

**ASPIRE
INVEST
RESPECT**



**Solihull
Sixth Form
College**
SUMMIT LEARNING TRUST

CAREER IMPACT Guide

Bright Prospects, Bright Futures



From Higher Education to Apprenticeships... From Careers Support to Curriculum-specific Enrichments...

**This is how we positively impact our
students' career prospects!**

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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 to give our young people an advantage when it comes to progressing onto their next step after sixth form.

We work with many external partners from universities and employers to organisations like the Solihull Careers Hub and the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Chamber of Commerce. We are proud to have achieved the Career Mark Gold Award, which is the national Quality in Careers standard and all our guidance works towards the nationally recognised framework known as the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

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 to set them on course for a bright future.



Dr Martin Sullivan (Principal)

Higher Education Destinations

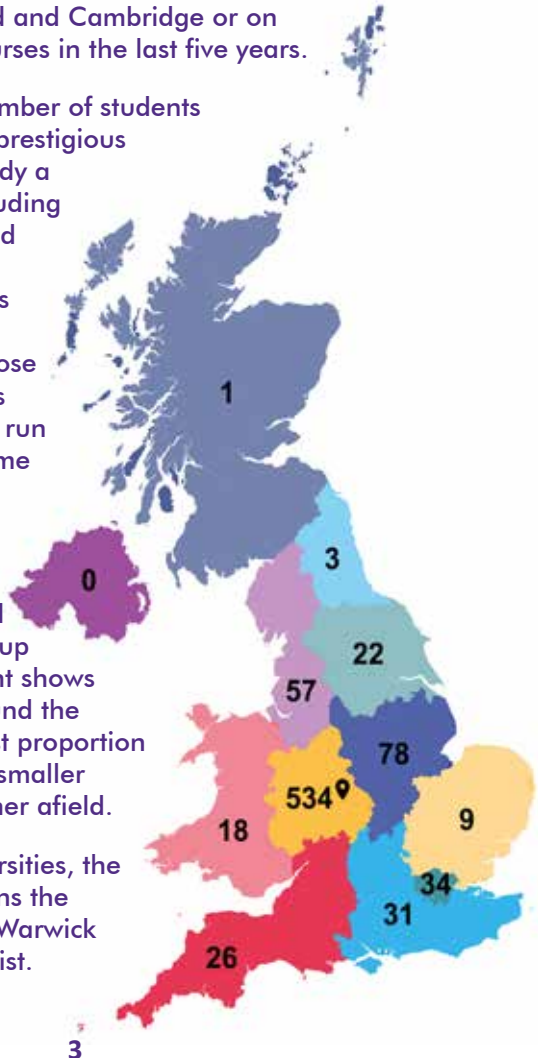
Despite the cost of progressing onto Higher Education, the majority of students see university as an investment in their future. Approximately 67% of our students chose to go to university in 2022 and many succeeded in getting places on some of the most competitive courses in the country at prestigious universities. Indeed, 71.6% got their first choice university place.

Solihull Sixth Form College enjoys great success in supporting students into Higher Education, with success significantly above the national average. This includes some of the most competitive destinations, with 52 students having secured places at Oxford and Cambridge or on highly competitive Medicine courses in the last five years.

As well as Oxbridge, a large number of students at the College also progress to prestigious Russell Group universities to study a range of ambitious 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 choose to challenge themselves like this towards the end of Year 12. We run a Stretch & Challenge programme which supports these learners.

Between 2017 and 2022, 4,868 students entered Higher Education from this College and almost 21% went to Russell Group universities. The map to the right shows where learners progressed around the country in 2022, with the largest proportion remaining in the Midlands and smaller numbers choosing to study further afield.

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



Other Destinations

Not all our students choose to progress immediately to university after they finish their A level, BTEC or T level studies. In 2022, 7% of students chose to take a Gap Year, while nearly 3% elected to pursue an apprenticeship and approximately 5% chose to go directly into employment.

Many of the degree apprenticeship routes that students undertook were highly competitive and at very sought after destinations. Among these were places secured with Rolls-Royce Holdings, Deloitte, KPMG, Paragon Bank, Pinsent Masons law firm, Clear Insurance Management, Zurich Insurance and National Grid.

We also had students learning about environmental management with Mott MacDonald Birmingham, real estate with AP Morgan, childcare with Busy Bees Nursery, air technology with FlaktGroup and pharmacy with Mohammedi Pharmacy. West Midlands Ambulance Service and Witton Lodge Community Association were among the other destinations for our learners in 2022.

For those young people who think that they want to try something other than university, support is available to help them find out more about the options open to them and make the best applications possible. The Spring Employability Fair (detailed on page 10) offers learners a useful first step in this journey.



Higher Education Case Studies

The majority of our students choose to progress onto Higher Education after completing their A level, BTEC or T level studies with us. Here are just two examples of students who have progressed onto university, but there are approximately 750-800 other learners who do this each year.



Nazifa Anjum came to the College from one of the Summit Learning Trust secondary schools, Ninestiles Academy. She opted to pursue a BTEC Extended Diploma course in Applied Science and her excellent achievements of two Distinctions and one Distinction* saw her progress to Birmingham City University to study Biomedical Science.

"I was able to unlock my full strength in science at the College and was really motivated to do exceptionally well after the pandemic. My teachers really helped me and supported me to do my very best and the whole environment was welcoming."

Dean Bridgewater joined the College from another member of the Summit Learning Trust family - Lyndon School. He chose to study A levels and emerged from two years of study with outstanding grades of A* grades in Mathematics and History, as well as A grades in Further Maths and his Extended Project qualification. This earned him a place at the University of Birmingham to continue his Mathematics studies.



"All my teachers were very good and learning therefore was a lot easier. The teachers were also very approachable and helped whenever I asked. I also liked the freedom the timetable brought."

Apprenticeship Case Studies

Higher Education is not the only choice after leaving College. We support some of our learners to progress onto very popular and sought-after Higher Apprenticeships. Below are two examples of students who have done this in recent years.

Aleena Arshad joined the Bright Start programme after leaving the College. This Level 7 apprenticeship will see her achieve an ACA Accountancy qualification with Deloitte.

“I got great careers advice and support at home and my academic coach helped me to find this Bright Start Apprenticeship with Deloitte. It’s helpful to get the guidance from an experienced person and it’s important that students start their research in Year 12. Deciding on your career paths and whether to do an apprenticeship or choose university will make life easier. For anyone wanting to pursue an apprenticeship, I suggest applying early in September of Year 13, because that’s when vacancies open and it can help avoid stress later in the year.”



Elliot Cusack chose to pursue an Auditing apprenticeship after finishing his A levels with all A and A* grades. He’s been completing this apprenticeship at Cooper Parry.

“The best thing about my time at College was the new, diverse and refreshing environment, amongst like-minded people and helpful, supportive staff. The help from my subject teachers, with use of the Learning Resource Centre to revise and complete assigned work when needed is what most helped me to achieve my grades and get my apprenticeship place.”

Careers Guidance

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, 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 who delivers individual advice and guidance to students via 1-1 sessions, specialist workshops, CV support and university applications support. The Careers Adviser also maintains and develops links with local and national employers and higher education institutions. Curriculum teams deliver subject-based careers themes and employer inputs relevant to the subjects being taught. 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 Microsoft Teams platform 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 into lessons, with a varied programme of delivered sessions and incorporating trips, visits and enrichment events. All curriculum areas report on the progress they are making to develop careers and employability opportunities.

We are proud to be holders of the national Quality in Careers standard known as the Career Mark, a qualification we have held since 2015. The award is revalidated every two years and we currently hold the Gold Award.



Careers Guidance continued

Students can take advantage of a wealth of opportunities and resources in the Careers library and book appointments with Careers Advisers for 1-1 advice.

All students are encouraged to explore the full range of post-18 options. For those students pursuing the apprenticeship route, we provide specific specialist support such as practice interviews with employers, mentoring, CV and application support, as well as information about the full range of virtual and other work experience opportunities.

These opportunities are communicated to students via the Careers Notices and via social media (@sfcscareers on Twitter), not to mention the Careers area within the Library and Learning Resource Centre.

We work closely with partner agencies such as the Chambers of Commerce, local and national employers, the government Apprentices Service and the college's Enterprise Adviser assists in developing links with business and the community.

Case Study

Daisy Holgate is one of our successful Oxbridge applicants. She joined the College from Swanshurst Girls' School and was supported to apply to the University of Oxford. She achieved straight A* grades and progressed to Keble College to study Biology.

"Having people around specifically to help me with university applications was really helpful. I made an Oxbridge application because of the course, teaching style and collegiate system, which all appealed to me. I thought I'd get something out of the whole process whether I got in or not, so I applied."



Careers & HE Fair

Our Careers & Higher Education Fair takes place at the end of the summer term each year and is an opportunity for Year 12 learners to get a head start on their post-College progression plans.

Learners come off the timetable for a morning to attend the Careers Fair, which comprises more than 50 universities setting up stalls in the Sports Hall. Not only are students able to pick up prospectuses and other promotional literature, but conversations with the Higher Education staff offer them a unique opportunity to get expert advice from a large range of providers all in one place.

The Fair also offers students the chance to book into a range of talks, with more than 25 different presentations to choose from. Many of the talks focus on particular careers such as Medicine, Law, Engineering, Teaching and much more. They give learners a more in-depth insight into the university courses and careers open to them and get them thinking about their futures.



Employability Fair

While the majority of our students choose to progress onto university when they finish their studies with us, some opt to go directly into employment or take on Higher Apprenticeships and the College works hard to ensure that those learners are supported to find positive destinations.

While 1-to-1 support is available at any time, our annual Employability Fair offers learners a fantastic foundation to start their search for employment. The Fair is particularly targeted at BTEC students, but all employment seekers are encouraged to attend, as a host of employers from a range of sectors are represented. There are stalls set up in our Sports Hall and a programme of talks.

Typically, sectors like the armed forces, banking, accountancy, hospitality, creative industries, engineering and construction, healthcare, media and legal are represented.



Enhancing Students' Employability

Enrichment

We encourage all our students to take part in an enrichment activity alongside their main programme of study. Usually taking place once a week, enrichments take many forms and exist to help learners develop skills that will serve them well in their search for Higher Education, Apprenticeship and Employment opportunities.



Some of our enrichments are academic in nature and may support progression into particular careers. Our **Pre-Medical School, STEM Programme, Archaeology Academy and Teaching Academy** are good examples of this.

Some enrichments are more creative than academic, but these develop skills that are highly sought-after, including team work, leadership and communication skills. Our **Sports teams** in Basketball, Cricket, Football, Netball and Rugby certainly develop such skills, while away from the playing fields, options include **Music, Drama and Creative Writing**.



We encourage students to get involved in a variety of activities outside of their lessons. Some choose to join the **Student Council** or form their own **Student Societies**. Others undertake fundraising activities or put together healthy living awareness campaigns as part of the **Student Health Ambassadors** initiative.

See more information about the options available by scanning the QR code above to visit our website. We ask students to choose an enrichment option when they enrol.

Enhancing Students' Employability

Trips & Visits

Students benefit from many exciting opportunities to get out of the classroom and develop their learning through more interactive means, such as field trips and other events.

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 £60,000 for the school since 2013 and more than 120 College students have visited to teach nursery school children for a week at a time.

In curriculum areas, Art offers students an annual overseas excursion to a major European city. Geography students have also completed fieldwork abroad including in France and 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. Links with industry, such as Criminology's work with the justice system and Sport's link up with the National Citizen Service (NCS), have also taken place. These links often involve reciprocal visits into College, with HE providers and business representatives offering guest lectures and seminars for the students to stretch their learning.

Enhancing Students' Employability

Volunteering

College offers a multitude of opportunities for young people to develop employability skills through volunteer work. We work closely with the Shirley Lions, enabling students to work towards Volunteer awards, depending on the number of hours they put in - 25-49 hours earns learners a Bronze Award, 50-99 hours is rewarded with a Silver prize and 100+ hours sees them given the Gold Award.

Among the activities that learners complete to achieve these awards are supporting College events such as open days, charity fundraising events and community events such as our Culture Week Fashion Show. We also work with a number of charities to support those less fortunate, such as putting food parcels together thanks to donations from Sewa Day West Midlands.



These opportunities develop students communication and team-working skills, make them more organised and able to meet deadlines and are superb activities to put on their CVs and future university and employment applications.

Support

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

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.

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, guiding students in writing their Personal Statements and an input from the national apprenticeship service.

We also encourage students and parents/carers to conduct their own independent research and attending university open days is a particularly good way of doing this.

There's lots more information on the College website. If you scroll to the bottom of the Careers Guidance page you will find links to lots of other useful websites too. Use this QR code to access that information.



Youth Card - available to download via the App Store or Google Play



This app has been created by Speakers for Schools, alongside youth charities UK Youth, Young Enterprise, Young Scot and the European Youth Card Association. By using the app, young people aged 16-25 can access perks that will support their personal development and career

progression, such as free work experience and volunteering opportunities and discounts to save them money.

Keep in touch with the College...

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