

OUR INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND VALUE FOR MONEY



Introduction

We're often asked where our income comes from and how we offer value for money to students.

Like most universities, Birkbeck is an educational charity and so we take great care to ensure that our financial resources deliver life-changing education and research for our students and society in general. Whether your course is on campus or online or both, we take the same care to ensure it is of a high quality and will maintain its value over time.

The fees you pay each year at enrolment contribute to everything in that year of study and to your lifetime association with the College and the University of London. Around a third of students pay their fees via agencies such as Student Finance England.

A tuition fee contributes to assessments, exams, reassessments, bursaries, academic support and all the academic services such as admissions, enrolment and exam boards across the whole student journey and beyond. It also supports pre-admissions and enrolment activity.

Regardless of how you pay your fees, we always use our income for the benefit of students, and on the things students care most about, such as continuously improving our learning resources and facilities, ensuring assessments are fair and providing helpful feedback. You can find more information about how we spend our income in our Financial Statements.

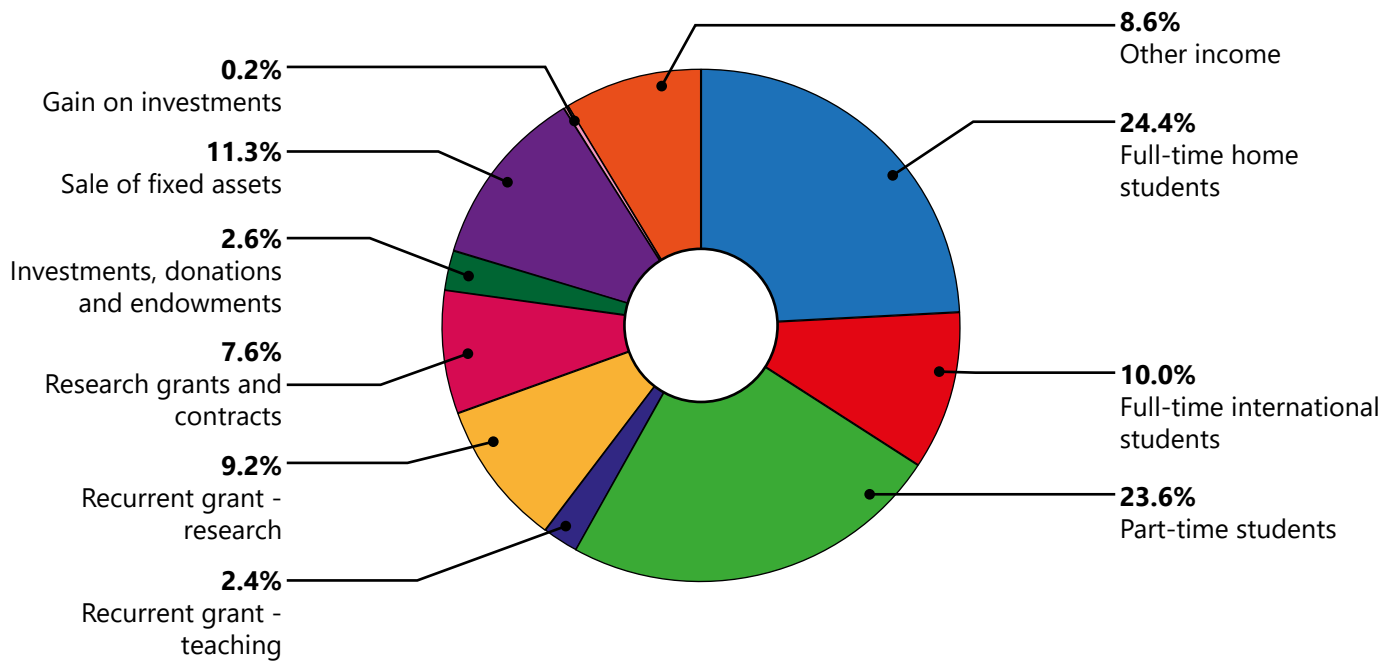
2021-22 saw the re-integration of in-person teaching events, while maintaining the gains from online teaching from the previous year. Our overall approach to the 2021-22 academic year was to provide in-person teaching where possible, and online learning if necessary. We therefore continued to enhance the materials developed for our virtual learning environment, furthering our commitment to a more blended approach to learning.

In line with our mission to provide educational opportunities to people who may not otherwise be able to access them, we provide a wide range of qualifications from short courses, through to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, all of which have been developed to meet the educational needs of our part-time and mature learners. With this brings some complexity and additional costs. In this regard, we continue to lobby Government to ensure institutions like Birkbeck receive equitable funding to deliver our flexible modes of delivery.

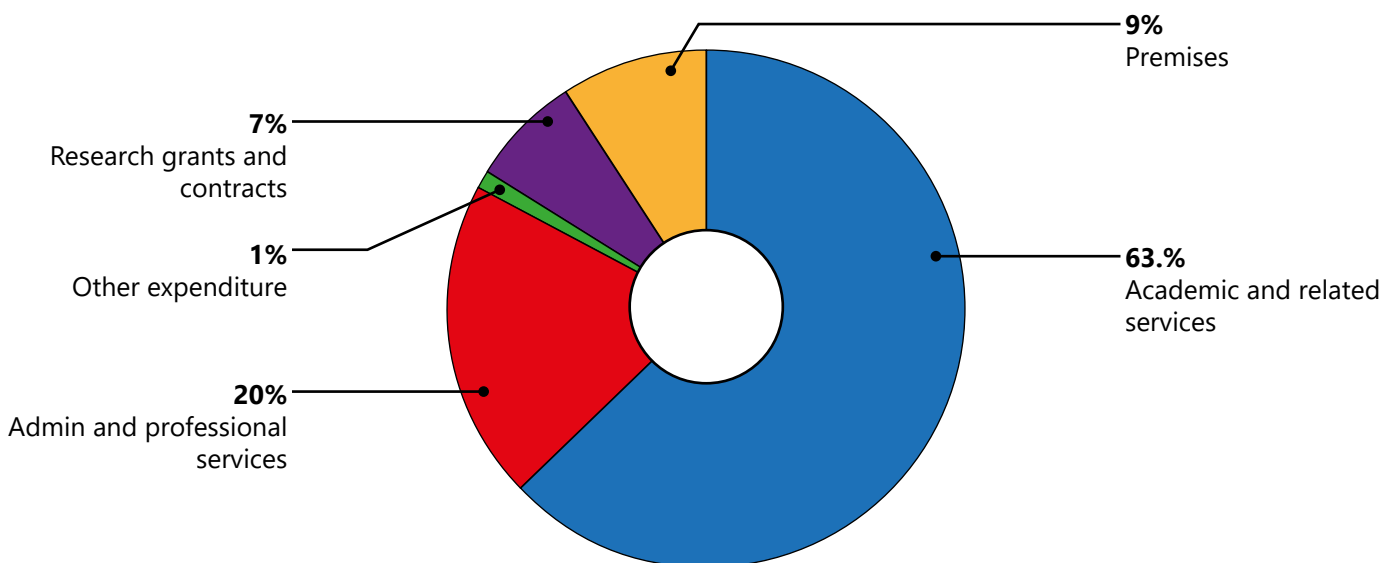
Income and expenditure

Here's how our £108m income for 2021-22 is broken down:

Our income 2021-22



Our expenditure 2021-22



Academic and related services

The majority of our expenditure and the income from tuition fees is spent on supporting teaching and research in our departments and research centres. This includes the provision of specialist facilities and infrastructure such as laboratories, software and technology; the salaries of teaching and research staff, as well as support staff such as programme administrators and learning development tutors. Being taught by research-active academic leaders, with a curriculum that has been informed by the latest thinking, is fundamental to your future success and the mission of Birkbeck.

We've invested a lot of money in our digital infrastructure in recent years. This includes providing high-quality online resources in Moodle and the Library to enhance the curriculum. Our online module evaluation system ensures we gather and respond to student feedback each term and the Studiosity service provides feedback key aspects of written assignments.

We also undertook a review of our office space, subsequently selling end-of-line infrastructure and investing in modern agile working facilities to support hybrid working for staff.

Administration and professional services

The central professional and administrative services staff community encompasses staff in Access and Engagement, Alumni and Fundraising, Secretariat, Human Resources, IT, Finance, Estates, External Relations and Marketing, Facilities and other services like the Registry and Library Services. The majority of these teams provide student-facing support and they include the Subject Librarians, Student Counsellors, and Mental Health Advisors, as well as staff who focus on admissions, student records, bursary payments and the hosting of careers and graduation events.

We also give an annual grant to the Birkbeck Students' Union, even though it's independent of the College, to enable them to deliver services and activities.

Premises, buildings and IT infrastructure

There are other costs you may not be aware of which cover the maintenance of teaching, research and learning spaces - for the 2021-22 period, this amounted to 9% of expenditure. This includes providing heating, light, power, and ventilation and maintenance in ways that contribute to our environmental sustainability targets and can save money in the longer term.

In July 2021 we completed the purchase of Student Central (now Birkbeck Central). Birkbeck Central is next door to our main Malet Street building so provides a transformational opportunity to further enhance and increase our teaching, learning and student social and communal space at the heart of our campus in Bloomsbury. The addition of Birkbeck Central has increased our campus space by around 25%. We aim to open teaching and learning facilities in Birkbeck Central in 2022-23.

We have a rolling programme of behind-the-scenes investment to keep our estate in good order. Our annual costs include cybersecurity services, for cloud capacity and for software and licences, including Microsoft Teams, Office 365, Collaborate and Panopto. These investments are designed to support the delivery of teaching and research.

Other expenditure

Other expenditure includes the USS Pension charge.

Research and teaching grants

These areas of income and expenditure underpin the international stature of our research base and allow for research to be incorporated across our portfolio of courses. When we receive research grants, sometimes they also pay for PhD studentships and internships, both of which directly benefit students. This area of funding also facilitates opportunities for our doctoral students to gain experience of teaching in the classroom or acting as demonstrators in scientific or technical subjects.

Financial support

We know that many Birkbeck students are on modest incomes. You can read more about our planned financial support commitments in our Access and Participation Plan (APP). We are committed to providing advice and support to help students finance their studies and provide a range of bursaries, scholarships and funding opportunities.

Research

Research is at the heart of our work as a university and is embedded in our studies at Birkbeck. We invest heavily in ground-breaking research, for example, our ToddlerLab is assessing the brain activity young children, building on research from Birkbeck's BabyLab, to help understand better, conditions such as autism and to hopefully improve their lives in future.

The 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research carried out at 157 UK universities in all disciplines, including at Birkbeck and an impressive 41% of our research achieved the highest possible grade of world-leading (4*) and 83% was classified as world-leading and internationally excellent.

We also invest time and money engaging with businesses and local communities to offer students additional benefits and to continue to make a positive impact within the external community.

Any surplus income is typically invested in enhancing teaching and research space, student learning, social facilities, additional student support, campus improvements, and funding new innovations.

Financial risks and issues

Like many universities, Birkbeck is managing its income and expenditure during a period of economic uncertainty. Every year there are increased costs, particularly from salary increments and employer pension contributions. Recent Government policy-changes have reduced our income as grants and central funding have reduced. Undergraduate tuition fees are regulated and have not kept pace with inflation and so, like many of our students, we are continually looking for ways in which we can 'do more with less' and reviewing our income and expenditure to make sure our central objectives of delivering life-changing education and research are maintained.

Further reading

- [Birkbeck, University of London Financial Statements](#)
- [Access and Participation Plan \(APP\)](#)

January 2023