I am proud of, whilst knowing I have the ability to live on my own and provide for myself, without relying on help from my mum.

“Initially, I was worried about the transition into university as I completed my college studies at the peak of Covid-19. But, interacting with the First Generation Programme put me at ease because I met so many people who were in the same position as me. The Programme provided me with ways to meet people and gave me the security of knowing that if I had any issues I had support.

“I would just like to say a big thank you to those who support First Generation. Without your donations I wouldn’t have been on the Programme which has been such an important part of my first year here at Manchester Met!”

Hannah, LLB (Hons), year one



“HONESTLY, WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT, IT WOULDN’T BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO BE ENJOYING UNIVERSITY AS MUCH AS I AM AND HAVE ACCESS TO BETTER TECHNOLOGICAL WAYS OF LEARNING.”

Reece, BSc (Hons) Biology, year one

“I REALLY APPRECIATE THE FIRST GENERATION DONORS AND THE SUPPORT THEY HAVE PROVIDED. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A HUGE THANK YOU, AS IT HAS GREATLY ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE AT UINI AND INCREASED MY OPPORTUNITIES.”

Farhana, BA (Hons) Business Management, year one



"The First Generation Scholarship Programme has allowed me to achieve my full potential. Knowing that I always have a very generous team of supporters helps me know that I have no limits stopping me from achieving anything that I would love to accomplish.

"The £1,000 bursary has allowed me to do things that I never thought I would have been able to do. Having access to public transport, being able to afford essentials for university and everyday living, i.e., a laptop, clothing, food, and transport, which has really benefitted me. I am so appreciative of this opportunity.

"I want to express my gratitude to the donors. Your contributions have made it much easier to get things done and thrust me forward. I thank you sincerely for your support and for your desire to help me succeed in this venture. You are the fuel to my fire, and I could not be more grateful than I am to you now in this moment. Truly, thank you."

Sadia, BA (Hons) Primary Education, year one

"The First Generation Scholarship Programme has helped massively during my first year at Manchester Met. It has allowed me to focus on my studies and to purchase equipment needed for me to study successfully on the course. Settling into University has been one of my big achievements this year, helped by getting involved in extra opportunities such as joining the University Boxing society, which has been an amazing opportunity where I've been able to help coach people and train in a sport that I'm passionate about.

"I had a brilliant opportunity to go to the House of Lords Impact of Philanthropy Celebration and network with alumni and supporters of the University. This was a high-profile event where we all had the opportunity to interact with people who we would normally never get the chance to meet, so the affect it has had on the Scholars is immense.

"I would like to thank the donors for my Scholarship and to thank them for being able to take part in all the opportunities given to me."

Matthew, BA (Hons) Fashion Design and Technology, year one

"The First Generation Scholarship Programme has helped me by giving me opportunities to develop my social skills. At the end of the week I would get reminders on what was going on in the Programme so that I could attend things I was interested in. This helped me as I was informed of events going on around the University campus, and I met new people and got to know charities and volunteering groups.

"The Programme enabled me to participate in extra courses, which enriched my skills. I am studying Primary Education with QTS so participating in Mental Health first aid was very beneficial as I will be able to use my knowledge in placement and support children.

"I adjusted well to university life but First Generation helped give me tips before I came to make the transition smoother. I attended workshops on how to be more confident, how to be active in participating in extra curricular activities and also learnt the basics of student finance.

"I am very grateful for the donors who made the Scholarship Programme possible because I now have more skills to help those in need. The money was used conscientiously, and helped me to buy textbooks to strengthen and broaden my knowledge in the Primary Education sector."

Hanifa, BA (Hons) Primary Education, year one

"I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A HUGE SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE DONORS, CEOS AND TUTORS THAT HELPED US ALL BECOME SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALS IN OUR TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!"

Sannah, BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science, year one





“The bursary eased the financial pressure during my first year of studies, allowing me to focus more on my course and secure work experience in a variety of roles. I did this by taking part in the Children Without Limits Scheme and undertaking a work placement at Salford Red Devils. This has allowed me to gain paid coaching roles and an amazing summer job at PGL in preparation for my second year. All of which I would have been unable to do without getting that initial foot in the door which this scheme has allowed me to do.”

Cian, BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science, year one

“First Generation has provided me with support as I transitioned from being a student at a college to a student at university. It has provided me with a sense of well-being, as I knew if I had a problem or wanted a person to talk to, someone from First Generation would be available. The bursary allowed me to buy resources for my teaching placement and helped me buy a new laptop, for which I am so grateful. Thank you so much! You have made a huge, positive impact on my university journey. I am so grateful!”

Amina, BA (Hons) Primary Education, year one

"I feel so much more confident, I feel like a different person compared to last year, even the travelling from home to university has helped me gain confidence. My next step is to start getting in touch with others about potential societies and groups to continue on this positive journey."

"I would like to say a big thank you for this opportunity, it is not an easy time at university, and you have helped many of us out!"

Adam, BSc (Hons) Cyber Security,
year one

"The Scholarship has enabled me to participate in activities and events which have helped me in so many ways. I took part in the Children Without Limits programme which consists of tutoring primarily school children from local schools on Saturdays for a whole year and it was so rewarding to see the progress they have made during their time with us."

"It has enabled me to share my knowledge and help these children improve in any way we could and just have fun! Such an enriching experience, I am so grateful to the donors for this opportunity of a lifetime."

Ines, MBioMed Sci (Hons)
Biomedical Science, year one



“Having a First Generation Scholarship has given me many opportunities. In particular, I now have a mentor with Addleshaw Goddard, which has given me insight into a law career and ongoing support throughout my degree. The £1,000 bursary has enabled me to buy law books for each unit and allowed me to travel to attend various law networking events, for example, the Barrister networking event hosted by Inner Temple.

“Becoming a finalist for the Undergraduate of the Year Youth Activism Award has been my biggest achievement this year. Finishing top 10 of 4,000 applicants was a huge achievement for me. Attending the Clifford Chance assessment day in Canary Wharf and meeting solicitors gave me many connections and has opened up more opportunities for me in the future.

“Gaining opportunities and work experience are vital whilst at university and the First Generation Programme has helped me get them. The Programme has also improved my application skills by attending relevant First Generation workshops.”

“THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCEL AND REACH MY FULL POTENTIAL THROUGHOUT MY DEGREE, THIS INVALUABLE SCHOLARSHIP HAS OPENED UP SO MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR ME.”

Elle-sue, LLB (Hons), year one



“The First Generation Programme has been a big help throughout my first year. The bursary has been extremely beneficial, allowing me to put money aside for a new laptop which I will be buying for second year. It has also given me a sense of security, allowing me to focus on my studies, personal life and work rather than dedicating all my time to working just to have spare money.

“The standout moments from the First Generation Programme this year was definitely the pre-entry taster sessions and social events that were held to ease us into university life. It prepared me for what to expect and gave me the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about what I would experience before starting university.

“I would like to thank the donors for making the Programme possible and allowing any students involved to have the best start to possible. Without the Programme I feel that I would have had a completely different university experience so far, so I will always be grateful for the opportunity.”

Megan, BA (Hons) Criminology and Sociology, year one

“Being on the Programme has allowed me to interact with others who had the same experience as me when heading to university, being first in our families. The bursary was very useful for me by covering my transportation costs and occasional lunch on a long day at the University.

“Being able to become a First Generation Ambassador was great for me. It allowed me to apply to work for the First Generation team via Jobs4Students website, gaining work experience like hosting events such as the Christmas networking event for other First Generation Scholars. This allowed me to work with my peers and benefit from the help given to us by the Programme through interacting with second and third year Scholars.

“I am incredibly grateful to the donors that are funding my Scholarship. The help and support I receive has been incredibly useful to me for travelling to Manchester Met and being able to socialise and have lunch with my friends, so thank you.”

Mohammed, BSc (Hons) Software Engineering, year one

Beyond the Programme

We are incredibly proud of all our First Generation Scholars, who this summer completed their undergraduate studies with us here at Manchester Metropolitan. Five of these alumni Scholars share their thanks and plans for the future below.

“The Programme has definitely increased my confidence. I have attended numerous events that allowed me to converse with people of all ages, which was something I wasn’t very good at when entering university. I feel much more prepared after all the employability sessions and have a better idea of how I will enter the working world. There were numerous benefits that I had access to with First Generation that transformed my university experience, such as the London workplace residential and the internship I did in 2021, which I’m looking forward to doing again at the BBC this summer!

“Thank you for all the support you give to the First Generation Programme. There is no doubt that my university experience would have been much more lifeless if it wasn’t for the London residential, the development sessions, the job opportunities and the seasonal socials. I have made friends that I am certain will stay in my life for a long time and the friendliness of the staff is so encouraging and has helped to bring me out of my shell.

“First Generation is such an enriching scheme and it brings together a community who would have otherwise felt out of place at university. Thanks to this support, I am the first in my family to graduate and its such a fulfilling feeling.”

Alliah, BA (Hons) History, class of 2022

"Thanks to the First Generation Scholarship Programme, I feel more confident in my profession and personally; I feel prepared and keen to explore the future, new opportunities and roles.

"I found the pre-entry activities vital in easing me into university life, managing money, and finding accommodation; the sessions really helped me build my confidence before joining university. The financial bursary was also super beneficial as it meant I was able to purchase a MacBook to assist my studies. I plan to continue studying at Manchester School of Art on a MA in Curation and then hopefully complete a PhD with the National Trust on strategies to increase young adult engagement.

"I'd like to thank Helen (Lord, who leads on the delivery of the Programme), for her commitment and welcome to the University and First Generation; I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at university and involvement with the Programme. I am so proud to say I'm a First Generation Scholar - it's one of the first things I say when introducing myself in job interviews. I'd also like to thank all the stakeholders and donors, without whom this Programme wouldn't be possible."

Flora, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, class of 2022

"The First Generation Scholarship Programme created a sense of community for me. Specifically, it allowed me to really feel part of my university and allow me to more engaged with my course. Having updates regarding new events allowed me to apply to many great opportunities, and I can't express my gratitude enough for this Programme.

"Pastoral support was the most valuable aspect. It allowed me to get additional support during my studies I wouldn't be aware of otherwise. Helen is an extremely passionate individual with a clear passion to help those studying from a first generation background. Now that I have graduated, I am going on to study for an MSc in Child and Adolescent Mental Health at UCL.

"This Programme has changed my future for the better. First Generation has provided support with my application for a place to study my dream postgraduate course, and provided financial support which was one of the crucial factors for me being able to successfully complete university. Without this Programme my life would be very different. I will always speak highly about First Generation and Manchester Met for believing in me when I didn't."

Michal, BSc (Hons) Psychology With Counselling and Psychotherapy, class of 2022



**"I AM CURRENTLY
LOOKING FOR A
COMMERCIAL
PARALEGAL ROLE, I
HAVE SEVERAL
INTERVIEWS COMING UP
WITH THE HOPES OF
QUALIFYING AS A
SOLICITOR."**

Keira, LLB (Hons), class of 2022

**"THE FIRST
GENERATION
SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAMME
ALLOWED ME TO HIT
THE GROUND
RUNNING FROM MY
FIRST DAY AT
UNIVERSITY."**

Shuab, BA (Hons) Accounting and
Finance, class of 2022



"It allowed me to have the confidence and knowledge to make the most out of all of the great things Manchester Met has to offer. At the Summer School before I came to university, development sessions and activities such as networking allowed me to understand the importance of building up soft skills and the huge impact that it can have on my job prospects. The staff on the First Generation Programme gave me the support and encouragement that I needed to dream big and reach for the stars and for this I am immensely grateful.

"The main reason I signed up for First Generation was for the financial bursary, but in reality, it wasn't the most valuable thing I gained from being on the Programme. The pre-entry activities and the regular catchups that I had with Helen before I started allowed me to come to university with no fear and just pure excitement.

"The London workplace residential also gave me an incredible insight into the world of work and how many different roles there are in such varied industries.

"I have just graduated with a first degree BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance and am so pleased to say that I will be starting my graduate career at this incredible institution as a Project Officer. I am really excited about what the future has to offer and cannot wait to get started.

"I want to say a massive thank you to all of the donors and supporters of the First Generation Scholarship Programme. Not only have you made a massive contribution to my life, but your continued support will help so many students reach their true potential. Thank you. I cannot wait to become a donor myself!"

Shuab, BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance, class of 2022



Times Higher Education
awards ceremony, 2021

“The First Generation Programme has been a tremendous help for me throughout my university journey, by providing a ready made support network from which I could rely on during any time of need.

“The cash bursary was an essential part of my first year experience and was a big help to ensure that I had less financial worries. I am extremely thankful for the Scholarship, but also the many experiences that have been offered to me as a result of being a part of the Programme, such as the trip to the House of Lords to attend the Impact of Philanthropy event.

“I have a job for September to work as a 1:1 teaching assistant for a child with autism, while also completing a part-time masters in childhood development and wellbeing.

“The First Generation Scholarship Programme has such a great impact on its students by not only tackling the financial barriers that first generation students face, but by also providing a community and a support network to help students navigate their university careers.

“I am extremely grateful for the support I have received and would like to thank all of the staff on the Programme, for all of their hard work, and the donors that make it possible.”

“I HOPE THAT WITH CONTINUED SUPPORT FROM DONORS, THE FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME IS ABLE TO REACH MORE WELL DESERVING FIRST GEN STUDENTS, TO ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITES AS OTHERS.”

Jessica, BSc (Hons) Psychology, class of 2022



A big thank you

The success of the First Generation Scholarship Programme in helping students to reach their full potential is only possible thanks to the generous support and involvement of our donors, alumni, and friends.

This year, in response to feedback from our First Generation Scholars and with careful deliberation from the Steering Group and leadership, we decided to implement a change to the allocation of the Scholarship funding. Rather than receiving £1,000 in their first year and attending the fully-funded London workplace residential, Scholars will now receive £500 per annum over three years of their degree programme, and £500 will be directed to fund bespoke employability opportunities delivered via our award-winning flexible learning pathways programme, **Rise at Manchester Met**.

To all who have supported the Programme, we would like to thank you and hope you take pride in helping our Scholars to achieve their goals of studying at Higher Education and into successful careers. The impact of your donations is not confined to them; however, it is sustained and amplified by the continued impact of these fantastic students on their communities and wider society, evident by the number of siblings and cousins progressing through the Programme.

We look forward to keeping you updated on the progress of our First Generation Scholars as they continue on their journey with us here at Manchester Metropolitan University and beyond.

Development and Alumni Relations
Manchester Metropolitan University
3rd Floor
6 Great Marlborough Street
Manchester
M1 5AL
+44 (0)161 247 2158
giving@mmu.ac.uk

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