

CAREER IMPACT



college
solihull

Find out what impact
The Sixth Form College,
Solihull has on its students'
career prospects...

... ASPIRE & ACHIEVE!

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From Higher Education to Apprenticeships...

... from Careers support to curriculum-specific enrichments...

... here is a comprehensive guide to the College's Career Impact.

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Message from the Principal

At The Sixth Form College, Solihull, we believe that education is about more than just grades.

We pride ourselves on the fantastic teaching and learning we provide and we're proud of the academic achievements that our students attain. However, we also aim to ensure that we have a real impact on the future career paths that our students choose.

Whether students elect to go to university, or start an apprenticeship or other training, or even go directly into employment, we believe we have a responsibility to prepare them the best we can. We believe we do that very effectively and we'd like to explain how.

This guide details the many ways the College supports student progression and boosts their career prospects.



Many of the initiatives detailed in this guide are unique to The Sixth Form College, Solihull. We have established close ties with employers and universities and tailored many of these links with specific courses, ensuring students are getting experiences that complement their learning. We believe this puts them at a distinct advantage when it comes to making Higher Education or employment applications.

I hope this guide demonstrates the support the College gives to students and the exciting opportunities that are available. However, these opportunities only benefit students who make the most of them. It is the students' responsibility to seize the chances presented to them so they can reach their potential and progress onto the next exciting chapter of their lives.

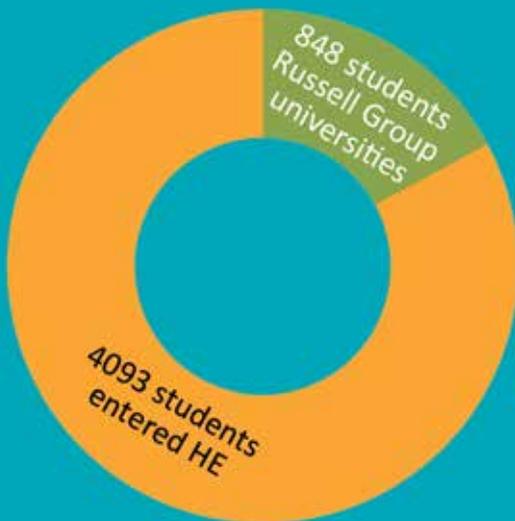
**Paul Ashdown
Principal**

Higher Education Destinations

Despite the cost of progressing onto Higher Education, the majority of students see progressing onto university as an investment into their future. Approximately 70% of our students choose to go to university and they succeed in getting places on a wide variety of courses, including some of the most competitive courses in the country at prestigious universities.

The Sixth Form College, Solihull enjoys great success in supporting students into Higher Education, with a success rate more than 10% above the national average. When it comes to supporting students who apply to Oxford and Cambridge, the College has a success rate of just over 20%, which is in line with the national average.

As well as Oxbridge, a large number of students at the College also progress to prestigious Russell Group universities and to study highly competitive courses including Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry. These students must apply earlier than other students and the College does its best to identify those students who can challenge themselves like this towards the end of Year 12. The Gifted & Talented programme supports these students.



Between 2010 and 2014, 4,093 students entered Higher Education from this College. Almost 21% went to Russell Group universities.

30 students got places to study Medicine.

25 students achieved Oxbridge places.

University Destinations

University is a popular choice for many of our students. Here are two examples of students whose hard work and determination were rewarded with excellent grades, and who earned places at top universities.



Kirsty Mears is studying for a History degree at the **University of Oxford**. She achieved A and A* grades in English Literature, History and Philosophy A levels, as well as completing an Extended Project.

“I was really pleased to be offered a place at Oxford and I worked hard to achieve the grades I needed to get in. I had to do a History aptitude test, write an essay and have an interview to get my offer at Oxford. It took four days, but it was actually fun and that’s when I realised I wanted to go to Oxford. I had been unsure, because I wasn’t sure it was right for me, but when I visited I realised everyone was so friendly and like-minded.”

Victor Adeyera is another success story. He is at the **University of Exeter**, doing a Medical Science degree. He achieved two A grades and one B in A level Chemistry, Biology and Use of Mathematics to get his place.

“During my time at College, I liked how every student was treated like an adult by teachers and how the teachers went the extra mile to ensure the success of students. The College provides all resources needed for individual study, from the quiet library to private study rooms and that helped me to achieve.”



Volunteering

Volunteering can significantly boost applications to university, training and employment, as these two students have discovered...

...Whether it's a Gap Year or a shorter volunteer project, it all looks good on your CV!

Meeakshi Parmar will be heading to the **University of Leeds** in 2015 to study Social Policy, after getting A grades across the board in her A levels. Before that, she has chosen to take a Gap Year and has been volunteering abroad. She heard about Project Trust at the College's Higher Education Fair and signed up to go to Cambodia for a year with them.



"The best thing about College has been realising the importance of independence and my capabilities to do well if I work hard and have a good attitude to learning. Wonderful opportunities have opened up for me at College, including the chance to travel with Project Trust. I want to work in the third sector (voluntary sector) so this should be good experience for me."

Alec Edwards is another student who volunteered abroad. He was part of the College's Team Gambia project and volunteered at a school in The Gambia during Year 13. He has since progressed to **University of Oxford** to study Chemical Engineering after achieving all A* grades at A level.



"The College presented me with unique opportunities, such as the project with a school in The Gambia, providing valuable experience and skills. In addition, experienced, subject specialist teachers have stretched me to reach my full potential through continual challenge and support."

Trips & Visits

Students get many exciting opportunities to get out of the classroom and develop their learning through more interactive means. This is often by way of fieldtrips. Perhaps the most exciting of these fieldtrips are the overseas trips, which are offered in several of our courses.



Visits to Higher Education institutions, as well as local businesses also benefit students.

Politics and Law students can visit New York City every February, while Art plan an excursion to a major European city (previously Paris, Rome, Berlin and Barcelona) each year, History travel to the battlefields in Belgium, History/Russian students can go to Moscow and St Petersburg and Modern Foreign Language students take part in exchanges in Germany, France and Italy, not to mention overseas work experience in Spain. Students can also join a volunteer project called Team Gambia, in which they raise money for an impoverished school in The Gambia and then visit to teach for a week.



Meanwhile, away from higher education, visits also include Law trips to local magistrates and crown courts, Performing Arts trips to productions at theatres across the country, and Humanities trips to the British Museum and to Caerleon in Wales to visit an ancient Roman site. HE Academies, the Career Passport and certain other courses also see students visit universities and businesses.

Employment & Apprenticeships

University is not the only choice open to students after College. For some students another path may be more desirable and more appropriate to their career ambitions.

There are lots of options open to young people, including jobs, apprenticeships, sponsored degree programmes or even study abroad.

Natalie Clements and Alex Chiles are two of the students we have helped to get places on the prestigious KPMG Audit School Leaver Programme. This sponsored degree programme will see them enter into a 6-year training programme, followed by a job at the audit and accountancy firm. KPMG will pay for their study at university, as well as providing on-the-job training in their Birmingham offices.



The College supports students who choose to pursue this route just as it would for those who apply to university. For a start, the Careers department is instrumental in making students aware of apprenticeship and employment opportunities. This is done via a weekly Careers Bulletin, as well as announcements on Facebook and Twitter. Support is also offered to students who require help in preparing for their applications.

Some students choose to support their studies by taking part-time jobs. This can be very beneficial, but the College encourages students to find a balance between this and the demands of their studies.

Training Schemes

Some careers, such as Engineering and IT, can benefit from a more hands-on approach, with on-the-job training. Ex-students Abigail and Jaime have chosen to join schemes that enable them to get more experience in these fields, whilst getting qualifications at the same time.



Abigail Stokes chose to pursue a sponsored degree programme and Higher Apprenticeship with **Cap Gemini**. She achieved all A and A* grades at A level, and hopes that her work with Cap Gemini will lead to a career in IT.

“The social side of College is what I enjoyed most, as everyone encouraged each other to do well and achieve their best both inside and outside of college. The support from all of my teachers helped me to achieve; they marked countless essays and practice work, even on top of all their other marking!”

Jaime Fowler is working at **Rolls Royce**, as she pursues a Year in Industry. She is also a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) Ambassador. Both roles see her visiting schools and colleges to promote engineering, particularly getting more girls involved.

“I applied for the Year in Industry programme through the Engineering Development Trust. I’m now working in the Manufacturing Engineering department at Rolls Royce. I deferred my university place (Mechanical Engineering degree at Coventry University) to do this placement and to make sure this is really what I want to do. I find it really interesting and it has confirmed that it is what I want to do. I go to work every day happy to be there.”



Careers & Career Passport

Expert staff dedicated to offering careers advice work at the College to support students with their post-College choices. They point students in the direction of further information on a range of progression routes, be it Higher Education, apprenticeships or other training, or employment. Support is also there to help students get work experience and internships via our Career Passport programme.

The **Career Passport** is an exciting initiative, designed to develop students for their future careers, whilst benefiting local employers. The programme is designed to enhance students' career prospects and employability skills. Students will combine their academic skills with some work-related experience through an internship of approximately 100 hours over a given period.

To assist them, targets will be set to develop and build on a range of skills, such as communication, team work and creativity. Upon completion, each student will achieve a 'Career Passport' – a document which will be used as evidence of work experience undertaken when applying for Universities, Apprenticeships and other employment opportunities.

Business leaders are often quoted in the media as saying that young people do not possess the skills they are looking for in their employees. Securing employment and getting into university is increasingly competitive, so we believe that students who achieve a Career Passport are far more attractive to employers and Admissions tutors. Employers welcome this award when shortlisting for vacancies.



Work Placements

The Career Passport scheme helps to place students on a variety of work experience opportunities and internships or support students to get their own. These placements take place at lots of businesses, including hospitals, schools, accountancy firms and many more.

This is a case study of one such work experience opportunity that was offered to students.

Teaching is one career that benefits hugely from work placements. Competition for primary teaching in particular is fierce, so being able to show you have undertaken a work placement at a school can benefit your application a great deal. The College supports students to get these work placements.

Students who join the **Team Gambia** volunteering project get primary teaching visits as part of the project. These students visit St Alphege Infant School to get a taste of working with very young children, in preparation for teaching at the Jemus Jungkung Jammeh Memorial Nursery School in The Gambia. The school was built thanks to the hard work and fundraising of Hamstead Hall School in Handsworth Wood. The College joined the project in 2013 and every year it takes a group of students out to The Gambia to volunteer at the school.



Careers & Higher Education Fair

Students can take advantage of a wealth of resources in the Careers library and book appointments with Careers staff for one-to-one advice. However, the highlight of the Careers calendar each year is the Higher Education Fair. Held in June, the event is one of the largest such events in the country, giving students the chance to learn about many different universities, Gap Year organisations and employers.

As the photo below shows, the HE Fair is a bustling event! More than 70 organisations attend, including many of the most prestigious universities in the country. Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Sheffield and Oxford Universities are among those that attend. For those young people looking to take a Gap Year, organisations like Project Trust are on hand to provide information about volunteering.



As well as stands set up in the Sports Hall, a variety of visiting speakers deliver career-specific seminars at the HE Fair too. These cover a wide range of career paths from Medicine and Nursing to Engineering and Architecture.

University Destinations

The Higher Education Fair in the summer term is often a good starting point for students in Year 12 to start considering their options. Students then make UCAS applications in the autumn term of Year 13 and they choose five possible destinations/courses.



Lucy Rutter has an offer to study Sport & Social Sciences at **Bath University** and hopes to carve out a career in sport and the media.

“The best thing about the College has been the freedom that it allows you to have. This helped make the jump from school to college manageable, but also gave me lots of independence, which I feel prepares me for later in life.”

Daniel Stokes is currently studying Law at the **University of Nottingham**, having achieved A and A* grades in all his A level subjects.

“College gave me the opportunity to study subjects that I didn’t do at school and I enjoyed being able to spend more time on fewer subjects. I was encouraged to be an independent learner at College, and the support of a personal tutor and the Tyber system (IT platform) enabled me to keep in regular contact with my tutors and keep track of my progress which helped to keep me motivated.”



Higher Education Academies

Some College courses run specialist academies that link up with Higher Education institutions and offer students some targeted activities that really boost their career prospects.

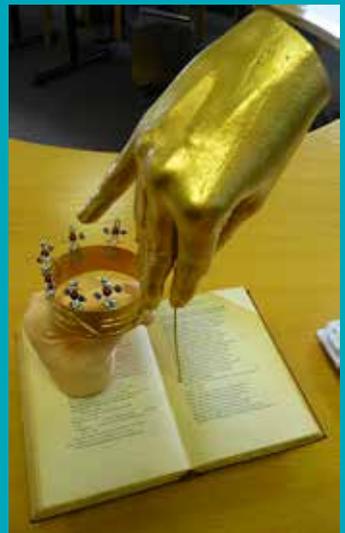


The Shakespeare Academy and the Pre-Medical School are two prime examples; both boost applications to university significantly.

The **Pre-Medical School** supports students who are looking to pursue medical careers. Links with Birmingham, Leicester and Manchester Universities, as well as the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, mean they participate in HE taster days, talks, hospital trips, museum visits and support in setting up work placements and applying to university.

Meanwhile, designed specifically for A level English students who are looking to continue their English studies at university, the **Shakespeare Academy** links up with Warwick, Leicester and Keele Universities to give students HE workshops and theatre visits and guides them in completing an Extended Project.

An Extended Project is a piece of work that can take any form (such as the piece of artwork on the right) and be on any subject that students choose. They complete a piece of private research - in this case related to Shakespeare - and present their findings, leading to a qualification that earns them additional UCAS points.



Higher Education Academies

Modern Foreign Languages and Psychology also boast well-established links with outside organisations and these links significantly aid student learning, putting them at a distinct advantage when applying to university themselves.



The **Psychology Research School** is a collaboration between the College and the University of Warwick. Psychology students work with Dr Elizabeth Blagrove to complete a piece of psychology research of their own, culminating in an Extended Project. Dr Blagrove is a former student at this College.

In Modern Foreign Languages, there are five languages on offer and they form the **European Languages Centre**. Those students on the A level French, German and Italian courses get the opportunity to go on exchanges with partner schools in those countries, while work experiences abroad is available for several courses, including Spanish. In German, there is a great link with Continental-Teves in Frankfurt. Meanwhile, those on the Russian course join A level History students on a trip to Moscow and St Petersburg. All this and there are links with the University of Birmingham and the University of Cambridge too.



Performance Skills

Different courses require different teaching methods. Performing Arts inevitably place a significant emphasis on practical performances. Developing these skills is essential not only because they form a significant part of the assessment, but also because they are necessary skills for these careers and further study.

The College offers four Performing Arts courses at A level: **Dance, Drama & Theatre Studies, Music** and **Music Technology**. All four courses require students to perform, and developing those skills are a vital part of their success on the course. The College supports students to develop these skills through:

- Expert teaching
- Lots of rehearsal time
- Specialist facilities (dance and drama studios, music recording suite)
- Visits to professional theatre and concert performances
- Links with Higher Education

One of the Higher Education links is Music's association with **Bangor University**, who come into College to deliver Performance workshops.

The College also offers a music bursary every year in the form of the **Heartfield-Wharam Scholarship**. Students can audition for this award at a public concert in the Autumn term; the winner can spend the money on any professional music tuition of their choosing.



BTECs & University

BTECs are highly valued by employers and universities and with good grades they will open doors to a wide range of courses and HE opportunities. Over 65% of our BTEC students go on to university, including Pharmacy, architecture, international business and sports science courses.



Aleem Riasat is currently studying Architecture at **De Montfort University**. What's particularly significant about Aleem's achievement is that he secured his place without having studied A level Physics. Instead, he did the BTEC Extended Diploma in Art & Design course. Many people don't realise it, but this is another route into architecture. His artwork at College (above) shows his interest in architecture.

"College helped me choose what I wanted to become in the future and gave me more options and more targets to strive for. The teachers were very helpful and motivated me to hit those targets and beyond. They listened to my ideas and helped me to make them work."

Avneet Bilkhu is studying Business & Finance at **Birmingham City University** after finishing her BTEC Business course with a triple Distinction* grade.

"BTEC Business offered me so much, from the assignments studied, to the trips I went on, and not forgetting career opportunities I got. The course brings out the best in everyone and helps to build the confidence of the students. I never felt alone and knew that there was always someone to offer help if it was needed."



College Colours

College Colours is a special award that students can work towards by demonstrating leadership, social responsibility and team work and by completing a 'Stretch & Challenge' activity.

The way that students demonstrate these qualities is up to them, but it can show employers and universities an impressive level of skill and dedication.

Logan Barton is one such student to have achieved College Colours. He completed a tandem sky dive and raised £450 for the Help for Heroes charity.



Other students have challenged themselves in other ways, including running half-marathons, climbing mountains, completing cycling challenges, organising charity events, overcoming their fears to make public presentations and much, much more. As long as it challenges the individual, it can lead to College Colours.

Every student who achieves College Colours is presented with an official College Colours scarf at the College Awards Evening in June.

Support

Students get progression support from the College, but so do parents.

The College delivers Higher Education Finance talks each year to give parents all the information they need ahead of their son or daughter heading to university.

In the Spring term, parents are invited to attend HE Finance talks at the College. Aston University deliver these talks and they are geared towards parents of Year 13 students.

Year 12 parents are also catered for with Next Step talks in the Summer term, which detail the support the College offers to their son or daughter, particularly the help given with UCAS applications and guiding students in writing their Personal Statements.

We also encourage students and parents to conduct their own independent research and attending open days is a particularly good way of doing this. The following websites may also prove useful:

Parentadviser.co.uk - parentadviser.co.uk

National Careers Service
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx

UCAS - ucas.com

Which? University - university.which.co.uk

Apprenticeships - apprenticeships.gov.uk

Notgoingtouni - notgoingtouni.co.uk

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