# Westminster says social mobility success will be boosted by new employer hub and expanded apprenticeships



The University of Westminster presents itself as a metropolitan engine of social mobility, with recent analyses placing it among the strongest performers in England on measures of upward earnings mobility. According to a University of Westminster news release summarising Institute for Fiscal Studies and Sutton Trust analysis, the university ranks second in England on the metric that tracks the proportion of former pupils who were eligible for free school meals and later reach the top 20% of earners by age 30. The original profile of the institution noted that Westminster admitted a particularly high share of disadvantaged students, underlining its claim to be a gateway into professional careers for Londoners and others from under‑represented backgrounds. (According to the original report, 22% of students admitted in the most recent cycle had been eligible for free school meals.)

That social‑mobility focus sits alongside a distinctly urban, international student body. Westminster operates four campuses — Cavendish, Regent and Marylebone in central London, and Harrow in north‑west London — and the Daily Mail profile records that more than one in five undergraduates admitted in the last cycle came from overseas, at a time when applications were the strongest since 2015. The university also reports that nearly three‑quarters of its students are from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and that more than half are the first in their families to enter higher education, which the institution frames as evidence of its broad reach across the capital.

Employability is a through‑line in Westminster’s public narrative. The university has built work‑based and placement learning into the first and second years of all degree programmes and offers optional year‑long placements, arguing that structured exposure to employers early in a course raises graduates’ chances in the jobs market. Westminster is also investing in a major new hub for careers, enterprise and employer engagement at 29 Marylebone Road — a nine‑storey redevelopment the university says will open in spring 2026. According to the university’s project material, the site is intended to be “the UK’s most inclusive centre for employability and enterprise, with accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability at its heart,” providing collaborative workspaces, exhibition and event areas and facilities to showcase student enterprise. The claim is presented by the institution as an ambition to bridge education and industry rather than an independent assessment.

Practical, industry‑facing teaching is bolstered by specialist facilities. Business students now benefit from a second Bloomberg Financial Markets Suite equipped with the terminals and software used in capital markets; the university describes the suites as providing a realistic trading and data environment to develop analytical and decision‑making skills sought by employers. Westminster says this hands‑on approach is closely tied to employability outcomes and professional readiness for finance‑related roles.

Alongside classroom and lab provision, Westminster has embraced degree and higher‑apprenticeship routes as a core element of its vocational offer. The institution outlines an “earn‑while‑you‑learn” model for apprenticeships across sectors such as construction, real estate and healthcare, noting that employers typically cover tuition costs while apprentices combine workplace training with university study. The university expects to have some 950 apprentices enrolled across seven programmes by September 2026, signalling a significant expansion of non‑traditional routes into professional careers.

Financial support for students is a further pillar of Westminster’s pitch. The institution’s bursary packages include a Westminster bursary worth £700 per year, paid to 773 foundation‑year and undergraduate students in 2024–25, and the Living Expenses Support Scheme, which aided around 230 students with one‑off payments ranging from £100 to £3,000 depending on need. Targeted awards include care‑leaver and estranged‑student bursaries and a Vice‑Chancellor’s scholarship that pays £5,000 to 15 high‑achieving black or mixed‑black students from households with incomes under £25,000. Taken together with other smaller schemes, the university reports that roughly one in six students benefit from some form of financial assistance. The university’s student finance pages set out eligibility rules and application timing, and signpost further support via student advice services.

Student wellbeing and pastoral care are also emphasised. Westminster assigns each student a personal tutor as their first point of contact for academic and pastoral matters; tutors must complete an e‑learning module on supporting students, including those in distress. The university’s counselling and mental‑health service provides one‑to‑one counselling, mental‑health practitioner support and group workshops across campuses, and a specialist mentoring service offers up to 20 sessions per academic year to students with mental‑health concerns and/or autism. The institution has also rolled out a peer‑support call‑centre to check on students’ experiences and signpost help where needed; emergency and out‑of‑hours crisis arrangements are described on the university’s wellbeing pages.

Westminster has also expanded access routes into degree study. The proportion of UK students taking a foundation year has grown, trebling to around 15%, part of an outreach strategy that targets roughly 50 London schools with high free‑school‑meal populations. Programmes such as a residential summer school for 16–18‑year‑olds and the Sony Games Academy — a ten‑week initiative for BAME students on free school meals that pairs participants with lecturers and alumni to build a game in the university’s Innovation Space — are highlighted by the university as practical ways to raise aspiration and readiness for higher education. The university says these activities have reduced its reliance on formal contextual offer schemes.

On practical student life matters, Westminster provides around 800 places in university‑managed accommodation, with rents starting from about £7,254 for a 38‑week undergraduate tenancy; the most expensive one‑bed flats cited in the profile cost £11,869 over the same period. The Harrow campus added a new sports hall in 2023, equipped for basketball, netball and volleyball and designed to host campus events.

Taken together, Westminster’s public materials and third‑party analysis present an institution positioning itself as both a city‑centre provider of professional‑facing education and a civic actor on social mobility. Independent researchers’ rankings and the university’s own data point to strong outcomes for some cohorts, while the university’s projections for new facilities and apprenticeship growth indicate a continuing emphasis on practical routes to work. Those claims rely heavily on institutional reporting and targeted partnerships with employers, and should be read as part of a broader picture in which outcomes can vary by subject, cohort and individual circumstance.

### 📌 Reference Map:

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-ranks-second-for-social-mobility-among-english-universities)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-ranks-second-for-social-mobility-among-english-universities)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/zone29)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/subjects/accounting-and-finance/bloomberg-financial-markets-suite), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships-for-applicants), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/university-life/student-finance/bursaries-and-awards-for-current-students), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 7 – [[6]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/support-and-services/counselling-and-mental-health-service), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-ranks-second-for-social-mobility-among-english-universities), [[3]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/zone29), [[7]](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships-for-applicants)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914681/University-Westminster.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/news/westminster-ranks-second-for-social-mobility-among-english-universities> - This University of Westminster news release summarises the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Sutton Trust analysis which ranks Westminster second among English universities for social mobility. It explains the mobility-rate metric used — the proportion of former pupils eligible for free school meals who reach the top 20% of earners by age 30 — and reports Westminster’s strong performance, noting the university admitted 22% of students who had been eligible for free school meals and achieved a mobility rating placing it near the top nationally. The piece frames the result within Westminster’s Being Westminster strategy and highlights subject-level mobility outcomes.
3. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/zone29> - Zone29 (29 Marylebone Road) is the University of Westminster’s major new hub for careers, enterprise and employer engagement. The page describes the nine‑storey redevelopment located adjacent to the Marylebone campus, designed to be inclusive, accessible and sustainable and to connect students, alumni and local businesses. It sets out facilities such as collaborative workspaces, digital studios, exhibition and event areas and training suites, and notes construction progress and funding support. The site positions Zone29 as a dedicated centre to bridge education and industry, increase employability opportunities and host employer‑led activity, with an intended opening timeframe in 2026.
4. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/subjects/accounting-and-finance/bloomberg-financial-markets-suite> - The University of Westminster’s Bloomberg Financial Markets Suite page outlines its purpose‑built trading and data facility for students in finance and related disciplines. It explains that the Financial Markets Suites use the Bloomberg platform to provide real‑time and historical market data, analytics and professional tools used across global investment banks, offering a realistic trading environment for teaching and research. The page emphasises the employability benefits of hands‑on experience with industry‑standard software, describes teaching integration, and explains how the facilities help students develop analytical, research and decision‑making skills valued by employers in capital markets and finance roles.
5. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/university-life/student-finance/bursaries-and-awards-for-current-students> - This University of Westminster page sets out the main bursaries, scholarships and hardship funds available to current students. It describes the Living Expenses Support Scheme (LESS), the Care Leaver Bursary and other targeted awards, explains eligibility criteria and application timing, and notes that different schemes award varying sums depending on need and status. The page signposts detailed guidance for each fund, clarifies that some schemes open or close on an annual cycle, and directs students to further funding options and Student Advice for personalised support, emphasising the university’s provision of multiple forms of financial assistance.
6. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/support-and-services/counselling-and-mental-health-service> - The Counselling and Mental Health Service page summarises the university’s wellbeing provision, describing one‑to‑one counselling, mental‑health practitioner support and group workshops available to registered students. It lists service locations (including Cavendish and Harrow campuses), explains the registration and assessment process via the Engage2Serve portal, and outlines emergency and out‑of‑hours arrangements, including partnership arrangements for crisis support. The page also covers practicalities such as opening hours, duty clinician availability, confidentiality and referrals, aiming to make clear how students can access timely therapeutic and wellbeing help while studying at Westminster.
7. <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships-for-applicants> - The University of Westminster’s higher and degree apprenticeships information for applicants explains apprenticeship study routes that combine paid employment with university learning. The page outlines available standards and sectors — including construction, planning, real estate, healthcare and related areas — and describes the ‘earn while you learn’ model whereby employers meet tuition costs. It details entry levels (Levels 4–7), individual learning plans, work‑based learning requirements and professional accreditation possibilities, and explains how apprentices divide time between workplace training and university study, emphasising apprenticeships as an alternative to traditional full‑time degree study with clear vocational outcomes.