How your fee is spent?

The University is funded from a wide range of sources and uses this funding entirely to support its research and teaching activities. For the University to be sustainable in the long-term it needs to generate surpluses in order to fund the cost of major investments in the University which benefit students. Recent examples include the programme to transform the Clifton Campus, the Fry building, ongoing refurbishments of academic facilities, libraries and other resources. The investments in the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC) are detailed below and the other areas of funding are described further in Section 2 below.

We spend the income from tuition fees in ways that we believe will best enable us to deliver a world class education and support your future prospects – and those of all our students.

This diagram shows how the University utilises an average home undergraduate tuition fee of £9,250. This may vary across courses and faculties, as described further below.

2019/20 Home undergraduate fee breakdown

Note 1: Widening access to Bristol

We are continuing to make a significant financial investment in widening access to higher education.

Spending on outreach allows us to work with thousands of potential new students to raise awareness and aspirations to higher education, engaging a range from primary school children to adult learners returning to education. In the last five years there has been a 93% increase in the University’s intake from students attending the lowest performing schools, a 27% increase in the University’s undergraduate intake from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. The University’s state school intake has increased annually since 2013.
Subject/school variations

Many factors contribute to the cost of educating an individual university student. The numbers of lectures, labs and seminars across the University do vary significantly because of the different ways in which students can become proficient in their disciplinary areas. Individual students also have very different needs and approaches to their studies: some make far heavier use of libraries, welfare services etc than others. We aim to cater for the needs of all students, and we clearly cannot put an individual price on each student’s degree. There is inevitably, therefore, some level of cross-subsidy between students. But we aim to use all of our resources to support our educational and research activities as effectively and fairly as possible.

International Students

The University receives no OfS (Office for Students) funding for international students and so their tuition fees have to cover the full cost of their education. It is more costly for the University to recruit international students and there are some additional regulatory requirements for the University that add to our costs. The University sets fees for international students to reflect these differences and based on the strong demand for our courses from overseas students.

Undergraduate vs Postgraduate teaching

The cost of teaching postgraduate students can be higher than the cost of teaching undergraduates. Postgraduates are taught for a longer academic year than undergraduates, and staff and other costs are therefore higher. We base our fee levels for postgraduates on the cost of delivery of our educational provision, and in accordance with what we believe to be the value of the educational experience at Bristol.

Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC)

The investment in TQEC is a key priority in the medium term to enable our future academic, environmental and financial sustainability. The financing of this project is supported from several sources including a bank loan taken out in 2017, but also from external sources of funding such as Governmental grants and philanthropic donations. Given the uncertainty in relation to COVID-19, expectations for future funding and costs for this project as well as assessments of the risks and mitigations are happening and will continue throughout 2020 before making final decisions to proceed with the campus build. It is still expected in the long term that TQEC will create a return that will pay off the loan and return cash to the University for further use.

Value for Money (VfM) Strategy

The Office for Students (OfS) has ensuring value for money for both students and money from taxpayers as one of its key regulatory objectives. The University has developed a VfM strategy and monitors performance against it for students in the following areas:

1. Assessment and feedback

Establish a consistent approach to student assessment and feedback, so that students understand the cyclical relationship between learning, assessment and feedback and its role in their learning.

During 2019/20: Launched the programme of work to embed curriculum enhancement across all taught programmes through a values-driven framework and collegiate process. Finalised the Exam Scripts Access Policy, ensuring students can view their exam scripts and reflect on their
performance. Established a learning community to focus on decolonising the curriculum. Due to Covid-19 moved teaching online from spring 2020 to the end of the academic year.

Planned for 20/21: Online teaching will form part of a blended learning approach. The results of the Covid-19 Education and Student Experience Survey captured broader opinions from students about their experience of the 19/20 summer term and the results have been scrutinised quickly to ensure action in 20/21.

2.   **Employability**

Broaden considerably the variety of opportunities we offer our students to acquire and develop skills that enhance their employability and competitiveness in the world of work.

During 2019/20: Curriculum Enhancement Programme will embed employability and career planning in programmes, thereby providing an education that equips students for work and life beyond university. 1,193 students achieved the Bristol PLUS Award (that rewards students for extra-curricular activities they have completed).

Planned for 20/21: Ensure that our students engage meaningfully with sustainability issues both formally through their learning and informally through extracurricular activities so they can graduate with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to lead sustainable lives and effect positive change in the context of the climate emergency. The same high-quality Careers Service support offer has moved online, and new materials and resources were developed to support students with employability in a Covid-19 environment e.g. support for preparing for remote interviews.

3.   **Wellbeing Support**

Work closely with our Students’ Union (‘SU’) to support our students’ wellbeing and their wider University experience; and develop the quality and consistency of resources for wellbeing support and personal and professional development.

During 2019/20: Introduced the PVC (Student Experience) role to provide senior capacity and lead on the new Wellbeing and Mental Health Action Plan. Launched the Student Experience Programme: focusing on the key themes of creating a sense of belonging; engaging with students; enabling successful transitions; supporting the student lifecycle; supporting students to thrive; inclusion.

Planned for 20/21: Embed our whole-institutional approach to wellbeing for all our taught and research students by delivering the Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, developing students’ skills in self-care and resilience and delivering continuous improvements to student support services.

4.   **Academic Support**

Improve academic support for our students, including transition to university study and progress through their academic programmes; review and enhance the academic support offered within schools by personal and senior tutors; further develop and co-ordinate our professional support services, with particular focus on the needs of specific groups.

During 2019/20: developed a tutorial attendance system and a tutor ‘dashboard’; ensuring information on student cases can be shared between key stakeholders, while respecting confidentiality.
Planned for 20/21: Provide a consistent, positive academic personal tutoring experience, or supervisor support experience, for all students. Work in partnership with the Bristol Doctoral College to support supervisor training and PGR personal and professional development and draw on best practice for PGR training from the doctoral training community and external partners.

5. Infrastructure

Provide the best available learning environment: teaching and learning spaces, laboratory and clinical spaces, and resources such as books and IT systems.

During 2019/20: Achieved completion of the new Humanities Building on Woodland Road and completed construction of the Fry Building as a new home for the School of Mathematics. A number of projects have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the changes to Senate House.

Planned for 20/21: continued work to provide an integrated, student-facing IT system.

Section 2: University Funding and Expenditure

Our Funding Sources

The below graph represents the Income that the University received in 2019/20 broken down by category.

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Do tuition fees subsidise research?

Although most research is directly funded by external funders such as Research Councils, industrial partners or other government sources, the full cost of research projects is not usually covered by these grants.
A lot of our expenditure covers activities, infrastructure or staff that support both teaching and research. Most of our academic staff do research and teaching, both of which add value to our students’ learning experience. Many of our facilities, including laboratories, are used for both research and teaching.

There is inevitably some cross-subsidy for research from teaching income. However, all our students benefit enormously from the world-leading academics that we employ and from the cutting-edge research that they undertake, both in terms of how it informs the curriculum and of the support that students get for their research (whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level). Undergraduates also benefit from the strong culture of postgraduate researchers at Bristol and their support of undergraduate education.

Our Expenditure

We aim to use the funds available to us to support world-changing research, high-quality research-informed teaching, a first-class student experience, a vibrant and inspirational academic community, and outstanding academic and student facilities that help to make a University of Bristol education one of the very best in the UK.

The University employs 7,000 staff, of which about half are academic staff and half are professional and technical services staff. These members of staff teach and support nearly 24,000 registered students.

Other operating costs include a wide range of activities including the maintenance and operation of buildings and equipment, libraries, computers and student services. For example, the Careers Service offers guidance and information to our students and graduates and provides ways for students and potential employers to meet through recruitment fairs and presentations. Welfare Services, including Disability Services, Multi-faith Chaplaincy, Student Counselling and the Students’ Health Service provide personal, confidential support to help you manage your studies and get the best out of the University experience. In their first year of operation, the newly established Residential Life and Student Wellbeing Services were accessed by over 5,000 students.

The below graph represents the expenditure that the University spent in 2019/20 broken down by category.
**Profitability**

The University is a charity rather than a private or limited company, so we have no shareholders who would expect a return on investment and therefore require a profit.

But we do need to make a surplus – that is, our operating income every year needs to be greater than our operating expenses for that year. This is not for anyone’s individual gain, but to enable us to generate cash reserves that are used for reinvestment in the University’s long-term academic needs – including buildings, equipment and IT facilities.

Now, more than ever, the University needs to be prepared for an uncertain future, given the lack of clarity on the full impact of COVID-19, BREXIT, future government policies and many more. Any surpluses generated enable us to have sufficient cash to respond for immediate investments in an uncertain world.

More details on these topics can be found within the Annual Report, specifically the section on Value for Money.