

STIMULUS Project

Progress Report 2015/16

Placing Cambridge University students in local schools to support science, mathematics and technology classes

stimulus.ucam.org



STIMULUS is a community service programme which gives Cambridge University students the opportunity to work with pupils in local schools, helping with Maths, Science, Computing or Technology lessons.

STIMULUS students work as volunteer teaching assistants in the classroom, alongside the class teacher. Each STIMULUS placement commits a volunteer to working in their allocated school alongside a specific teacher for one afternoon a week for a term.

In 2015/16 STIMULUS organised **200 placements for Cambridge student volunteers in local schools**. A sustained collaboration with the national Code Club network meant that a group of STIMULUS student volunteers ran weekly Code Clubs in several primary schools within the city of Cambridge, introducing primary school children to computer programming.

Eleven STIMULUS volunteers, around 25% of the final year cohort of volunteers, went on to teacher training. This means that more pupils will benefit from being taught by highly qualified, knowledgeable teachers in shortage subjects (particularly Mathematics and Physics) in the future.

“STIMULUS has been very enjoyable and rewarding, working with children at the beginning of their science education & hopefully inspiring them to enjoy the subject.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

“The children were really engaged and hearing them say, "This is really fun!" or "I love maths!" was super-rewarding.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

The main aims of the STIMULUS programme are:

- to provide support for the teaching of Mathematics, Science, ICT and Technology in schools;
- to provide pupils with positive role models of young scientists, mathematicians and technologists;
- to encourage all pupils to develop and maintain an interest in Mathematics, Science and Technology;
- to contribute to enrichment opportunities for school students;
- to give university students opportunities to develop their communication and interpersonal skills;
- to give university students experience in the classroom and a better understanding of education;
- to provide a link between the University and the local community.

The project also provides valuable experience to those students who are considering a teaching career and often helps them decide whether to make this career choice. Each year we have some students who go on to follow a PGCE course or to complete school-centred initial teacher training; some join the Teach First scheme or participate in the Student Associate Scheme during their vacation. The STIMULUS scheme experience proves to be an extremely positive aspect in their applications.

How do STIMULUS volunteers help in schools?

Examples include:

- Helping generally to support pupils in the classroom
- Assisting with practical work
- Encouraging pupils to talk about their work, using key vocabulary
- Asking questions which help pupils develop their understanding
- Encouraging uninterested pupils to engage with the task
- Helping sixth-formers during a lunchtime “surgery”
- Taking practical materials in from a university department
- Taking a small group to work on extension topics
- Working one-to-one with an exceptionally able pupil
- Discussing university applications with sixth-formers
- Helping with after school Science Clubs and Homework clubs

“The teachers were very friendly and everything I did was easily organised and very fulfilling.”

Secondary volunteer 2015/16

“A fantastic opportunity to get experience working in a classroom - really allows you to assess what teaching is like on a day to day basis.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

Volunteers acquire a range of skills from participating in the scheme:

- STIMULUS can help to develop and support volunteers' confidence and leadership skills: **84%** of those who responded to an evaluation questionnaire felt that their STIMULUS placement had helped them to develop their **communication skills** and **72%** felt that it had improved their capacity to **'take the initiative'**.
- **63%** of students believed that, as a result of participating in the STIMULUS programme, they had **improved their time management skills**.
- Organisation and interpersonal skills are developed, as volunteers need to organise their work around their visits and work alongside teachers and students.
- Many students will be involved in teaching in different contexts during their careers and, through their STIMULUS placement, they are able to develop their teaching skills. Some students use the scheme to find out more about teaching as a career, and to help them decide whether to apply for a PGCE, SCITT, Teach First or Student Associate Scheme placement. In the Michaelmas term, **80%** of students who responded to an evaluation questionnaire indicated that they were **'considering teaching as a career'**.
- **94%** of volunteers who responded to an evaluation questionnaire **would recommend the STIMULUS programme to others**.

(All data from 2015/16 STIMULUS programme evaluation.)

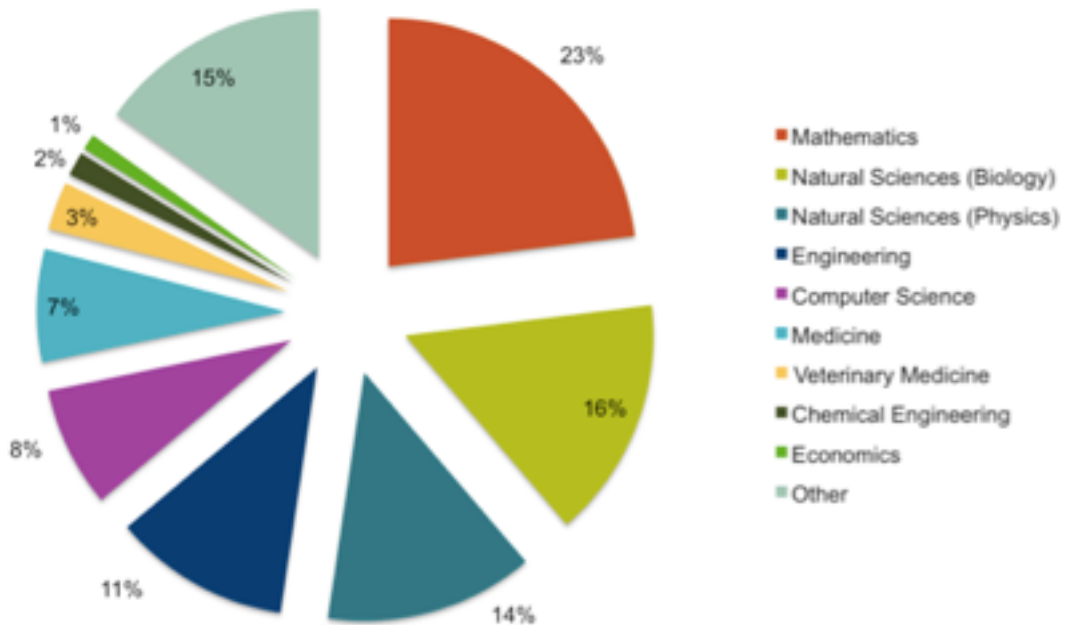
“Helping out with a variety of classes ... worked really well as this helped me to learn to communicate to and teach different students in different ways, and to adapt myself to different situations, such as using language skills, speed of delivery etc.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

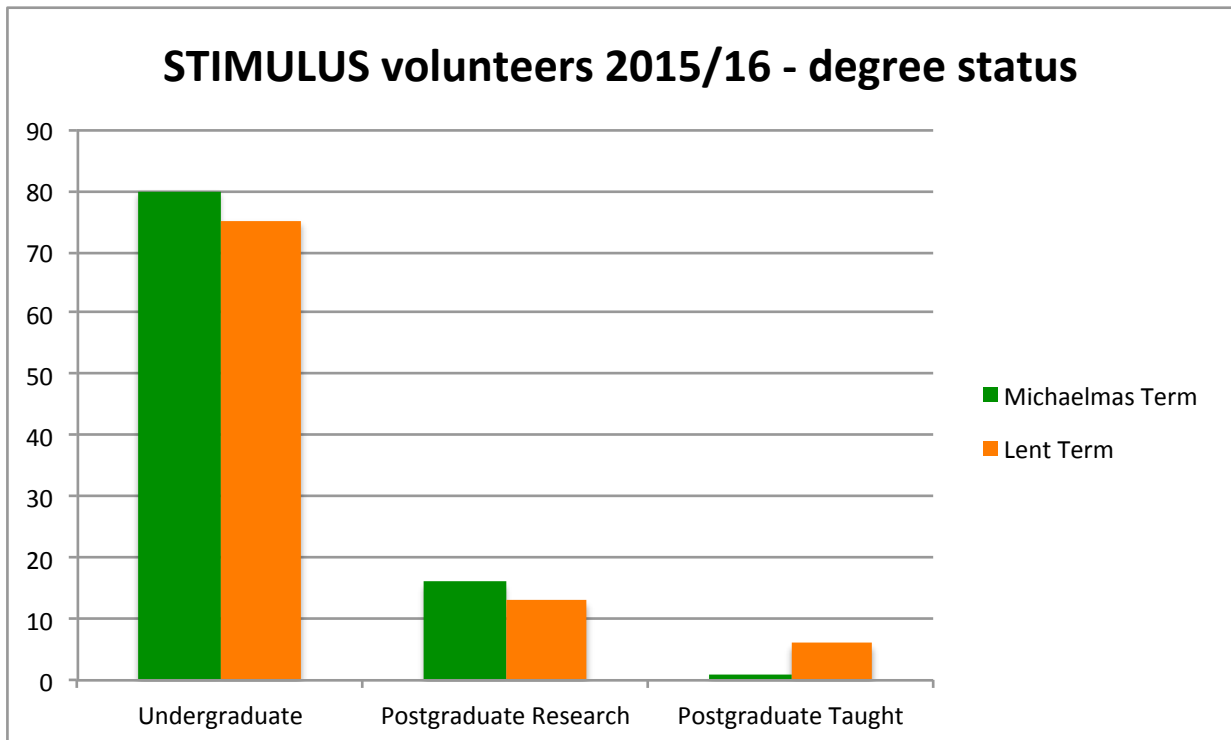
“The STIMULUS students promoted a culture of learning which has rubbed off on the students.”

Teacher hosting STIMULUS placement 2015/16

Subjects studied by STIMULUS volunteers 2015/16



STIMULUS volunteers 2015/16 - degree status



“It was a pleasure to teach the students - they were all very polite and motivated to learn!”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

Schools taking STIMULUS volunteers, with number of placements in each term	Michaelmas term 2014/15	Lent term 2014/15
Arbury	1	1
Cambridge University Primary	1	1
Castle	1	1
Chesterton Community College - Mathematics	5	9
Coleridge Community College - Science	3	5
Fawcett Primary	1	2
Fen Ditton Community Primary	1	1
Girton Glebe Primary School	2	1
Hills Road Sixth Form College - Chemistry	4	4
Hills Road Sixth Form College - Mathematics	3	3
Hills Road Sixth Form College - Computing	0	1
Impington Village College - Technology	1	0
Kings Hedges Primary	0	2
Long Road Sixth Form College - Maths	4	9
Long Road Sixth Form College - Biology	0	1
Long Road Sixth Form College - Chemistry	4	4
Long Road Sixth Form College - Computing	5	5
Mayfield Primary School	2	4
Milton Primary	2	0
Milton Road Primary School	1	1
Newnham Croft Primary School	3	2
North Cambridge Academy	8	4
Orchard Park Community Primary School	1	1

“A great programme!” “I enjoyed STIMULUS so much the last couple of years that I’m doing teacher training next year!”

STIMULUS volunteers 2015/16

Schools taking STIMULUS volunteers, with number of placements in each term (continued)	Michaelmas term 2014/15	Lent term 2014/15
Parkside Community College - Science	7	3
Parkside Federation (Parkside Campus) - Maths	6	5
Queen Edith Community Primary School	1	1
Ridgefield Primary School	4	4
St Albans Catholic Primary School	1	1
St Bedes Inter-Church Comprehensive School - Maths	1	0
St Faith's	3	1
St Laurence's RC Primary School	3	0
St Luke's Primary School	4	2
St Mary's Cambridge	1	3
St Matthew's Primary School	8	5
St Paul's	0	1
St Philip's	2	1
The Stephen Perse	7	4
The Stephen Perse Junior School	0	1
The Netherhall School - Mathematics	1	1
The Netherhall School - Science	1	1

“The volunteer demonstrated initiative and flexibility combined with passion to inspire children to succeed in their present learning and future lives. ”

Teacher hosting a STIMULUS placement 2015/16

Numbers of STIMULUS volunteers by college	Number of students
Christ's College	9
Churchill College	8
Clare College	3
Corpus Christi	5
Downing College	7
Emmanuel College	6
Fitzwilliam College	2
Girton College	11
Gonville and Caius College	11
Homerton College	12
Hughes Hall	1
Jesus College	5
King's College	3
Lucy Cavendish College	2
Magdalene College	6
Murray Edwards College	3
Newnham College	11
Pembroke College	14
Peterhouse	4
Queens' College	8
Robinson College	8
Selwyn College	6
Sidney Sussex College	2
St Catharine's College	1
St Edmund's College	5
St John's College	5
Trinity College	21
Trinity Hall	6
Wolfson College	5

“Both teachers in STIMULUS and in schools are very supportive. It’s really an unforgettable and valuable experience! Thank you!”

STIMULUS volunteer 2015/16

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all our supporters, past and present, whose generosity has enabled hundreds of volunteer Cambridge students to help in local schools. We would particularly like to thank all those who have supported us over the past year:

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Colleges of the University of Cambridge: Christ's College, Churchill College, Clare College, Clare Hall, Corpus Christi College, Darwin College, Fitzwilliam College, Girton College, Gonville and Caius College, Homerton College, Jesus College, King's College, Magdalene College, Murray Edwards College (formerly New Hall), Newnham College, Pembroke College, Peterhouse, Queens' College, Selwyn College, Sidney Sussex College, St Catharine's College, St Edmund's College, St John's College, Trinity College, Trinity Hall;

University of Cambridge Departments, Faculties and Schools: Biological Sciences, Computer Laboratory, Economics, Education, Engineering, Genetics, Mathematics, Physics;

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