Thank you

Thank you for supporting Birkbeck. In 2016–2017, our donors gave £3.3 million to the College, while our volunteers dedicated 3430 hours of their time – equivalent to 85 working weeks.

With your help, we are coming closer to finding successful interventions for autism, expanding the reach of our student counselling service, and providing students with a careers service to help them launch their future careers while they study.

Over the next few pages, you will read more about these projects. I hope that you will see the difference that your time and money have made, not only to our students but also to their families and wider society too.

Professor David Latchman CBE

Master
YOU DONATED
£3.3 MILLION TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS
Your donations

In 2016–2017, our alumni and friends donated over £3.3 million, including:

£1.4 MILLION for postgraduate students

£1 MILLION to improve research and teaching facilities

£178,000 to support undergraduate bursaries

£105,000 to support asylum seekers

To find out more about how you can help, visit: bbk.ac.uk/donate
YOU GAVE

3430 HOURS

OF YOUR TIME
Your time

You gave 3430 hours of your time to support our students – that’s 85 working weeks.

To find out more about how you can help, visit bbk.ac.uk/alumni/help
I couldn’t afford to do it on my own but my bursary has given me that chance.

Stuart Haw
MSc Sport Management, Governance and Policy
Donations to the College funded 53 postgraduate bursaries last year, supporting students like Stuart:

“Before I began studying at Birkbeck, I was working at my local library but wanted to work in sport management – one day I hope to work at the British Olympic Association or UK Sport.

This was a big shift in career and I knew I’d need to re-qualify to stand a chance of making it. I couldn’t afford to do it on my own but my bursary has given me that chance.

I’ve had a fantastic time studying at Birkbeck and, thanks to my course and to my bursary, I now have a new job in sports administration, with a year of studying still left.”
NOT A SINGLE AFRICAN WHO FOUGHT AND DIED ON AFRICAN SOIL IN WW1 HAS THEIR OWN HEADSTONE
PhD studentships

Your donations also support PhD students to change society. John Siblon, whose PhD in Medieval and Modern History has been supported by the Grace Morris Learning Ladder, explains his work:

“My research has shown that after the First World War, officials from the British Empire made a determined effort to keep the memory of Africans and Caribbeans out of the war. Not a single African who fought and died on African soil in WW1 has their own headstone.

My hope is that my findings will change thinking on commemoration and rewrite the memory of the war. After one of my talks, the British Legion committed to working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to look again at the commemoration of Africans.”
GET TALKING LIFTED MY WORRIES AND PREPARED ME TO FACE UNIVERSITY CONFIDENTLY

Cecilia Nguyen
BA German and Journalism
Alumni volunteering

Last year, our Get Talking programme saw 60 alumni volunteers meet with 60 prospective students to talk through their concerns about starting at Birkbeck. Cecilia was one of these students. She says:

“\textit{I was extremely excited to start my course and couldn’t wait to hear what Birkbeck was like from a student’s point of view. Get Talking was the perfect chance to find out more. I had a lot in common with my mentor so it was easy for us to converse and for me to confide in him. It was nice to have someone who had been through the same thing, who had been as anxious as I was and who could reassure me about what the future held. It lifted my worries and prepared me to face university confidently.”}
I feel looked down upon if I admit to having a problem
Counselling outreach

With support from the UPP Foundation, we are exploring the barriers preventing men, care leavers and forced migrants from accessing our counselling service, in an initiative that will inform best practice across the higher education sector. Paul Mollitt, who is leading the project, explains:

“When we asked Birkbeck’s male students why they wouldn’t use the counselling service, one said, ‘Being male, I feel looked down upon if I admit to having a problem like depression.’ Our aim is to better understand what we can do to encourage people like him to seek help.

We also want to tailor our counselling offering to best suit our students’ needs. So far, online therapy and gym- or exercise-related courses have been popular options to consider offering alongside our traditional therapies.”
THE ENTIRE SERVICE SEEMED REALLY GENUINE, LIKE THEY REALLY WANTED TO HELP

Marta Sikorska
MSc Occupational Psychology
Career opportunities

Since launching in 2015, Birkbeck Talent, our in-house recruitment service, has found jobs and internships for 384 students, with support from Santander, the Texel Foundation and friends of the College Sir Michael and Lady Morven Heller. Marta found a placement through Birkbeck Talent:

“The entire service seemed really genuine, like they really wanted to help. They reviewed my CV and the most helpful thing was the mock interview. I received very helpful, honest feedback, which gave me a clear insight into my technique and what employers look for.

Birkbeck Talent found me an Occupational Psychology internship, which gave me the experience that I have today and the confidence to apply for my new role as a Senior Research Executive at ORC International.”
BRINGING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY AUTISM CLOSER TOGETHER
Autism research

With funding from the Medical Research Council, Autistica, The Waterloo Foundation and Autism Speaks, researchers at Birkbeck have been working on one of the world’s earliest autism intervention studies.

Using video-feedback therapy, the study helped parents to understand their baby’s individual communication style. Families who received the therapy saw improvements in their babies’ engagement, attention and social behaviour. The next stage of the research is to try to replicate these results on a larger scale.

Early intervention is key to teaching children with autism how to cope in a world where they feel like outsiders. Using this strategy, parents could one day play a greater role in enabling their children to comprehend this world and to build relationships with those around them.
I WANT TO ACHIEVE MY AMBITION OF BECOMING A HUMANITARIAN AID WORKER

Kandeeban Thanabalan
PG Diploma War and Humanitarianism
In 2016, more than 44,000 people applied for asylum in the UK. Many of them had their education disrupted when they fled their home countries. Thanks to generous donations from our alumni, The Blanes Trust, The Foundation, Allen & Overy and Santander, this year we have been able to provide a tailored outreach programme, as well as scholarships for 20 asylum seekers through Birkbeck’s new Compass Project. Kandeeban is receiving one of these scholarships. He says:

“I was very pleased to get a place on Birkbeck’s PG Diploma War and Humanitarianism. I lived most of my life in a war zone, losing two siblings in the Sri Lankan war. Through my Diploma, I want to achieve my ambition of becoming a humanitarian aid worker.”
MATHEMATICAL UNDERSTANDING THAT CAN SOLVE REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS
Dr Steve Noble is the Sundstrom Reader in Mathematics, a position kindly supported by alumna Geraldine Sundstrom. He researches networks, with a current focus on delta matroids.

Delta matroids are mathematical structures that can help us to better understand the properties of networks. In the real world, networks are everywhere, from DNA to road maps and telephone exchanges but many are not properly understood.

By studying the shape of these networks, rather than viewing them as a list of connections, we can see their structure and attempt to better understand their mathematical properties. This understanding brings us closer to devising algorithms that can, ultimately, solve mathematical and real-world problems, including identifying genetic conditions, designing artificial enzymes and understanding DNA replication.
IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY BEING OFFERED TO YOU ON A SILVER PLATTER

Georgiana Chiper
MSc Management Consultancy and Organisational Change
Mentoring Pathways

This year, alumni and corporate volunteers mentored 115 students through our Mentoring Pathways programme, which offers careers advice and support. Georgiana was one of those students:

“It was an opportunity I just couldn’t say no to. It was my chance to get first-hand insight into what consultancy is all about. My mentor was like an encyclopaedia, with insightful answers and advice to all my queries and concerns. Our mentoring topics ranged from assignments, to interviews and CV feedback, to what a ‘hands-on approach’ is.

I would highly recommend the programme to other students – it is an opportunity being offered to you on a silver platter.”
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE
Planning ahead

In 2016–17, our donors kindly left us £2.3 million in their wills. These generous donations support scholarships, bursaries and research, as well as improving our teaching facilities.

In order to give our students the best possible experience at Birkbeck, we want to ensure that their classrooms, lecture theatres and laboratories are well equipped, with all the space and modern technologies students need. It is also our ambition that all of our students are taught in purpose-built, Birkbeck-owned classrooms. To achieve this, we are planning a new multimillion pound teaching centre on Euston Road.

Donations left in people’s wills have been vital in helping us to plan ahead and will ensure that future generations of Birkbeck students are taught in a world-class environment.