

# US PROGRAMME EVALUATION

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Assessing the impact of the Sutton Trust US  
Programme

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The Bridge Group

2021





## About the Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust is a foundation which improves social mobility in the UK through evidence-based programmes, research and policy advocacy.

# Key findings and actions

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## 1. Context

Since 2012, the Sutton Trust US Programme, delivered in partnership with the US-UK Fulbright Commission, has supported 1389 young people to explore a US education. 514<sup>1</sup> students have gone on to enrol at leading US universities, accessing over \$125 million in financial aid. A further 150 were selected for the programme in 2020 (Cohort 10) with 94 choosing to apply to a US university.

The Sutton Trust commissioned an external evaluator, The Bridge Group, to explore the impact of the US Programme to date. They used applicant data, survey responses, interviews and worked with Cohorts 1 – 9 of the programme to give a longitudinal view. This document highlights the key findings from the research and the actions the Sutton Trust and Fulbright Commission will take in response.

## 2. Key findings

### 2a. Destinations

- On average:
  - 55% of students applied to a US university or college
  - Two thirds of students who applied to the US gained a place, this is c. 40% of the overall cohort
- c. 1 in 4 students stay in the US upon graduation
- This reduces to c. 1 in 5 in the longer term
- 93% of graduates are in full time employment or further study, which is comparable to the outcomes of our UK programmes

### 2b. Programme impact

The evaluation showed an overwhelmingly positive impact on students with many reporting the programme as life changing.

Students reported increased confidence, wider networks and an engagement in international issues as the biggest impacts of the programme, beyond university destination.

Encouragingly, this impact was felt similarly amongst those who went to the US and those who chose to apply to UK universities only. A lower impact was reported for students who applied to the US and didn't receive a place, though the overall outcomes were still positive.

### 2c. Areas for development

The research highlighted a few areas of reported challenges, which the programme could choose to address, these are:

1. Support with UK applications for students who decide not to apply to the US
2. Support for students who are unsuccessful in their US applications
3. Transition support for those who attend US universities
4. Awareness and preparation for topics such as mental health and race, specifically

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for further detail

### 3. Next steps

In terms of areas for development, the Sutton Trust and Fulbright Commission have agreed to explore the following actions:

| Area | Action   | Status  |
|------|--|---|
| 1    | At the end of Part 1 of the US Programme, all students will be enrolled on to Sutton Trust Online to support with UK applications  | This has already taken place for Cohort 10  |
| 2    | Sutton Trust Online and Sutton Trust Alumni will provide transition support for those attending UK universities. We will also explore if we can include unsuccessful US applicants in the pre-departure event  | STO and STA ready for students to enrol on.<br><br>Pre-departure event to be scoped                 |
| 3    | We will explore promoting more local networks in the US through Sutton Trust Alumni and Fulbright Scholars   | To be scoped  |
| 4    | We will encourage US Programme students to attend Sutton Trust run provision on mental health and race and Fulbright will explore running US specific sessions to supplement general support<br><br>Fulbright will also explore how to encourage students to access support on campus once in the US | ST programming launched, Fulbright started developing activities, with some delivered for Cohort 10 |

## Appendix

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### Appendix 1: Top 10 university destinations

| University              | Number of enrolments |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Princeton University    | 35                   |
| Yale University         | 23                   |
| Harvard University      | 22                   |
| Dartmouth College       | 18                   |
| Northwestern University | 18                   |
| Duke University         | 17                   |
| NYU Abu Dhabi           | 17                   |
| University of Rochester | 14                   |
| Columbia University     | 14                   |
| Skidmore College        | 14                   |

### Appendix 2: Case studies

To read individual case studies of students on the Sutton Trust US Programme, please [click here](#).

The Sutton Trust  
9th Floor  
Millbank Tower  
21-24 Millbank  
London, SW1P 4QP

T: 020 7802 1660

F: 020 7802 1661

W: [www.suttontrust.com](http://www.suttontrust.com)

Twitter: [@suttontrust](https://twitter.com/suttontrust)

