



The Faculty of Arts and Humanities

FirstGen Sheffield



ENHANCING THE
ARTS AND
HUMANITIES

AT THE UoSHEFFIELD

BUILDING COMMUNITY,
PUSHING BOUNDARIES,
FULFILLING POTENTIAL



About First Gen Sheffield

The logo for First Gen Sheffield, featuring the text 'First Gen Sheffield' in a blue sans-serif font next to a large, stylized number '1' that has a yellow base.

FirstGen Sheffield is a programme of opportunity and support for students who are first in their families to go to university. We recognise that the journey to and through university can pose particular challenges for students who are embarking on their studies as pathfinders in their families. Our flexible, opt-in programme seeks to respond to what first generation students have told us matters most to them; access to career and academic development opportunities and spaces for building community and fostering belonging.

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In this digital magazine you will find a range of resources and upcoming events curated by the First-Gen team based in The Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The upcoming development and wellbeing event will help you understand how to nurture and leverage the distinctive skills and attributes shaped by your experiences of being a first generation student. Our career panel will feature Alumni speakers sharing their experiences of careers in the Arts and Humanities and offers an opportunity for you to ask questions and network. In addition, this digital magazine operates as a First-Gen handbook with useful links to Faculty and University resources and events collated in one place.

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At the centre of this magazine are a series of case studies from Alumni who themselves were first in their family to attend university. Our Alumni share with us powerful reflections on their experiences of being a first generation student and offer advice and encouragement to you on your journey.

Finally, I want to thank all the Alumni who have generously supported the FirstGen Sheffield programme and who continue to inspire our students by their example. The FirstGen project assistant Laura McAuley, along with Edd Poole Poole the FirstGen Project Coordinator, have been instrumental in developing the First-Gen online programme and digital magazine and I thank them for their passionate advocacy for first generation students present and future.

Dr Rachel van Duyvenbode
Faculty Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Arts & Humanities)
Director FirstGen Sheffield

About The Team



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Edd - Project Coordinator

Edd was the first person in his family to go to University, completing a BA in History before an MA and MPhil. Edd is currently the Arts and Humanities' Outreach Activities Officer and is passionate about widening access to and participation in higher education for groups currently under-represented at University.



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Laura - Project Assistant

Laura was the first generation in her family to go to University, completing a BA in Politics and Sociology at the University of Sheffield. Now an MA student in International Development, Laura is committed to supporting first-generation students access opportunities and supporting their wellbeing.



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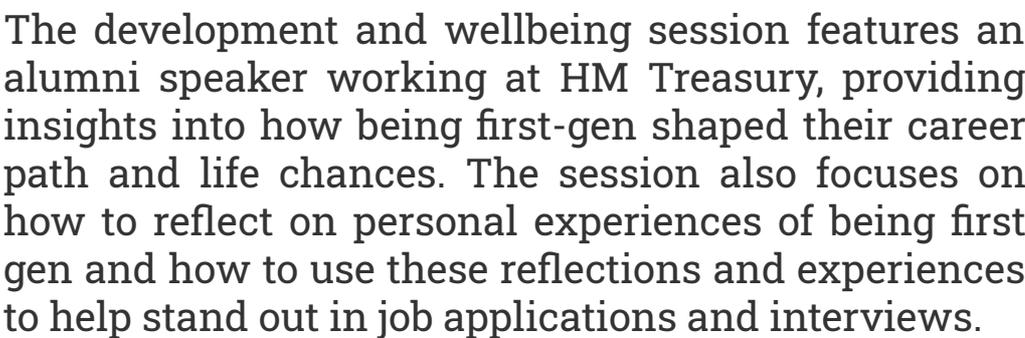
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FirstGen Sheffield Events

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What Does It Mean To Be First Gen

1pm-3pm Wednesday 21st April 2021

A paragraph of text describing the event.

The development and wellbeing session features an alumni speaker working at HM Treasury, providing insights into how being first-gen shaped their career path and life chances. The session also focuses on how to reflect on personal experiences of being first gen and how to use these reflections and experiences to help stand out in job applications and interviews.

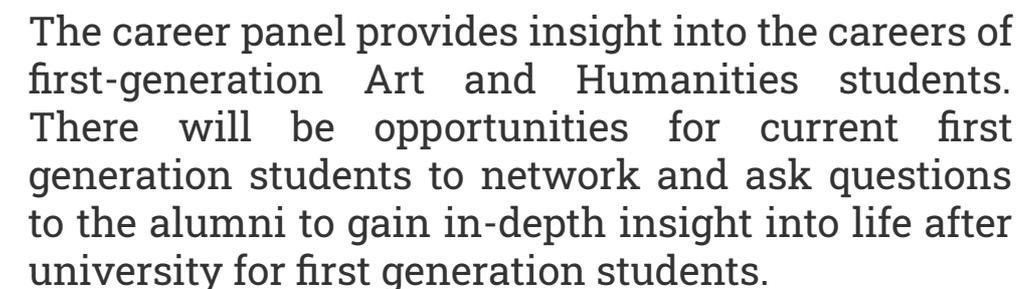
A light blue rectangular button with the text 'Sign up here' in a blue sans-serif font.

[Sign up here](#)

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Career Panel

6pm-8pm Wednesday 5th May 2021

A paragraph of text describing the event.

The career panel provides insight into the careers of first-generation Art and Humanities students. There will be opportunities for current first generation students to network and ask questions to the alumni to gain in-depth insight into life after university for first generation students.

A light blue rectangular button with the text 'Sign up here' in a blue sans-serif font.

[Sign up here](#)

Alumni case studies - Laura



Laura
Graduated in 2012
Studied BA Japanese Studies

Head of Business Development at
European Mathematical Society
Publishing House

What does being the first person in your family to go to university mean to you?

Being the first person in my family to go to university has meant that I've been motivated to achieve success, to prove to myself and my family that this was a journey worth taking. Even though I sometimes struggled to balance studies and paid work while at university, it proved to me that I'm resilient and resourceful, and can achieve a lot when I am focused and try hard. This has given me the confidence and persistence to pursue further studies alongside work, and to really push myself to become a leader in my field.

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Alumni case studies - Laura

How do you think being the first person in your family to go to university has influenced your journey?

As the first person in my family to go to university there was no suggested roadmap or career plan laid out for me. I think this has given me a lot more freedom than some of my peers to pursue opportunities that might not make total sense with the degree I studied. I don't suffer from the weight of expectation in the same way that some of my peers do, so I feel like I've been able to approach my journey with a clear and open mind. At the same time, I haven't had as much of a safety net, so it's definitely influenced me to be proactive and opportunistic, seeking out and pursuing advancement and promotion on my own terms rather than being content to wait for things to come to me.

Do you have any advice for current or future first generation students?

Get involved in as much as you can while you're at university - societies, student government, all of the opportunities that the university can offer. Going to university and not understanding how everything works is pretty intimidating, but try to be confident - you're there because you deserve to be, just like everyone else. Rely on the support you're offered and use it to build your understanding of the system you're in, and don't be afraid to ask if something doesn't make sense; university can be pretty overwhelming but it becomes more manageable when you feel embedded as part of a community rather than being a satellite.

Definitely take advantage of any careers support you're offered, and don't be afraid to network and be a little self-promotional - your peers will be exploiting the connections and relationships that they have when they graduate, so you need to work a bit harder to build that network for yourself.

Alumni case studies - Hannah



Hannah
Graduated in 2016
Studied BA English Literature

Corporate Partnership Manager at
The Prince's Trust

What does being the first person in your family to go to university mean to you?

Being the first person in my family to go to university means I had the opportunity to forge a slightly different pathway to the rest of my family - and make them really proud! The chance to move away from my hometown where the majority of my family still live and work, take on a new academic challenge, and navigate university independently was intimidating but ultimately helped me to grow. As my parents didn't have the lived experience of university, I leant on my friends (old and new!) for guidance which enabled me to have a strong support network. I also gained a significant amount of independence and loved meeting new people from such a variety of backgrounds. Being first gen at university also encouraged me to get involved in the outreach activity available to me. I was able to benefit from talks, volunteering opportunities, and networking events with alumni, current students, and future students. It was great to get involved in these events to help inform and shape my experience at university and understand my career prospects as they would differ significantly from the job roles of my family. This all led to me having such a rewarding and fulfilling time at university!

Alumni case studies - Hannah

How do you think being the first person in your family to go to university has influenced your journey?

Being the first generation in my family to attend university has built my confidence and independence and influenced my journey. Finding academic and career support by building networks outside of my family has exposed me to personal and professional development opportunities. It enabled me to understand the importance of mentors and role models, and the reassurance gained in sharing your experiences with others. In overcoming the barriers I faced in being first gen, I developed an insight into how background and circumstance play such a pivotal role in peoples' access to education and career prospects. This has driven my interest in, and passion for, supporting young people. I now work in a youth charity that supports young people into education, training, and job opportunities through a variety of courses and work experience.

Do you have any advice for current or future first generation students?

Take every opportunity that arises and don't be afraid to lean on your support network for advice and guidance!

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Alumni case studies - Morenike



Morenike
Graduated in 2011
Studied Law

Group Managing Director at Flux Group

What does being the first person in your family to go to university mean to you?

It was amazing! I was setting the standard for my siblings and had to be a good example. I also felt a bit pressured as everyone was looking up to me and I was leaving the country. I was so happy I went to a welcoming environment like Sheffield which had a great support system and helpful teachers. I eventually left with a law degree and graduated top of my class.

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Alumni case studies - Morenike

How do you think being the first person in your family to go to university has influenced your journey?

It has made me embrace leadership. I have had to be a good example for my siblings while going to Uni and that made me get used to leading. I took a John Maxwell course organized by Mrs. Yinka Ogunde and this further enhanced my leadership skills. After practicing law for four years, I have found myself still in leadership as the Group Managing Director of the Flux Group leading the operations of 10 companies operating in 5 countries around the world.

Being a first born also made me deal with pressure a lot. I had to learn to perform optimally even under pressure. This 'practice' made it easier for me to deal with the pressures of life work and business after leaving Uni.

Do you have any advice for current or future first generation students?

Don't feel pressured. Keep believing in yourself and give it your best shot. At Sheffield I was eventually able to win the Sheffield graduate award, skills for work certificate and graduate top of my class. However; I started out not believing in myself and on a less than average GPA. Like I said just do your best and keep believing in yourself.



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Alumni case studies - John



John
Graduated in 2009
Studied BA Sociology

PhD Student at The University of York

What does being the first person in your family to go to university mean to you?

Lots, and, for me, is very similar to being about 'class'. It's a source of a bit of pride, given that (probable) disadvantages were overcome. For all first gen people, we grew up without the language and insider knowledge of how University works, and University and the cultures around it are markedly singular. Where I grew up, few went to University, and few would use or even understand phrases like "markedly singular". There's an alienation in that, a loneliness perhaps. Not just on returning 'home', but in University spheres too, which often talk of 'deprivation' from an outside perspective, full of political hyperbole. Nevertheless, violence, drugs, racism, homophobia, and all such things, were too common, so I'm glad to have left. Of course, I haven't fully left. My family are the same family, and I do not have a settled long-term income resembling middle-class comfort. But then, the workload to get there is pretty daunting too. Some people seem so good at working hard, with their parents that had professional occupations and no TV! All in all, it's a different world, one I'm privileged to have reached. And yet, it's sometimes a lonely one, and has a tendency to highlight my shortcomings.

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Alumni case studies - John

How do you think being the first person in your family to go to university has influenced your journey?

A stylized illustration of university buildings, including a large modern building and a smaller traditional building with a tower, set against a dark blue background with white clouds and a sun/moon.

The answers to this are similar to above, and it is hard to be certain whether being first gen truly explains these things. But I'll try! Firstly, it can be a lack of instinctively knowing 'how things work', which can be confusing and alienating. Secondly, it's cultural. I tend to view work as either useful or not, regardless of whether I argue and publicise, a departure from individualistic cultures of 'achievement'. It means I engaged poorly with 'extra-curricular' aspects of University, and possibly explains my fear and dislike of uncertain sized workloads, particularly large ones, which definitely slows and limits my career path! Fourth, it's a lack of prior education. I only have 4 GCSE's, and I do get concerned I lack in certain areas because of this. Lastly, I spend time creating financial backups, because if I put more hours into Deliveroo instead of Uni work I'm financially safer. It even feels more meaningful sometimes, for if I deliver it, the proof is in the pudding. All this implies a 'successful' white-collar career may not happen, and I'm not even sure I want it to! But I also don't want to be around the violence and ignorance I alluded to above. So I keep at it, shortcomings and all! And that, somewhat abstractly, summarises its (possible) affect on my journey.

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Do you have any advice for current or future first generation students?

A stylized illustration of university buildings, including a large modern building and a smaller traditional building with a tower, set against a dark blue background with white clouds and a sun/moon.

Be kind to yourself! You may not always fit in, and well-off suburban kids are somehow more 'metropolitan' than you. You may not be the 'clever one' anymore, and may struggle to understand the logic of it all, and feel alienated by some of it. But it's no reason to beat yourself up! It is what it is, just negotiate it best you can. Also, a note of caution. At University you have a solid financial situation, and you're kind of all in the same boat. Afterwards, this quickly changes. So, the first thing again - be kind to yourself!

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Resources for first gen students

Arts and Humanities faculty resources

A stylized illustration of a university building with a clock tower, set against a blue sky with clouds and a sun. The building is white with blue outlines, and the sky is a gradient of blue.

There are loads of members of staff at The University of Sheffield who can help with academic and pastoral advice as well as being a friendly face to chat to about how you are finding being first-gen at university. If you want to know the best person to get in touch with in your department email the department's reception and they can help you out.

A stylized illustration of a university building with a clock tower, set against a blue sky with clouds and a sun. The building is white with blue outlines, and the sky is a gradient of blue.

You can also always contact your personal tutor for advice or even to help point out other resources that can help you.

Archaeology

archaeology@sheffield.ac.uk

East Asian Studies

seas@sheffield.ac.uk

English

english@sheffield.ac.uk

History

history@sheffield.ac.uk

Music

music@sheffield.ac.uk

Philosophy

philosophy@sheffield.ac.uk

Modern Languages Teaching Centre

mltc@sheffield.ac.uk

School of Languages and Cultures

slc-enquiries@sheffield.ac.uk

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Resources for first gen students

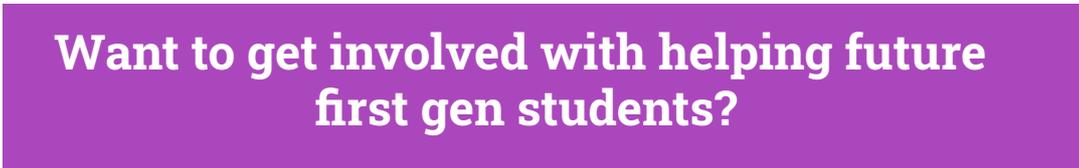
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Arts and Humanities faculty resources

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Faculty Student Experience Hub

The Faculty Student Experience Hub is a central space that provides general information on events and opportunities across the faculty, as well as signposting to wider services and department contacts.

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Want to get involved with helping future first gen students?

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Student Ambassador

Working as a positive role model for secondary school pupils and working at Open Days and Higher Education fairs.

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Faculty Champion

Working to enthuse and inform perspective students about The University of Sheffield student experience

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Resources for first gen students

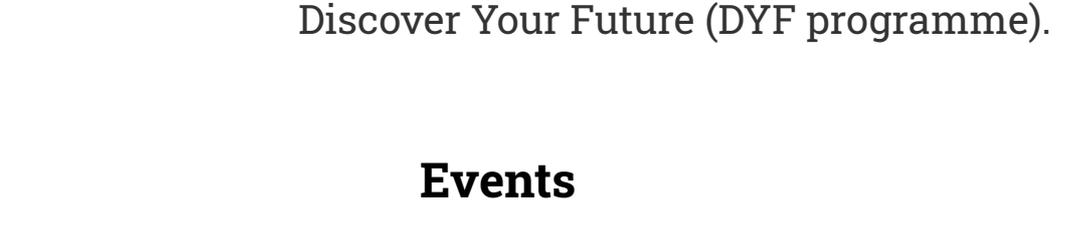


University resources



Careers Service.

The **Careers Service** offers a range of workshops, events and one-to-one appointment sessions to help students explore career opportunities available to them. Priority for some events and appointments with a career advisor is given to first gen students as part of their Discover Your Future (DYF programme).



Events



How To Use LinkedIn Effectively
12-1pm Wednesday 5th May 2021

[Sign Up Here](#)



**Discover Your Options After Graduation
(Including Further Study)**
2pm-3pm Wednesday 28th April 2021

[Sign Up Here](#)



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Resources for first gen students

University resources



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301 offers study skill workshops and appointments to students, including providing help on planning, writing and research academic work. 301 also offer one-to-one tutorials to receive tailored advice for academic work.

Events

Study Skills Workshops

Book a slot

[Sign Up Here](#)

MASH- Maths and Statistics Workshops

Book a slot

[Sign Up Here](#)

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Resources for first gen students

A purple rectangular banner with the text "University resources" in white.

University resources

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The Wellbeing Service offers one-to-one appointments with a wellbeing advisor to students who are struggling. The Wellbeing Service also offer events, seminars and training to improve personal wellbeing.

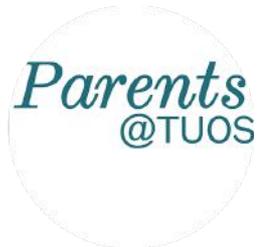
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A dark blue rectangular logo with the text "Sheffield Nightline" in white, where the "N" in "Nightline" is stylized with a crescent moon.

Sheffield
Nightline

Sheffield Nightline is a student-run confidential and anonymous listening service for students who are struggling. Sheffield Nightline runs both a phone line and an instant messaging service to support students.

A white circular logo with the text "Parents @TUOS" in a blue, cursive-style font.

Parents
@TUOS

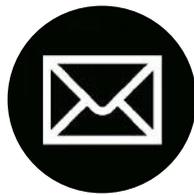
Parents @ TUOS is a student -parent group that meet the last Tuesday of each month at 1pm to connect with other student-parents and support each other in a non-judgemental environment.



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How to get involved?

To be kept up to date with how to get involved in the programme including the development and wellbeing session and the career panel:



Sign up to our mailing list to be kept up to date with opportunities about academic support, employability and wellbeing.



Sign up to our LinkedIn group to network with current first gen students as well as staff and alumni.



Join our Google group to connect with current first gen students and be the first to hear about new opportunities with the programme. Search 'FirstGenSheffield' under google groups on your uni gmail account.



@firstgensheffield



firstgensheffield@sheffield.ac.uk

