

# UNIVERSITY INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND VALUE FOR MONEY



## Introduction

We're often asked how where our income comes from and how we offer value for money to students.

Like most universities, Birkbeck is an educational charity and so we take great care to ensure that our financial resources deliver life-changing education and research for our students and society in general. Whether your course is on campus or online or both, we take the same care to ensure it is of a high quality and will maintain its value over time.

The fees you pay each year at enrolment contribute to everything in that year of study and to your lifetime association with the College and the University of London. Around a third of students pay their fees via agencies such as Student Finance England, which depending on your income level or age, may never be fully repaid. A tuition fee contributes to assessments, exams, reassessments, bursaries, academic support and all the academic services such as admissions, enrolment and exam boards across the whole student journey and beyond. It also supports pre-admissions and enrolment activity.

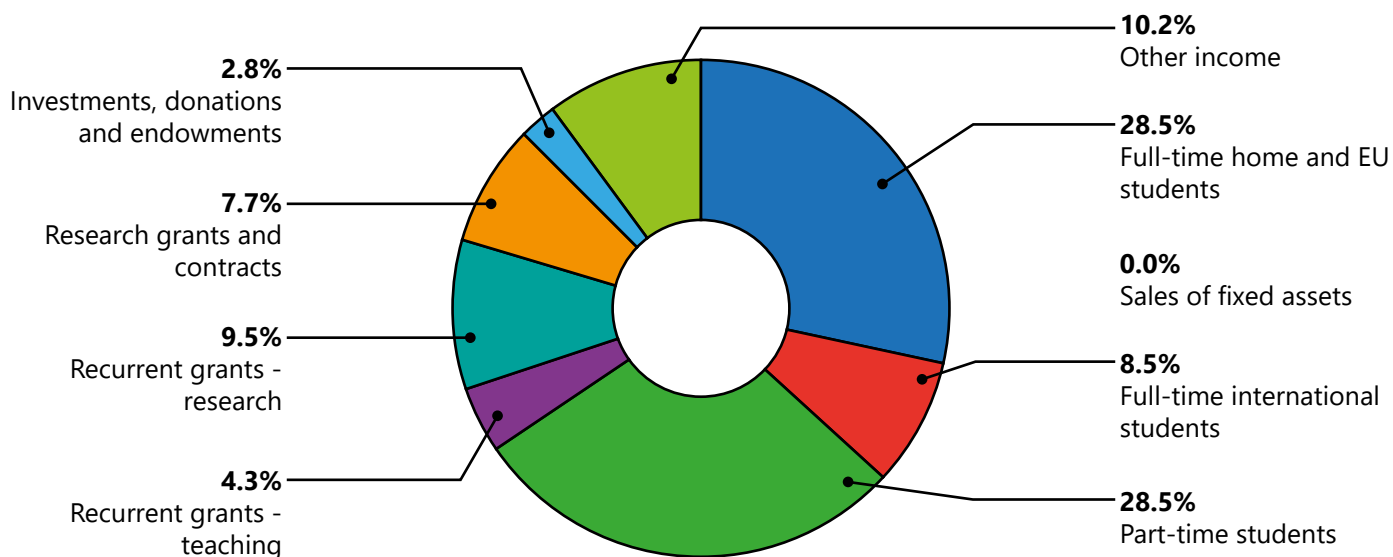
Regardless of how you pay your fees, we always use our income for the benefit of students, and on the things students' care most about, such as continuously improving our learning resources and facilities, ensuring assessments are fair and providing helpful feedback. You can look in detail how we spend our income in our Financial Statements.

In line with our mission to provide educational opportunities to people who may not otherwise be able to access them, we provide a wide range of qualifications from short courses, through to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, all of which have been developed to meet the educational needs of our part-time and mature learners. With this brings some complexity and additional costs. In this regard, we continue to lobby Government to ensure institutions like Birkbeck, receive equitable funding to deliver our flexible modes of delivery.

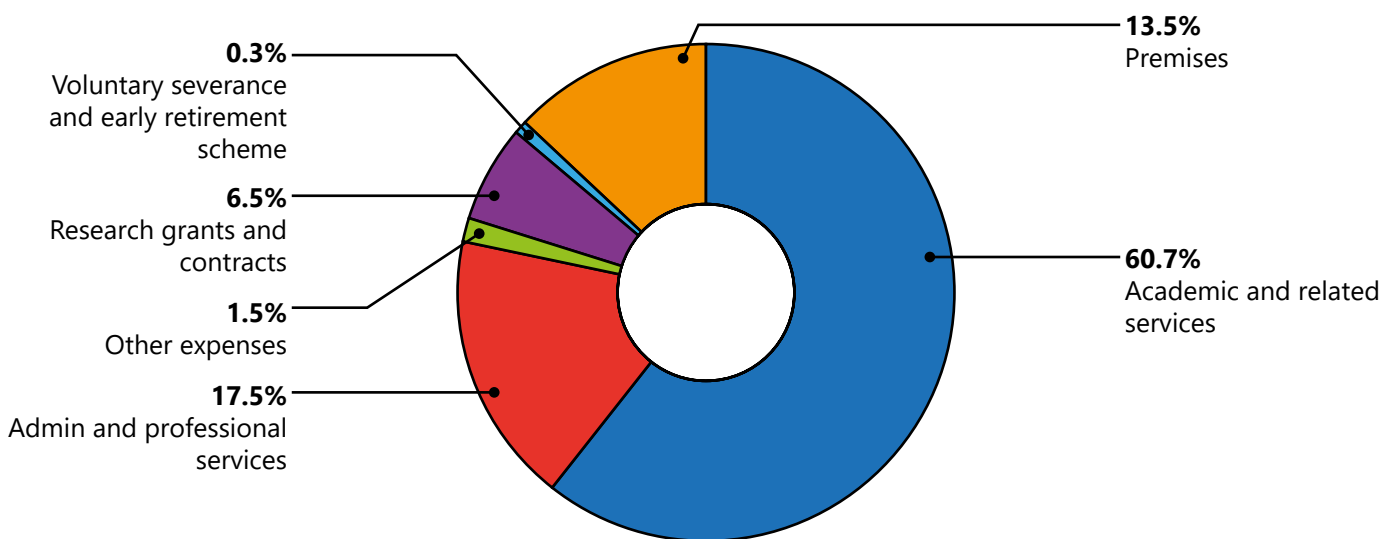
# Income and expenditure

Here's how our £109m income for 2019-20 is broken down:

## Our Income 2019/20



## Our expenditure 2019/20



## **Academic and Related Services**

The majority of our expenditure and the income from tuition fees is spent on supporting teaching and research in our departments and research centres. This includes the provision of specialist facilities and infrastructure such as laboratories, software and technology; the salaries of teaching and research staff, as well as support staff such as programme administrators and learning development tutors. Being taught by research-active academic leaders, with a curriculum that has been informed by the latest thinking, is fundamental to your future success and the mission of Birkbeck.

We've invested a lot of money in our digital infrastructure in recent years. This includes providing high-quality online resources in Moodle and the Library to enhance the curriculum. Our new online module evaluation system ensures we gather and respond to student feedback each term and the Studiosity service provides feedback key aspects of written assignments.

## **Administration and Professional Services**

The central professional and administrative services staff community encompasses staff in Access and Engagement, Alumni and Fundraising, Secretariat, Human Resources, IT, Finance, Estates, External Relations and Marketing, Facilities and other services like the Registry and Library Services. The majority of these teams provide student facing support and they include the Subject Librarians, Student Counsellors, and Mental Health Advisors, as well as colleagues who focus on admissions, student records, bursary payments and the hosting of careers and graduation events. Whilst independent of the College, we also give an annual grant to the Birkbeck Students Union to allow them to deliver services and activities.

## **Premises, buildings and IT Infrastructure**

There are other costs you may not be aware of which cover the maintenance of teaching, research and learning spaces- for the 2019/20 period, this amounted to 13.5% of expenditure. This includes providing heating, light, power, and ventilation and maintenance in ways that contribute to our environmental sustainability targets and can save money in the longer term.

We've recently purchased the rest of the building attached to our Malet Street campus, which will provide 25% more high-quality classrooms and social space. And we've just opened new buildings - 373 Euston Road and the ToddlerLab. These will help us achieve our goal that all Birkbeck students can be taught or conduct research in Birkbeck buildings, equipped with the latest learning facilities, laboratories and technology.

We have a rolling programme of behind-the-scenes investment to keep our estate functioning. We also have to pay for cybersecurity services, for cloud capacity and for software and licences, including Microsoft Teams, Office 365, Collaborate and PanOpto. All these investments are designed to support the delivery of teaching and research.

## **Other expenses**

Other expenses relate to the USS Pension charge.

## Research and Teaching Grants

These areas of income and expenditure underpin the international stature of our research base and allow for this scholarship to be incorporated across our portfolio of courses. When we receive research grants, sometimes they also pay for PhD studentships and internships, both of which directly benefit students. This area of funding also facilitates opportunities for our doctoral students to gain experience of teaching in the classroom or acting as demonstrators in scientific or technical subjects. One of the research grants recently helped buy a £4m electron microscope which enhances our research capabilities and opportunities to collaborate with other universities around the world.

## Financial Support

We know that many Birkbeck students are on modest incomes. You can read more about our planned financial support commitments in our Access and Participation Plan (APP). During the pandemic we doubled our spend on financial support to help our students through a challenging period. This included the introduction of new schemes such as the provision of internet and computers via the Access to Digital Learning Fund and a Summer Fund to assist progression from one year to another. We also provided an additional 200 scholarships to Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Postgraduate students.

## Research

Research is at the heart of our work as a university and is embedded in our studies at Birkbeck. We invest heavily in ground-breaking research, for example, the new ToddlerLab is assessing the brain activity young children to help understand better, conditions such as autism and to hopefully improve their lives in future.

We also invest time and money engaging with businesses and local communities to offer students additional benefits and to continue to make an impact within the external environment.

Any surplus income is typically invested in enhancing teaching and research space, student learning, social facilities, additional student support, campus improvements, and funding for new innovations.

## Financial Risks and Issues

Like many universities, Birkbeck is managing its income and expenditure during a period of economic uncertainty. Every year there are increased costs, particularly from salary increments and employer pension contributions. Government policy can also change and this year we lost £1.5m of our teaching grant income as a result. Undergraduate tuition fees are regulated and have not kept pace with inflation and so, like many of our students, we are continually looking for ways in which we can 'do more with less' and reviewing our income and expenditure to make sure our central objectives of delivering life-changing education and research are maintained.

## Further reading

- Birkbeck, University of London Financial Statements ([Financial statements — Birkbeck, University of London](#))
- Access & Participation Plan (APP) ([Corporate policies and procedures — Birkbeck, University of London](#))