

Access and Participation Statement

2023/2024: Admissions

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Dyson Technology Limited
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Distribution/stakeholders

Version	Date issued	Action	Name, job title
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C=Contributor, R=Reviewer, A=Authoriser

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1.0 Access and participation

At the Dyson Institute, our mission is to build challenging and enriching educational experiences which are free, student-centric and aligned with the needs of industry. Offering a free education means that those who are able to benefit the most can participate and therefore we are committed to improving access for students from underrepresented backgrounds. This document outlines our approach to fulfilling our ambition.

2.0 Access

As a small provider with a cohort size of around 40 students per year, we must set aspirations that are appropriate to our scale and focus. We are also mindful of the fact that pursuing degree level study alongside working does not suit everyone; our admissions process is designed to recruit candidates who are more likely to thrive in this demanding environment; applicants who are passionate problem solvers and can demonstrate attributes such as persistence, as well as high academic capability. To support access from all backgrounds, the Admissions team provide information and guidance ahead of each admissions stage on what to expect and how to prepare.

The Dyson Institute is focused on three key underrepresented areas for access and participation:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Students who are legally female
- Students from minority ethnic groups or backgrounds

2.1 Students from a low socio-economic background

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 requires HE institutions to address the underrepresentation from socio-economic background in higher education.

We have previously used POLAR4 data as one indication of educational disadvantage. Our ambition was to increase the number of students we recruit from the lowest quintiles:

- 10% of new admissions from POLAR4 Q1
- 20% of new admissions from POLAR4 Q1 + Q2

In 2021 we admitted our highest percentage of Q1 + Q2 applicants to date: 15%. This decreased to 11% in 2022, however in 2023 we have met this with 10% from Q1 and 20% from Q1 + Q2 – our highest proportion to date.

Due to challenges with the societal measure of POLAR4, we have moved to using the individual measures of eligibility for free school meals and low income benefits, to establish socio-economic background. Our aspiration was to see 20% of joiners to be eligible for either of these metrics as a representation of a lower socio-economic background.

In 2023, we made significant progress with 15% of joiners eligible for free school meals (our previous highest was 9% in 2020) and 23% eligible for low income benefits (our previous highest was 7% in 2022).

We continue to aspire to 20% from a lower socio-economic background, to maintain the progress made this year.

2.2 Female students

The Dyson Institute is passionate about increasing the number of female students pursuing engineering. We ensure positive and aspirational role models, such as female engineers, academics, undergraduates and other professionals, are included in both our recruitment activity and our admissions process. According to data from EngineeringUK, only 12% of engineers are female¹. Whilst our aspiration for 2022 entry was to enrol 40% of female undergraduates, to maintain the progress made in 2021, our intake has decreased slightly over the past

Access

two years, to 35% in 2022 and 25% in 2023. Whilst this is still significantly higher than the female undergraduate engineering population starting at UK universities in 2021/21 (19% according to HESA data), we maintain our aspiration to reach 40% in 2024.

2.3 Students from minority ethnic group or background

Only 9% of engineers in the UK are from ethnic minority groups compared to 12% of the UK's workforce². According to HESA data, 29% of UK undergraduate students enrolled on engineering courses in 2020/2021 were from a minority ethnic group or background. We have made progress, increasing our joiner population from 21% in 2021 and 2022, to 23% in 2023. Our ambition remains to reach the sector average of 29%.

¹ <https://www.engineeringuk.com/media/1691/gender-disparity-in-engineering.pdf>

² <https://raeng.org.uk/blogs/racial-parity-in-engineering-looking-beyond-black-history-month>

3.0 Outreach & Partnerships

Outreach events are planned throughout the year with undergraduates playing a vital role, sharing their personal stories from their education and work lives and conveying their passion for engineering. Our outreach activity specifically targets areas and schools that will support our access aspirations.

3.1 Outreach partnerships

As a small, independent institution we are keen to collaborate with organisations who have recognised expertise in widening participation and can support us to achieve our ambition.

3.1.1 The James Dyson Foundation

The James Dyson Foundation (JDF) is a registered charity whose mission is to get young people excited about engineering. It does this by providing free educational resources, delivering engineering workshops in schools and offering bursaries. Through our partnership with the JDF, we reach their network of secondary schools, further education and sixth form colleges. Their outreach activity is prioritised on providers that meet some (or all) of the following criteria:

- Be co-educational or girls' schools
- Be state funded
- Have students from a socially diverse background (based on POLAR4 and ethnicity of local population)

3.1.2 Upskill Me Empowered Females in STEM Programme.

As part of our schools' outreach, we are continuing to develop our partnership with Upskill Me, a social enterprise with a network of over 3,500 schools which focuses on supporting under-represented and less advantaged young people with the skills, connections and knowledge they need to thrive in the future. Upskill Me believes engaging with students in school is vital to raising aspirations, developing key skills, and influencing life-changing career decisions.

Upskill Me's flagship programme, Empowered Females in STEM, matches over 400 passionate students with female or non-binary mentors for an immersive 6-month programme, which includes in-person events, STEM challenges, masterclasses and group mentoring sessions.

4.0 Success and Progression

4.1 Success

Three cohorts (114 students) have graduated from the programme. Two students left the programme to follow different (non-engineering) studies, and three dropped back a year due to personal circumstances. All graduates achieved an honours degree, and all have moved into full time employment. The Dyson Institute will continue to monitor student success and provide support to ensure all learners can achieve their best.

4.2 Progression

Dyson Institute students are also Dyson Technology Ltd employees, and work in the company's Research and Development (R&D) department for three days a week during their degree apprenticeship, putting academic theory into practice in the workplace. They participate in rotations across electrical, mechanical and software teams, allowing them to experience a range of engineering disciplines and develop the skills they need to be effective in the workplace.

Upon graduation, Dyson Technology offers a permanent role to all Institute graduates who achieve a satisfactory level of performance. All graduates have received a permanent job offer at Dyson Technology Ltd.

5.0 Student support

We are committed to offering our undergraduates a supportive and stretching environment in which they can thrive personally as well as academically, as they prepare to become the engineering leaders of the future.

5.1 Academic Support

Our small class sizes allow us to provide individual support to every student. Undergraduates are assigned an Academic Tutor who checks on their academic progress, provides advice when needed and can guide undergraduates when the time comes to choose a stream. The academic team provides study skill seminars, facilitating the transition to higher level study.

5.2 Student Support Advisors (SSAs)

Each student has both a dedicated Student Support Advisor (SSA), who is the first port of call for support and a year group SSA who oversees the students throughout their time at the Institute. SSAs hold regular individual meetings with the undergraduates assigned to them, supporting and coaching them to become resilient, confident individuals enhancing their effectiveness as both a student and employee. The student support team also run Wellbeing and Development days three times a year to further enhance both professional and personal development. SSAs also the first port of call for undergraduates who may face difficulties and they work closely with the safeguarding team where specialist support is required.

5.3 Mental Health Support

We all face challenges in our lives, and that is perfectly normal, however, we sometimes struggle with facing those challenges. As well as providing a wealth of self-help resources, including CBT through SilverCloud, we partner with four key mental health support providers for our undergraduates to support them in responding to these challenges whilst maintaining their wellbeing.

- Online talking therapy in partnership with ProblemShared.
 - Online Text Support in partnership with SHOUT.
 - In-person talking therapy with a clinical psychologist from StableFocus.
 - Mental health support through their BUPA medical insurance, as a Dyson employee.
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5.4 Disability Support

The SSA's support students with their disability and learning difference needs and ensure the necessary reasonable adjustments are made. They, alongside Dyson HR, provide advice and support to both current and prospective students on the availability and provision of different adjustments available in both academic teaching and workplace learning, helping our undergraduates to achieve their full potential. The Dyson Institute provides a wide range of assistive technology to further support for those with disabilities and/or learning differences and takes a proactive approach in making the experience as accessible as possible for all students.

5.5 Year One Induction

Fully aware of the challenges this important life transition poses, we provide a comprehensive two-week induction programme that supports undergraduate to transition into employment and higher education. The induction

period also includes a social programme, designed to facilitate the cohort in building a community.

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POLAR4	POLAR4 Q1	3%	0%	5%	3%	5%	2%	10%
	POLAR4 Q1 +2	12%	13%	12%	9%	15%	12%	20%
Parental Education	Parents completed higher education	58%	45%	79%	62%	62%	79%	80%
	Unsure if parents completed higher education	18%	32%	0%	3%	2%	2%	-
	Parents did not complete higher education	24%	23%	21%	35%	36%	19%	20%
	Eligible for free school meals	-	-	-	9%	8%	7%	15%
	Eligible for low income benefits	-	-	-	6%	5%	7%	23%