

# The Architectural Association announces a new partnership with Open City Accelerate

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The Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture will expand its collaboration with Open City's Accelerate programme this year by becoming a university partner in the programme and offering a package of benefits to help Accelerate students pursue education at the AA. Accelerate offers learning and mentoring opportunities for 16- to 18-year olds interested in studying architecture and the built environment. The programme's aim is to empower students from under-represented backgrounds to pursue careers in this sector.

The AA began its collaboration with Open City in 2022 and helped to develop the Accelerate Studios programme for 14- to 16-year olds, offering a series of workshops exploring themes relating to exhibitions in the AA Gallery. This year, the collaboration has developed as the AA becomes the fourth university partner to support the Accelerate programme.

As a university partner, the AA will host a series of workshops at Bedford Square throughout the Accelerate course, which will enable students to explore the school and the facilities it has to offer. The AA is also offering a package of benefits for Accelerate students applying to the school, making study at the AA more financially viable for students from underprivileged backgrounds.

The AA's partnership with the Accelerate programme reflects the school's ongoing commitment to widening participation in architectural education. Approximately one in five AA students currently receive financial assistance from the school in the form of a scholarship, bursary or assistantship. This, along with the package of benefits available to Accelerate students, will ensure that the most talented individuals are able to study at the school, regardless of their financial situation.

Siraaj Mitha, Head of Accelerate at Open City, said: "We are incredibly excited to be working together in the year ahead, and hope that this partnership will allow us to continue to support young Londoners from under-represented backgrounds with a programme that offers far-reaching insight and experience into every part of built environment."

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## About the AA

**The Architectural Association (AA) is the oldest independent school of architecture in the UK; it was founded in 1847 as a student-centred collective that aspired to radically transform architectural education. The school offers a broad range of flexible, self-directed programmes, courses and curricula that empower students and staff to challenge the accepted methods within contemporary architectural education and professional practice. These are enhanced by the Public Programme, which focuses on the unique opportunities and challenges of the present through a series of lectures, exhibitions, studio visits, symposia and book launches, and by the Communications Studio, a media, publishing and graphic design studio.**

**The school offers a Foundation Award, a BA(Hons)/RIBA Part 1 and MArch/RIBA Part 2 (and AA Diploma) throughout its five-year course within the Intermediate and Diploma Programmes, and nine Taught Postgraduate programmes as well as the PhD Programme, a RIBA-accredited Part 3 course, a Summer School and Visiting Schools based around the world.**

## About Open City and Accelerate

**Accelerate was established by Open City, a charity which has dedicated more than 30 years to making London's architecture more open, accessible and equitable. Its mission is to empower communities to learn about, experience and have a role in shaping the places where they live. Open City collaborates with people from diverse communities to widen access to spaces, built heritage, neighbourhoods, knowledge and careers that they are often excluded from. It does this by creating educational and cultural programmes that discuss, celebrate and open historic and contemporary buildings and landscapes to the public. Accelerate supports young people aged 16–18 from under-represented backgrounds to pursue careers in the built environment industries and equips them with the skills, portfolios, networks and confidence to make informed career choices. Over the past 11 years, Accelerate has encouraged more than 500 young Londoners from under-represented and historically marginalised backgrounds to experience, explore and gain access to built environment professions.**