University of Birmingham University of Exeter Goldsmiths, University of London King's College London University of Leeds University of Leicester University of Liverpool University of Manchester Newcastle University University of Sheffield University of Sheffield University College London University of Warwick University of York

REALISING OPPORTUNITIES STUDENT PROGRAMME

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www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk

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Realising Opportunities

Welcome to the Realising Opportunities (RO) Programme! This guide has been designed to help you understand the different elements of RO and what you will be doing while taking part in the Programme.



The sections in this guide will help you to check your own development and progression through RO, so refer to it regularly to make sure you are on track.

If you have any questions please get in touch with the RO Central Team or contact your ementor who will be able to help. You can read more about the help and support available to you in this guide.



RO Programme Summary

The Realising Opportunities (RO) Programme is a structured, interactive programme that will help you develop your academic skills, improve your awareness of university and knowledge of how to apply for a place. Taking part in the programme will also give you increased access to the universities involved in RO.

The Programme aims to

- Increase your knowledge about research intensive universities and what they can offer you.
- Give you access to the RO universities.
- Develop your skills and confidence in planning, researching and writing an original piece of academic work including developing skills in analysis, critical thinking and evaluation.
- Increase your understanding of university life and how to apply through UCAS.
- Give you dedicated support from a current university student.
- Support you in thinking about different professions that you might be interested in pursuing as a career.

Your RO checklist

- Attend a Local Launch event
- Work with your ementor
- 🔘 Complete skills4uni
- Attend National Student Conference
- Complete the EPQ or the Academic Assignment
- Attend events and activities at RO universities

How will RO help you?

Taking part in RO will give you:

- Additional consideration

 All RO universities will give additional consideration to your UCAS application.
- Alternative offer

All RO universities may give an RO offer worth up to two A level grades (or equivalent) lower than the standard offer.
 Make sure you look at the RO Recognition Guide for more details.

- The opportunity to develop your skills

 You will develop a range of skills that will help you with your A levels and the academic element of the Programme.
- Advice for the future

 You will know more about how to apply to university and you will receive advice and guidance about choosing your course and where you want to study, so you can make informed choices about your future.
- Access to careers information

 You will improve your understanding of careers and access to professions from professionals currently employed in the field.







University staff are looking forward to meeting you so don't be shy and make sure you ask any questions you have about RO!

Make sure that by the end of the event you know what you need to do while taking part in RO.





Local Launch Event

You will have been given this guide at a Local Launch event held at the university that recruited you (your host university). The event will tell you all about RO and explain what is involved in the RO Programme.

What is the Local Launch event?

The Local Launch has been designed to get you started on RO and give you the opportunity to check that you understand what you will be doing on the Programme.

What will you do?

You will hear a presentation about RO from staff at your host university. You may also have the opportunity to meet current university students and see some of the university campus.

How will it help you?

The Local Launch event will:

- Give you an understanding of the RO Programme.
- Clarify what you will need to do to complete the RO programme.
- · Give you the opportunity to meet staff at your host university.
- Help you understand the support available to you.
- Give you the opportunity to visit a university campus.

Local Launch Event

University:		
Date:	<i>Time:</i>	
Notes:		

Skills4uni

As part of RO, you will need to work through an online study skills module and complete a multiple choice test based on what you have learned. This will help you to develop valuable skills to use now and later at university.

What is skills4uni?

Skills4uni is an online module to help you develop the study skills necessary to be successful at school/college and at university. The module includes interactive quizzes, videos, tasks and information from current university students.

You should start working through the skills4uni module after you have attended the Local Launch event. Your ementor will check how you are getting on with the module once ementoring begins but you should also keep them up to date with how you are getting on. When you have completed the module, let your ementor know and they will set you a multiple choice test.

What do you have to do?

- Work through sections 1-6 of the online module (section 7 is optional).
- Complete the interactive quizzes and tasks.
- Take notes and make sure you understand what you are learning.
- Take the skills4uni multiple choice test through the ementoring portal.



The multiple choice test

Once you have completed sections 1-6 of the online module let your ementor know and they will set a multiple choice test for you to take.

The test involves 36 multiple choice questions relating to what you have learned in sections 1-6 of the skills4uni module. You must achieve a score of 75% or above to pass the test.

How will it help you?

By completing the skills4uni module you will:

- Increase your confidence in approaching independent research based projects.
- Develop your skills in planning, research and referencing that will help you complete your EPQ or Academic Assignment successfully.
- Have a greater understanding of what to expect at university.

Module Title

- 1. Are you ready?
- 🔵 2. Plan ahead
- 3. Track it down
- 4. Look it up
- 5. Write it down
- 6. Put it together
- 7. Calculate it (optional)

You can find the skills4uni module at www.skills4uni.bham.ac.uk





Complete the skills4uni module and test as soon as you can – what you learn will help you approach your EPQ or Academic Assignment!

Don't worry if you don't pass the test the first time you take it! Your ementor will give you feedback and you can take the test again.

Skills4uni notes









Ementoring

While you are taking part in RO, you will be supported by an ementor. Your ementor will be a university student and will work through a programme of useful topics with you.

What is ementoring?

As part of the RO Programme you will be matched with a current student from one of the RO universities. They will be your ementor throughout your time on RO and support you while you are taking part in the programme. Ementoring gives you the opportunity to talk to someone who is already at university and to receive support at key times throughout the year.

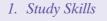
Top 3

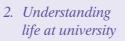
The top three things RO students say their ementor has helped them with are:













3. University Choice

Your ementor will:

- Work through an ementoring programme of useful topics with you and answer any questions or queries you have about applying to university, university life, exam techniques, revision, study skills and much more.
- Send you regular messages to give you updates and information about RO. You will have access to a secure online portal where you can send messages to your ementor.
- · Support you with the skills4uni element of the RO Programme.

You need to:

- · Log onto the ementoring portal at least once a week.
- · Reply to any messages your ementor sends you and keep them up to date with your progress throughout the programme.
- Tell your ementor when you are ready to take the skills4uni test.
- Make the most of the support they offer you and ask them as many questions as you can about the topics they work through with you.
- Use the resources and activities available to you on the ementoring portal and discuss these with your ementor!

The Ementoring Portal

When the ementoring programme begins, you will be sent details of how to log in to the ementoring portal by email. You'll also be sent a link to a video showing you how to use the ementoring portal.

The ementoring portal will allow you to contact your ementor and the RO Central Team safely and easily. It also contains lots of useful activities and resources that you'll find invaluable when researching university life, career options, and study skills.

How will ementoring help you?

Ementoring will give you:

- A better understanding of applying to higher education and the UCAS process.
- Support with your UCAS application and personal statement.
- Support during exam periods and advice on revision and exam techniques.
- Guidance with the skills4uni module and test.
- A chance to ask questions about what it is like to be a student at a research intensive university.
- Advice about student finance, choosing a course and choosing a university.

Ongoing ementoring support

The RO ementoring programme will begin for you in February 2017 and end in December 2017, but if you wish to continue after that you will still have access to an ementor. This will allow you to continue to access support, information and advice right up until you receive your A level results.



To help get your relationship with your ementor off to the best start make sure you introduce yourself to your ementor the first time you log in to the ementoring portal. Key things to include in your first message are:

- Your first name
- What you're currently studying
- Where you're at with thinking about university (even if you haven't started thinking about this yet!)

You will get the most out of ementoring if you keep in touch with your ementor regularly and ask them lots of questions. Your ementor has been through the university application process and is very knowledgeable about university life so make the most of this support!

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National Student Conference

All of the students taking part in RO will come together to attend the RO National Student Conference.

What is the National Student Conference?

The National Student Conference is a national event that will allow you to visit a university campus to meet all of the universities involved in RO. By attending the event you will also develop skills and knowledge that will be useful to you in your current studies and help you when thinking about applying to university.

At the National Student Conference you will:

- Get to meet other students from around the country who are taking part in RO.
- Attend a key note session that will inspire you to make the most of the opportunities available to you.
- Attend a workshop to develop your skills and knowledge.
- Attend an exhibition where you will have access to representatives from all of the RO universities.
- Have the opportunity to take a campus tour of the university hosting the event.
- Have access to information about careers from well-known employer organisations.



The Details

The National Student Conference will take place on a Saturday in March 2017. You will be given information about the date and the venue in the email confirming your place on the RO Programme. Your host university will also talk to you about the National Student Conference at the Local Launch.

More information about the National Student Conference and how you will get there will be sent to you by email from the Central Team in early 2017 so watch out for this!

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National Student Conference details

Date: _____ *Time:* _____

Venue: _____

Travel arrangements (speak to your host university about this):

Workshop choice:

Questions for RO universities:

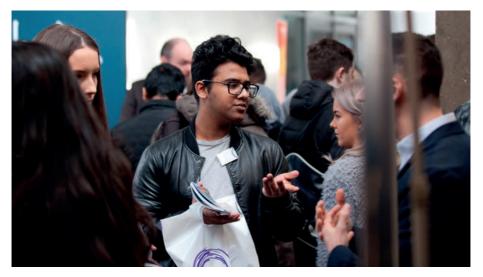


Having access to all of the RO universities is a great opportunity! Come to the event with your questions ready and make sure you speak to the universities you are interested in before you leave.

Step 5 of 6 complete

The Academic Element

To successfully complete RO you must undertake either the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or the RO Academic Assignment.



Extended Project Qualification or Academic Assignment?

The EPQ route will only be an option for you if your school/college offers this as part of their curriculum. If your school does not deliver this qualification then you must complete the RO Academic Assignment.

In addition, if the EPQ forms part of your core studies, for example if you are undertaking a Diploma qualification, then you must also complete the RO Academic Assignment.

You will be asked to let us know which academic element you will be taking.

If you are unsure if the EPQ or Academic Assignment is best for you, or if you have any questions, you should speak to the teacher/tutor who introduced you to the RO Programme, or contact the RO Central Team at info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk or on 0191 208 8923.

Your Academic Element



Academic Assignment

The Extended Project Qualification

What is the EPQ?

 The EPQ is a stand alone qualification that is taken in, and delivered by, schools/ colleges.

What do you have to do?

- Complete the EPQ in school/college as directed by your teacher. This will involve you creating a project log to document your planning, research and progress and delivering a presentation on the outcome.
- You must achieve a grade C or above in the EPQ to successfully complete the academic element of RO.
- When you have your EPQ result, you must inform the RO Central Team (but don't worry - we'll remind you!).

How will it help you?

- The EPQ allows you to examine a topic of your choice in more detail.
- You will develop core skills in analysis, research, problem solving, critical thinking and communication.
- You will develop skills in preparing and delivering a presentation.
- It will develop your ability to take responsibility for your own learning.

What support will you have?

- Your school/college will guide and support you through the EPQ.
- The RO universities host events and activities that may offer additional support for your chosen topic and help you develop your research and academic writing skills. You can read more about RO events and activities on page 21 of this guide.
- Skills4uni will help you with your research skills, referencing and presentations (you can read more about skills4uni on page 7 of this guide).
- The Bright Knowledge Bank on the ementoring portal provides helpful resources on a range of topic areas including referencing, using sources and writing essays.

If you have already started your EPQ you should carry on with the timetable set out for you by your school or college. You must send a copy of your results when you have them to the RO Central Team by email to: info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk



Whether you take the EPQ or Academic Assignment you will need to pick a topic to research and write about. Try to choose a topic that relates to what you might want to study at university.

The Academic Assignment

If you are not taking the EPQ in school or college then you will need to take the Academic Assignment to fulfil the academic element of the RO programme.

The Academic Assignment is designed to allow you to develop skills in independent research, planning and assignment writing. The Academic Assignment will be delivered and supported by an Academic Tutor at your host university.

If you are taking the Academic Assignment then we need to know before the end of **March 2017**. This is important because the Academic Assignment is delivered within a specific timescale; if we do not know that you will be taking this option by the end of March 2017 then you may be unable to follow this route.

What do you have to do?

- Think about a topic that interests you and work with your Academic Tutor to develop an Academic Assignment title.
- Plan and research your assignment.
- Submit a draft assignment to your Academic Tutor to allow them to give you feedback before your final submission.
- Meet with your Academic Tutor and communicate with them regularly to discuss your assignment and respond to any feedback they give you on your work.
- Produce an assignment of 1,500–2,000 words.

How will the Academic Assignment help you?

- It will allow you to research a topic of your choice in lots of detail.
- It will allow you to demonstrate to the RO universities your ability to understand, analyse and use information.
- It will help you develop your ability to take responsibility for your own learning.
- You will develop core skills in analysis, research, problem solving, critical thinking and communication.

How is the Academic Assignment assessed?

Your work will be assessed against a number of learning outcomes that your Academic Tutor will explain to you.

You will be assessed on your ability to:

- Think independently

 How well can you conduct a piece of independent research?
- Construct arguments

 Can you critically select information from a range of sources to develop and support your arguments?
- · Develop ideas

– Can you demonstrate your ability to problem solve and critically analyse information to develop your own ideas?



What support do you have?

You will be allocated an Academic Tutor from the university that recruited you.

Your Academic Tutor will offer you support throughout your assignment.

You will meet your Academic Tutor in one-toone tutorials to discuss your assignment title, research plans and ideas, and you will also be able to get in touch with your tutor via the Academic Assignment portal.

The RO universities host events and activities that may offer additional support for your chosen topic and help you develop your research and academic writing skills. You can read more about RO events and activities on page 21 of this guide.

Skills4uni will help you with your research skills, referencing and presentations. You can read more about skills4uni on page 7 of this guide.

The Bright Knowledge Bank on the ementoring portal provides helpful articles on a range of topics including research and working to a deadline.



Your Academic Tutor is looking forward to working with you so don't be nervous about sharing your ideas with them and asking them questions that you have!

You will be sent a separate guide about the Academic Assignment in Spring 2017 which will give you lots more information.

Academic Assignmen Checklist



First tutorial

Tutor:

Date:

Time:

Assignment title:

Second tutorial

Date:	Time:		
Notes:			
Deadline for fi	irst draft		
Date:	_Time:		
Final submission			
Date:	_Time:		



Events and Activities

As well as the Local Launch and National Student Conferences, the universities involved in RO put on a huge range of other events and activities that you can attend. We want you to get as much out of RO as possible, and the wide range of events and activities at the RO universities will help you to do this.

What events and activities can you attend?

A full list of events is available on our website at **www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk**. This list is updated frequently so make sure you check it regularly.

The type of events on offer include:

- Subject taster days and master classes.
- Campus tours, visit days and open days.
- Summer schools and residentials.
- Skills development sessions including academic and study skills.
- Information, advice and guidance sessions on topics such as student finance.
- Personal Statement support.

What do you have to do?

You must attend the Local Launch event and the National Student Conference. We also recommend you attend at least one other event or activity at one of the RO universities. You can attend as many events and activities as you wish, and you should use this opportunity to see a university which is not your host university.

How will they help you?

Attending events and activities allows you to:

- Visit the universities you may want to apply to. This will help you make informed decisions when you come to submit your university applications through UCAS.
- Identify and develop the skills necessary to be successful at a research intensive university.
- Learn more about specific subject areas, accommodation options and facilities at universities.
- Find out what it is like to be a student at university by meeting current students.
- Receive support with your university application and the EPQ or Academic Assignment.
- Find out more about how university will help you in the future.



Make the most of the RO university network and think about visiting a university outside of your area! All universities are slightly different and the best way to see which university will be right for you is by visiting them!



Some events, particularly Open Days, are great for parents/carers to attend too if they would like to!

How do you book a place?

Visit **www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk** to see the events and activities available to you and follow the booking instructions included with each event.

Key points to remember are:

- Make sure the date doesn't clash with any important exams or deadlines.
- Let your school or college know that you are attending an RO event.
- Let the university know if you have any specific requirements which they should know about.
- If you need to travel to an event it may be possible to have your travelling expenses reimbursed with prior arrangement. Details on travelling expenses you can claim will be advertised alongside the events or activities on our website. You should check with the university you are visiting in advance of the event to see if this is possible. Details of who to contact at each university can be found on our website. Please be sure to keep any travel tickets!



For a real student life experience think about attending a summer school or residential event.



Access to Professions

Realising Opportunities aims to give you enhanced access to information and advice about accessing different professions.

You will be able to access information in the following ways:

The National Student Conference

• Professionals from employer organisations will be present to tell you about career opportunities within their sector.

Ask the Expert

- Each month a new professional is featured on the ementoring portal.
- You can read their profile and ask them questions about their job and what pathway they took to get there.
- The professionals will answer all your questions and their responses will be posted on the ementoring portal.

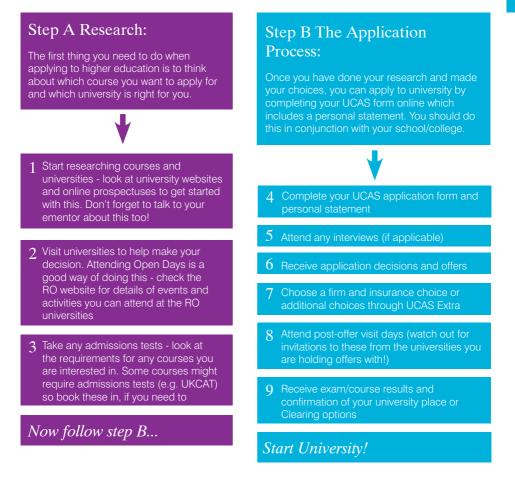
Resources

• The ementoring portal has lots of useful resources about different careers paths.

Applying to University: an overview

Throughout your involvement in RO, you will receive advice and guidance about applying to university from the RO universities and your ementor. There will also be information to help you on the RO website.

There are two steps to applying to university:



Research Intensive Universities

Throughout this guide you will have noticed the term research intensive universities or RIUs being used a lot. This page will explain more about what an RIU is and why you need to know about them.



Research Intensive Universities (RIUs) are universities that focus heavily on research and because of this can offer students who study there some great opportunities. In these universities teaching is research-led, and facilities available are of a very high standard. Links with employers and businesses are also strong.

All of the RO universities are RIUs; by being on the RO programme you have access to them and will be visiting RIUs during your time on the programme. Your ementor also studies at an RIU so they are in a great position to let you know what it's like to study at one (make sure you ask them!). You can see examples of the research being done by RO universities on their websites.

Students who study at RIUs benefit from:

- Research-led teaching and being taught by academics who are experts in their field.
- Opportunities to develop transferable skills which are valuable for employment and further study.
- Investment in cutting edge facilities on their campus.
- A vibrant learning atmosphere where new discoveries are being made and research is being carried out to help problems in the wider world.
- Access to top graduate employers as a result of the university's strong links with business.

Applying to study at a research intensive university can often be competitive, due to the wide range of benefits these institutions can offer students. However, by taking part in the RO programme you will develop skills and gain knowledge that will help you to submit a strong and well-informed university application.

If you are considering applying to any of the RO universities you may be eligible for an alternative offer of up to 2 A Level grades or equivalent (reliant on your successful completion of the programme). Check the RO Recognition Guide on the RO website to get more details about this.

Useful websites

Here are some websites which may help you during your time on RO and researching your university options.

Choosing a University What Uni

www.whatuni.com

Provides university reviews written by students.



UNISTATS www.unistats.co.uk

Offers official data on universities and colleges based on student satisfaction scores. It allows you to compare different institutions and courses.

QAA: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education www.gaa.ac.uk

The QAA undertakes assessment of all universities in the UK on the quality of their teaching.

🐽 QAA

The Complete University Guide www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

Provides information about all aspects of university.



Advice on HE National Union of Students

www.nus.org.uk The confederation of students'

unions which represents university students.



The Student Room www.thestudentroom.co.uk

The UK's biggest student community sharing tips for applying to university, careers information and lots more.

Push www.push.co.uk

An independent guide to UK universities, student life, gap years, open days and student finance.



www.studential.com

Information and advice about options at school, university and beyond.



Student Finance Student Finance www.gov.uk/student-finance

Information on the financial help available to students.



Student Calculator http://studentcalculator.org

A useful site providing realistic projections of your student finances.

Careers Prospects

www.prospects.ac.uk

A graduate careers site which gives information on career paths.

Plotr blot

www.plotr.co.uk

A site to help you find out about jobs and careers linked to your interests and skills.



Useful terms

These pages list some common terms you will hear in relation to university and Higher Education, and also offer a description of what they mean. There's also space to record any extra terms you come across.

Term	Description	
Access course	Access courses are designed to prepare students who do not have standard entry qualification for Higher Education courses.	
BA/BSc	Bachelor of Arts/Science; the award for an undergraduate course.	
BEd	Bachelor of Education.	
Campus	The main area on which the university is based. Some universities might have more than one campus.	
Contact time	The amount of time you spend in lectures, seminars, labs, works etc.	
Degree course	A Higher Education course leading to the award of a bachelor's or master's degree.	
Dissertation	An extended piece of work approximately 5,000-10,000 words, usually undertaken in the final year of a degree.	
EPQ	Extended Project Qualification; a standalone qualification taken in, and delivered by, schools/colleges.	
Foundation course	A two-year degree level qualification which combines academic study with workplace learning. It is the equivalent of two-thirds of a full honours degree.	
Fresher	First year student.	
Graduate	Someone who has attained a bachelor's or higher degree.	
HE	Higher Education.	
Joint honours	A degree where you study two or more subjects e.g. History and Politics.	
MA/MSc	Master of Arts/Master of Science; postgraduate qualifications that can be studied after an undergraduate degree. They usually take a year to complete or two years part-time. Some 4 year degrees are classified as MA or MSc.	
MPhil	Master of Philosophy; another form of postgraduate qualification. MPhil signifies the completion of a period of research rather than a taught programme.	
MBA	Master of Business Administration.	
MEng	Master of Engineering.	

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Term	Description	
Modules	Programmes of study are made up of modules which will focus on a specific area or topic.	
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education; a teaching qualification.	
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy; a higher level degree normally taken after a postgraduate degree.	
RIU	Research Intensive University; universities that focus heavily on research.	
Sandwich course/year	A course of study which includes periods of practical work in organisations outside the university or college/a year abroad.	
Semester	A study period of up to 16 weeks, often with exams or assessments at the end; similar to a term.	
Single honours	A degree where you study a single subject e.g. Chemistry.	
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service; the organisation responsible for managing applications to HE.	
Undergraduate	A student working towards a first degree.	

If you come across any other new terms, you can record them and their definitions below. As current university students, ementors can be really helpful in clarifying new terms.

Term	Description		

Key Contacts

The Realising Opportunities Central Team, based at Newcastle University, lead the Programme on behalf of the RO universities.

Our contact details are:

The Realising Opportunities Central Team, c/o Marketing and Student Recruitment, Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU

0191 208 8923 info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk

Contact List

Each of the RO Universities has a key contact for RO and you may wish to get in touch with them if you have a question about recognition or admissions through UCAS.

University	Contact Name	Phone Number	Email Address
University of Birmingham	Lucy Hall	0121 414 8729	l.hall@bham.ac.uk
University of Exeter	Melissa Ruddock Jenny Rusk	01392 726 181	realisingopportunities@exeter.ac.uk
Goldsmiths, University of London	Jonathan Bridges	020 7717 2596	j.bridges@gold.ac.uk
King's College London	Anne-Marie Henderson	020 7848 3948	anne-marie.henderson@kcl.ac.uk
University of Leeds	Ashleigh Hope	0113 343 7501	rops@leeds.ac.uk
University of Leicester	Andy Johnson	0116 223 1872	rop@le.ac.uk
University of Liverpool	Michael Mohebbi	0151 794 5122	m.mohebbi@liverpool.ac.uk
University of Manchester	Francesca Guratsky	0161 275 8572	realisingopportunities@manchester.ac.uk
Newcastle University	Hilary Wilkinson	0191 208 6094	realising.opportunities@ncl.ac.uk
University of Sheffield	Denise Brooks	0114 222 1027	rosheffield@sheffield.ac.uk
University of Sussex	Zoe Dawson	01273 877 642	z.dawson@sussex.ac.uk
University College London	Khashim Hussain	020 3108 7763	srs.realisingopportunities@ucl.ac.uk
University of Warwick	Marie Diebolt	024 7615 1428	rowarwick@warwick.ac.uk
University of York	Angela Purdham	01904 324 635	realising-opportunities@york.ac.uk







University of Birmingham University of Exeter Goldsmiths, University of London King's College London University of Leeds University of Leicester University of Liverpool University of Manchester Newcastle University University of Sheffield University of Sheffield University of Sussex University College London University of Warwick University of York

Contact

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

Realising Opportunities c/o Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU

0191 208 8923 info@realisingopportunities.ac.uk www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk

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