

OPPORTUNITY

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All about Aston University
Information for candidates

www.aston.ac.uk

Welcome

from Saskia Loer Hansen

Interim Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive



Dear applicant

The HE sector is currently experiencing an unprecedented scale and pace of change, combined with a high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. Those universities able to adapt swiftly to a changing and increasingly competitive market will thrive. As a mid-sized, focused university Aston has the advantages of agility, innovation and team working that some other institutions do not. Our integrated placement year, our applicable, exploitable research, and our commitment to widening participation all help to make Aston distinct.

In November 2020, Aston University was delighted to be announced as the Guardian's University of the Year 2020. The Guardian's decision to award this prestigious accolade to Aston University is based on their objective assessment of the 121 UK universities against numerous criteria. These include graduate employability and earnings, student retention, closing attainment gaps and embedding sustainability.

Aston University was announced as the winner of the Times Higher Education's (THE) 2020 Outstanding Entrepreneurial University in recognition of our support for student entrepreneurship, small businesses, and the West Midlands region. In 2021 Aston was also shortlisted for the THE University of Year award.

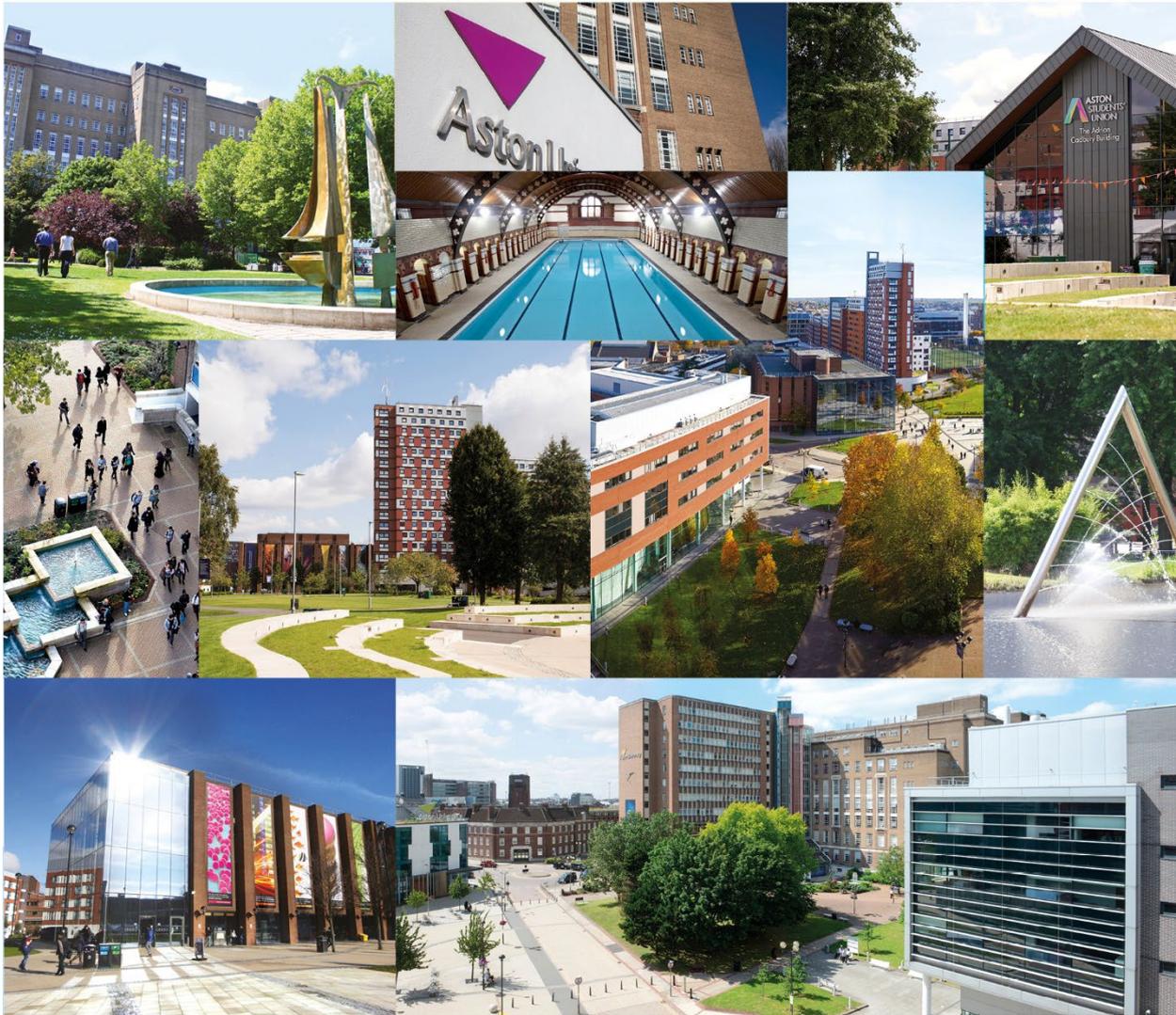
The 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) results recognised the quality and impact of Aston University's research. Almost four-fifths of our research was rated as either 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'. We have significantly grown the number of our academic staff undertaking high quality research since the last REF. While increasing the number of research outputs, the quality has also increased. We submitted double the number of research outputs than in 2014, while our percentage of 4* outputs grew by eight percentage points.

Teaching quality and the student experience are an important focus at Aston. We are committed to doing all we can to address the needs of students and to assisting them to achieve their career ambitions on graduation.

We very much look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how you would contribute to Aston's continuing success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saskia Loer Hansen".

Saskia Loer Hansen
Interim Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive



About Aston University

Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established research-led university known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to business and the professions.

Outstanding graduate employability

Aston University has been a leading university for graduate employment success. With placements integrated into our degree programmes, students develop essential work skills, build industry connections and a professional profile. We have strong relationships with national and international graduate employers, as well as smaller and local employers. These relationships are extremely important and make a real contribution to graduate employability.

Career focused programmes

Close and established links with business, the public sector and the professions ensure that our career focused degree programmes are inspiring, challenging, and constantly updated to equip students with essential work-related skills and experiences.

Excellence in teaching and research

We are committed to high quality teaching and academic excellence, ensuring we provide the highest standard of education to our students. Aston University has an excellent reputation for research which shapes and improves lives. We're proud of the quality of our research and the real world applications developed as a result – it makes a substantial and beneficial difference to people, organisations and society.

International

Aston University is a popular choice for international students. We recognise and welcome the important academic contribution and cultural diversity international students bring to our university environment. Students from over 120 countries choose to study at Aston University each year.

Birmingham – one of Europe's liveliest cities

Birmingham has a rich history which makes the city a unique and inspiring place to visit. It is recognised as a leader in leisure, entertainment, shopping and sport and is an international centre for business, commerce and industry. Birmingham is home to world-class companies, innovative entrepreneurs and has one of the youngest populations in Europe. It is a dynamic, business-focused region that is well connected and centrally located in the UK.

A green, sustainable campus

Located in the centre of Birmingham our green, 40 acre campus houses all the University's academic, social and accommodation facilities for our 15,000 students. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to our sustainability agenda and practices.

Academic colleges and schools



College of Business and Social Sciences (BSS)

- Aston Business School
- Aston Law School
- School of Social Sciences and Humanities



College of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS)

- School of Informatics and Digital Engineering
- School of Infrastructure and Sustainable Engineering
- School of Engineering and Technology

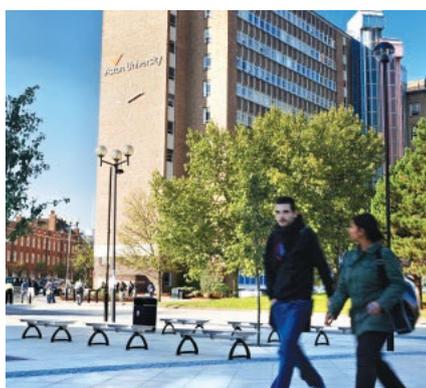
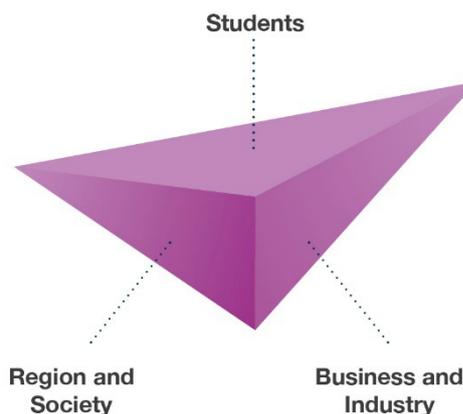


College of Health and Life Sciences (HLS)

- Aston Medical School
- Aston Pharmacy School
- School of Biosciences
- School of Optometry
- School of Psychology

Our beneficiary groups

The University's beneficiaries are identified as three groups:



Students

The first and primary beneficiary of Aston University are the individuals who form our student body and who progress to become our alumni. Aston University places students at the heart of our academic and professional endeavour. Through our industry placements, students are at the coalface of our interaction with industry.



Business and Industry

Our strategy has an emphasis on the businesses and other external organisations who engage with us. Aston University is a market leader in industry-engaged research, as well as graduate employability. Our industry partners benefit from our work through our leading research and knowledge exchange, and from the quality of graduates we produce. Each student at Aston University is offered the opportunity for a year-long work placement; these placements not only cement our relationships with industry but ensure businesses have access to work-ready graduates.



Region and Society

We are committed to having a positive and transformative impact on Birmingham and the West Midlands. Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe and Aston University plays an important civic role by educating the leaders of the future. By emphasising research that has a regional impact, engaging with local businesses to develop a strong economy and educating top graduates, we are helping to shape our society around us.

University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University. In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them. Our mission is to be the UK's leading university for students aspiring to succeed in business and the professions, where original research, enterprise and inspiring teaching deliver local and global impact.

Staff expectations

All staff are expected to:

- Be committed to delivering high performance
- Recognise and praise the high performance of others
- Remain open to new ideas and seek to act quickly for positive change
- Develop themselves, and support the development of others
- Be ambitious, for themselves, their teams and the university
- Engage with others, listen, observe and communicate
- Focus on excellent customer service, finding solutions and saying "yes"
- Make reasoned decisions without fear of blame
- Engender trust through their own actions
- Be fair in all matters.



Library and Information Services

We are focused on providing excellent customer service, a range of learning environments, access to high quality scholarly information resources, and support for all students and staff to develop their skills and enhance their research. The Library has held the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award since 2012.

The budget allocated by the University to the Library is £3.4 million of which approximately £1.9 million is spent on information resources to support learning, teaching and research. This includes an extensive collection of books, journals, and specialist databases selected to support the University's disciplines.

The Library's Information Specialists work with the Colleges and programme teams to understand resource requirements and the budget model allocates funds appropriately based on need. Acquisitions are primarily driven by reading lists populated by module leaders in the University's reading list system which automatically links through to the relevant module on Blackboard for students for easy access to their required readings.

The Library staff complement currently comprises 17 professional staff and 21 support staff organised into four teams: the Information Resources team, the Information Services team, the Research Services team, and the Public Services team.

The Information Resources team manage the purchase and access to all print and electronic resources and manage the associated library systems.

The Information Services team work closely with the Colleges to ensure library services and resources meet the needs of their students and staff, as well as providing support for information and research skills within programmes.

The Research Services team support staff and researchers with advice on topics including Open Access publishing, research data management, research indicators, and enhancing research profiles.

The Public Services team manage the learning environment within the Library building on campus, run the library's enquiry services in person and online via email and LiveChat, and support the lending and circulation of library material.

We are committed to staff training and development, using the University's 'My Development Conversation' as an underpinning mechanism. The department has a weekly training hour, and annual staff development away day, and staff attend both internal and external events.

The Library is a member of the Mercian Collaboration of libraries in the region, and the national body for academic libraries, SCONUL with many staff involved in regional and national special interest groups, sector developments, and initiatives.

The four-storey Library building can accommodate 1200 users with space for individual and group study, workshops, and bookable rooms.

The ground floor is a group learning space incorporating a café, PCs, loanable laptops, group study rooms and a variety of furniture to facilitate group study.

The first floor incorporates the library staff area, print journal stock, single study spaces and the Learning Development Centre which brings together learning support initiatives for academic skills and mathematics.

The second and third floors house the printed book stock, the Library workshop room, and further study spaces for single and group study. The Library has flexible opening hours throughout the year with extended opening during exams and through vacation periods.

All students are timetabled for a library induction at the beginning of their first year and most students will have subject-based information and research skills sessions later in their course delivered by the Library's Information Specialists. Training and development for postgraduates and research staff is available through university researcher development programmes and bespoke sessions for Colleges as required. Online learning materials and activities and guides are available for students and researchers via the Library website or within relevant modules on Blackboard.

We recognise the value and importance of good communication with academic staff and students and acting on feedback to improve services. Information Specialists liaise closely with academic staff to assist with programme planning and advise on available information resources.

Formal communication occurs through a variety of channels, including Library representation at College and School meetings and committees, and Staff Student Consultative Committees, as well as through meetings with the Students Union. Informal feedback is encouraged via comment forms, online evaluations, and through the library email, LiveChat and social media channels. Formal feedback is also obtained from internal surveys and national student satisfaction and experience surveys.

For more information, visit: www.aston.ac.uk/library

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