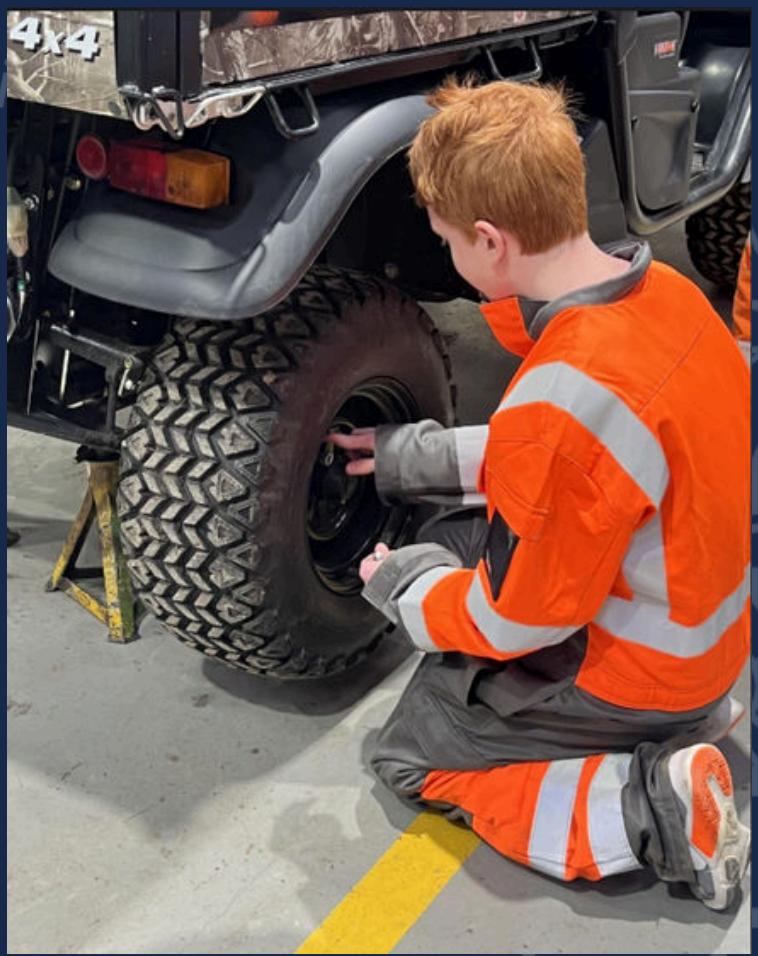
ASHFORD SCHOOL HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREERS NEWSLETTER

February 2025



Upcoming Events

Dates for Your Diaries

Feb
ongoing

Year 12 next steps interviews

Year 12
By appointment with Dr Wilson
HE & Careers Office

Mar
3-8

National Careers Week

Years 7-9
Various events around school to celebrate
#NCW2025

June
3

UCAS Discovery Event

Year 12
Kent Event Centre

THIS TERM IN CAREERS

Head of Careers Mr Ashley Grech

Dear Parents and Guardians

Welcome to the spring term edition of the Higher Education and Careers newsletter. This will be the last newsletter of this nature, as we shift to a more regular update. On a fortnightly basis, we will send out bulletins via MSP which will outline opportunities for the students to access in the coming weeks. This will lead to more routine communications and a higher amount of opportunities for the students to access throughout the term.

It has been a busy term, with two fantastic careers trips running in January, which you will read about later in this issue. It has been a real pleasure to experience these with the students and it has been inspiring to hear of their ambitions and goals formed in light of these interactions. I look forward to more of these opportunities arising in the coming term. This term, we have also celebrated National Apprenticeship week (10th-14th February) by sharing with the students resources and virtual experiences to inform about the possibilities an apprenticeship can bring them.

Next term will be very exciting. We will be introducing our new careers platform Unifrog to Year 12. We are very enthusiastic about the impact that this will have on our offering.

In addition, I will be running the National Careers Week activities with Years 7-9. I look forward to seeing the entrepreneurial skills of our students as they engage with business-themed scenarios.

As ever, if you have any questions or queries regarding careers please don't hesitate to get in contact.

grecha@ashfordschool.co.uk

THIS TERM IN UCAS & HE

Head of UCAS and Higher Education Dr Edward Wilson

Since we returned from the Christmas break, it has been a busy and productive period for students across the school working towards their tertiary education and employment goals.

Inevitably, at this stage of the year, the Sixth Form has been the main focus of this effort. All Year 13s applying for universities in the UK this year submitted their UCAS applications by the deadline of 29th January; pleasingly, many students are already in receipt of at least one offer from the universities to which they applied, and almost as many are now having to make tricky but exciting decisions about where their future lies after the summer. With university becoming an imminent reality for so many Year 13s, over the coming weeks they will be given talks about related topics, including how to accept offers and organise and apply for student finance.

In order to prepare Year 12 for the same process, I have begun to speak to each of them individually about their plans and aspirations for their lives after they have finished their A Levels. Although each of these conversations is different, they tend to start with an education or career goal to be achieved several years from now, and then work backwards, attempting to plot a precise course from that achievement to the present moment. While some students already have a very well-developed sense of what they hope the next few years have in store for them, others are less certain; regardless, whether they are intending to pursue an apprenticeship, apply for university or go straight into work, all of them are developing clear plans about what they need to do next to open up exciting options for the future. It is wonderful to hear their thoughts about the direction they hope their lives will take, and the ways in which they can use their individual skills and personal qualities to make a contribution to the world.

To offer a more structured and holistic path to applying for university, apprenticeships and work, Mr Grech and I have made the decision to join Unifrog, which is an integrated platform for finding and comparing university courses and apprenticeships. It also has a handy tool for identifying and applying for work experience opportunities, which will be of huge benefit to our Year 12 students in particular. We look forward to introducing this to students in the second half of the Spring Term.

wilsone1@ashfordschool.co.uk

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

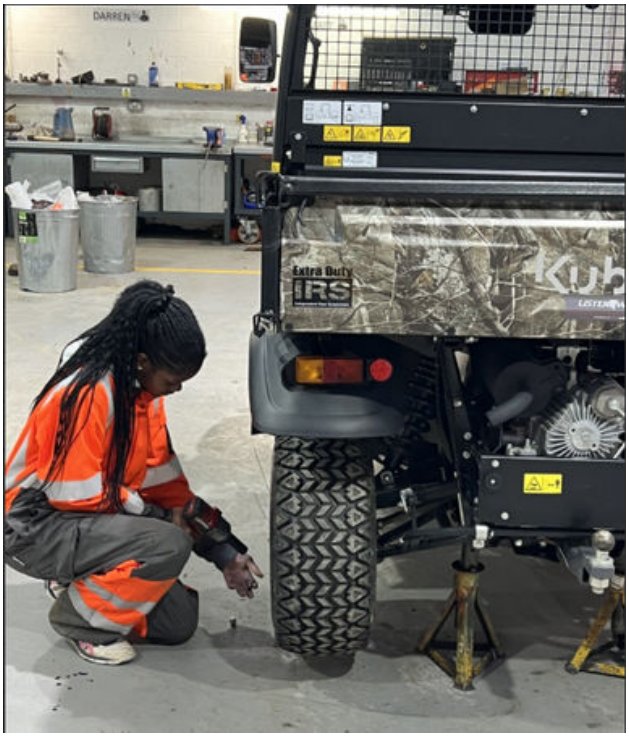
Careers in Law trip

Four Sixth Form students had the opportunity to visit the wonderful Draper's Hall. The students got to visit the City of London Court and they met legal professionals, including lawyers and solicitors, and participated in a mock trial with Their Honours Judge Marc David Dight CBE and Judge Saunders, successfully defending the accused from a custodial sentence. They had a speed networking session with professionals representing a variety of different types of legal careers, and enjoyed a splendid lunch. The students had a fantastic day and have come away inspired to seek a career in Law.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lister Wilder visit

Nine students from Years 11-13 had the fantastic opportunity to experience the world of work at Lister Wilder in Henwood Industrial Estate. After a short walk from the school, the students were given a presentation into the history of the company and an introduction to the Apprenticeship opportunities available to them if they were to join the Kubota team.



- Excavator task. Students got to operate the excavator and had the challenging task of lifting a golf ball out of the sand and then into the scoring tubes. This was a difficult task which required precision and patience, especially when they had the added pressure of the clock. Again, Ed T took the prize, scoring a whopping 550 points, which resulted in him taking home the Kubota rugby ball.

- Technical diagnostics walkthrough. Students were guided through the process of completing diagnostic reviews of machinery entirely through the use of technology.

The second part of the day provided the students with practical experiences:

- Completing a manual wheel change on a 4x4 in the fastest time possible. Ed T in Year 13 won the inter-school competition, finishing in an impressive 2 minutes 30 seconds and taking home the coveted Kubota cup.

- Live experience of finding parts in the workshop. Students were taught how to use the internal database to cross reference a specific piece of machinery and to then find parts for the customer to enable them to fix their product. This required students to work their way around the workshop to locate the specific parts.

The students had a great day, really engaging with the activities, and came away with an understanding of a possible career route in agriculture.

NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK

National Careers Week takes place on 3rd-8th March. Ashford School will hold a series of events for Years 7-9 in which they will participate in some Business-themed activities as a year group.

These experiences will develop students' problem solving skills, requiring outside the box thinking and presentation.

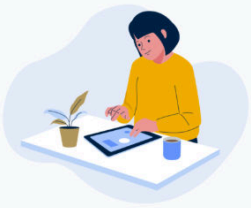
The Virtual Careers Fair goes live on 3rd March, giving pupils a chance to engage with over a hundred employers.

MY SUPER CURRICULAR

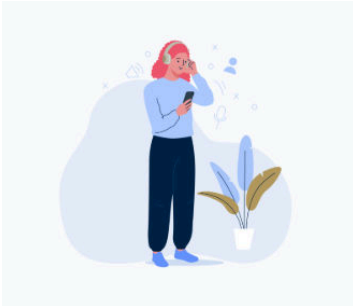
To support Year 12 in developing their plans and aspirations for life beyond Ashford School, they have each been provided with an account for My Super Curricular, a platform through which they can access additional material related to their subjects. They can use the site to find courses, articles and lectures that will deepen their understanding of a range of topics; it also has a handy note-taking function, which will make it much easier to integrate this super-curricular learning into any applications they end up making. We hope this wider engagement might spark some interesting conversations at home and with peers as the students consider the many future paths open to them.

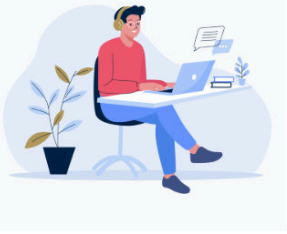
Digital Resources & Social Media

Podcasts & Videos



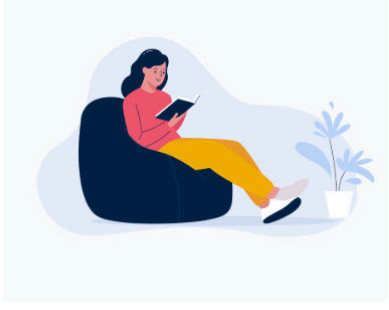
MOOCs

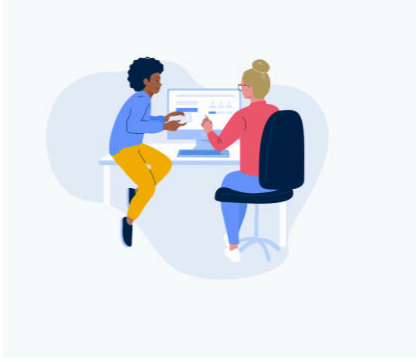




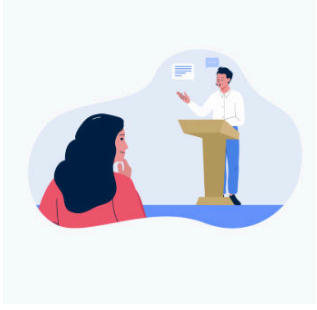
Work Experience & Volunteering

Books





Events



INTERNATIONAL CAREER MENTORING

Choosing what to do after school can feel massive. Whether you're thinking about university or diving straight into a job, it's essential to get your head around career planning. International Career Mentoring (ICM) can help you navigate these big decisions. Think of your career as a journey. You need a road map to guide you, especially since the landscape is always changing. ICM extends any existing career advice into the future, pinpointing potential obstacles along the way.

Key questions to consider:

- Timing: Will the job I want even exist when I finish my studies?
- Location: Where in the world will my job be? What's the difference between where I'd like to work and where is realistic?
- Level: What's a realistic starting point, and how can I move up?
- Pay: What's the real value of my wage, considering living costs and other factors?
- Job Types: Which jobs are growing, and which are fading away?
- Transferability: How easy will it be to switch to a different job later on?
- Security: How stable is this career path?
- Risks: What are the potential downsides?

ICM focuses on an interlinked world and helps make the right destination and career choices by considering risks, opportunities, and challenges. It prepares you to defend your study or career decisions with an understanding of global socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural trends.

- Global Opportunities: ICM explores jobs, quality of life, education and more around the world.
- Cultural Diversity: ICM helps you understand and work with people from different backgrounds.
- Future-Proofing: ICM discusses the obstacles and risks associated with career choices and focuses on handling them successfully.
- Interview Skills: ICM equips you to handle university and job interviews effectively.
- Inclusivity: ICM sees local and national settings in an increasingly global context, while inviting others to get to know us and work with us more productively.

ICM doesn't just look at what makes a job appealing, but, crucially, it also considers its drawbacks. It's not just about landing that first job, it's about how to keep it and avoid burning out. So, whether you are considering university or immediate employment, remember that things shift fast and that ICM is here to help you navigate such shifts and design a career that works for you. If you are interested in arranging a meeting with Mr Cardyn to begin planning your road map to university studies and your future career, email him at the address below.

cardyng@ashfordschool.co.uk

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Springpod offers interactive, work-based learning experiences to help students explore future career paths. Top employers and universities offer virtual work experience opportunities, some of which could lead to real-world placements. Current opportunities include:

Acoustics World: Virtual Work Experience with Institute of Acoustics

Discover the Science of Sound! Join this virtual work experience programme and explore the fascinating world of acoustics. Learn how sound affects our lives and the environment, and gain practical skills to pursue a career in this dynamic field. This programme opens the door to a diverse and expansive realm of acoustics careers, offering insights into roles, specialisations, and abundant opportunities.

Veterinary with Vets for Pets

This programme provides insight into veterinary treatment, from animal behaviours to surgery. Uncover alternative veterinary careers and engage in fun activities that enhance your understanding. Whether you dream of deciphering horse whinnies or aspire to be Dr. Dolittle, this virtual work experience is your key to the exciting world of veterinary care.

Academic Publishing with Taylor & Francis

This programme invites you into the world of academic publishing with Taylor & Francis. You'll learn all about the lifecycle of books and journals and the different stages involved in publishing (including digital publishing). We'll also look at the monumental impact academic publishing has on academia, industry and government, and more.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Unifrog hosts free webinars which offer insight into potential career paths.

Hidden careers in the creative industry

Monday 3rd March at 16:30

When you think of careers in the creative industry there are many which don't spring to mind straight away such as roles in finance, law, software development, business management and marketing. Join professional experts from the BBC and Into Film to find out about these careers and many more in the industry, to highlight roles which could become your dream career.

Student budgeting at university

Wednesday 5th March at 17:30

A lot of students worry about how they will afford to attend university with a restricted budget. Join this webinar to find out about the costs you need to consider whilst at university, additional support and sources of income whilst studying, and hear from a current student who will share their hints and tips when budgeting.

Shaping the future: inspiring women in STEM

Tuesday 11th March at 16:30

Join us for this special webinar celebrating the International Women's Day 2025 theme of accelerate action and empowerment. Hear from three inspiring women who are working in STEM fields. Find out more about their roles, what a typical day looks like, and what advice they'd give you to begin your own inspiring career.

Registration is open now for **InvestIN**'s summer work experience opportunities for students aged 15 to 18. These two-week programmes combine immersive career simulations and professional site visits. Programmes are available in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Law, Investment Banking, Engineering, Forensic Science, Psychology, Entrepreneurship, Art, Architecture, Computer Science, Fashion, Filmmaking and International Politics. Ashford School students receive a 10% discount with the code ASHFORD10.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Apprenticeships

If you would like to earn while you learn, an apprenticeship could be for you. The Government's **Apprenticeships website** explains what being an apprentice involves and can help you make an informed decision on **whether an apprenticeship is right for you**.

Apprenticeship levels range from level 2 through to level 7.

Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE)
No prior experience or specific skills are needed.
Example: Level 2 Metal Welding is suitable for beginners with no prior experience.

Level 3 (equivalent to A level)
Some qualifications or experience may be required.
Example: Level 3 Business Administration is ideal for those with basic office or retail experience.

Levels 4 to 5 (equivalent to Higher National Certificate/Diploma)
You'll need relevant qualifications or experience for more complex tasks.
Example: Level 4 Lead Engineering Maintenance Technician requires prior knowledge of engineering maintenance.

Levels 6 to 7 (Degree and Master's level)
These apprenticeships can lead to a bachelor's or master's degree. Entry requirements vary but may include qualifications like A Levels and skills in areas like communication, IT, or problem-solving.
Example: Level 6 Chartered Manager is for those with significant leadership or management experience.

Find an apprenticeship is an online government service which allows you to search and apply for apprenticeships. The service is used by thousands of employers to advertise their current apprenticeship opportunities, making it easier for you to find the right apprenticeship for you.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

MASSOLIT Video Essay Competition

In partnership with Brasenose College, Oxford, MASSOLIT are inviting UK-based students in Years 10, 11 and 12 to create a "MASSOLIT-style" video lecture running at around 8-12 minutes on any academic topic. Entries open from Friday 28th February 2025 and the final deadline is 5pm Friday 27th June 2025.

The best entries will be reviewed by a panel of judges made up of academics from Brasenose and members of the MASSOLIT team.

This competition is open to every pupil in the UK; you do not need to be a subscriber to MASSOLIT. If you want to see what a "MASSOLIT-style" lecture is, please check out their YouTube channel.

MFL Flash Fiction Competitions, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, University of Oxford

Submissions to the University of Oxford's French and Spanish Flash Fiction competitions for UK secondary school students are now open. Write a complete story in your chosen language, using no more than 100 words.

The judges will award a top prize of £100 in each age category (Years 7-9, Years 10-11 and Years 12-13), as well as prizes of £25 to a maximum of two runners up. The deadline for submitting your entry is 12 noon on 31st March 2025.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Year 13's final UCAS applications were submitted at the end of January. Students have begun to receive offers from universities and are working with renewed focus to achieve the grades they require to secure their place on their chosen courses. **Year 12** are at the early stages of the UCAS process, thinking about their goals and researching university and employment opportunites.

In June, **Year 12** will visit the UCAS Discovery Event at the Kent Event Centre. They will have the opportunity to meet representatives of over eighty universities and employers and explore a wide range of future paths.

ALUMNI CAREERS

Robbie Boxall Franklins, 2014

At five years old, I knew exactly what I wanted to be: a vet, and it was my time at Ashford School that truly helped me achieve this childhood dream. The staff at Ashford knew me and my interests. Whether it was extra discussion in A Level Biology or the flexibility to pursue Music GCSE independently, the school environment allowed me to pursue my passions. My interest in veterinary medicine was supported by inspiring teachers like Mrs Miller, Mr Curry, Mrs Towill, and Dr Allen in A Level Biology. A rat dissection sparked a lasting interest in anatomy.

As a Music scholar, I threw myself into the school's Music department. I played flute in every ensemble imaginable, which led to incredible experiences like trips to Germany, joining Mr Green's guitar ensemble, and even attending concerts in Paris and the Royal Albert Hall.

When I joined Ashford School in Year 7, I was quiet and with little drive to achieve my best. Through my seven years at Ashford, I grew in confidence and ability. The small classes meant I felt my teachers really knew me, my interests and needs, allowing them to support me in pushing myself to be the best I could be. The staff were always willing to give their time to help, whether in revising for exams or writing my university application.

I successfully applied to veterinary school and finally achieved my childhood dream. I have no doubt that without my Ashford School education, made possible with the bursary fund, I would not be where I am today.

My advice to current students is to embrace all the opportunities that Ashford offers. These years pass quickly, so make the most of them.

As a practising veterinarian today, I am so grateful for my time at Ashford School.

ASHFORD SCHOOL

Inspiring Minds

HE & Careers Bulletin 2024-2025