



The Programme

First Steps is a Widening Participation programme delivered by Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) aimed at engaging students in Year 9 to 11 to help raise aspirations and encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter higher education. The focus of the programme is to develop study skills while allowing students to find out more about university. The programme is delivered free of charge and is available to schools throughout Lincolnshire and those on the border of surrounding counties.

Which students are suited to the programme?

We ask schools to select a maximum of **30 students** from each year group to participate in the programme.

Students must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Have been/are currently in public care
- Have parents who have served in the forces
- Currently a young carer
- Identify themselves as a black, Asian or minority ethnic student
- Identify themselves as having a physical, mental or learning disability
- Have been identified as an NCOP student
- Living in a low participation postcode (we measure by POLAR4 Q1&2 and IMD Q1&2, if you send the students post codes we are happy to check which students this refers to)

We will require schools to send us a list of student's names, date of births and postcodes prior to Step 1 taking place, along with a list of which of the criteria they meet.

Please note the First Steps programme criteria has changed in 2019 to be more selective in line with guidance from the Office for Students. If schools would like to offer support to students who do not fit into this criteria we can offer a generic higher education talk at your school followed by a bespoke University Experience Day for these students instead. Please contact us for more details.

The Structure

Schools can opt into one, two or three year groups of the programme. Each year group will get two steps, these are for the same 30 students at each step.

Due to the current situation with COVID-19 we are offering all step 1 sessions as either a virtual session or an in school session. Step 2 is traditionally a campus visit but this year may need to be delivered in a different format. We would like to book a date in for this and then review government guidance and institutional risk assessments closer to the time to agree on the format. We would ideally like to bring groups onto campus if it is safe to do so but this may mean delivering the step 2 objectives as a hybrid of virtual and on campus sessions.

Year 9:

- Step 1: Introduction to Higher Education – April (a one hour session delivered either virtually or in school)
- Step 2: Sessions on budgeting, student life and decision making – May (details of delivery TBC)

Year 10:

- Step 1: Revision skills – December (a one hour session delivered either virtually or in school)
- Step 2: Sessions on note taking, critical thinking and time management – February (details of delivery TBC)

Year 11:

- Step 1: Decision making – October (a one hour session delivered either virtually or in school)
- Step 2: Research skills, transferable skills and presentation skills – January (details of delivery TBC)

What Bishop Grosseteste University will provide free of charge:

- Full commitment to the successful delivery of the First Steps programme
- Feedback to your school at the end of the year about your students' experiences on First Steps upon request
- Any resource materials required
- Provide well-qualified professional staff to support school staff and students during the programme
- Further support (on request) to your school on all aspects of higher education

Our expectations from schools:

The First Steps programme is offered free of charge to schools, in return we require schools:

- To name a primary contact for the programme at your school (or one per year group) and inform BGU of any changes through the year to the contact's information
- To select up to 30 students who meet the criteria of the programme and send us their details prior to step 1 of the programme (please see 'which students are suited to the programme' section)
- To ensure that parents/carers fill in our digital EMWPREP* form prior to the step 1 session
- If in school Step 1 sessions are required then arrangement for a suitable room and PowerPoint facilities. Also, to provide us with details of your schools risk assessments regarding hosting visitors on your school site
- Arrange for students to be available for one hour for step 1 sessions (either in person or to be available remotely)
- Provide and pay for transport for students any visits to BGU campus (if your school works with LincHigher then they may be able to support with this)
- To make suitable arrangements for members of staff to attend any campus visits with students
- Complete risk assessments in line with the health and safety policy of your school. If you would like a copy of Bishop Grosseteste University's Risk Assessment for the programme, we would be happy to provide this

***East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership (EMWPREP)**

As an institution, Bishop Grosseteste has always been committed to delivering successful Widening Participation activities to schools and colleges throughout the UK. It is vital that our team can monitor and evaluate our programmes to make sure that we are targeting the correct students. In 2013, our institution became part of the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership. This partnership will help us to collate all information into a central database and create evaluation reports of the programmes we are delivering as well as giving us the opportunity to follow students through their engagement with WP activities at our own and other institutions in the region. You will be given 30 copies of the form during Step 1 of the programme by a staff member and sent an electronic version in case any copies are misplaced. These forms are to be sent to the parents/carers of the students participating. The forms explain in detail to parents/carers what the information will be used for, however if you have any queries or concerns please contact the Outreach team on outreach@bishopg.ac.uk If your students have already completed EMWPREP forms as part of your schools work with the LincHigher team then we can just get them to fill in a register/consent to match their details from the EMWPREP database to this programme.

There has been a large demand for spaces on the programme so dates for taster days are allocated to schools on a first come- first served basis on receipt of a signed registration form.