

# Careers Education and Guidance

## How The Sixth Form College, Colchester helps students make the next step

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Approximately 70% of the students that leave us each year continue their education to degree level at universities. The majority of students continue with their education at universities in the UK and approximately fifteen per cent gain a place at a Russell Group University or medical school or highly comparable degree courses. Approximately two thirds of students choose universities in the East or London and the South East. Some students will alternatively attend skills or vocational courses to specialise in a particular course area for example Art Foundation course and the AAT for accountants.

### Employment, Apprenticeships and Training Schemes

Increasing numbers of students are choosing to undertake opportunities offered by Apprenticeships, especially Higher Level Apprenticeships. Businesses are more aware of the value of training young people to be the managers of the future.

## The Careers Department organise a range of events and activities for students to meet their needs. Careers Fair and Progression Event.

### **At the Careers Fair in February we welcome over 70 exhibitors.**

This event is aimed at first year students as a means of encouraging them to begin thinking about their options after College. Second year students looking for employment opportunities or who have Higher Education queries are also encouraged to attend. We invite a range of Higher Education representatives, employers who recruit at both graduate and college leaver levels and gap year providers. The event takes place in the Multi-purpose hall where representatives are able to display marketing materials and answer students' queries. The event is run alongside the student progress review process giving them the free time to attend the exhibition.

A highlight of the careers programme is the "Two Day Programme" – a career progression event which happens over 2 days in June when first year students return after their internal assessment period. During the event students have a choice of 300 specific 40-minute talks and workshops, from which they choose ten to attend. Some of the sessions are delivered by College teaching staff but many presentations are also offered by employers, Higher Education representatives, 'year out' providers and former students involved in employment, training or HE. The programme is intended to give students a real insight into their options and choices for the future after College and provides information which helps with their choices.

### Tutorial programme

Every Thursday students are with their personal tutor for a 40 minute tutorial session. Tutorial Programme sessions offer opportunities for information on careers and progression to be delivered and Personal Tutors can offer ongoing guidance and advice to students about their future plans. The information we signpost for students is also made available on our 'MOODLE' virtual learning environment. The Careers Department Moodle area has lots of research opportunities and helpful information. This starts with tools such as KUDOS for students who have little idea of their plans, through to 'How To' guides for University applications. Job opportunities, apprenticeship vacancies, employer engagement, open days and university and higher education engagement are all communicated through these pages as well as in the daily Student Bulletin and on the display screens around College. The Career Department physical area, attached to the Library, provides range of materials, ICT facilities and staff support and guidance.

## Work related learning

Work related learning takes many forms and is both implicit and explicit in students' individual programmes of study and curriculum areas. Subject lessons will all have elements of employability skills within them. E.g. Law explains how courts are structured outlining a number of careers opportunities. Business looks at the recruitment process, including the application process and legislation around recruitment and selection which assist students in their own employment. External speakers for subjects provide opportunities for careers advice and information, as well as delivering a subject specific topic. During the Career Progression Event external and internal speakers provide information on career progression from subjects as well as information about alternative routes into careers. We also advertise Volunteering opportunities.

## Careers Interviews and support

In addition to the support of Personal Tutors, Senior Staff and invited visitors and advisors we have an established careers team who can provide careers interviews for students who need impartial information, advice and guidance. Students sign up for interviews in the careers department. Each interview normally lasts about 30 minutes and students are not confined to one interview. Students are often directed to specialist resources or software and or referral to specialist advisors or facilities.

### Specialist Support for Oxbridge Applicants

In the Autumn Term, an initial introduction to Oxbridge meeting is held to explain what Oxford and Cambridge universities are like and what the College does to support applicants. In January, the Principal has individual appointments with those students who have outstanding GCSE results and advises them on potential Oxbridge applications. Another open meeting is held in February for students who may have missed the November session, and in March former students who are now at Oxford and Cambridge return to brief our students on their experiences. A trip to Cambridge is organised in March to Emmanuel College, our link College in Cambridge, where students have the opportunity to talk to admissions tutors. In the Summer Term, potential applicants have one-to-one meetings with one of the Oxbridge team to discuss next steps. This is followed by a session in the Careers Progression Event with detailed advice on preparing personal statements, and each student will be advised to make appointments with appropriate subject staff to help them work on Personal Statements. Applications are sent off to UCAS in September. Mock interviews are organised in November and December, and where written tests are required, College subject departments advise and help students to prepare. There is an Oxbridge site on Moodle with more detailed information, and is regularly updated about taster days and other opportunities available at both universities.

### Specialist Support for those applying for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine

The Medics Programme is a comprehensive two year programme of activities for students applying for medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. It covers the application process for these highly competitive courses as well as the necessary skills for interview and for the UCAT and BMAT examinations. We assist students in preparing an individual personal statement, which reflects their strengths, and advise them on the necessity of appropriate and extensive work and volunteer experience. We provide one-to-one advice on the best Universities to apply to based on their personal profile. Ex-students now studying these courses or having completed these courses at university often return to share their experiences. We also involve qualified outside speakers, visit the local hospital for a medical careers day and a taster day at ARU Medical School and ensure students are well-informed on other available opportunities and resources.

Weekly meetings in the second year involve discussion of topical news items, ethical issues and comprehensive guidance on interview techniques. Many college staff give up their time to help with both one-to-one and MMI mock interviews. Students are given feedback on their performance and advice on interview dress.

'The medics group has been really supportive during my medicine application. They really helped me realise the realities of applying for medicine and all the work that needed to go into it. They are great at giving us deadlines for important things we need to do to support our application and help spread it out over the two years so you're not rushing when it comes to the medicine application deadline in September of year 2. They are also so helpful with interview prep, providing us with mock interview opportunities and always being on hand to support us' Ellie

'Medics has been very supportive throughout the whole 2 years and especially when it comes to interviews it has been excellent. They've highlighted what we need to do and know to go into interviews well prepared. The mock interviews were very helpful and without these I wouldn't know what the experience of medicine interviews would be like' Marianne

'The Medic's group is a great class to find new friends on a similar career path, receive guidance on university applications and interviews, as well as providing supportive and interactive classes' Jodie

"A brilliant course for anybody interested in the medical field, you are provided with all the help and support you could need and get to meet a group of people with similar interests." Andreas  
"An amazing way to prepare for medicine applications, on-going and one-to one support from dedicated and knowledgeable tutors as well as opportunities to commune with fellow applicants and learn from each other's experiences." Dominique

### **Specialist support for Teaching**

The 'Pre-Teaching' Additional Study is a means by which year 12 students who are considering a primary school teaching career can gain work experience in a primary school, especially if they are considering studying Primary Teaching/Education with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at university. In addition, talks are made available to all students, delivered by educational professionals, during the year. At the end of year 12, an information pack regarding the Primary Teaching degree application process is provided for all Pre-Teaching students, plus further support as required. From these experiences, some students discover that teaching is not the career they wish to follow and, for others, Pre-Teaching enhances their decision to teach, either via the 3-year subject degree route followed by a 1-year teaching qualification, or via a Primary Teaching (QTS) degree.

Work experience will take place as and when Covid-19 restrictions allow. In the meantime, this has not prevented students from undertaking Primary Teaching (with QTS) courses for 2021 entry to university. Interviews have been held online and Literacy and Numeracy Skills Tests have been replaced by universities' own tests

### **Specialist support for Lawyers**

Lawyers is a programme of learning and activities designed for students who are interested in a career in law. It is mainly aimed at student who are not studying A-level Law or BTEC Applied Law. The course will cover the basics of the English Legal system and looks at how the law is made and used. Core skills such as debating and public speaking will be covered via activities such as mock trials and presentations and participation in national competitions such as "The Bar Mock Trial" and "The Legal Apprentice."

Career paths will be considered including looking at the variety of legal professions and the availability of alternative training paths such as apprenticeships. Guidance will be given on personal statements, interviews and, where appropriate, the LNAT examination. A range of speakers will be invited, many of whom are former college students, to talk about their jobs and routes to their careers.

#### **'Year Out' Advice**

The College has a Year Out Adviser who offers 1-1 appointments for students on request. These meetings are tailored specifically to meet each student's interests, budget and aims for a gap year experience. Traditionally, we have advised upon volunteering (UK and abroad), working (UK and Abroad) and round the world travel experiences. We aim to help students have a fulfilling and meaningful gap year, and can recommend companies that tailor their experiences specifically for student gap years. The recent covid-19 pandemic has led to huge disruption, not just to international travel, but also to the volunteering industry. Contact with students is via the Student Bulletin and promotion at Careers events. With advice and guidance changing weekly in response to the pandemic, we recommend 1-1 appointments to point students towards up to date information.