

**ASPIRE
INVEST
RESPECT**



**Solihull
Sixth Form
College**
SUMMIT LEARNING TRUST

CAREER IMPACT Guide

Bright Prospects, Bright Futures



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 Solihull Sixth Form College, 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 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 Solihull Sixth Form College. We have established close ties with employers and universities and tailored many of these links to 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 70% of our students chose to go to university in 2018 and many succeeded in getting places on some of the most competitive courses in the country at prestigious universities.

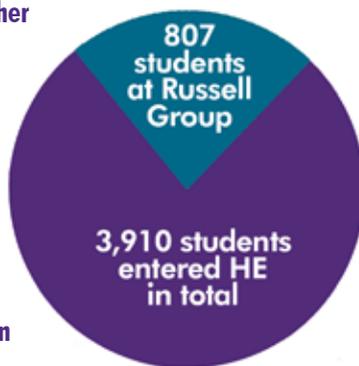
Solihull Sixth Form College enjoys great success in supporting students into Higher Education, with a success significantly above the national average. When it comes to supporting students who apply to Oxford and Cambridge, the College has a success rate of just over 21%.

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 2014 and 2018, 3,910 students entered Higher Education from this College. More than 20% 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.

32 students got places at Oxford and Cambridge or on highly competitive Medicine courses.



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.



Kyaice Hendricks is one of 23 students who have secured Oxbridge places in the last five years. She is studying English Literature & Language at the University of Oxford. She achieved all A and A* grades in her A levels.

“I chose to make an Oxbridge application because I was looking to study at the best university for English. I met an English Tutor from Oxford, who came into College to talk about the process, and explain what student life is like – it really appealed to me, and the fact that Oxford is an excellent university made it even better.”

Sam Sayer is another Oxbridge success story. He is at the University of Cambridge studying Theology. He achieved all A and A* grades in his A levels and he has this advice for anyone thinking of making an Oxbridge application:

“To anyone thinking about making an Oxbridge application, I’d say just go for it and make the application! It’s difficult and time-consuming but it’s well worth it in the end.”



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!

Emily Cremins finished her A levels at the College with all A and A* grades and elected to take a Gap year after her studies. Emily travelled to China to teach children English with the TEFL Academy, before returning to the UK to read English at university.

"The best thing about being at this College was the independence I got, as well as meeting new people. The support and incredible teaching I received helped me to achieve the results I got."



Becky Johnston is another student who volunteered abroad. She was part of the College's Team Gambia project and volunteered at a school outside Banjul. She has since progressed to the University of Exeter to study Politics after achieving all A grades at A level.

"Team Gambia was the highlight of my time at College, as it provided me with a once in a lifetime opportunity and I made some excellent friends through this unique and insightful experience. The support from staff and students and the overall atmosphere of the College was also good."

Trips & Visits

Students benefit from 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.



Team Gambia is our boldest overseas trip. This is a volunteer project, which sees students raising money for an impoverished school in The Gambia, which they then visit in the autumn. The College has raised more than £50,000 for the school since 2013 and more than 100 College students have visited to teach nursery school children for a week at a time.

In curriculum areas, Art offer students an annual overseas excursion to a major European city (previously Paris, Rome, Berlin and Barcelona). Geography students can also do their fieldwork abroad. Most recently, they visited the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. Modern Foreign Language students take part in exchanges in Germany and France, not to mention overseas work experience.

Meanwhile, closer to home, visits also include Law trips to local magistrates and crown courts, Drama and Music trips to productions at theatres across the country, Visual Arts trips to galleries and Humanities trips to museums.

Many subjects also take advantage of links with Higher Education to visit universities for masterclasses, lectures and open days. These links also involve reciprocal visits into College, with HE providers offering guest lectures and seminars for the students to stretch their learning.

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.



Rebecca Clarke is one of the students we have helped to get a sponsored degree place. She got a place on the **KPMG 360 Accounting Programme** after achieving top grades in her **BTEC Business** course.

“The support from my academic coach and Careers Advisor was invaluable in me getting the apprenticeship I wanted. I also loved my time on the **Team Gambia** project and enjoyed doing **The Big Sleep Out** during my time at College.”

Zair Afzal is an example of a student who pursued a sponsored degree. He got a place on the **PwC Flying Start Programme**, which sponsored his place on an **Accountancy degree** at the **University of Nottingham** after a top grade on his **BTEC Business** course.

“The best thing about this College would have to be the **Careers’ Fair**, this event organised by the College equipped me with the vital information regarding university courses.”



Careers & Employability

The College provides excellent information, advice and guidance to young people, as they explore their post-16 study options and beyond.

There is a comprehensive careers and employability programme which is evaluated in a variety of ways including feedback from students and parents/carers. We are proud to be holders of the Career Mark, the recognised national award for achievement of the 'Quality in Careers Standard', assuring that quality careers education, information and guidance is available to our students.

We boast a dedicated careers and employability team, with a qualified and experienced careers adviser and employability adviser who deliver individual advice and guidance to students via 1-1 sessions, specialist workshops, CV support, university applications support and maintaining and developing links with employers and higher education institutions. A member of the teaching staff leads on careers and employability related curriculum initiatives. Every BTEC student will follow a work experience programme and support is available to A level students in finding placements through links with employers and voluntary organisations.

The College's intranet Moodle has information and advice for students to complement the individual advice. In addition, the College has well established links with universities and employers that are able to offer a range of opportunities from work experience, on site visits, taster sessions and 1-1s.

Careers and employability are also embedded into the Academic Coaching programme which all students follow, and through curriculum areas through a varied programme of delivered sessions, subject themes and incorporating trips and visits and enrichment events. All curriculum areas report on the progress they are making to develop careers and employability opportunities.

Careers Events

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 such as Birmingham, Manchester, Nottingham, Sheffield and Oxford Universities. For those young people looking to take a Gap Year, organisations like Project Trust are on hand to provide information about volunteering. We also host a number of local and national Employers who advise students on higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeship opportunities.



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

Apprenticeship and Employment Options

For those students who choose not to go to university, applications for apprenticeships and employment happen later in the year.

These opportunities are communicated to students via the Careers & Employability Bulletin and via social media, not to mention the Careers area within the Library and Learning Resource Centre.

However, perhaps the single biggest way we support young people who want to go straight into employment or an apprenticeship is via our Employer Networking Event. Taking place in March, this is an early evening event, which brings together a variety of local employers with students and parents. Supported by Solihull Chamber of Commerce and LADDER for Greater Birmingham, this event involves presentations and a “World Cafe” style roundtable of discussions.



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** gives students the opportunity to attend 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

Psychology, Social Sciences, Humanities and Engineering are other courses and career areas that benefit from Specialist Academies.

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

The **Engineering Academy** involves an association with Coventry University, who put on a series of workshops (both in College and at the university) for budding engineers to take part in, all of which boosts students' application to university.

The **Social Sciences Academy** is open to students on the Criminology, Economics, Politics and Sociology courses. There is a strong link with Birmingham City University, who have made numerous trips to Solihull to deliver a series of lectures to students on topics like criminal psychology, domestic abuse and misuse of social media.

The same is true for the **Humanities Academy**, which is open to students studying Ancient History, Philosophy, Religious Studies, History, Geography and Geology. This academy typically involves visiting speakers coming into College to deliver presentations that can extend students' learning and can often push students to complete an Extended Project.



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 70% of our BTEC students go on to university to do courses that include pharmacy, architecture, international business and sports science courses.

Hamzah Mashgari is currently studying for a **Radiotherapy & Oncology degree at Sheffield Hallam University**. He achieved two distinction* grades and one distinction in his BTEC Applied Science course to earn his place at university.

“The quality of teaching and support that I received from all my teachers was excellent. What helped me most was having access to the Learning Resource Centre and the library; the resources that were available were very beneficial.”



Former Cockshut Hill School student Ellie Roberts is another successful BTEC student. She achieved triple distinction* to get a place at **Birmingham City University** studying **Midwifery**.

“I got the opportunity to go on placement with my BTEC course, which gave me the chance to find out which career I wanted to go into. The teaching was amazing because the teachers were so supportive. I also got the opportunity to make great new friends.”

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. 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:

Parent Adviser - 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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