

CAREER IMPACT



6 form
**college
solihull**

AS A COLLEGE WE
ASPIRE, INVEST, RESPECT

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

CONTENTS

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. 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.

Dr Martin Sullivan
Principal

HIGHER EDUCATION DESTINATIONS

Despite the cost of progressing onto Higher Education, the majority of students see university as an investment in their future.

Approximately 72% of our students chose to go to university in 2016 and many succeeded in getting places on some of the most competitive courses in the country at prestigious universities.

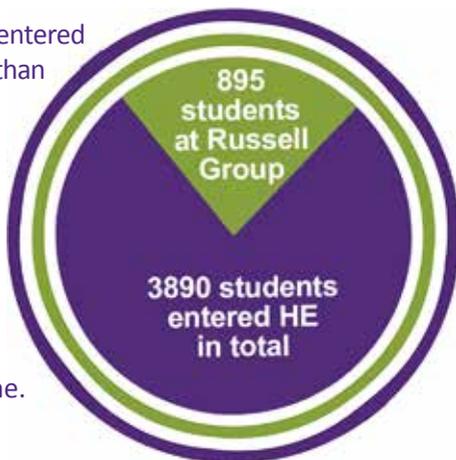
The Sixth Form College, Solihull enjoys great success in supporting students into Higher Education, with a success significantly above the national average. When it comes to supporting students who apply to Oxford and Cambridge, the College has a success rate of just over 20%, and nine students secured offers in 2017.

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 2012 and 2016, 3,890 students entered Higher Education from this College. More than 23% went to Russell Group universities.

Among the Russell Group universities, the most popular destination remains the University of Birmingham, with Nottingham, Manchester, Cardiff and Warwick also high on the list.

34 students got places to study Medicine.



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.

Gabriella Kelly is studying Medicine at the University of Oxford. She achieved A and A* grades in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics A levels to become the first student from the College to study Medicine at Oxford.

“Staff at the College really encouraged me. I was terrified to even apply to Oxford and I would never have even tried without the encouragement of staff at the College. It felt like a pipe dream, but I’m actually going to university to study Medicine at the top university in the world!”



Asad Butt is another success story. He is at Kings College London to study a Dentistry degree. He achieved all A* grades in A level Chemistry, Biology and Statistics to get his place.

“The quality of teaching and support that has been afforded to me throughout my time has been very good. I feel this has been instrumental in securing the grades I achieved. The culture and ethos of the College has been pivotal to my success too.”



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!

Meenakshi Parmar is at the **University of Leeds** studying Social Policy, after getting A grades across the board in her A levels. Before that, she chose to take a Gap Year, during which she volunteered 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 was realising the importance of independence and my capability to do well if I worked hard and had a good attitude to learning. Wonderful opportunities opened up for me at College, including the chance to travel with Project Trust."



Sumati Kotecha is another student who volunteered abroad. She was part of the College's Team Gambia project and volunteered at a school in The Gambia. She has since progressed to **University of Warwick** to study English & French after achieving all As and Bs at A level.

"The opportunities I had at College were great, including the Model United Nations competition and Team Gambia, which was an incredible experience. The positivity of the environment at College helped me do well and the teachers were encouraging and helpful."

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, including visits to Higher Education institutions and local businesses. Perhaps the most exciting of these fieldtrips are the overseas trips, which are offered in several of our courses.



Politics and Law students can visit Washington DC, 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 and Modern Foreign Language students take part in exchanges in Germany and France, not to mention overseas work experience.



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, closer to home, 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.

Specialist Academies, the Career Passport and certain other courses also see students visit universities and businesses for masterclasses, lectures and seminars. Reciprocal visits into College also take place, enriching the learning our students get and enabling them to put their learning into practice in real HE and working settings.

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.



Taha Ayyas is one of the students we have helped to get a sponsored degree place. He has joined the **PwC Flying Start Degree Programme** with study at the University of Nottingham, combined with paid work in the PwC offices.

"I've had great support from my teachers during my time at College, as well as support from my academic coach and all the staff in the library and Careers."

Other students - such as **Alex Chiles** and **Stephanie Loose** - have secured places on the **KPMG Audit School Leaver Programme**, which involves a 6-year training programme. Combining study at university, paid for by KPMG, and on-the-job training in their Birmingham offices, students then get a job at the audit and accountancy firm at the end of the 6 years.

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, one-to-one support and announcements on social media. Support is also offered to students who require help in preparing 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.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

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



Olivia Scott-Martin left the College with a D*DD (Distinction*) grade in her BTEC Business course. She moved to **Mazars** as a trainee to do her VAT Diploma. She has completed that diploma and is now working as a VAT Assistant for the firm.

“The College supported me in terms of finding employment opportunities.

The regular deadlines I was given encouraged me to be disciplined and organised and my course enabled me to improve my team working skills and confidence. Mazars provides job satisfaction, as I feel part of the team by helping to meet deadlines. The work I do is engaging and interesting on a daily basis and there are good opportunities for progression and financial rewards.”

Laura Wilkie decided to volunteer at **City Year UK** to boost her career prospects in child and adolescent psychology, with a view to becoming a teacher in the long term.

“Being at this College I discovered my strengths and became more independent and responsible for my learning. The teacher support and good learning resources available helped me to succeed in my studies.”



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 35, 70 or 100 hours over a given period, giving them Bronze, Silver or Gold Career Passport awards.

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.

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 are supported to get primary teaching visits as part of the project. This gives them a taste of working with very young children, in preparation for teaching at the Jemus Jungkung Jammeh Memorial Nursery School in The Gambia. Since 2013 the College has raised more than £35,000 for the school, helping to build classrooms and pay staff.



Students also gain a lot personally from being part of the project, gaining in confidence and developing teamworking and communication skills. Being a part of such a project is a great thing for students to be able to talk about in their personal statements and at interviews when applying to university.

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 & Higher Apprenticeship 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 Fair too. These cover a wide range of career paths from Medicine and Nursing to Engineering and Architecture, plus much more in between!

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.

Shaira Begum is reading Law at the **University of Birmingham** and hopes to carve out a career as a corporate solicitor. She got her place thanks to A and A* grades in her A levels and Extended Project.

“I really enjoyed having to be independent in my studies, but knowing I could go back to my teachers if I ever needed to. Getting involved in extra curricular like the Shakespeare Academy and College Colours was an enjoyable aspect alongside doing my A levels.”



Ellis Stephenson is currently studying Maths at the **University of Nottingham**, having achieved all A* grades in all his A levels.



“The progression I made in all of my subjects, as well as the relaxed nature of the College, is what I enjoyed most. I was able to spend time with friends and build good relationships with teachers, who went out of their way to provide outstanding support and diverse lessons suited to the range of students in the class.”

SPECIALIST ACADEMIES

Enrichment is an important part of College life. As the name suggests, it enriches your time at College and develops skills that will put you at a distinct advantage when applying for university or jobs. Our Specialist Academies are the enrichment options that can most significantly boost your prospects.



With links to Higher Education, these Specialist Academies are designed to support students with particular career ambitions. If you are thinking about a career as a doctor or an engineer, for example, joining the appropriate academy will help reinforce whether this is the right career for you and impress university and employers when you make applications in the future.

One example of a Specialist Academy is the **Pre-Medical School**, which supports students who are looking to pursue medical careers. Links with Leicester and Keele Universities 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, Oxford and Keele Universities to give students HE workshops and theatre visits and guides them in completing an Extended Project.

An Extended Project can be completed within many of the Specialist Academies. It involves a piece of private research and students may present their findings in a variety of ways, leading to a qualification that earns them additional UCAS points.

SPECIALIST 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.

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 four languages on offer and they form the **European Languages Centre**. Those students on the A level French and German 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. There are also links with the University of Birmingham and the University of Cambridge.

Other specialist academies include an **Accounting & Finance Academy, Business Academy, Engineering Academy, Humanities Academy, Law Academy, Media Academy, Performing Arts Academy, Social Sciences Academy, Teaching Academy** and **Wider Medical Careers Academy**. See the next page for more information.

SPECIALIST ACADEMIES

Putting the spotlight on two more specialist academies, we concentrate on the Engineering Academy and the Performing Arts Academy. Although focussing on diverse subject areas, both include links with Higher Education to give students a head-start in their career ambitions and the opportunity to take part in some exciting trips and visits.



The **Engineering Academy** involves an association with Coventry University, who put on a series of workshops for budding engineers to take part in. These workshops, held at the university and in College, are funded by the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) and give students a superb insight into engineering as a course. In addition, other university masterclasses, a visit to Jaguar Land Rover in Solihull and an overseas trip to CERN in Switzerland to see the Hadron Collidor, make this one of the most engaging specialist academies that students can participate in.



Meanwhile, the **Performing Arts Academy** enables students to benefit from the expertise of both Higher Education practitioners and theatre/dance companies. Visits to theatres like the MAC, the Rep and the Hippodrome enable students to gain inspiration from professional actors and dancers. Workshops with visiting performance companies and universities (including De Montfort University) give students the chance to join in themselves, while shadowing

of professionals can be arranged to give students an insight into the industry. Students can also get specialist preparation for auditions too.

BTECS & UNIVERSITY

BTECs are highly valued by employers and universities and with good grades they will open doors to a wide range of opportunities. Although some choose to pursue apprenticeships or employment, over 65% of our BTEC students go on to university to do courses that include pharmacy, architecture, international business and sports science courses.

Loren Tolley is currently studying for a Business Management degree at **Coventry University**. She achieved a triple distinction* grade in her BTEC Business course and also came second in the SUBWAY® brand's 'Design a Sub' Challenge.

“The best thing about coming to this College was that I became more independent. However, support is available from teachers if you need it. The teaching I received helped me to do well and get my university place.”



George Rees is studying a Physical Education and School Sport degree at **Sheffield Hallam University** after achieving a triple distinction* grade in his BTEC Sport course. He was also part of the College cricket team.



“I enjoyed meeting lots of new people with the same interest as myself, as well as being able to take part in extra curricular sporting activities. The support of my teachers and my coach have helped massively, as well as peer support and genuine interest for the subject I was studying.”

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. Twice, in recent years, students have joined staff to sleep rough for the Big Sleep Out, raising money for the homeless charity St Basil's. Whatever students do, 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

Keep in touch with the College...

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