

**TEACHER**



**8/10  
applicants  
get a place  
on RO**

**One programme  
14 leading universities  
Over 6000 courses**

**REALISING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Working Together | Supporting Talent

# Realising Opportunities

For over 10 years Realising Opportunities (RO) has been supporting students during their post 16 studies to develop their skills to be successful at university. Since 2010, RO has supported over 11,000 students from over 500 schools and colleges. The programme is intended for the most talented students who have not considered research intensive universities as an option.

This guide is designed to help you identify students at your school/college who would be suitable for a place on RO and support their application onto the programme. Applications to the programme will open on 4 September 2023. See page 7 for details on the application process.

**Recent independent evaluation shows that 74% of programme graduates progress to higher education. 67% progress to research intensive universities which represents higher rates than the national averages.**

# Targeting students

RO is a targeted widening participation programme promoting fair access and social mobility. RO supports young people from underrepresented groups to gain access to some of the country's leading research intensive universities. To do this we specifically target **Year 12/First year of college** students who meet the individual criteria on pages 3-4.

Please target eligible students from a range of subject areas within your school/college who would benefit from this programme. **RO is intended for the most talented students who have not considered research intensive universities as an option.** These students should take priority, rather than those who have the confidence and support to already seriously consider this option.

RO is committed to supporting diverse groups of eligible students who are underrepresented in higher education. Therefore, we particularly welcome applications from:

- Eligible male students, as they are currently underrepresented on the RO programme.
- Students who live in neighbourhoods with low rates of progression to university - we determine these as those students living in postcodes in POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2. **For more information on POLAR classification please visit the Office for Students website.**

**You can visit the RO website to check students' postcodes.**

Please encourage students to make an application if you believe they meet criteria listed on pages 3 and 4.

# Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for a place on the Realising Opportunities programme students must meet the criteria laid out below.

## STEP 1

Students must meet **all** of the following criteria\*:

Attend a state-funded school/college which is currently working with an RO Partner university to deliver the RO programme. If they are home schooled you should see the website for further information.



Are studying in Year 12 (or equivalent) in England



Have achieved at least five grade 9-6 at GCSE (or equivalent, eg GNVQ, BTEC certificate); if this does not include English Language and Mathematics they must have achieved at least a grade 4 in these subjects



Be a Home registered student or expect to be by the time they apply for higher education. If they are not a Home registered student, but are classed as an asylum seeker or have a temporary status, please see the RO website for further details\*

**If students  
meet all of the  
criteria in STEP  
1, move to  
STEP 2**

## STEP 2

The more of the below criteria a student meets, the more likely they are to secure a place on the RO programme. Students who meet fewer than two of the Step 2 criteria are unlikely to be offered a place on the programme, with exceptions for some groups of students\*, as RO is oversubscribed each year.

Live in a neighbourhood which has a low progression rate to higher education or an area which has a high level of financial, social or economic deprivation. This is defined by **home postcode**.

Be in the **first generation** of their family to attend university in the UK or abroad. (If one or more parent is currently studying their first degree, or graduated from their first degree within the last five years, an application will still be considered).

Be in receipt of or entitled to **free school meals**, or have been entitled to them at a point in the last six years.

Be in receipt of or entitled to **discretionary payments/16-19 bursary/Pupil Premium** at school/college.

Attend or have attended a **school/college performing below the national average** in key areas or where there is higher than the national average number of students eligible for free school meals. Click [here](#) to go our website where school/college criteria are explained.

OR

If they are living in/have lived in **local authority care**, are a **young carer**, or are **estranged/living independently** from their family, we strongly encourage them to apply even if they don't meet other step 2 criteria. This is because their application will be given additional consideration.



If students do not meet prior attainment outlined in step 1 but have experienced a period of disrupted education, their application may still be considered on an individual basis. Please see our website for further information.

See the RO website for full eligibility information

\*We recommend [checking our website for the full eligibility criteria](#) which contains more information about how students may be eligible. You can also check the eligibility of students' postcodes on our website.

# Benefits of the programme



## Alternative offers

from the RO Partner universities which are typically two grades lower than the standard offer. †

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## A launch event

with their host university to celebrate their place on the RO programme, get them started, and meet university representatives.

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## Experiences and support

to help them make an informed choice about higher education and research intensive universities.

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## A chance to develop their skills

in analysis, critical thinking, evaluation and research through taking the the RO Academic Skills Module (ASM).

† The majority of courses at RO Partner universities give alternative offers but there are some exceptions. Students who are successful in gaining a place on RO will be informed of the exceptions when they begin the programme.



### **A wide range of events and activities**

at the RO Partner universities. Support for travel costs is available for some RO events.

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### **skills4uni**

An online study skills challenge and multiple choice quiz which will help them develop their planning and independent research skills.

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### **Online support**

through which students can get answers to their questions from both current university students who have been in their shoes and staff from the RO Partner universities.

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### **A virtual National Student Conference**

where students have the chance to meet others from across the country taking part in RO and representatives from all of the RO Partner universities.

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### **Additional consideration**

when students make applications to RO Partner universities through UCAS.

# The application process

Host  
university  
contact

Your university contact will set you up as a School User on the secure online Realising Opportunities (RO) hub.

School  
User

You will receive an email alert which allows you to set your password.

You can log into the hub at  
**[www.realisingopportunities.co.uk](http://www.realisingopportunities.co.uk)**

Here you can review student applications and then review their progress at any time while they are taking part in RO. Please do not share your login details with anyone.

School  
User

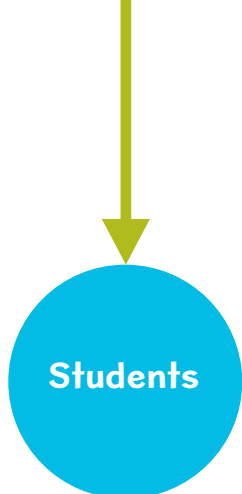
To begin the application process, issue eligible students with the *Student Application Key* given to you by your host university contact.

School  
User

Ask students to complete the online application at  
**[www.realisingopportunities.co.uk/apply](http://www.realisingopportunities.co.uk/apply)**

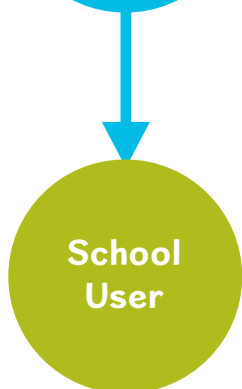
They should enter the *Student Application Key* when asked to do so.





**Students**

Students complete the online application following the on-screen instructions. Progress can be saved at any time and completed at a later date. Students will be asked to read and agree to **RO Community values**.



**School User**

You can check the stage of your students' applications to help you nudge them along. As soon as they begin an application, you will see the relevant information in your RO hub! This was a new feature released last year based on School User feedback.



**Parent/  
Carer\***

Once students have submitted their application, an automated email will be sent to their parent/carer's email address. This email instructs the parent/carer to fill in their part of the online application and give permission for their child to take part in the programme.

\*Where students are living independently of parent(s)/carer(s) they will be asked to indicate this on their application. When they submit their application it will come directly to you. You will need to confirm their status as a student who is living independently when you complete the School User section.



Once the parent/carer section of the application has been completed, you will receive a notification email informing you that you have an application waiting. Please log in and find the relevant application, click '**continue application**' and complete the School User section. You are responsible for confirming each student's eligibility by checking that all of the information in the application is correct.

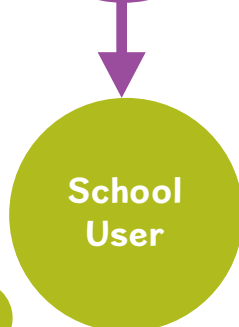
Once you have completed the School User section and all student information is complete and correct please submit the application. Your host university contact will then receive an email notification confirming you have completed your section of the application.



Your host university contact will check over the application and review the information provided to decide on application outcomes. Applications which meet the most eligibility criteria will be prioritised. Information provided on extenuating circumstances will be considered alongside eligibility criteria.



All students will be informed of application outcomes no later than 5 January 2024.



You will be able to login to the RO hub and see your students' application outcomes after 5 January 2024.

# Completing the programme

**Students must complete three compulsory elements of the programme to complete RO:**

- Attend at least two RO events or activities (these can be the Launch and the National Student Conference) **to explore student life at RIUs.**
- Pass the skills4uni online multiple choice quiz **to develop study skills.**
- Complete the RO Academic Skills Modules (ASM) **to increase study skills confidence.**

To find out more about the Realising Opportunities programme and its benefits, please [click here](#) to go to our website.

University of Birmingham

University of Exeter

Lancaster University

University of Leeds

University of Leicester

University of Liverpool

Loughborough University

Newcastle University

University of Nottingham

Queen Mary University of London

University of Sheffield

UCL

University of Warwick

University of York



## REALISING OPPORTUNITIES




Working Together | Supporting Talent



## Contact

The RO Central Team co-ordinates the programme on behalf of the RO Partner universities.

[info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk](mailto:info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk)  
[www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk](http://www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk)

 [realising\\_opportunities](https://www.instagram.com/realising_opportunities)  
 [@RealisingOpps](https://twitter.com/RealisingOpps)  
 [RealisingOpportunities](https://www.facebook.com/RealisingOpportunities)