



The Brilliant Club: Mobilising a diverse cohort of PGRs to inspire the next generation

Rosa Smith, Tutor Engagement Director

Who are The Brilliant Club?



- An education charity, **mobilising the PhD community to become experts in supporting less advantaged students to access and succeed at university.**
- We work with over **400 PGRs and PhD graduates each year.**
- Partnered with over **50 universities and DTPs.**
- We support around **20,000 students** and **400 parents** per year, in **800** schools.
- Our PhD community bring academic expertise into nonselective state schools, gaining **valuable skills and experience in teaching, public engagement and research communication.**



Some of our brilliant courses



The Scholars Programme

Basic Game Theory: Understanding the Science of Decision Making and Social Mechanisms
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Can Computers Help Us Make Better Batteries?
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Rap, Racism and Resistance: A Critical Perspective
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Symmetry, Symmetry Breaking and Why the Universe Doesn't Annihilate Itself
Key Stage 5 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Infectious Disease – How can we prevent future pandemics?
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Disability Across Time
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

The Scholars Programme

Engineering Materials – How do materials help shape the world we live in?
Key Stage 4 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B

hello future.

The Scholars Programme

Oceans and Climate Change
Key Stage 5 Programme

Pupil Name:

Coursebook Designed by:

S B



The University of Sheffield.



Why do researchers choose us?



Inter-sector
mobility/
transferrable
skills

Fair pay and
professional
experience

Contributing
to EDI in HE



**“Each session has been a journey of discovery, not only for the students but for myself as well”
Celestina Atom, Teesside University**

What do our tutors think?



“The Scholars Programme has stretched my ability to disseminate my research to non-expert audiences, which is important in other outreach activities I take part in, as well as in my career. I even won a prize for producing the best lay summary of my research in my department's annual research symposium, which I never could have done without the experience I'd obtained while working with The Brilliant Club.”

University of Cardiff PGR

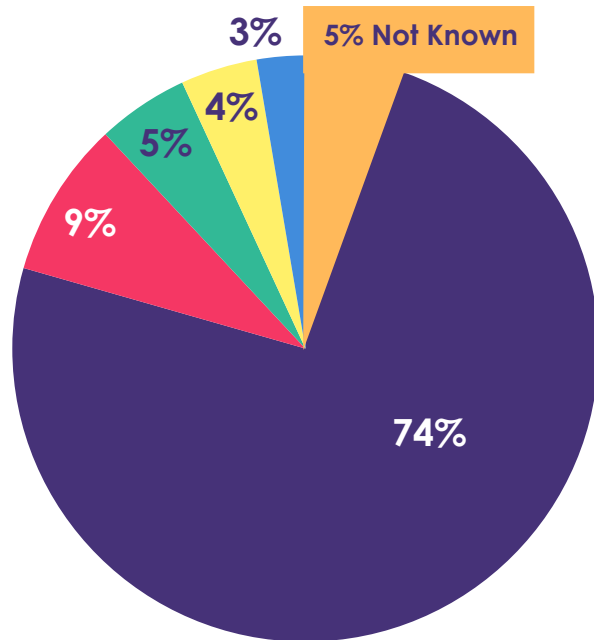


PGR Diversity:
Who are our tutors and **why** do
they want to work with us?

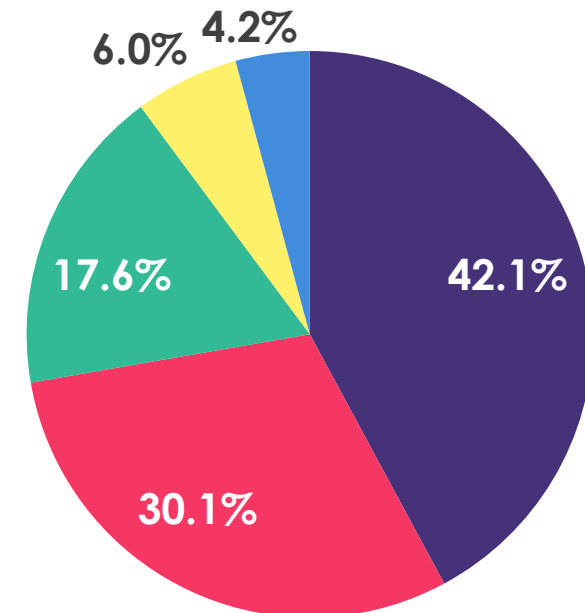
Brilliant Club PGR applicants come from more diverse backgrounds than the national PGR population



National PGR Population 2022-23
n=73,705 students with UK address



The Brilliant Club Applicants 2023-24
n=1367



■ White ■ Asian ■ Black ■ Mixed ■ Other

Of our current tutor pool...



- **41%** say **neither of their parents went to university**
- **39%** participated in **university access or school outreach activities**, suggesting they were from a less advantaged socio-economic background
- **15%** have told us they have a **disability or long-term health condition**

What motivates tutors to work with us?



“A lot of my motivation [comes from being] a state school student. I want to be that support and that person that I didn't have, to advise me to get into university.”

“If even one student thinks about applying to university because they've been on The Scholars Programme, that would be massive for me.”

“I'm also a first generation academic and so it really means a lot that I can pass on my experience to the kids.”



PGRs as change agents:
How do we work with them to
inspire the next generation?

Our training has a focus on:



**Inclusive
teaching
practices**

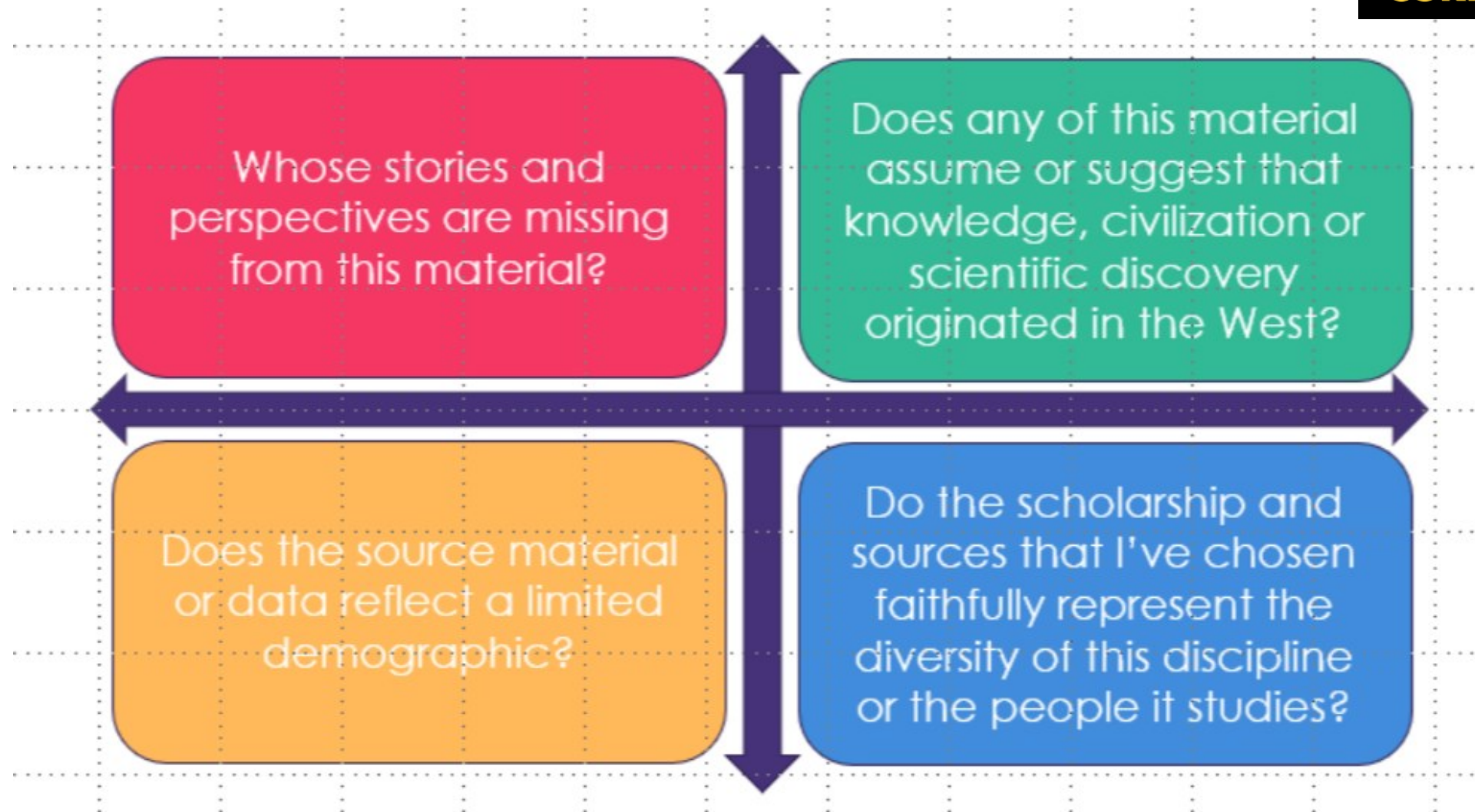
**Decolonising
courses**

**Crafting a
public
narrative**

Inclusive Teaching Practices

- Support with strategies for engaging all students and differentiating tasks and questions in tutorials
- Guidance to support tutors to design accessible handbooks for students with SEN (e.g. considering visuals, colour choices, language choices)
- Optional sessions which focus in more depth on supporting 'high risk' or SEND learners

Decolonising the curriculum



Public Narrative

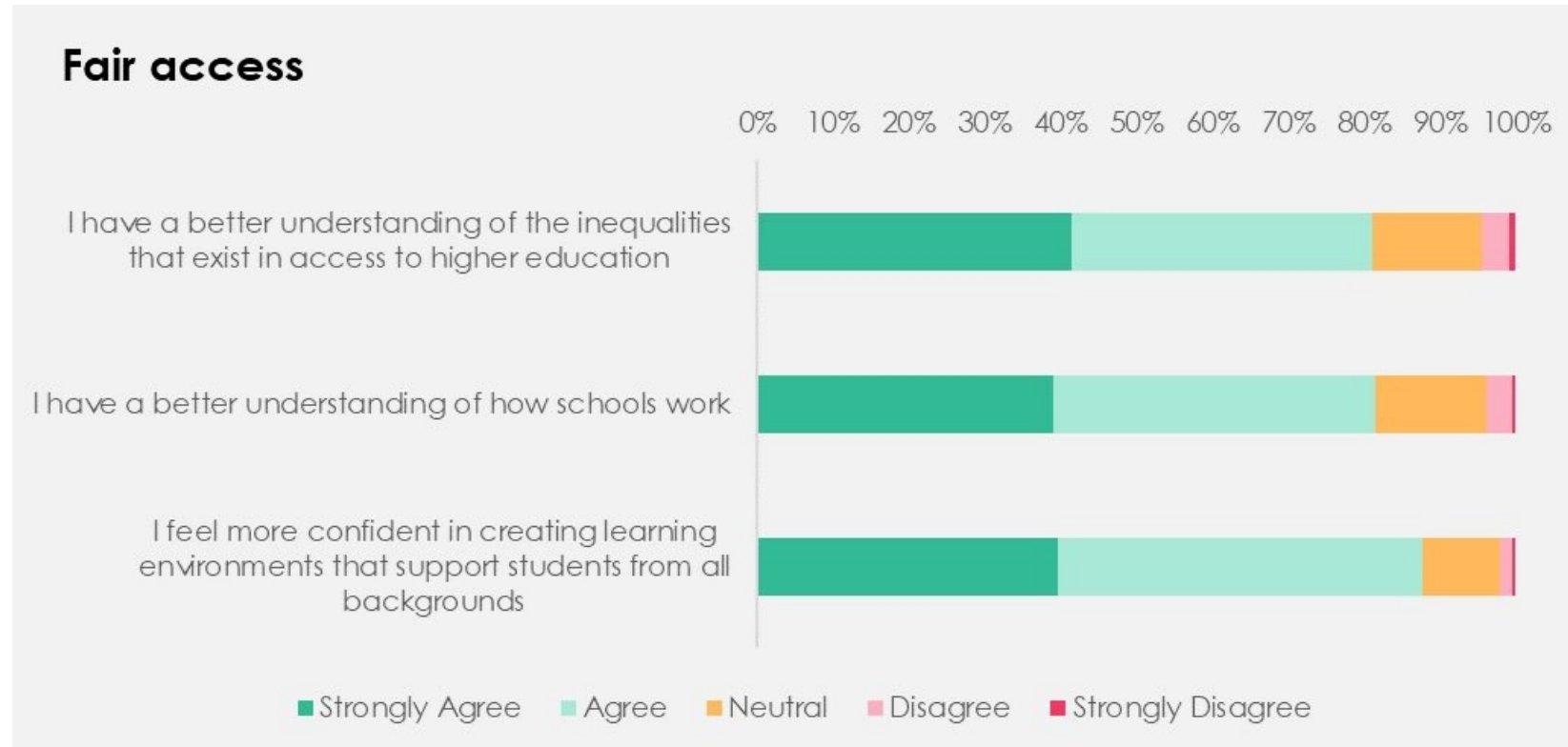
'Why Stories Matter' Marshall Ganz



After our training:



Sample size ~1100 PhD tutors from 2019 onwards

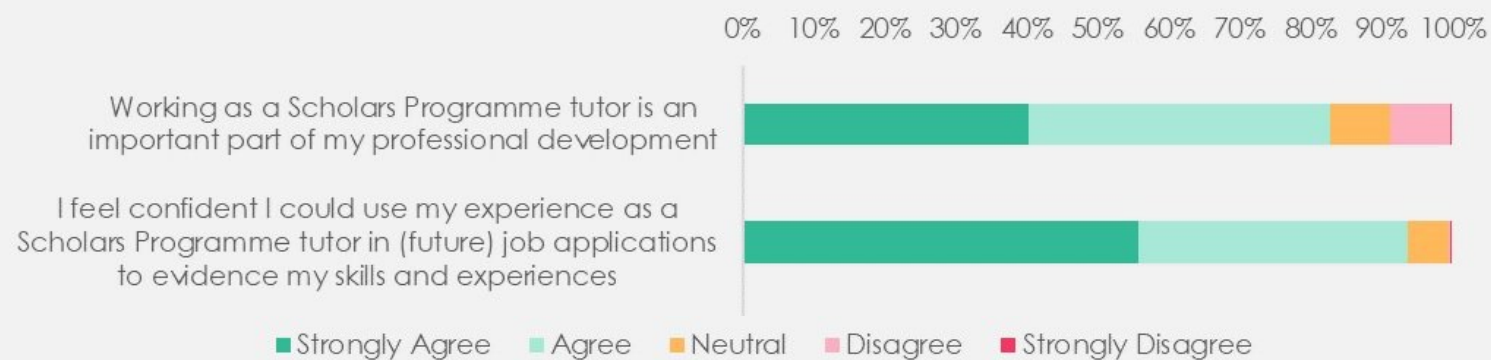


Main findings: 87% of tutors feel confident in creating learning environments that support students from all backgrounds and 81% of tutors feel that they have a better understanding of inequalities in the educational system.



Sample size ~1100 PhD tutors from 2019 onwards

Professional and career development



Main findings: 89% of tutors view working in The Scholars Programme as being important to their professional development. 94% of tutors feel confident they could use their experience as a Scholars Programme tutor in future job applications.



How can we work with you?



University Partnership offers...

University
Civic
Engagement

Detailed
evaluation
and impact
data

Support
future PGR
Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion



Transitions and Transformations with The University of Essex

Webinar: **25th November, 3-4pm**

Come along to hear about this pioneering project that won significant funding for its work in tackling inequalities and barriers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students to access and take part in postgraduate research



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Working with The Brilliant Club helps PGRs to learn the critical skill of how to engage with and enthuse diverse audiences from outside academia, and feel a real sense of satisfaction from supporting less advantaged pupils.

“

**PGR Careers Consultant,
Brunel University**



thebrilliantclub.org