ASHFORD SCHOOL HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREERS BULLETIN

21 March 2025

Welcome to the first edition of the new form of communication from the HE and Careers team. To ensure that Careers is an ongoing conversation throughout the School, we will send a bulletin every two weeks outlining recent HE and Careers events and directing students towards upcoming virtual and in-person opportunities.

I am extremely pleased to report on a fantastic National Careers Week at Ashford School. The engagement and enthusiasm for the activities put on for Year 7-9 was outstanding. All three year groups completed a 'crack the hacker' task which required them to use problem solving, logical thinking and, most importantly, maths skills to break six different codes to identify who had hacked the Army HQ. I was very impressed with the students and how they worked together in teams, displaying excellent communication and resilience to solve the tasks. Students from all years developed vital soft skills throughout this task which will be transferrable to future careers.

Year 9 then proceeded to further test their maths skills with an escape from capture task, where students had to again use logical thinking and problem-solving skills to work out the quickest and most efficient means of escape. The Year 9s had to consider how different terrains and obstacles would impact on their ability to escape. Again, this task required excellent teamwork and mathematical skills to work out how long it took them to escape.

Year 8 were given an Ashford Town Centre regeneration task. In their groups they had to come up with a plan to revive the town centre. The students displayed strong creativity and outside the box thinking to develop some fantastic ideas that took into consideration of the needs of the local people. The presentation of their plans was equally impressive, with confident delivery and insightful questions from their peers.

Year 7 students were given a brief overview of the different careers possible in the food and drink industry before embarking on a creative design task to pitch a new snack. Once again, the students needed to work together to develop their ideas in promoting a new product idea. There was a real emphasis in the student designs on sustainability and consideration of health benefits to their snacks. Students produced some high-quality branding and catchy slogans to hook their potential customers and again some high-quality presentations of ideas were very impressive.

Overall, it has been incredibly inspiring to see the students engaging in the activities. They have developed a wide range of soft skills including leadership, collaboration, presentation and resilience.

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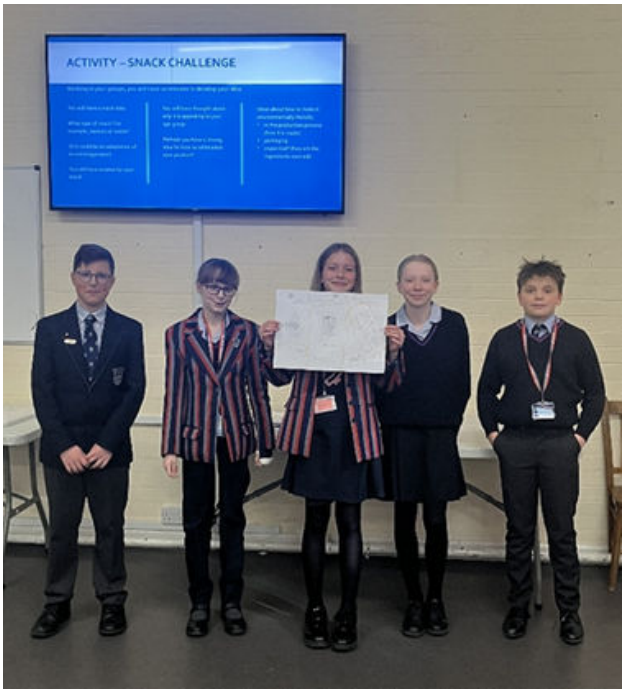

Now is the time for Year 12 students to be drawing up a shortlist of possible university courses for their UCAS applications. Although the deadline for 2026 applications is not until the end of January, researching this now will allow them to make a start on the work that will produce a truly eye-catching application: deepening their understanding of their chosen subject through engagement with their course materials; engaging with super-curricular study that demonstrates a personal relationship with their learning; and undertaking a related work experience placement, whether in person or online, that reveals a sense of intention and purpose in their choices. These areas have always been the bedrock of a good application to a UK university; however, the new format of the UCAS personal statement being introduced for applicants in 2026 makes this even more evident. If you would like to learn about these changes to a very important aspect of the UCAS process, there is more information available on their website: The new personal statement for 2026 entry | Undergraduate | UCAS

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OPPORTUNITIES

The Eurekas is an annual physics competition for students aged 11-16 in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It is part of the Limit Less campaign, which has been conceived by the Institute of Physics to broaden and diversify the range of people doing physics after age 16. This year, we challenge entrants to answer the question: How can physics help you see the world differently?

The competition will open on 3 March 2025 and close on 9 June 2025. Whether arty, sporty, musical or into literature and language, science or humanities, we're looking for students to show how physics can provide the solution to the mysteries in our lives.

Any student aged 11-16 can take part and all entries that meet the criteria will be accepted. An inspiring judging panel will determine which entries demonstrate exceptional originality and creativity, with a number of prizes up for grabs for students and their schools.

Unifrog virtual university fair: Wednesday 26 March @ 16:00 UK time - 2hrs 30 mins

Join Unifrog's virtual fair to chat with over 30 UK universities in just two hours. You'll be joined by experts and current university students from the universities of Lancaster, Durham, Queen Mary London, Manchester, Warwick and many more. You'll have the chance to get your questions answered, and attend live sessions on topics including student finance, personal statements, and student life.

Five things everyone should know about criminology, criminal justice, and policing: Thursday 27 March @ 17:30 UK time - 45 mins

Perfect for aspiring criminologists, this webinar is a full introduction to the Criminal Justice system of England and Wales. Drawing on his edited books in the '50 Facts' book series, James Treadwell from the University of Staffordshire will cover some of the vital facts you should know as a student, while giving you a taste of the sort of things he does as an academic criminologist. He'll also explain how studying criminology at university can set you up for a rewarding career.

Making iconic brands: product innovation or creative advertising? Tuesday 1 April @ 16:30 UK time - 45 mins

Have you thought about what makes brands like Apple and Nike the icons they are? Most people think it comes down to product innovation. Join Dr. Tim Hill, Director of Studies for Business at the University of Bath, as he explores why this might not be the case. Discover why the route to becoming an iconic brand doesn't always lie in good research or radical ideas, but in creative advertising. Perfect for students interested in business, marketing, or entrepreneurship

Criminal law taster: how is grievous bodily harm prosecuted? Tuesday 1 April @ 17:30 UK time - 45 mins

In this interactive session, you'll explore a fictional crime case with Dr Prejal Shah, Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Lincoln. In the case, a violent attack is carried out on a transgender woman during a Pride event. The prosecution are seeking a charge of grievous bodily harm (GBH). Join Dr Shah to explore elements of criminal law to understand the importance of GBH as a criminal charge, and learn how the prosecution and defence handle different aspects of GBH cases.

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Inspiring Minds

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