



**Mansfield College, University of Oxford,
celebrates 20 Years of Access to Excellence and looks to next 20 years of broadening the
range of voices in academic and public life**

In 2020, College marks 20 years since the launch of its successful Access to Excellence Campaign, which has resulted in Mansfield welcoming over 90% of its UK undergraduates from non-selective state schools.

Launched by Professor David Marquand, Principal at Mansfield from 1996-2002, and supported by Guy Hands, the Sutton Trust and the Higher Education Funding Council England among others, the initiative came out of Mansfield's mission as a College: to make an Oxford University education available to all those with the academic potential to benefit from it, regardless of educational or social background.

Through a combination of innovative and determined outreach efforts, focusing first on targeting Further Education and sixth-form colleges, and careful use of contextual data to identify potential, Mansfield now attracts and recruits students from a very wide social and educational range of backgrounds. In the last academic year, Mansfield welcomed over 90% of its UK undergraduates from non-selective state schools; and over 40% of its offer holders were from the most disadvantaged educational and socio-economic groups.

In the same year, Mansfield was rated 5th for academic excellence of the 39 Oxford colleges.

We are proud to have proved that academic excellence and broadening participation in higher education are complementary, not competing, objectives.

We want to continue with our success in championing access to Oxford, and support our students in having their voices and talents heard and recognised.

Oxford University has made a considerable cultural shift in recent years, with the number of successful state school applications across the University as a whole now standing at 69%, up from 56% five years ago. The University's two new access schemes, Opportunity Oxford and Foundation Oxford, support its ambitious target of boosting the proportion of students who come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to 25% by 2025.

The covid crisis means we risk inequalities in society deepening and social barriers widening. But Universities can help redress this, by helping people from a broad range of backgrounds to develop their talents, and to make a positive contribution to the world.

Mansfield College intends to build on our success in finding brilliant students from a range of backgrounds. Our next goal is to find innovative ways to help students develop their potential while at University, so that they can make the most of their chances after they leave. Our current focus is on supporting our students' self-confidence and skills, to help them build social as well as educational capital.

Now more than ever, it is essential that voices in leadership positions – whether in politics, industry, education or other sectors – better represent the diverse society that makes up the UK today.

"The world is enriched through diversity of thought leadership, and this is best achieved when the most intellectually able are identified early and educated to achieve their potential."

Helen Mountfield QC
Principal, Mansfield College

"Oxford University, which has been widely recognised for many years as one of the greatest universities in the world, is wholeheartedly dedicated to providing the highest quality education to all who are able to benefit from it. This enables them to make a major contribution to wider society wherever they choose to make their future careers. Mansfield College has itself always been at the cutting edge of these efforts. It helps to make sure that the University is open to talent, regardless of the background of those who seek to study in Oxford."

The Rt Hon the Lord Patten of Barnes, CH
[Chancellor, University of Oxford](#)

Notes to Editors:

[Mansfield College](#)

Mansfield opened in Oxford in 1886. Its original purpose was to provide further education and theological training for nonconformist ministers. Today Mansfield offers a wide range of subjects and its population is made up of 240 undergraduates, 180 graduates, 40 visiting students. In recent years, over 80% of Mansfield's UK undergraduates have been from the state sector - the highest percentage of any Oxford college. Mansfield's first year intake for 2018/19 was over 90% state sector, compared with an average of around 60% for all colleges. Mansfield has always been proud to welcome to Oxford people traditionally excluded from excellent higher education, and – in conjunction with the **Bonavero Institute of Human Rights** – to stand up for equal dignity, respect and rights for all.

[Mansfield's Admission Statistics](#)

Mansfield's UK undergraduates come from a wide range of social and geographical backgrounds, and the College has by far the highest participation of students from non-selective state schools of any Oxford or Cambridge college.

- Mansfield's undergraduate intake has been over 80% state sector for the past ten years
- This year, 90.6% of our offer holders are from state schools, 90.9% of which are from non-selective state schools
- 40.7% of our offer holders are from the most disadvantaged educational and socio-economic backgrounds, compared to 15% of the Oxford applicant pool
- In 2020, 24.4% of our offer holders are from areas of low progression to higher education, compared to 13.1% of Oxford students admitted in 2018
- 20.2% of our offer holders are from the most disadvantaged postcodes, compared to 10.8% of students achieving AAA or better nationally, and 11.3% of Oxford students admitted in 2018

[Principal Helen Mountfield QC](#)

Helen Mountfield joined Mansfield College in September 2018 to become the third consecutive female Principal. Helen is an experienced and award-winning barrister, with 26 years' expertise in constitutional law, human rights and equality law, including particular experience of the higher education sector. She has appeared in many cases in the Supreme Court, European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights, and recently featured on the 'First Hundred Years' website, which celebrates the history of women in law. Helen is a founder member of **Matrix Chambers**, an accredited mediator, a Master of the Bench of Gray's Inn, a Recorder and a deputy High Court Judge.

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