

STEP Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Please find the criteria for the 2023 programme, below.

All applicants should be interested in exploring Durham University and finding out about what the University has to offer. As places are limited and highly sought after, we will use the eligibility and selection criteria to help us identify those applicants who we feel will benefit the most from the programme. Successful applicants are not required to choose Durham University through UCAS, however, the aim of the programme is to support students in their pursuit of a place at Durham University and we ask that applicants take this into consideration when choosing to apply.

Essential criteria – applicants must:

- Be in Year 12, or equivalent, and attending a UK state school or college;
- Be currently living in the UK and have been for a minimum of three years prior to the time of application;
- Be a UK national or have “settled status” such as indefinite leave to remain in the UK, except where residence in the UK is wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education;
- Be a Black heritage student, which includes those who identify as being of Black - African, Caribbean, Dual, or Mixed Heritage.

Additionally, we may prioritise applicants meeting some of the following (this list is in no particular order):

- Have achieved at least eight GCSEs or equivalent at grade 6 or above (or e.g. B, Distinction), including at least three at grade 7 or above (or e.g. A, A* or Distinction) and a strong level of achievement for relevant subjects. We know sometimes, students experience mitigating circumstances which means their results do not show their true potential. As such, the application form will provide you and your teacher the opportunity to provide details of any such circumstances, which we will consider in our decision making.
- Come from neighbourhoods with low overall progression rates to higher education or high levels of financial, economic or social deprivation.¹
- Have experienced significant educational disruption, for example if you have been in local authority care or under a Care Order (i.e. you are a care leaver or care-experienced) or are irreconcilably estranged from both parents/carers.²

- Are in receipt of, or entitled to, Free School Meals, Pupil Premium funding and/or discretionary school/college payments, which are directly linked to financial hardship.
- Will be within the first generation in their family to attend university.
- Attend schools or colleges with a low overall GCSE and/or A-Level, Higher/Advanced Higher (or equivalent) point score and/or schools or colleges with low progression rates to higher education.³

Applicants to Durham University STEP are encouraged to consider whether or not they might also benefit from applying to Durham University's Supported Progression programme or Durham's Sutton Trust Summer School. Students are welcome to apply to more than one of these programmes. However, if you are successful in gaining a place at more than one, you may be asked to choose one programme to pursue to enable us to offer programme places to a greater number of individual students.

All of our programmes welcome applications from disabled students and make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to events at the University.

¹ To meet this criterion, students will need to be one of 1) Quintile 1 (POLAR4); OR 2) Quintile 2 (POLAR4) AND ACORN category 4 or 5. For further information see [Young participation by area - Office for Students](#) and [Acorn - The smarter consumer classification | CACI](#)

² We will consider personal circumstances of care-experience or estrangement on a case-by-case basis. A supporting statement from your school or college will be required as part of the application. By irreconcilably estranged we mean that you have had no contact at all with any of your parents/carers for at least 12 months prior to starting Year 12 and that this is unlikely to change. Alternatively, you may be able to demonstrate your estrangement on other grounds e.g. exceptional circumstances.

³ Please see [Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Find school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk\)](#)