



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**WIDENING  
PARTICIPATION**



At Queen's University Belfast we are committed to providing students with an education experience that is on par with the best universities in the world.

We are also committed to ensuring that those who are the most able but least likely to participate in Higher Education should have an equal opportunity to do so.

A UNIVERSITY  
FOR ALL



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A man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a blue and white paisley tie, stands in front of a brick building. He is smiling and has his hands clasped in front of him. The background is a blurred brick wall and green foliage.

WIDENING  
PARTICIPATION  
AND CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES

02

03

# VICE-CHANCELLOR INTRODUCTION



**Queen's is a university where a student's ability, potential and commitment to learning comes first – not their personal or social circumstances.**

At present, around 34% of our first-degree entrants are from lower socio-economic groups. This places Queen's among the leading UK universities for widening access. We are proud of this achievement but we want to do more.

Widening Participation, Equality and Diversity – these values are embedded in our Social Charter. They are key elements of our Education Strategy and priorities in our Corporate Plan.

Our Widening Participation team is dedicated to realising these values and achieving our access goals. Working closely with young people, teachers, carers, schools and colleges, Widening Participation makes contact with communities, building relationships and unlocking possibilities.

We have a number of programmes, all engaging and imaginative initiatives helping to raise the aspirations and attainment levels of children and young people who might not otherwise have considered university as an option for the future.

And when they come to Queen's that encouragement will still be there – right up until their Graduation.

I want to pay tribute to everyone involved in Widening Participation at Queen's. They are improving young lives, inspiring a new generation and a new society.

**PROFESSOR IAN GREER**  
**PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR**



# A PATHWAY TO QUEEN'S

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The Pathway Opportunity Programme has definitely helped me to become more ambitious. I never would have imagined I'd be realistically applying to Queen's.

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**Hannah Lyttle**

Former Pathway Student, Thornhill College, Derry  
and current Queen's undergraduate, studying Law

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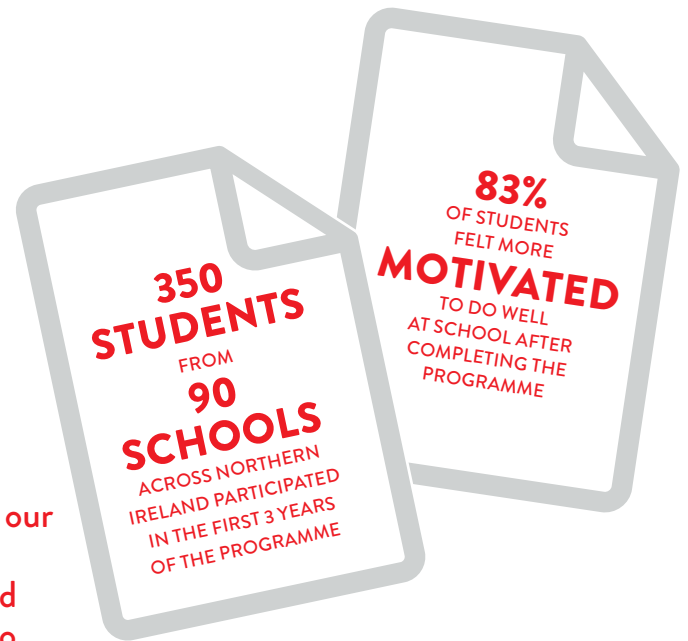
# PATHWAY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMME

(Year 13–14)

The Pathway Opportunity Programme, part of our Social Charter commitment, provides an entry route to Queen’s University Belfast for talented young people from across Northern Ireland who have the ability but may need additional support and encouragement to fulfil their potential.

During Years 13 and 14, Pathway students participate in a series of events focused on increasing their knowledge and skills within a subject specific Pathway as well as providing admissions guidance and support. The overall programme includes a week long residential summer school which concludes with a piece of assessed coursework.

Upon successful completion of the programme, students receive a guaranteed conditional offer to study at Queen’s in a designated Pathway course. In addition, the summer school assessment can lead to a reduced admissions offer which may be up to two A level grades lower than the standard offer.



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**The Pathway Programme was brilliant – it gave my son the confidence to proceed with the view to further education in university. I really appreciated the opportunity to visit Queen’s on their “graduation day”. It made me realise that anyone - regardless of their background - can have the same hopes and dreams of their ideal career.**

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**Parent**  
of a Pathway Student

The Queen's Senior Academy Programme has positively impacted me and I would say it is beneficial, friendly and an amazing learning experience.

**Courtney Busby**

Student, Belfast Model School for Girls  
Former Junior Academy participant  
and current Senior Academy participant

06  
—  
07

RAISING  
ASPIRATIONS

# SENIOR ACADEMY

## (Year 13–14)

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**An excellent programme which our school is pleased to be a part of. Pupils openly engage with and enjoy the Senior Academy and it helps to broaden their experience of what life at university is like.**

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**Ms. S Pauley**  
Head of Year 13, Omagh High School

OVER  
**2,000**  
HOURS OF  
SUBJECT SPECIFIC  
TUTOR SUPPORT  
PROVIDED TO SENIOR  
ACADEMY STUDENTS  
OVER THE PAST  
5 YEARS

The Senior Academy engages and supports young people who are ‘most able but least likely’ to progress to university. Each year the Academy works with up to 50 students from secondary schools and further education colleges across Northern Ireland. This programme gives an insight into university life and is tailored specifically to individual needs.

Over the course of the two-year programme the Senior Academy gives students the opportunity to experience the University environment. The programme offers them a full range of multidisciplinary activities on and off campus, including workshops, UCAS application support, a shadow-a-student experience, a summer residential and study skills information days.

The Residential takes place in August and the young people experience a taste of student life, living in Halls of Residence and studying at Queen’s. The residential involves an exciting range of interactive and creative activities. Students work in teams, developing their research and communication skills in collaboration with leading academics and researchers.

The ‘Tutoring for Success’ element of the programme provides participants with up to 30 hours of subject specific tutoring to support academic studies and preparation for exams. The tutoring also enhances study skills and builds confidence in analytical writing, primary research and problem solving.



**It was great. It gave me a real taste of what it would be like to study at Queen's.**

**Orla**

Current Year 10 Junior Academy participant

08

09

**LEARNING ABOUT  
UNIVERSITY LIFE**

# JUNIOR ACADEMY

## (Year 9–12)

The Junior Academy is a progressive programme engaging with young people from Years 9 to 12 in secondary schools across Northern Ireland. The Academy offers a range of focused interactive activities to raise pupils' aspirations and support attainment.

In Year 9, young people are introduced to Queen's University Belfast and learn what makes university different from being at school. They meet and engage with current undergraduate students and are introduced to the Queen's campus.

When pupils progress to Year 10 they are invited to participate in three dynamic faculty taster days. These showcase the breadth of courses on offer within Higher Education and help inform GCSE subject choices.

In Years 11 and 12, the focus is on preparing pupils for their exams. Programme sessions include intensive Study Skills workshops and stimulating Mathematics and English masterclasses, all delivered by subject experts.

Having completed their GCSEs, Junior Academy graduates are encouraged to apply to the Senior Academy or Pathway Opportunity Programme in Year 13.



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**Being on the programme is a regular reminder to pupils that they need to think about the future and the Junior Academy is helping them take the first steps towards achieving their goals.**

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**Julie Gueret**

Head of Careers, Ulidia Integrated College,  
Carrickfergus

THE JUNIOR ACADEMY  
ENGAGES WITH OVER  
**500**  
**PUPILS**  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND  
ANNUALLY



It has been an extremely successful venture each year and the boys have gained a lot from this experience. Apart from meeting pupils from other schools and developing new friendships, the boys have developed their confidence and acquired valuable skills.

**Aine Morgan**  
Head of Careers, Hazelwood College, Glengormley

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**ENGAGEMENT  
THROUGH SPORT**

# JUNIOR ACADEMY SPORTS PROGRAMME

## (Year 8–10)

The Junior Academy Sports Programme focuses on male pupils in Years 8 to 10 and aims to raise aspiration and attainment by using sport as a way to foster early engagement with Queen's University Belfast. A total of 110 young males, selected from secondary schools, become involved with the programme each year.

In Year 8 participants are introduced to the University environment, the state-of-the-art sports facilities, lecture theatres, teaching spaces and the world-class McClay Library. Visits to the campus are structured around exciting team challenges facilitated by a dedicated group of student ambassadors.

By Year 9 pupils engage more closely with academic subjects linked with sport and participate in tailored workshops including nutrition, sports psychology, management and leadership.

In the final year of the programme Year 10 Participants have the opportunity to complete a Level 1 Sports Leadership Award, accredited through Sports Leaders UK. Gaining this practical qualification gives participants a sense of achievement and motivation and sets strong foundations for future development.



**98%**

OF PARTICIPANTS  
IMPROVED THEIR  
COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS\*

**68%**

BELIEVED THE  
PROGRAMME  
IMPROVED THEIR  
OTHER SUBJECTS\*

\* Data provided by Sports Leaders UK.

# ENGAGING WITH RESEARCH



12

13



# SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE (SUPI)

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The Principals were unanimous that it was vital to give their pupils, the citizens of tomorrow's world, the best possible introduction to research, working with experts from such a prestigious university as Queen's.

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## Jackson Frew

Co-ordinator, Magherafelt Learning Partnership

The School-University Partnerships Initiative (SUPI) fosters engagement between university researchers and schools.

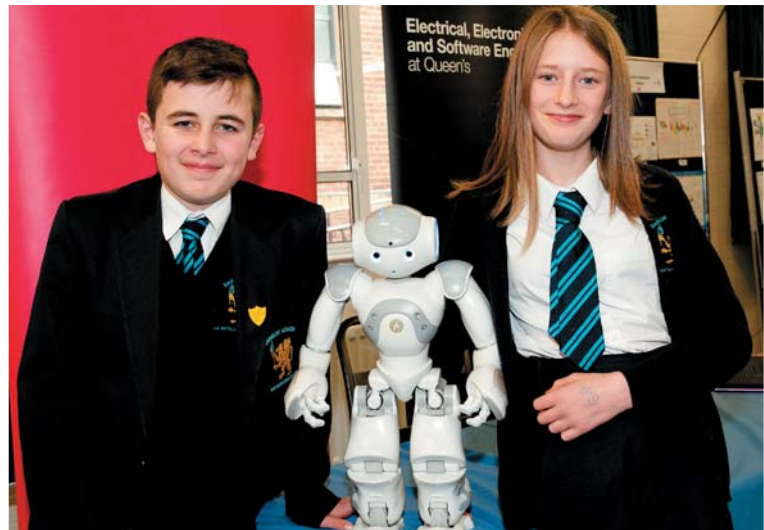
Working with Area Learning Communities throughout Northern Ireland, Queen's seeks to inspire the next generation of researchers by bringing together pupils, teachers and research staff to explore contemporary and cutting-edge research and questions.

Over the past two years, pupils from more than 40 secondary schools have connected with Queen's researchers in a variety of interdisciplinary projects.

SUPI provides an excellent opportunity for early career researchers to present their research in a different context, making it more accessible for young audiences.

IN 2017/18  
QUEEN'S  
ORGANISED  
9 UNIQUE  
SUPI  
PROJECTS

INVOLVING  
OVER 55  
RESEARCHERS  
AND STAFF  
AND OVER  
800 PUPILS  
FROM  
40 SCHOOLS



# SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



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# HOMWORK CLUBS

**Queen's University Belfast student volunteers supporting children living in inner-city Belfast through homework clubs.**

Volunteer SU, the volunteering department of Queen's Students' Union, co-ordinates the Homework Clubs initiative, which works to improve the educational attainment and raise the aspirations of children and young people living in inner-city Belfast. This initiative also involves members of the refugee and asylum-seeker community. Partnering with youth centres, community groups and schools across Belfast, Volunteer SU recruits and trains student volunteers to provide homework and study support to children and young people participating in their local homework club.

In the 2017-18 academic year, 18 homework clubs across Belfast were supported by some 170 volunteers, making a real difference by enriching and nurturing the skills and abilities of each young person. The peer-mentor approach creates a safe and enjoyable environment where all children can access free study help in core curriculum areas, in addition to personal development and recreational activities.



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**To sit for one hour each week with a Queen's student who is only interested in what the child can do, to their own level of ability, and to see improvement on that – our children can't wait for next week until they see the student again. It is very valuable work.**

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**Breege O'Kane**

Parent Support Officer

Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Belfast



INSPIRING A NEW  
GENERATION



THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

THE GATES ERECTED IN 1910 TO REPLACE THE GATES PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY IN 1912 BY FRANCIS ADRIAN HERON WHICH WERE REMOVED TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE NAVY DURING THE WAR OF 1909-10 11



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# PROFESSOR FLUFFY PROGRAMME

## (Primary 6-7)

**Our young people are the future. It's never too early to show them how much they're valued, to encourage and inspire them and Professor Fluffy is helping us do just that.**

This educational initiative is opening the doors of opportunity for a new generation – over the past 4 years, thousands of pupils have engaged with the programme.

Primary schools engaged with the programme welcome Professor Fluffy and a member of the Queen's Widening Participation team to their school. During their initial visit the 9-11 year old pupils experience a flavour of what university life can offer.



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**I was nervous at first to see what university was like, but now after Professor Fluffy, I feel confident about it.**

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**P7 Pupil**

St Matthews Primary School, Belfast

Pupils are then invited to spend a day at Queen's where they explore all areas of the campus – with a special emphasis on activities that engage them with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

We want to raise young people's aspirations for Higher Education and to show them how Queen's could be a part of their future.

**ALMOST**  
**5,000**  
**PRIMARY PUPILS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE PROFESSOR FLUFFY PROGRAMME TO DATE**



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**OPENING  
UP A NEW  
WORLD**

# READING TOGETHER

## (Primary School)



'The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity.'

**Neil Gaiman**  
Author

This is the ambition of the Reading Together programme, a collaboration between the Widening Participation Unit and the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's, and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The programme connects students from Queen's with primary school children in care. Visiting the child each week in their school, our students read with them, help with their homework and encourage other activities designed to provide support in developing their reading, imagination and literacy skills.

As the pupils progress, they find a whole new world opening up for them to enjoy. As well as creating an appetite for reading, the programme provides an insight into what it is like to be a university student and what is possible in their own future.

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The difference a couple of sessions made to the confidence of the young person I worked with was substantial. I feel that I benefited just as much as they did and it was an experience I will always treasure.

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**Zoë Asher**  
Queen's Graduate Intern and  
Reading Together Mentor

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I love reading now... love it ...  
I want to see what happens  
at the end of the story.

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**Pupil**  
Age 6



RECOGNISING  
POTENTIAL

20  
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# YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Queen's University Belfast is committed to Care Experienced applicants and students.

Coming to University is both an exciting and a stressful time for every student. Students who are care experienced might also have additional concerns; Queen's recognises this and has support in place. With a dedicated member of the Widening Participation team as their point of contact, students can receive information, advice and guidance specific to them.

Queen's acknowledges that students from a care experienced background may encounter additional financial hardship. A crucial part of the Queen's commitment to care leavers is to alleviate some of this stress by providing a care leaver bursary for the duration of their studies.



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The ultimate aim for me is that Young People who have been through similar situations to myself can see that our backgrounds don't define us and that we can reach our goals. My goal was to graduate from university and I've done that.

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## Billie-Jo McDowell

Grew up in the care system in Northern Ireland, graduated from Queen's with a BSc (Hons) Geography and is currently studying for a degree in Social Work.

SUPPORTING  
CARE LEAVERS WITH  
**365 DAY**  
ACCOMMODATION  
AND FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT WITH A  
QUEEN'S BURSARY  
THROUGHOUT  
THEIR STUDIES

Arriving at Queen's was exciting, overwhelming and challenging and throughout my time here I have been enjoying my whole experience. I have learnt not to compare myself with others and to accept that success happens through trial and error.

**Bridgeen Quinn**

Current Queen's undergraduate, studying Psychology

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# ACCESS PROGRAMME

The Access Programme (Diploma in Foundation Studies) is designed for those who left formal education without the qualifications necessary for entry to Higher Education.

The Access programme provides successful students with a qualification equivalent to A levels, together with study skills support, which provide the opportunity to progress to Queen's University Belfast. Access programmes are available in both full-time and part-time study modes.

The University has a range of access programmes delivered in Belfast Metropolitan College, South Eastern Regional College and North West Regional College. Over the past 5 years almost 1000 adult learners have progressed from Access to studying at Queen's.

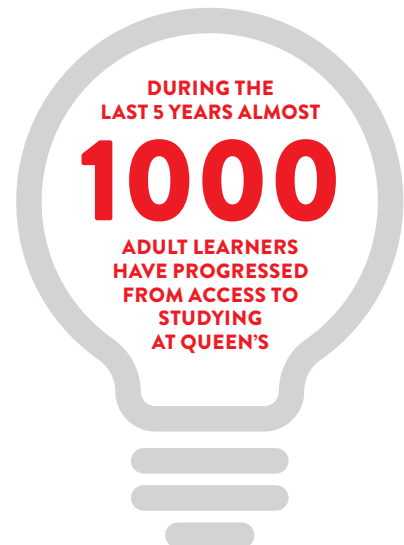
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Balancing family commitments and study has at times been challenging but really rewarding. Trusting my instincts by taking risks in developing my academic ideas has been invaluable and I have found working with a study buddy very beneficial.

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**Michelle Murray**

Current Queen's undergraduate, studying Psychology



# MIGLE BUIVYDAITE

Queen's has always been there for me, especially in the hard times. At A Levels I didn't reach the grades to get into university but the Care Leaver contact at Queen's guided me and explained the options I had if I still wanted to pursue a degree. One was to complete a Foundation Degree and start Queen's at second year, which is exactly what I did. She supported me, stayed in contact throughout my Foundation Degree, and helped if I had any queries. Now that I am an undergraduate, I also receive a Care Leavers Bursary, which I find is extremely helpful especially if you encounter financial difficulties during your university year.

My advice to any care-experienced young person considering university is to get in touch with the Widening Participation team who will support you even before you come to Queen's. They will help you get a feel for the University, with your student finance application forms, financial support and will answer any questions you may have.

If I had to describe my time at Queen's I would say 'Couldn't Be Happier'.

**Migle Buivydaite**

Current Queen's undergraduate, studying Computer Science

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# ANDREW BARBER

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I have always had an avid interest in electronics and computers and was delighted when my application to the Pathway Opportunity Programme was successful. The whole experience gave me an insight into what studying at Queen's is like and a real incentive to work hard during my last two years in school. One of the things I really valued was the summer residential and working on programming in the lab definitely gave me an early confidence boost. As a Pathway student I was also eligible for a Queen's bursary and that has enabled me to access more up-to-date equipment and resources to support my studies this year. The programme was challenging and exciting and if I was to offer any advice to the next cohort of students it would be to make the most of this opportunity to discover what it is you want to study. Work hard and enjoy your time at Queen's.

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**Andrew Barber**

Former Pathway Student and current Queen's undergraduate, studying Electrical and Electronic Engineering

# MARLENE TRIMBLE



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I wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't taken part in the Senior Academy programme. When I joined initially, I was incredibly nervous and very shy but I have to say the experience changed my life. Although I didn't have much confidence in myself, everyone was really encouraging and believed that I too could apply to study for a degree. They gave me the support and confidence I needed to work hard in my final year at school and as a result, I chose to study at Queen's. That experience gave me the chance to achieve something for myself and to then help others do the same.

I graduated in June 2018 with a BSc Hons Psychology degree and now I work with Mencap, supporting adults with learning disabilities in leading a full life. If I had some advice for the next cohort of Academy participants, it would be to take it all in and enjoy every single moment because the memories made will be for life.

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## **Marlene Trimble**

Former Senior Academy participant and  
Queen's Graduate BSc (Hons) Psychology

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# LLOYDS SCHOLARS

**A unique social mobility programme of support from Lloyds Banking Group.**

Partnering with Queen's University Belfast, each year the scholarship offers up to 15 students from lower-income households a complete package of financial support including a £1,000 bursary for each year of their undergraduate study at Queen's, paid internships, a business mentor and the opportunity to develop their employability skills. Designed to reward outstanding academic performance, scholars also commit to 100 hours of volunteering in the community each year and on completion of their degree, have the opportunity to join the Lloyds Graduate Leadership Programme.

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**Having the financial support and the mentoring really encouraged me because I was really nervous about going to university. It will really make sure I push myself to grow and develop.**

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**Courtney Girvan**

Current Lloyds Scholar and Queen's undergraduate, studying International Politics and Conflict Studies



**UP TO  
£16,500**  
TO HELP WITH  
STUDY AND LIVING  
COSTS AND  
CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT\*

\*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

Charity Commission Number - NIC102044

**Widening Participation**  
Queen's University Belfast  
BT7 1NN

**T:** 028 9097 5020  
**E:** [wpu@qub.ac.uk](mailto:wpu@qub.ac.uk)  
**W:** [go.qub.ac.uk/qubwpu](http://go.qub.ac.uk/qubwpu)

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