

SHADOWING SCHEME 2024 IMPACT REPORT

June 2024
Cambridge SU



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1. FOREWORD

For over 20 years of successful operation, the Shadowing Scheme has provided a student-led, demystified look at Cambridge University for prospective students who are currently under-represented at Cambridge. This year in 2024, Cambridge SU has continued this work, taking heed from student and attendee feedback, and engaging in robust safeguarding practices across the organisation.

Administering the Shadowing Scheme for current and prospective students alike, is an important and rewarding experience. We saw familiar faces in the students who volunteered their time as Mentors, whilst recruiting students from 17 Colleges. Mentor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, whilst robust safeguarding training meant that any queries or concerns were responded to promptly. As staff, it was genuinely lovely to see the commitment and passion students had for widening participation (WP) and giving their mentees the best experience possible. There is a high saturation of WP opportunities at Cambridge, along with incredibly busy work schedules, so seeing the dedication of students to the Scheme has been heartening.

This year, we have worked even more closely with participating Colleges, especially Schools' Liaison Officers and JCR Access Officers. The Shadowing Scheme relies upon the generous support of the Collegiate University, whilst building closer ties between College and SU staff teams. After our in-person return in 2023, College staff have been helpful and enthusiastic in supporting the Scheme to be its best. Access Officers have leading roles in the Scheme, and we are so grateful to every student involved. Feedback from Access Officers before, during and after the Scheme helped steer the direction each week and ensure we were directly responsive to student needs. The overall delivery of the Shadowing Scheme would not be possible without funding from the Cambridge Admissions Office.

As staff and Sabbatical Officers at Cambridge SU, we are proud to administer the Shadowing Scheme. The programme offers a unique insight into Cambridge academic and social life through empowering our students to lead, trusting that their knowledge remains valuable to prospective students. We will always seek reflections and improvements for the current cohort, whilst recognising the benefit of the Shadowing Scheme's place in the field of access and WP at Cambridge.

Caredig ap Tomos

Undergraduate Access, Education and Participation Officer 2023-24

Frankie Kendal

Activities Coordinator (Access and Widening Participation Projects)

2. OVERVIEW

The 2024 Shadowing Scheme selected 101 prospective students (“Shadows”) to visit Cambridge in Lent Term, which is a 10% increase in participants from 2023. Shadows were matched with 91 undergraduate Mentors, of which 10 were matched for two weeks of the Scheme. Shadows were invited to Cambridge for three days and two nights, following the usual routine of the Shadowing Scheme, whilst delivering upon an intention set by the 2023 Impact Report to alter the residential days to a Sunday to Tuesday format.

This year we have increased College engagement in the Shadowing Scheme, with 11 Colleges providing accommodation either through guest rooms or students donating their bedrooms. The design of the Scheme remained functionally similar to that of the 2023 Scheme, with scheduled programming following a similar pattern. Changes were made to the location of events and clarity on whether events were essential to attend, or up to the individual, in aim of reducing student workload. Priority was given to enhancing safeguarding procedures among SU staff, as the Shadowing Scheme is a whole cross-department operation, and ensuring existing plans were delivered to the highest standard.

Following trends for the Shadowing Scheme, 76% of Shadows agreed or strongly agreed that they were planning to apply to Cambridge after attending the residential. Many students expressed that their perceptions of Cambridge and their own place in the University had changed significantly, with only 20% strongly agreeing they would fit in Cambridge before visiting the University, to almost 40% upon their leaving. One student noted that the most important thing they had learned “to raise my aspirations, I hadn’t previously thought I would fit in or even be able to attend Cambridge before this.” Moreover, just under 40% of students felt clear on the Cambridge admissions process before the residential, with this rising to an impressive 96% of students afterwards.

This report will expand upon the above whilst including reflections for the continuation of the Shadowing Scheme. As a core provision of the Students’ Union, and one of our most fruitful membership engagement services, we are always striving to ensure the Scheme is the best it can be for all its participants. We welcome any further feedback and discussion upon the publication of this report.

3. SCHEME DESIGN: CONTINUATION AND CHANGE

After returning to an in-person Scheme in 2023, this year offered the opportunity for stability in the scheme design, whilst focusing on improvements to enhance the experience for all participants. The Shadowing Scheme remains an established part of Cambridge WP provision, and part of student experience, therefore the focus this year was on making the residential days as effortless as possible. Following feedback and evaluation, the primary focus for these improvements were to

1. change the residential days of the Scheme to reduce volunteer workload
2. ensure clear messaging regarding essential activities during the residential
3. widen safeguarding practices for all Students' Union staff

Safeguarding procedures were reviewed and made more robust. Cambridge SU strives to centre safeguarding within all of its services, taking lead from the revision of our safeguarding measures in 2023. All student volunteers, attendees and staff members at the SU were given appropriate training and briefings on their role within the Shadowing Scheme. Central to this was empowering students to lead in their mentoring role through setting out clear procedures.

At its core, the Shadowing Scheme is student-led and the continued and improved elements of the residential were either from direct feedback from students, or from reflection on how the Scheme interacts with students' termly workload. Feedback was also actively encouraged before and during the residential, especially from Access Officers as elected student representatives. This ensured we could make smaller, practical changes from week-to-week which have been noted for future iterations of the Scheme. The Cambridge students involved in the Shadowing Scheme are not just participants, but partners in its success. The design and organisation of the Scheme will continue to be strengthened by its student leadership and staff implementation, making it unique amongst WP initiatives in Cambridge.

3.1 Key Principles

The overall aim of the Shadowing Scheme is to demystify Cambridge and provide tools and resources to under-represented students so they can make informed decisions about their University choices. The Shadowing Scheme is not a recruitment drive and sees success in any choices that Shadows make, as long as the Scheme has given them more confidence in such decisions. To achieve this the Scheme is underpinned by four key principles:

- Ensure Shadows feel listened to and part of a community whilst in Cambridge
- Provide for Shadows to share and develop their academic interests
- Be honest and transparent about life at Cambridge, such as workload and 'fitting in'
- Develop Shadows' study skills and understanding of admissions processes

The following table illustrates how Colleges (including Access Officers), student volunteers (including societies), Admissions staff, and Mentors, (with support from SU officers and staff) fulfilled each aim through their involvement.

Aim	Mentors	Student Volunteers	Colleges	Admissions Staff
Community				
Academic Interests				
Life at Cambridge				
Skills & Applications				

3.2 College Engagement

17 out of the 31 Colleges were involved in the 2024 Shadowing Scheme, an increase on the 14 Colleges in 2023. Increased engagement was curated through stronger relationships between SU and College staff, including the integration of the Activities Coordinator (Access and WP Projects) into forums for SLOs, such as the Schools' Liaison Officers Group (SLOG). As to be expected, a cross-College Scheme means that attendees have varying experiences of Cambridge life. However, we consider this aligned with the values of the Shadowing Scheme in being transparent about Cambridge and the different experiences College choice may provide.

After the success of the 2023 Shadowing Scheme, trust was rebuilt between the SU and the Collegiate University. Further engagement between our institutions was created through shared projects such as [Student-Led Outreach Support](#), which was doubly proposed by Fitzwilliam College and the SU, and a joint Ambassador Pay Report, written with the SU by those at Downing College and Emmanuel College. Feedback from College staff was taken on board for this year's Scheme, and the stronger lines of communication ensured for a more collaborative programme whilst Shadows were in Cambridge. In terms of numbers, increased College engagement also allowed for a larger capacity Scheme. It is important to note that the Shadowing Scheme, in its current form, relies entirely on College engagement to host any students in Cambridge. Maintaining and strengthening ties between the Colleges and the SU therefore remains pivotal for the success of the Shadowing Scheme.

We would like to note that we did see an unfortunate continued hostility towards the Scheme from some Colleges. Although there have been previous difficulties with the Scheme, as outlined in our past Impact Reports, the SU has put out multiple opportunities for Colleges to raise any concerns, upon which we have changed our planning accordingly. The success of both the 2023 and 2024 Schemes was supported

by the critical feedback from many College staff. Moving forward, we implore any Colleges to provide clarity on their disengagement and, if necessary, open a dialogue with us on what actions may soothe their concerns.

3.3 Date Changes

The most notable change of the scheme design this year was moving the residential day pattern from Thursday-Saturday to Sunday-Tuesday. After 2023 it became apparent that starting a residential scheme on a Thursday was often difficult for student Mentors, with contact hours and deadlines clashing with essential elements of the Scheme. The new pattern is also more inclusive, particularly of any prospective or current students who follow the practices of Shabbat and do not work or travel on Saturdays, a concern which was raised by an interested Jewish school.

The move to Sunday-Tuesday did create more work internally. It required more out of hours staff time, with six staff members on average working each Sunday when Shadows arrived. Booking and organising travel was also more difficult with a Sunday start. However, the decision overall ensured the residential ran smoothly. Mentors had more time to meet their Shadows on arrival day, and Shadows still experienced a Cambridge formal on their first night. This pattern also ensured the residential only continued over one day where students would have contact hours, as Mentors dropped off their Shadows at Emmanuel College from 10am on Tuesday. The three days felt more sustainable than the previous year, allowing more breathing room for Mentors and less time taken from an already busy term.

3.4 Timetable and Flexibility

The overall timetable structure remained similar to previous years with a variety of academic and social activities arranged by the SU team. Upon advice from JCR Access Officers, these events were all moved centrally to the University Centre, so that participants were not walking across the city. The SU Lounge also functioned as a place for Shadows to have some downtime in a busy schedule. Both evenings were covered by planned events: on Sunday a College formal dinner, and on Monday a Quiz Night at Newnham College hosted by SU staff. We would like to sincerely thank Queens' College, Churchill College, Emmanuel College, and Newnham College who supported these events. The week ended with an Admissions Talk from Dr Martin Thompson, the Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and, for the second week, Ellie Wood from Christ's College, which gave insight into how the application process works and answered any questions.

Events organised by the SU were non-essential for Shadows and Mentors to attend. This has always been true, but extra effort was made to ensure this was communicated directly to participants, in response to last year's feedback to better manage student workload. Feedback last year told us that Mentors were unsure what events they had to attend, meaning they could not plan their time as authentically as possible. As detailed in the timetable below, we coded events as essential or non-essential so that students could have the experience they wanted. Some Shadows attended the majority of events, others planned their time almost entirely with their Mentors. One Mentor

noted that the most successful part of the Scheme was “the flexibility to do as much or as little as you both want.” As we hope that prospective students are able to develop their interests during their time in Cambridge, we believe this flexibility continues to indicate the success of the Shadowing Scheme.

3.5 Safeguarding

Safeguarding procedures have remained robust following the full review of our organisational policies in 2022. As stated in the 2023 Impact Report, the following procedures were followed:

Mentors were approved by the Senior Tutors, given Enhanced DBS checks, and attended mandatory safeguarding training before they were accepted onto the Scheme. All Shadows and Mentors signed a Code of Conduct during the application process, and Shadows attended a safeguarding briefing upon arrival. All Mentors, Shadows, and other volunteers were briefed on our safeguarding procedures. There was a 24/7 emergency phone number that was staffed at all times and printed on wristbands given to Shadows, alongside an incident reporting form that could be used by all attendees.¹

Procedures and training were further enhanced across the organisation for this year’s Scheme. All members of Cambridge SU were given bespoke safeguarding training for young people and vulnerable adults, including a scenario-based workshop to instil the safeguarding procedures into everyday work practices. The number of staff who completed NSPCC training was increased, and specifically covered safeguarding for online communities given to members of our Communications Team.

Systems of escalation were continued from 2023, with the Interim CEO and Interim Director for Membership Engagement, acting as Safeguarding Leads throughout the Scheme. The delineation of roles between the logistical staff team and the safeguarding leads remained effective, with any concerns handled independently of the organisers running the Scheme. Mentors and Shadows used the procedures correctly, ensuring there were no major issues and all concerns were resolved swiftly and confidentially. 90% of Mentors surveyed agreed that they felt confident following the safeguarding procedures on the Scheme, with the remaining 10% agreeing somewhat.

We are proud to provide effective and stringent safeguarding processes that students feel empowered to follow and ensure the safety of all participants involved in the Shadowing Scheme.

¹ Atkinson, N. and Kendal, F. *Shadowing Scheme 2023 Impact Report*. July 2023. Cambridge SU. Accessed 31 May 2024: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/pageassets/opportunities/outreach/mentor/Shadowing-Scheme-2023-Impact-Report.pdf>

SHADOWS

Sunday | Day 1

SU Lounge Open
8.30-5 Weekdays

Arrival

1-2pm

Welcome
Talk

3-4pm

*Emmanuel
College*

Meet your
Mentor

4.30-5pm

*Emmanuel
College*

College
Tours &
Settling in

5-6.30pm

Your College

Formal
Dinners

7-9pm

*Various
Colleges*

Free Time

9pm
onwards

Monday | Day 2

Breakfast

8-9.30am

*Your College/
SU Lounge*

Shadowing
Mentor

Throughout
the day

Lunch

12-1pm

*Your College/
other location*

Medicine
Seminar

1-2pm

*University
Centre*

Student Life:
Collage &
Cake

2-3pm

*University
Centre*

Law
Seminar

3-4pm

*University
Centre*

Society
Give it a
Go

4-5pm

*University
Centre Dining
Hall*

Dinner

6-7pm

Your College

Quiz Night!

7-9pm

*Newnham
College Bar*

Free Time

9pm
onwards

Tuesday | Day 3

Breakfast

8-9.30am

*Your College/
SU Lounge*

Admissions
Talks

10am-12pm

*Emmanuel
College*

Goodbyes

12pm

KEY

 ESSENTIAL

 OPTIONAL

SHADOWING SCHEME
TIMETABLE 2024



MENTORS

Sunday | Day 1

SU Lounge
Open
8.30-5 Week-

Meet your
Shadow

4.30-5pm

*Emmanuel
College*

College
Tours &
Settling in

5-6.30pm

*Shadow
College*

Drop off at
Formal

7pm

*Various
Colleges*

Pick up at
Formal

9pm

*Various
Colleges*

Free Time

9pm
onwards

Monday | Day 2

Breakfast

8-9.30am

*College/SU
Lounge*

Academic
Time with
Shadow

Throughout
the day

Lunch

12-1pm

*Your College/
other location*

Medicine
Seminar

1-2pm

*University
Centre*

Student Life:
Collage &
Cake

2-3pm

*University
Centre*

Law
Seminar

3-4pm

*University
Centre*

Society
Give it a
Go

4-5pm

Dining Hall

Dinner

6-7pm

College

Quiz Night!

7-9pm

*Newnham
College Bar*

Free Time

9pm
onwards

Tuesday | Day 3

Breakfast

8-9.30am

*Your College/
SU Lounge*

Drop off
and
Goodbyes

10am

*Emmanuel
College*

KEY

 ESSENTIAL

 OPTIONAL

SHADOWING SCHEME
TIMETABLE 2024



4. REFLECTIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

At this point in the history of the Shadowing Scheme, the organisation and delivery of the programme is stable and successful, as displayed by overwhelmingly positive feedback from Mentors and Shadows. Regardless, there is always room for improvement, especially considering the wider context of WP programmes at Cambridge. The primary reflection regards recruiting Mentors and ensuring they are valued for their time and commitment. With such a high saturation of WP programmes in Cambridge, there is pressure and expectation on students to give their time to multiple schemes, alongside their busy workloads. This is especially true for those with a higher number of contact hours. As one of a few remaining voluntary schemes, it is necessary to reflect on the possibility of Mentor remuneration and how to make this sustainable for the Students' Union and central University bodies.

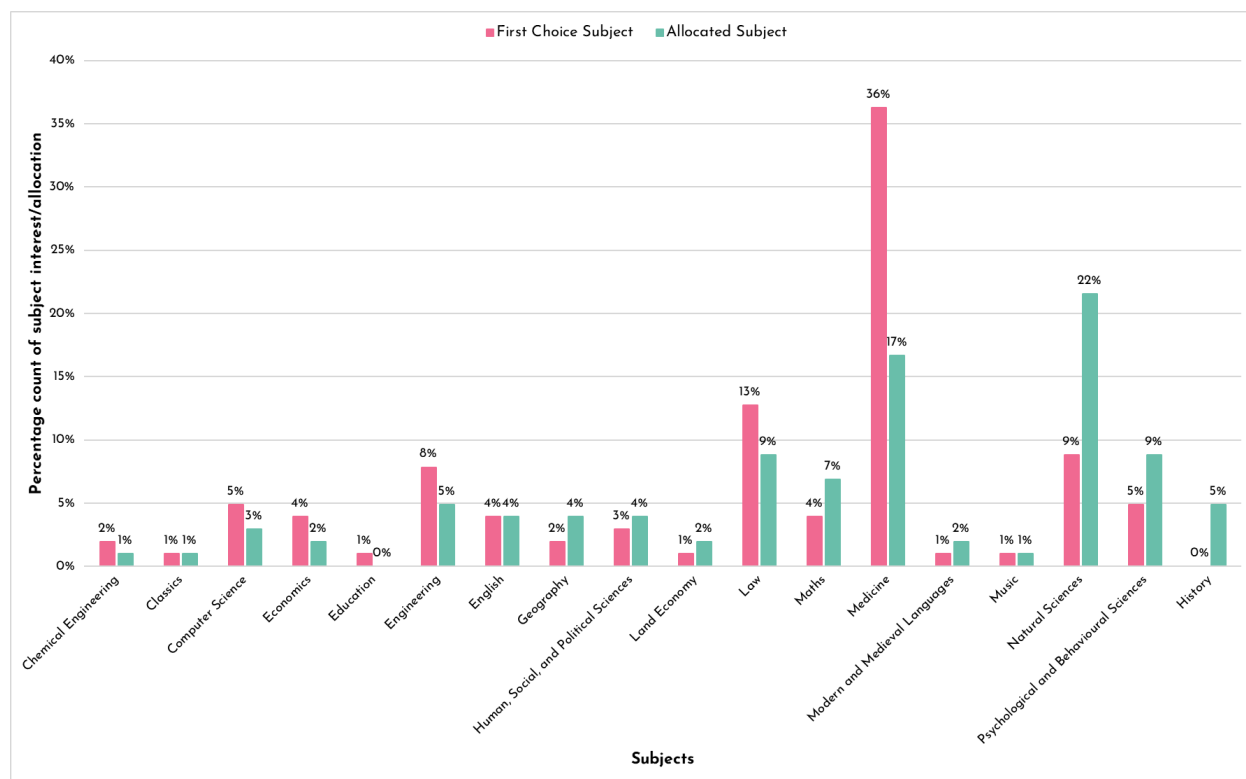
4.1 Subject Choice

As can be seen in the below Figure 1, the subject preferences of selected Shadows are inclined towards Medicine and Law, with almost 50% of Shadows applying for these subjects as their first choice. Unfortunately, despite targeted promotion towards these students, there were not enough Mentors recruited within these subjects to match the demand. Of the 13% of Shadows who applied for Law, 9% of them were matched with a Law student and of the 36% of Shadows applying for Medicine as their first choice, only 17% were allocated as such. From the 22% of Shadows matched with a Natural Sciences Mentor, many had Medicine as their first choice.

The Shadowing Scheme continues to remain open for all undergraduate subjects for Shadows to select their interest in. However, with the success of schemes like STEM SMART, alongside collegiate subject-focused programmes, it may be necessary to reflect on how we interact with subject-specific outreach and ensure that Shadows receive all the information they need. One Mentor answered that the least successful element of the Scheme was that "some shadows didn't see a lecture in the course they wanted to see." Although this will always be the case with a term-time residential, the Shadowing Scheme may look to improve its academic provision, for instance through online elements in the summer, or through pairing Mentors from different subjects so that Shadows can get insight into multiple subjects.

It is important to recognise alongside this that all Shadows were matched with a Mentor who studied their first or second choice. Similarly, we ensured to hold 'Shadow Seminars' on both Law and Medicine so that students who were matched with a student studying a different subject could still get insight into the teaching style of their preferred course. We also value the matches that are less common, for instance in subjects like Music that are often less focused on in WP work. We continue to meet our values of developing the academic interests of our attendees and consider the reflections stated here as an opportunity to enhance the Scheme, rather than a necessity for its success.

Figure 1: Comparison between Subject Preferences and Allocations Depending on Mentor Recruitment



4.2 Mentor Remuneration

The Shadowing Scheme remains one of the few remaining voluntary WP projects. Mentors are not paid for their time during the Scheme, and mentoring is promoted as a voluntary commitment. During Mentor recruitment, we found a smaller application rate from certain Colleges, of which SLOs suggested that students were more likely to apply for other paid programmes recruiting at similar times. It is unlikely that WP activity in Cambridge will become less competitive in the near future, and thus the voluntary nature of the Shadowing Scheme must be considered if it is to remain a desirable opportunity for students.

Our values are aligned with empowering students to engage in extracurricular activities. We recognise that pay may be an important factor in student access to an activity, especially for low-income students. The Shadowing Scheme has always been voluntary, however the economic realities of student life have significantly changed in the past two decades. As the Scheme is funded largely and generously by the Cambridge Admissions Office, these are not decisions we can make independently. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise our values as we reflect on how to maintain the Scheme's success in the future. Thus, the SU's long-term goal is for Mentors on the Shadowing Scheme to receive paid remuneration in line with the Real Living Wage, and we are opening these conversations with the University.

5. EVALUATION OF SHADOW EXPERIENCES

Shadows were surveyed before the Scheme started, and again once the Scheme had ended. 101 Shadows completed the Pre-Scheme survey, and 75 completed the Post-Scheme survey. Shadows’ self-identification with statements about future plans, knowledge about admissions, sense of belonging and perceptions of Cambridge before and after the Scheme are compared below. Similar trends can be seen this year as with the 2023 Scheme, especially when compared against our four key principles, as seen in [Section 3.1](#).

5.1 Future Plans

Figure 2: “I want to go to University”

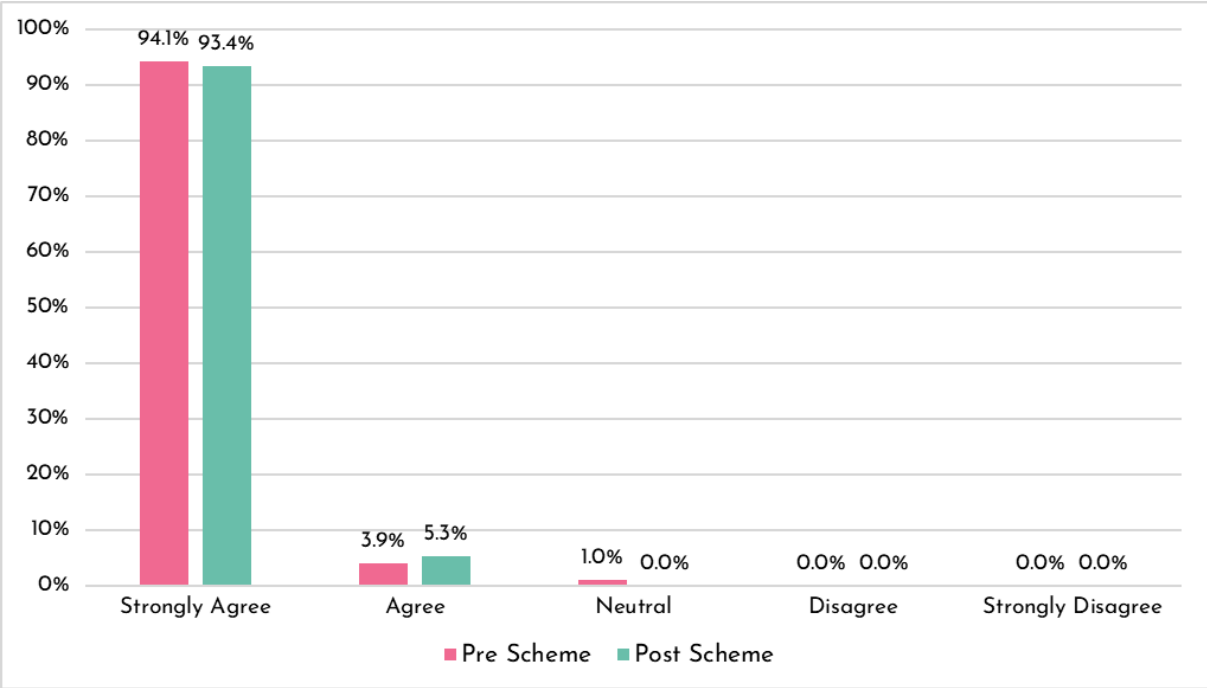


Figure 3: "I plan to apply to University"

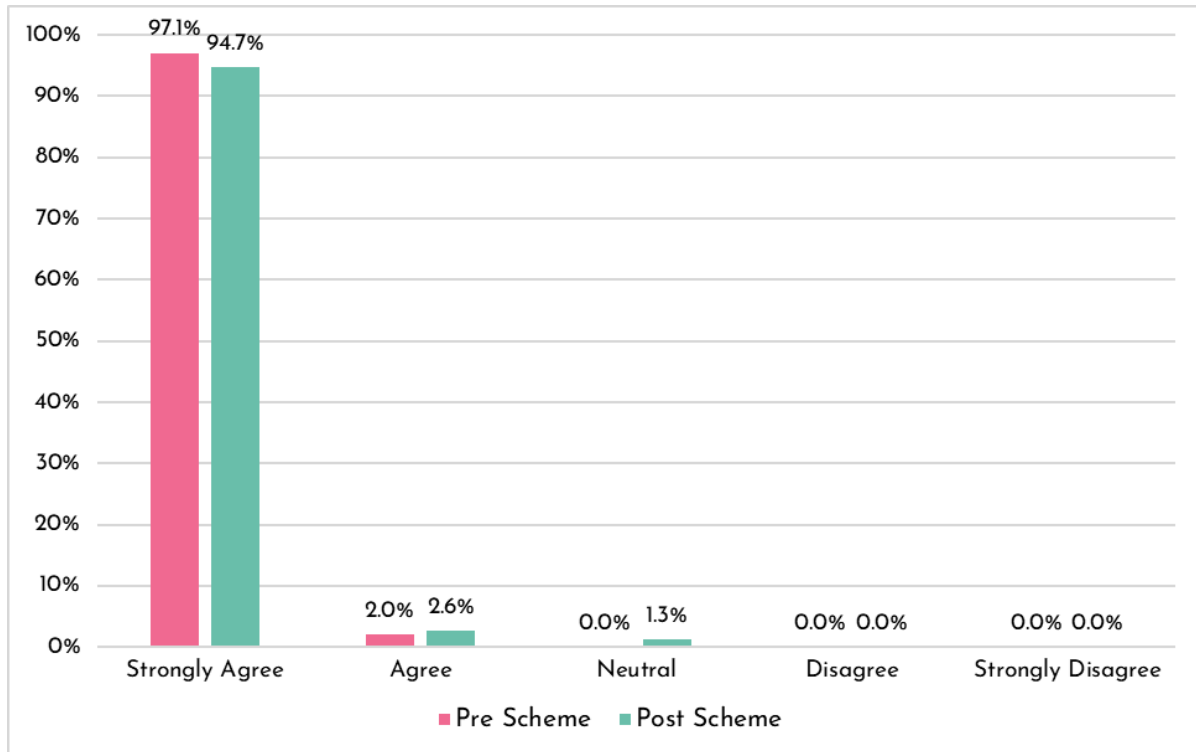


Figure 4: "I plan to apply to a top University"

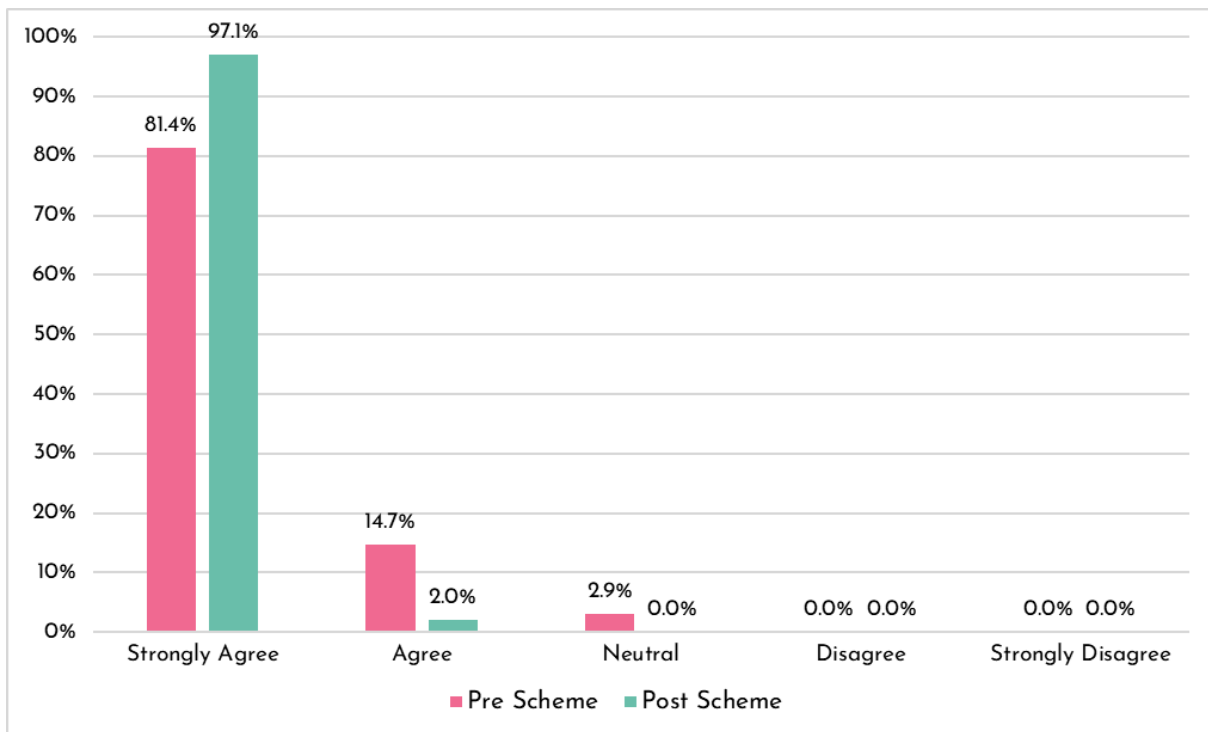
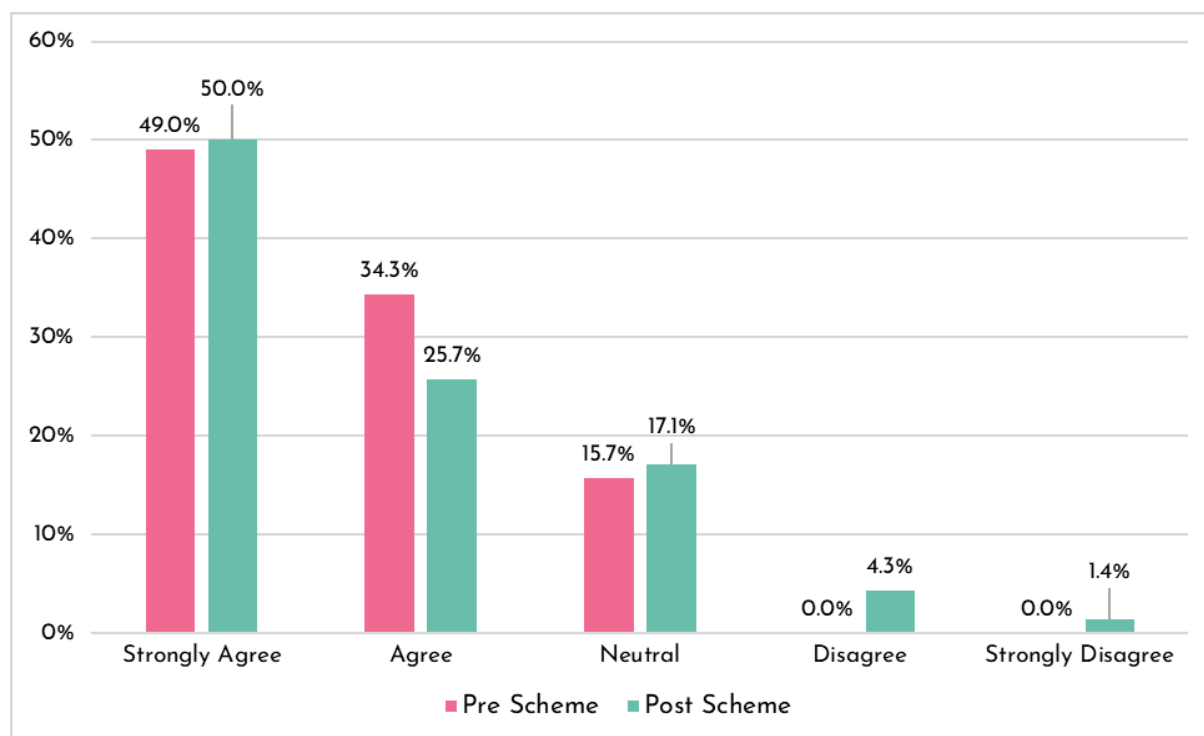


Figure 5: "I plan to apply to Cambridge"



The above data shows that the majority of attendees planned to apply to University (and a 'top university') before they attended the Scheme. After the Scheme, an impressive 97% of attendees strongly agreed they planned to apply to a 'top university'. Although raising aspirations is not the primary function of the Shadowing Scheme, as a high number of Shadows plan to apply to top universities before the Scheme, this increase still shows that experiencing a highly academic university through the eyes of a peer increases the confidence in Shadows to apply to such institutions themselves.

There was a small increase in Shadows who disagreed that they plan to apply to Cambridge after the Scheme than before. One of the core principles of the Shadowing Scheme is to allow students to make informed decisions about their future by demystifying Cambridge and Higher Education more broadly. One Shadow who does not plan to apply to Cambridge put it succinctly that Cambridge is a "beautiful place just not for me."

Overall, plans to apply to Cambridge were higher than the 2023 Scheme, with 76% of Shadows agreeing or strongly agreeing they planned to apply to the University, compared to 67% in the previous year. With changes this year allowing for Mentors to have more flexibility in showing Shadows their life at Cambridge, this increase indicates the value that student-led outreach has for WP students in feeling confident in applying to Cambridge.

5.2 Knowledge of Admissions

Figure 6: "I understand the UCAS Admissions process"

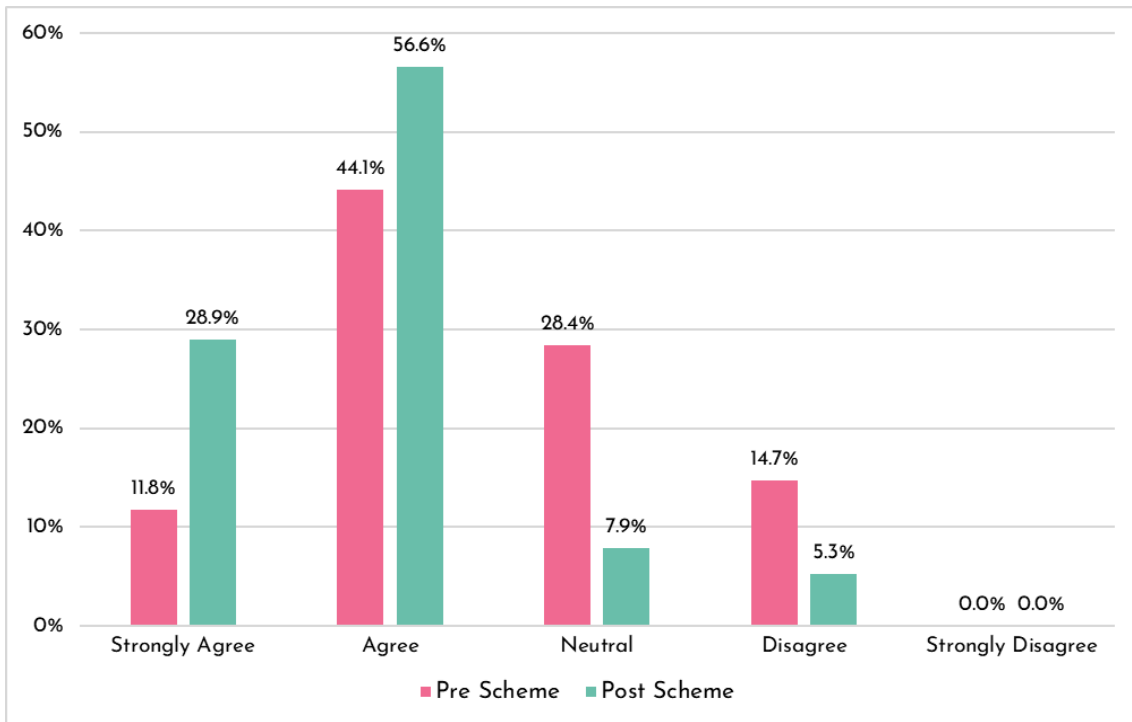
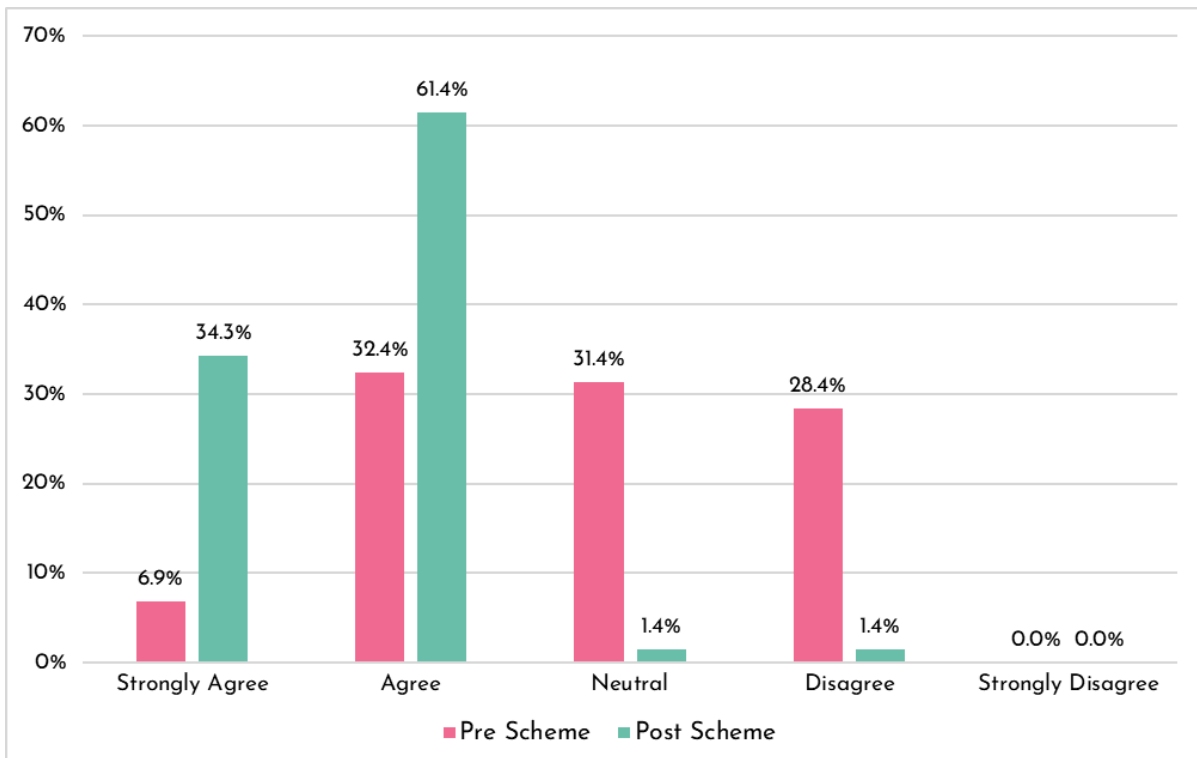


Figure 7: "I understand the Cambridge Admissions process"



Shadows' understanding of admissions processes greatly improved after attending the Scheme, especially regarding the Cambridge admissions process. Following widening participation objectives, the Shadowing Scheme enhances knowledge of higher education and better equips students to make strong applications to University. It remains important that the residential Scheme ends with a mandatory admissions talk from a staff member involved in the admissions process. When asked what was the most important thing that they learned on the Shadowing Scheme, 9 students explicitly mentioned application advice and how interviews work, including the knowledge that "it's the quality of the supercurricular that counts more so than how many you do." Another student noted that they "still have a bit of confusion regarding a few myths and uncertainty about the application process," which is why we maintain a connection between Mentors and Shadows for a year after the residential has ended.

5.3 Confidence and Belonging

Figure 8: "From what I know about Cambridge, I would enjoy studying there"

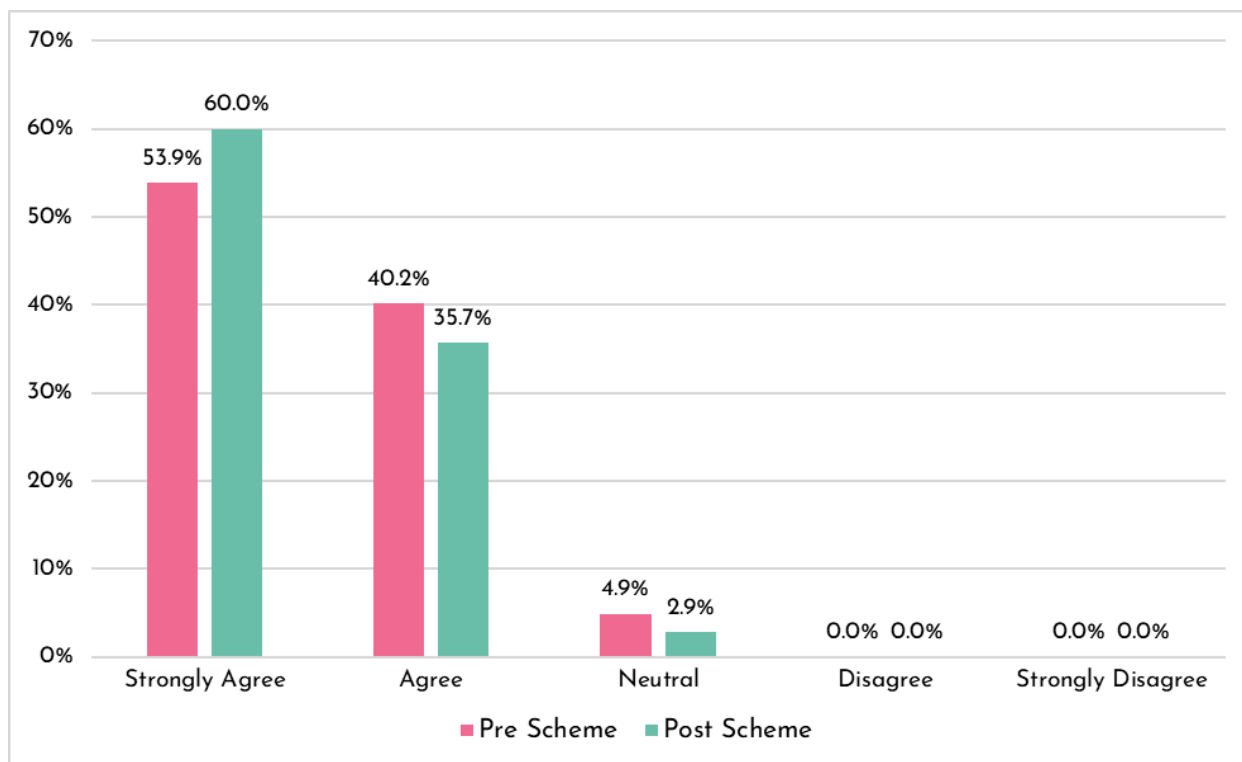


Figure 9: "I can see myself studying at Cambridge"

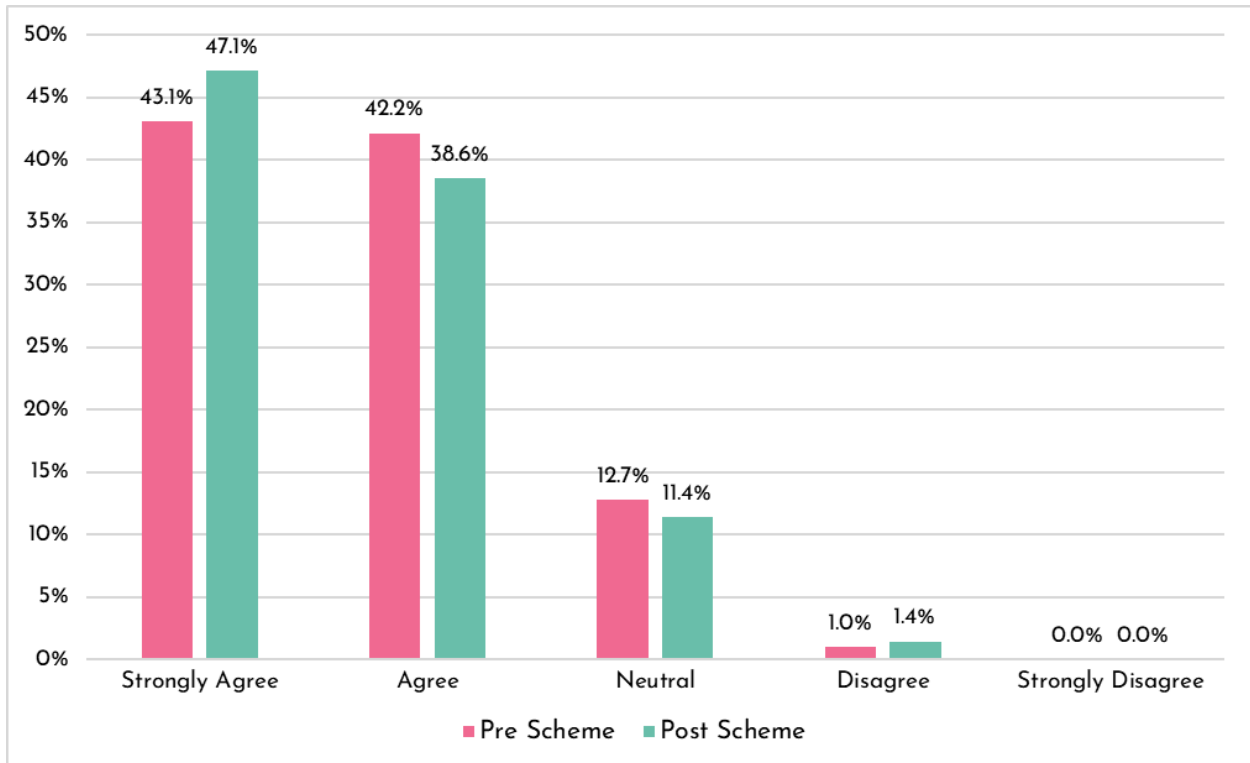


Figure 10: "I would fit in at Cambridge"

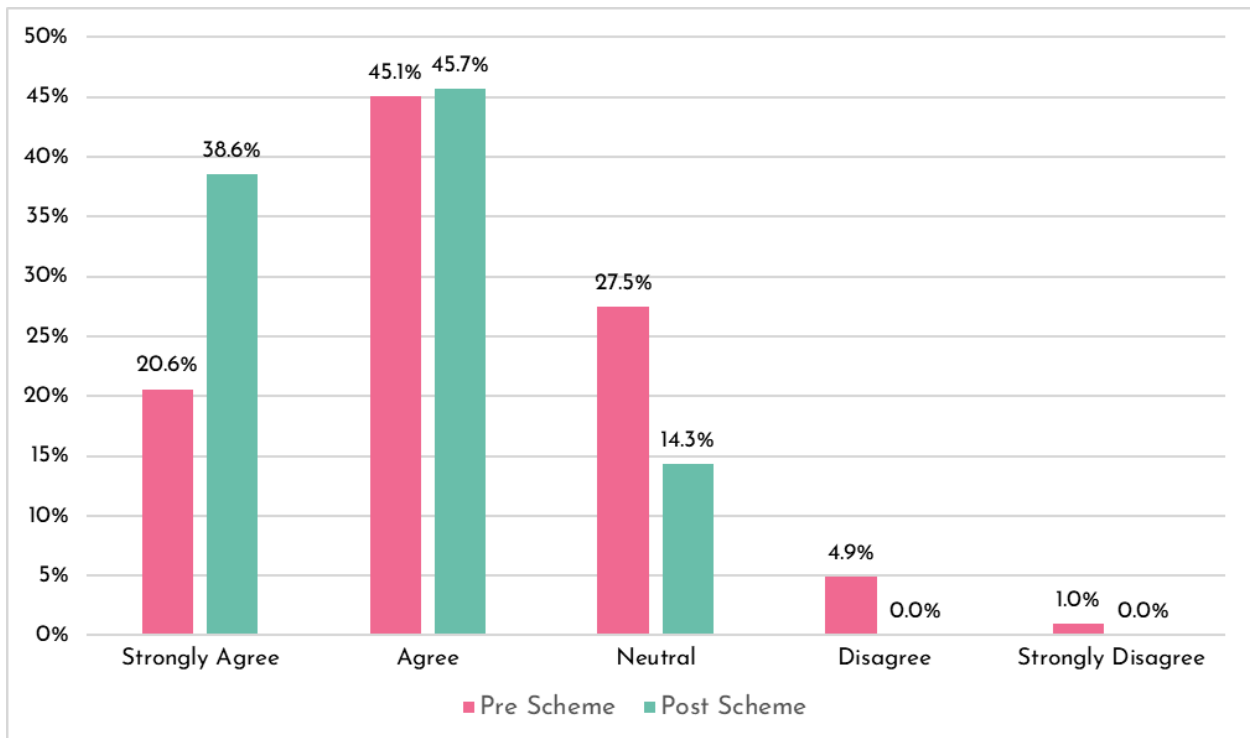
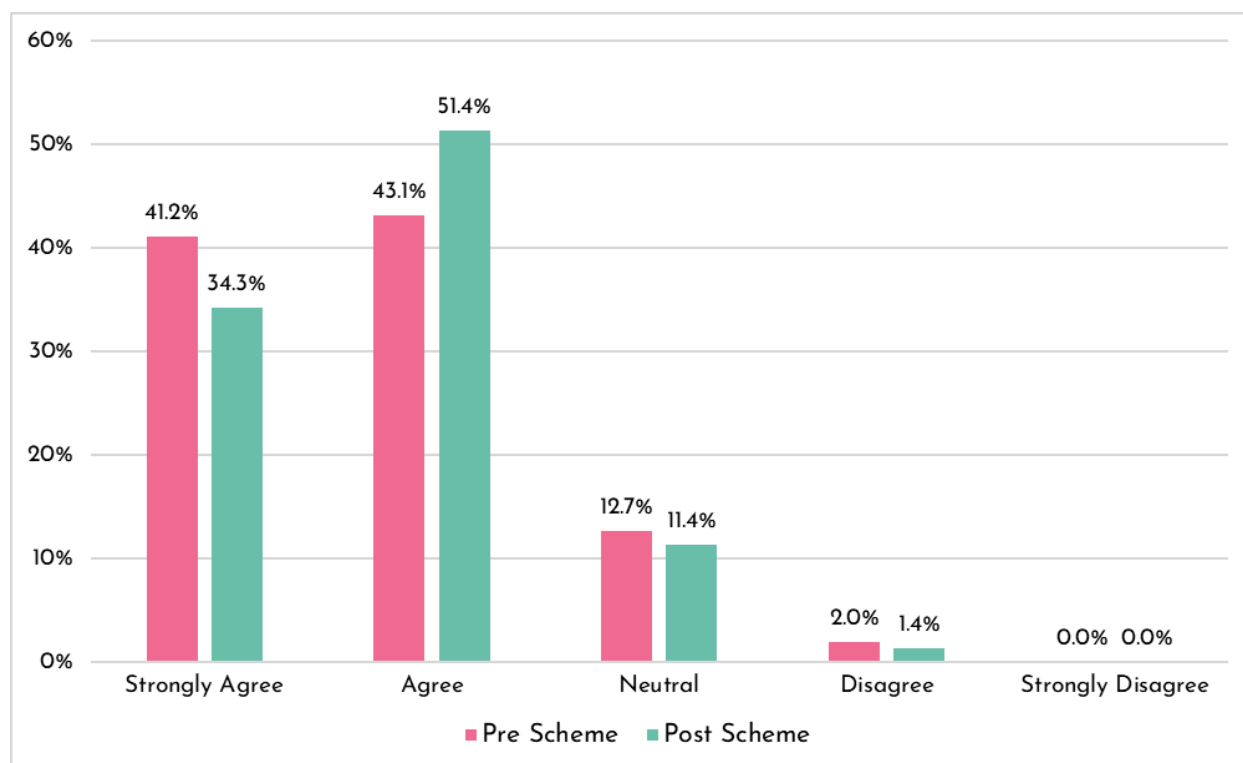


Figure 11: "I would be a strong applicant to Cambridge"



Overall, these trends express a heightened confidence in how attendees see themselves in Cambridge, with more Shadows strongly agreeing they would enjoy studying at Cambridge and that they would fit in at the University. Whereas in the 2023 Scheme, approximately 7% of Shadows disagreed they would fit in at Cambridge, of those surveyed in 2024 there is no disagreement regarding this point. Shadows noted that they felt welcomed in sharing their academic interests, stating that "it felt like the first time that I belonged somewhere academically and wasn't ashamed about my passion."

Balancing these feelings of belonging with the confidence of admission to the University, one student noted that Cambridge "still remains incredibly competitive but in terms of actually being there, everyone seems nice and not intimidating! It is easy to feel out of place in spaces like Cambridge given my culture and religion but Cambridge felt like a mainly welcoming place." This gives insight into the decrease in students who strongly agreed they would make a strong applicant, in comparison to statements about their community and belonging. The Shadowing Scheme aims to give students a sense of community whilst in Cambridge, whilst being transparent about the competitive nature of admissions. Considering the priority in attendee selection for the Scheme is WP backgrounds, it seems understandable that some Shadows were slightly less confident in their own application given the high academic standards of admissions.

6. EVALUATION OF SHADOW SELECTION

We received a total of 2760 applications for the 2024 Shadowing Scheme. This was a smaller number than in 2023, mainly due to more targeted promotion to schools. In order to select participants, we firstly exclude those for whom we have not received the consent of their parent or guardian.

Other ineligible applicants are then identified, including those attending independent schools, those who have not received a teachers' consent, those with family members who have attended Oxbridge, and those who will not obtain three or more A Levels or equivalent. These applicants are excluded unless there are specific circumstances that mitigate their academic profile. To be more precise with confirming eligibility next year, applicants without the correct combination of A-Levels for their chosen course will also be excluded.

Eligible applicants with WP flags were then selected automatically. Remaining applicants are then selected based on a WP score, and an academic score, both determined by automatic algorithms. The academic score is determined by GCSE performance, which is then confirmed by a teacher, and the WP score by scoring a range of WP flags in addition to POLAR4 Quintile and their parent/guardian qualifications. For 2024, we gave enhanced priority to applicants who were care-experienced/estranged, had refugee status, and were from under-represented regions in the UK. This decision is in-line with the current focus of the University, alongside feedback from Mentors and Shadows that the Scheme felt London-dominated.

First, applicants in the top quartile for both WP and academic score are selected and matched with a Mentor, and then applicants in the upper half for WP score and the top quartile for academic score are selected and matched. As the Scheme is still running at a smaller capacity, the majority of students have top range WP and academic scores, with a higher intake of students with prioritised WP flags.

Shadows are paired primarily based on the courses they express an interest in, and secondarily on other preferences like a BME Mentor or same gender Mentor. We also consider their home region and extracurricular interests when matching, although subject preference remains the most important as this serves the core element of the Scheme.

6.1 Attendee Profile

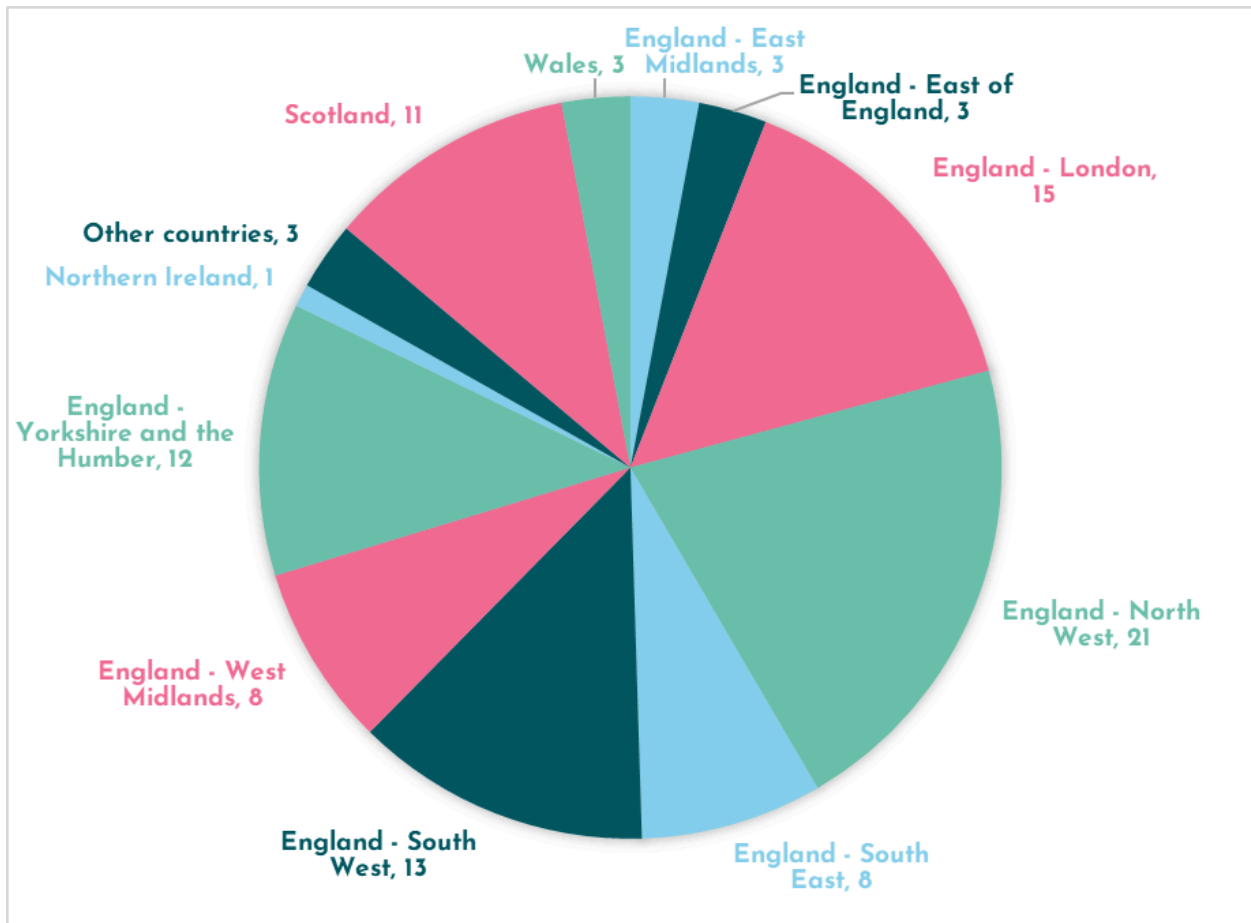
6.1.1 Widening Participation Flags

Of the 101 Shadows surveyed, 60 were eligible for free school meals, 69 were first generation students, 5 were refugees, 7 had experience of local authority care, 5 were estranged, and 15 had caring responsibilities. These figures represent an overall increase in the number of Shadows with selected WP flags. For those with caring responsibilities, there has been a 250% increase in selected attendees compared to the 2023 intake; for care-experienced students there has been a 600% increase. There was

an active effort to ensure these students were given priority in selection, and we are glad to have seen the success of this.

6.1.2 Region

Figure 11: Regional Analysis of Count of Selected Attendees

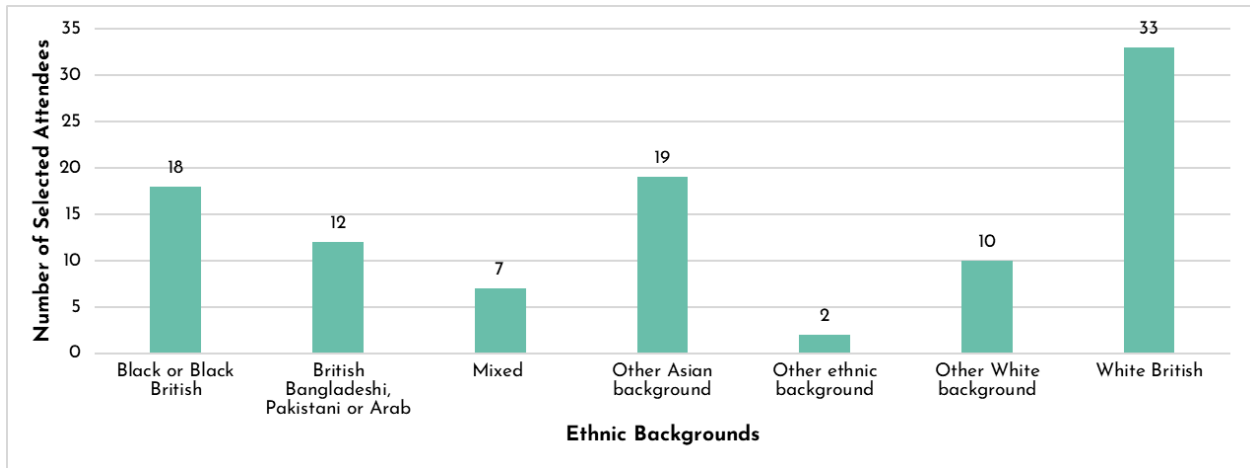


We have included regional data this year as we included under-represented regions within the WP flags of the Scheme’s selection algorithm. We would particularly like to draw attention to the number of attendees from Yorkshire and the Humber, and from Scotland, as these numbers are much higher than those represented at the University (see: Undergraduate Admissions Statistics 2023 cycle). Some Shadows last year expressed the feeling that the Scheme was London/South dominated, therefore we are glad to have admitted less than 40% of attendees from London, the South and the East of England.

This was the first year including regional priority within the selection process and this will continue in future Schemes. To improve regional selection, the Scheme will work more closely with Colleges linked to areas that remain under-represented, particularly Wales, Northern Ireland and the North East to ensure targeted communications with local schools.

6.1.3 Ethnicity

Figure 12: Analysis of Selected Attendees by Ethnicity



The Shadowing Scheme recognises the interconnected relationships between socio-economic barriers to education and ethnicity. As a predominantly White institution, prospective students of colour may be less confident in applying to Cambridge, including because of their cultural/ethnic background. Although there were more White attendees than any other, the majority of participants in the Scheme were from non-White backgrounds. It is important that these opportunities are given to those from under-represented ethnic backgrounds at Cambridge, particularly those who are Black, Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Arab.

7. ATTENDEE DESTINATIONS 2022/23

Using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) we can now see the destinations of Shadows who participated in the 2023 Shadowing Scheme. They have been placed in comparison to the data from 2022. The below table shows applications to Cambridge and offers from Cambridge for students in that cohort. We have compared this data directly with that of the 2021/22 Scheme for analysis. Please note that there has been an increase in applications for the 2021/22 Scheme as an attendee applied in the 2024 admissions round.

	Participants	Applications	Application Rate	Offers	Offer Rate
2021/22 total	150	41	27%	12	25%
2022/23 total	92	42	54%	8	19%
2022/23 IMD Q1	49	26	53%	6	23%
2022/23 IMD Q2	17	5	29%	<3	20%
2022/23 First Gen	55	25	45%	4	16%

Attendee applications to Cambridge between the 2022 and 2023 Schemes increased numerically, but more importantly, are a much higher percentage of the overall cohort, with a small majority of students applying. Considering the aims and principles of the Shadowing Scheme, this shows a marked increase in confidence and aspiration for an in-person Scheme in comparison to an online version (as was run in 2022). With a residential during term time, the University is demystified through access into student life. As a WP Scheme where the majority of students have experienced barriers to higher education, we are proud to see a 54% application rate which indicates that a majority of attendees both wanted to apply to Cambridge, and gained the necessary knowledge and skills to make the application.

The offer rate for the 2023 Scheme has a slight decrease, from 25% to 19%. Although we would always wish the greatest success to our attendees, the Shadowing Scheme does not have an offer rate target. The offer rates were evenly distributed across the three Scheme weeks, with 3 students successful from Week 1 and Week 2, and 2 students successful from Week 3. HEAT data was uploaded for separate weeks to evaluate any disparity in provisions. The data shows that each week of the Scheme provides an equal opportunity with no disparity of service. As a programme that requires the support of the entire SU staff team, and runs for almost a month, we are happy that the provision remains high from start to finish, indicating that the Scheme has reached a level of long-term sustainability for staff, students and attendees.