



CITY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
— EST 1894 —

The University of
business, practice
and the professions.

www.city.ac.uk

A photograph of three students sitting at a white table in a modern, brightly lit study area. A man in a pink shirt is on the left, a woman in a striped shirt is in the middle, and a woman in a light blue shirt is on the right. They are all smiling and looking at laptops. The background features a large window and a curved wall with vertical orange and white stripes. A black pendant light hangs above the table.

The Difference You Have Made

Impact Report 2023



Dear Alumni and friends,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you City, University of London's 2023 Impact Report. In the following pages, you will not only be able to learn about the amazing impact that your support has had upon our students, but also get a comprehensive idea of where many of those students come from, their pathways to City to undertake a degree, and crucially, what they hope to do with that degree upon graduating.

The difficulties that a student faces in 2023 are immense. In light of rising rent, heating, food and travel costs, our students are having to make every penny go further than ever. Amidst the lingering fallout and long tail of Covid-19, they are having to adapt and learn adult social skills that were put on hold during lockdown. In the churn of ever-changing national and international uncertainty, they are attempting to work out what the future holds in store for them.

Each student's story is unique. In my role as Head of Student Support Services, every day I hear of hardship and struggle. But to see those students - with your help and generosity - overcome those hurdles and go on to graduate, is both heartwarming and inspirational.

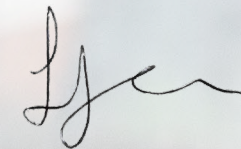
And as our President, Sir Anthony Finkelstein remarked last year, 'while university is always an opportunity, in certain cases it can also be a sanctuary'. Again we have had students fleeing persecution and coming to the UK to seek out a safe and brighter future. Indeed, a university education remains the most transformative life choice that a young person can make.

Your support is helping students overcome financial difficulties that are putting their degrees in jeopardy; it is ensuring that our care-experienced students are supported every step of the way throughout their entire time here; it is facilitating a vital pipeline of health professionals who will hopefully go on to make a positive and deep-lasting impact on our underfunded and overburdened NHS; and through the micro-placements initiative, it is ensuring that students gain professional workplace experience which readies them for careers after graduation.

On behalf of all the students and staff at City, University of London and Bayes Business School, please accept my gratitude for the support that you give. You truly help make the institution the special place that it is, and without you we simply would not be where we are today.

Please do enjoy reading the following stories. The success of all of these students is down to you. Thank you so much.

Yours sincerely,



Louise Jennings
Head of Student Support Services
Student and Academic Services

Your impact in 2023



£3M

in gifts and pledges to the University



1,008

Student Support awards, helping students who are struggling financially



41%

You were one of the generous 41% who said 'yes' when asked to make a donation



863

alumni and supporters made a donation



259

mentors coupled up with City and Bayes students, a 73% increase on last year



51

students given Micro-Placement bursaries



£102,000

in donations and pledges to the City and Bayes Future Fund



160

Care Experienced students supported



24

Age of our youngest donor



94

Age of our oldest donor

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to the University. To all our donors, supporters, friends, mentors and ambassadors, thank you for your generosity during this challenging year.

Student support

The lifeline that you provide for students in need

Memories of the struggles of studying during the Pandemic may well be fading for our students, but other challenges still remain.

The cost-of-living crisis, in particular, is proving a considerable obstacle to City's current cohort of undergraduates, and the Student Support Fund is more vital than ever.

Over 1,100 of you have made donations to Student Support over the last decade. We are truly thankful to every one of you. Your support is enabling our students to complete their degrees and graduate, and then go out into the wider world and change it for the better.

You have provided grants to students experiencing financial hardship and given them the breathing space to pay rent, bills and food and travel costs. You have not forgotten our international students either, particularly those seeking asylum or fleeing war-torn countries. All of those students have benefitted from your unceasing generosity.

Here are three stories that illustrate very different aspects of why Student Support matters, and why studying at university is still one of the most important decisions that a young person can make.



Ashleigh's story

Studying or rent?

Rent increases have impacted hundreds of our students over the past year. Coupled with rises in inflation and an escalation of food, heating and travel costs, undertaking a degree is now more financially challenging than ever. Indeed, the majority of applications for student hardship cite those rising costs as the main obstacles to overcome. Your generosity has been vital in mitigating this crisis.

Ashleigh has been fascinated with documentaries and news programming from a young age, so studying for a degree in Journalism was clearly her next step. However, as with many of our students from underprivileged backgrounds, the expense that she was going to encounter was always going to be a challenge.

"I grew up and did my A-levels in Leeds, but after researching journalism courses, City and its amazing reputation became my dream. I just wasn't prepared for London rent though: a tiny room that costs nearly £1,000 a month left my jaw on the floor. Even with my part-time job, I found myself left with absolutely nothing towards the end of the month. I am estranged from my parents, and cannot count on them for help, so I decided to apply to Student Support to give myself the breathing space that would allow me to devote more time to my studies."

The help from Student Support, funded in part through your generous donations, made sure that Ashleigh was able to fully focus on her degree.

"It freed up time to concentrate. Thinking back to the award during my second year, it really was a burden lifted from my shoulders. For my mental health, it was incredible. I spent less time 'in my own head' and started to look outwards and explore the possibilities that university could give me."

Ashleigh is now in her final year and is very much ready for the future.

"I want to make my dream role happen. I'd like to make documentaries. I really like the idea of working in a country that is struggling. I'm fascinated by The Republic of the Congo and I find it really sad and difficult to process how children go about their daily lives in a warzone. I want to explore what those countries' Governments are doing to alleviate this situation. But also, some of the issues that are going on at home, too. I want to learn about and report on the rent crisis, something that has already impacted me. So many of the people I know are having to live on a friend's sofa, or in mouldy and not fit-for-purpose bedsits. And landlords charging crazy amounts for tiny rooms, and illegally putting more than one person in there."

"Failing to address the student housing crisis really risks throwing all of the progress that has been made in Widening Participation under the bus. If you are from a background like myself, it really can make you think twice about a degree. That's why I'm so thankful to all of the alumni and friends who contribute to the Annual Fund."



Michael's story

Degrees during Covid-19

Undertaking a degree during a worldwide pandemic will hopefully prove to be something future students never need to experience. But for those students who did find themselves doing just that - logging into online lectures, studying in the claustrophobic confines of their own bedrooms, and not making those 'friends for life' that many of us found and treasured during our time at City – university threw up a very different challenge.

Michael's goals in 2023 are exactly the same as those he had in 2020. His ambition was to do a degree in Business Studies and he wanted to do it at Bayes Business School.

"Bayes was perfect for me. I live in Essex and felt I could come to London and still be close to home. Yet for almost all of my first year, everything happened online and I felt unmotivated and missing out on the thing that I was most looking forward to: a university experience that would shape my personality and character, and the chance to study at the heart of one of the most amazing cities in the world. Cooped up with siblings – even though I love them to bits - and viewing my degree through a laptop camera was like some kind of cruel joke."

Michael was therefore raring to go at the start of his second year. Yet he found himself struggling, not only financially, but also socially.

"I'd saved up quite a bit of money for my degree doing part-time work, which stopped during lockdown, and those savings dwindled. I found the travel costs in and from Bayes were really hitting me hard. I couldn't even afford to go out and share a coffee with my new classmates and found myself isolated.

I remember one of our lecturers encouraging us to all get together after class and brainstorm ideas, and I thought I can't just sit there without a drink. But on learning of the Student Hardship Fund I applied and found myself with an award that helped me buy a season ticket. It was great to eventually make new friends, and also surprising to learn that many of them had the same anxieties that I'd had during lockdown. We'd all forgotten how to socialise and talk to others, and it was almost like the time spent with my new friends was a fun extra module that had been tacked onto our degree."

Michael graduated this summer and has already secured his first role in marketing.

"I did have a good think about a postgraduate degree, but after interviewing for a couple of positions - and getting offers for all of them - I thought it was time to enter the workplace. I also set up a direct debit with the University's Annual Fund ... I know the support that I got is down to City and Bayes alumni, so it's time for me to give back. It took time for me to feel part of the Bayes family, and for the first year, I wouldn't have even dreamed of seeing it like that. But I got there eventually."



Lima's story

Women in STEM

Since 1992, the number of female university students in the UK has consistently exceeded the number of male students. But the UK still has a long way to go to close the gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Although things have improved over the last decade, parity has still not been achieved. Currently, only 31% of STEM graduates are women, an indication that men continue to dominate this field. The difference is even more apparent in STEM careers, where women make up only 24% of the workforce. City is striving to change this.

Lima's story is illustrative of the part that City and Student Support are playing in getting women into STEM subjects (and keeping them there). Lima tells us about what it was that inspired her to pursue a BEng in Mechanical Engineering.

"There have been a lot of ongoing issues in my life, and I am a care leaver who has found myself homeless on a few occasions. Nevertheless, I developed a fascination for science quite early, and I remember attending a lunchtime science club at primary school which ignited a real love for experiments.

"Engineering at university became the goal. However, my A-levels were a tricky time. It was here that I found myself homeless. Although I was eventually placed in a hostel, my grades were severely impacted and I failed to get a university place. Once things were a little more stable, I found my way onto a Foundation course, and eventually arrived at City."

Challenges remained, though, but Student Support provided Lima with a solid base to build from.

"The intensity of my course just grew and grew, and having no parental network to rely upon meant I still needed to balance studies with paying the bills. I had to reduce the number of days I worked at the supermarket in order to focus on my degree.

"Student Support was a life-saver. As someone who has experienced real instability - particularly with regards to accommodation - I can't tell you how important breathing space and knowing that you have a home to go to is."

Lima graduated during the summer and has already secured her first role in engineering.

"In my final year I developed a passion for coding. Combining coding and mechanical engineering is now the direction I'm pursuing. That coding knowledge has led to job offers. I've accepted a fantastic role at an engineering company and am about to start."

"Who knows where I'll go in the future, but I definitely want mechanical engineering to be part of it. I am so proud to be a woman in STEM, and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to Student Support and changed lives like mine for the better."

Powering up the NHS

City's role in educating and providing the health professionals of tomorrow is long-established. With the NHS under ever-increasing strain, and with a significant shortfall in many areas of healthcare, that pipeline of nurses, radiographers, midwives, psychologists, mental health professionals, speech and language therapists, and optometrists is more necessary than ever.

Our generous supporters and friends are helping to keep that pipeline flowing.

Many of you already directly support our groundbreaking Aphasia Clinic which develops and offers life-changing interventions which continue to dramatically improve the prognosis for those suffering from aphasia, a devastating language and communication disability that often strikes those who have suffered a stroke.

Further to that, your support over the last year has benefited over 200 students in the School of Health & Psychological Sciences.

A significant minority of those students have come to the UK from overseas. The desire to make a home here, and to give back in the most impactful and life-affirming way, joining a workforce that is struggling to keep up with need, is something that we at City can celebrate.

Here are just two examples of those students whose journeys to City started overseas.

Jasmine's story



Jasmine's journey to City has been far from straightforward. Yet it is a journey that has carried her all the way to the third and final year of a degree in Midwifery. She tells us more:

"It's been quite a tough road to university. Just before I began my access course, I found myself homeless and with nowhere to go. Things like my immigration status - even though I moved to the UK from Nigeria when I was 12-years old - were not sorted. I didn't even know that things like this needed to be sorted."

As with many of our students without settled immigration status, Jasmine found herself struggling to make it through her degree.

"I was getting some mental health support and counselling from City, and through that, I learned there might be financial help available. I got the award and it really made a difference with buying basic necessities. And - this was so important to me - I'd often been going without lunch and my friends would offer to help. I really didn't want to be a burden though and it was so good to be able to afford it myself."

Jasmine is back on track, focused and eager to put her thoughts about her degree firmly into practice, right at the heart of the NHS:

"Specifically, midwifery is so much more than just delivering babies. For instance, doctors who are present at a birth will often just quickly breeze over how they are going to deal with a delivery - what drugs they are going to use and so on. And often, because of language difficulties and the situation a woman is in, she won't understand what is being said. In my midwife training - where I've already delivered 24 babies of the 40 that I need to as part of my degree - I've really noticed this. I've found it's a chance for me, as a midwife, to advocate for women who have those language barriers, and the need to either tell the mother or the doctor what's going on. That's definitely what motivates me and it feels incredibly empowering.

"After I graduate, I want to work in my field and hone my skills. But in the much longer term, I perhaps see myself going into health management. The state of the NHS feels very desperate, and I think one area that needs sorting is how the NHS is managed. Just one example is a pregnant mother I was assigned to, who missed her induction date because of a lack of a bed. We need more people who have done things at the delivery end going into the management end. They have the practical experience to know exactly where the problems are."



Olu's story

Olu's desire to pursue a nursing career is at the core of her personality. She has always seen herself as the person who gets involved, the one who looks after others. To do that in the wider community and to make a difference in the city that is her home, therefore, seemed the obvious next step. She tells us more about what motivated her to do a degree in Nursing.

"I like the idea of giving back and caring for adults, particularly elderly adults. And as a mature student, nursing seems the perfect choice.

"I really think that healthcare should be about providing a service that improves lives, leading to a much brighter and optimistic outlook. When patients are old, there's this cruel idea that it's just about waiting for decline. I don't like that and want to change it. That's why I'm drawn to adult nursing."

However, with a family to support, the degree was going to be a significant challenge. As is so often the case, Student Support was there to help.

"As I still don't have British citizenship, I am not entitled to maintenance grants. That's why the Student Hardship Fund was a life-saver. I was having sleepless nights, worrying about whether I would have to give up studying and if I could get

by without doing extra jobs. I and my husband have children to support, one of whom is autistic. He's non-verbal and it requires a lot of work and energy.

"The award helped me focus fully, taking the strain off my mental health, and helping with food and transportation back and forth from my NHS placements. It took the pressure off my husband and children too and I could give them the necessary mental space that the award freed up."

This summer Olu graduated with a BSc (Honours) in Nursing and is already making a positive impact in the NHS. The immediate goal is to get as much experience as possible under her belt. Right now she is doing just that, working in Acute Care and doing her preceptorship while being mentored. And afterwards?

"I really want to move into Community Nursing. I'm a great believer in – wherever possible - people being looked after in the home, an environment that feels safe and comforting, which helps you heal faster. Hospitals should only be there for those who really need to be monitored 24/7. Plus, community nursing really helps reduce the strain on the NHS."

Jasmine and Olu represent the future of our NHS. Your generous support is therefore an extra investment in the health and care of the UK's population. Your donations will save lives. Thank you so much.





Micro-Placements at City

Ensuring our students are work-ready and world-ready

City's exciting Micro-Placements Programme is an invaluable initiative which offers our students - particularly those from under-represented backgrounds - the opportunity to take up an exciting role over the summer. Through this role, each student will acquire vital real-life experience, preparing them for the challenges of the wider world after they graduate.

To facilitate these placements, which often find our students encountering expensive travel and day-to-day costs, all eligible students are offered a Micro-Placements bursary, funded through your generous donations.



Charlie's placement

Charlie Williams is in the final year of a BA in International Politics. Learning about the Micro-Placements programme during his 'Practical Politics' module, Charlie seized the opportunity to gain experience in the wider working world. Charlie told us a little bit about why the placement was important for him.

"It was the first serious job I had in my life and was my first experience of work. I'm a wheelchair user with Cerebral Palsy and the whole experience gave me a real boost in confidence and much more knowledge of how teams actually function."

One of Charlie's main areas of interest is classical music, and so he was offered a placement at Nonclassical, a music promotion company and events producer that focuses on new classical, experimental and electronic music. He tells us about his typical day:

"I was involved with the marketing side of things, taking care of mail, collating interview pieces, working with social media - correcting and editing pages - and was involved with the various aspects of how they promote their music. It's a really small team and I was really made to feel welcome and involved in the events and concerts that they put on. It was great to be at the heart of something that I am passionate about too."

Natalia Franklin Pierce, the Executive Director of Nonclassical, was delighted to host Charlie in the role:

"It was a pleasure having Charlie work with us over the summer months, bringing his passion for classical music, inclusivity and journalism to the team. He brought great ideas to our audience development strategy meetings, did valuable work on our press lists and archives, helped support marketing campaigns for upcoming releases and events, and also crafted a beautifully-curated playlist and blog. He added such great value to our small team."

And what are Charlie's plans for the future?

"Well, my ultimate goal is to be a political journalist. To get moving further forward in that direction, on completion of my International Politics degree, I plan to take a Masters in Journalism here at City. Further on from that, I'd love to be involved in political broadcast journalism - be this television, radio, or podcasts - and work as a producer."

Nguyen Binh, who heads up the Micro-Placements Programme is delighted by how much it has grown over the past two years. She also tells us just how vital the Programme is for employability.

"I love how it is right at the core of City's strategy, helping us understand the breadth of opportunities out there, and how that feeds into such a vital area like employability."

"It is also so rewarding to see the immediate impact that it makes on students, and also - let's not forget this - the employers too. A lot of the students have not had any real workplace experience and I love how, as they are exposed to that, you get to see them grow. They are not going to fall off that cliff edge when they leave us. On the flip side, you also have those students who are 'work ready', so it's about how they impact across the board - both big and small - and I'm really pleased how we are seeing the fruits of our labour borne out in the Programme."

"It's about benefitting students - seeing them grow."

It is you, our donor community, who make this possible. If you are an employer and would like to learn more and get involved with taking on students as part of the scheme, please do drop Nguyen a line at nguyen.banh@city.ac.uk.



You care, City cares

Our dedicated support network for care-experienced students, estranged students, young adult carers, refugees and asylum seekers

Thanks to your generous donations, City Cares continues to offer a full range of support to care-experienced students, helping them navigate the ups and downs of university life.

As many of you already know, financial support is just one vital element of what our care-experienced students require. Essential pastoral and educational support, advice on accommodation and priority access to counselling are also key to our work.

From the very first day that these young people arrive at City, and throughout the long and challenging journey to the life-changing goal of graduation, City Cares will accompany them every step of the way.

Difficult beginnings and circumstances must never define a young person's future.



Chelsea's story

Care experienced students studying law

While City Cares students do not choose to study law at any higher percentage than other degrees, law students seem eager to share their stories. As Chelsea told us: “I want to give hope and be an example to students everywhere that may not have had the perfect start in life. That with application and perseverance you can change things, and that changing things for the better is what law is all about.” Chelsea and two other law students tell us something about their difficulties, their reasons for studying law and their plans for the future.

Chelsea had always been interested in law and from the age of 12 fostered ambitions to do a degree in the subject. All was going as planned. But then everything changed. Chelsea picks up her story and tells us how City Cares helped her through the most tragic of circumstances.

“This all goes back to before I started at City. I had been offered a place to study law and was excited and raring to go, when on holiday I tragically lost both of my parents. As you can imagine, at just 18 years old, this was a devastating time and I wondered if I'd be able to undertake the degree. In the end, I knew I had to. I owed it to myself and my parents to continue. I'd worked so hard to get here and didn't want to give up.”

The difference that the City Cares bursary and support package made to Chelsea saved her degree.

“It was an incredible help. If you can imagine going from having everything to having absolutely nothing, that was me.

“But it is so much more than just the bursary. The counselling aspect was also really important. With the loss of my parents, this really helped out and kept me steady throughout my time

here. I had two amazing counsellors and monthly counselling sessions where I could share worries and difficulties.

“It was also tricky, in that for a period I was essentially homeless. My home with my parents was in Watford, but it was so big and tied up with too many memories. It felt impossible to stay and cope. I moved closer to City, and have a small room in Islington - this is still very expensive and the rent prices keep rising - so the bursary was so important. I've been in this room for over two years now and it has provided stability, which is so important to me. It feels like home.”

Chelsea is now almost halfway through her third and final year. What are her future plans?

“I've always known exactly where I am going. I want to graduate and train as a solicitor and am already seeking apprenticeships and a training contract. I know that will take five years, but I am going to give it my all and make sure that I succeed. The help that City's generous and kind donors have given me will not go to waste.”



Jamila's story

Jamila also wanted to study law and also faced incredibly challenging circumstances. Jamila told us all about why she chose law and her journey - and it is a journey - to London and City.

"I came to the UK from Syria as a refugee in 2015, having to leave my family and the horrific war there. My experiences with injustices and hardship at home - how my family lost their business, for instance - made me realise that I wanted to do something that made me feel better about myself and to do something that would help me change the world around me.

"Because I don't have any family in the country, I really struggled financially. The main problem, back before I even started at City, was my landlord evicting me. I had nowhere to go and no money to look for a new place. But at the beginning of my degree, City Cares found me accommodation and helped me with the deposit and rent. They were just so reliable. They were always there, taking the weight off present circumstances, stopping me worrying about what may or may not happen in the future."

Jamila's goals are very similar to Chelsea's.

"The immediate ambition is to secure a training contract as a solicitor in commercial law. I'm applying to international firms that are based in London and that's the long term goal. The applications are very competitive though, particularly for the international firms, but I'm ready to keep on working hard, applying myself in order to realise my dream.

"I want to be able to make a difference. The war in Syria really brought home how close to me human rights abuses were. As I say, my parents lost their business through the war. Perhaps part of that is why I feel that commercial law is so important to me. I want to have, not only that in-depth legal knowledge combined with great interpersonal skills, but also the ability to be inspirational to others. Thank you so much to everyone that has supported City Cares."

Nadia's story



Just like Chelsea and Jamila, Nadia had also been drawn towards law from a young age, and doing an A-level in Criminology at college edged her towards her choice of degree. She tells us about her motivations and the difficulties that she encountered on her journey to City.

"I'm an estranged student and have been so since just before I turned 18, when because of personal problems, my mum asked me to leave our family home. In fact I ended up homeless for a short time. Eventually, I found myself a flat in Northampton with very affordable rent. My dilemma then was, if I was to come to City to study a law degree - which I really wanted to - I would have to give up the flat. Commuting that far wasn't an option. I decided, though, that my degree was a way to change my life and I gave up the flat.

"However, extra financial problems started to arise in the summer time and I didn't have the necessary money to pay for my accommodation and no home to return to in Northampton."

This is exactly the kind of situation that Student Support and City Cares are there to deal with. An award was made to Nadia to help with accommodation which would see her safely through the summer.

"Not only did it really help out with that, but it also helped out with general cost-of-living things. I've also had a further award as my mum sadly passed away in August and I'm having to take time off from my part-time job and deal with that."

Nadia is adamant that nothing will stop her from completing her degree. And then?

"I think the immediate plan would be to take a year in a law-related graduate job. Just to gain experience and steady myself for the time being. And maybe eventually to make it to my dream role as a solicitor."

We are truly grateful to all of our donors whose contributions help City Cares go the extra mile. In the year ahead we will be supporting 160 care-experienced students, a 33% increase on last year.

Your generous gifts will make an immense impact and are more necessary than ever.

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**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

City, University of London is an independent member institution of the University of London. Established by Royal Charter in 1836, the University of London consists of 17 independent member institutions with outstanding global reputations and several prestigious central academic bodies and activities.