ASHFORD SCHOOL HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREERS NEWSLETTER

November 2024

Upcoming Events

Dates for Your Diaries

Nov 14

Year 9 GCSE Options Evening

Year 9
18:00 - 20:00
Brake Hall

Nov 28

Year 8 Morrisby Testing

Year 8
08:40 - 09:25
Form rooms

Dec 2-3

Year 11 Sixth Form Taster Days

Year 11
08:40 - 15:50
Classrooms

Jan TBC

Year 11 Visit to Lister Wilder

Year 11
22nd or 29th January - to be confirmed
Lister Wilder

Mar 3-8

National Careers Week

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

MEET THE TEAM

Head of Careers Mr Ashley Grech

I am extremely excited to be the Head of Careers at Ashford School. I feel that inspiring students to identify their future path should be at the heart of everything we aim to provide as a school. I bring a wealth of personal experience from a number of different career development routes. My working career began at a telephone market research agency during my A Level studies, which definitely provided me with an appreciation of the importance of enjoying the work you undertake. While completing my undergraduate degree in Classical History at the University of Kent, I worked as a customer advisor at B&Q. While in that role I completed a 'Team Leader' apprenticeship which provided me with theoretical understanding and the opportunity to put it into practice in a leadership position. An epiphany during the lockdown inspired me to then pursue the full use of my undergraduate degree and become a History teacher. Now in my fourth full year of teaching, I teach History, Geography and Business across all Key Stages. My ability to teach Business stems from the practical and theoretical experience gained in my apprenticeship. As you can see, my career path has been a varied one, but the opportunities I have taken along the way have all enabled me to reach the position I am in now, making my story an example from which our students can learn.

My vision for this role is to establish stronger links with our excellent alumni and the businesses in our community and utilise the skills and expertise of the parents of our students to enrich our careers offering. By providing more talks, workshops and opportunities to our students, I hope to develop the soft skills that so many graduates are lacking and of which employers are so demanding. Our Careers programme aims to develop these soft skills, such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking. I want to inspire students not only to have a clear vision about what they need to do academically to achieve their career goals but also what and how they need to develop as individuals to make that dream a reality.

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MEET THE TEAM

Head of UCAS and Higher Education Dr Edward Wilson

I look back with fondness on my own time in sixth form as one during which I could see new opportunities and adventures coming into view, all of them stemming from the passion I had discovered for literature and writing. This was a period during which the groundwork for paths that I would follow in the future was laid. It was my English teacher who encouraged me to study English Literature and Language at the University of Oxford, and supported me through the application process. My first career, in publishing, as a graduate trainee with Penguin Books, and then as an editor with Dorling Kindersley, was a continuation of this route; and in turn, this led me down other interesting avenues, including freelance football journalism for publications like the *Guardian* and *Four Four Two* magazine and, eventually, into a PhD and teaching.

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Reflecting on these experiences, I can see that none of them would have happened without some combination of initiative, determination and boldness on my part. Therefore, in my new role as Head of UCAS and Higher Education, I hope to create an environment in which students are encouraged to develop the same qualities, allowing them to create rich, rewarding and adventurous opportunities for themselves during their further education and beyond. It should go without saying, however, that none of the experiences I have outlined above would have been possible without the encouragement, guidance and support that I received from family, peers, teachers and managers along the way. With this in mind, Mr Grech, Dr Hayes and I will combine all of our knowledge to guide students towards the prospects on the horizon that intrigue and excite them and help them to take practical steps on the route towards new destinations.

MEET THE TEAM

Higher Education & Careers Administrator Dr Joanna Hayes

My career has been very different to the one I imagined at school. Going into Sixth Form, I hoped to take A Levels in English Literature, Art and Latin. I ended up taking Maths, Physics, Chemistry and AS Further Maths. Having chosen my degree by tossing a coin (this is not a good idea), I studied Physics with Acoustics at the University of Surrey. This included a year in industry with a global telecommunications company, during which I developed a prototype fibre optic broadband system. After graduating, I completed a PhD at the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research, University of Southampton, writing code to model feedback paths in hearing aids in order to design a more effective sound processor. These simulations often took hours or even days to run, and I would read to pass the time. One day I decided to read Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and realised I was in the wrong career. Ten years later, after being made redundant from my job as a customer support assistant in a public library, I began a degree in English Literature with the Open University. I continued to study part-time after joining Ashford School as a Librarian, graduating in 2017. Two years later, my passion for Restoration Theatre drove me to complete an MA by Research with the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham, once again juggling work, study and caring commitments.

Education is a lifelong process and career paths are rarely linear. In my new role as Higher Education and Careers Administrator, supporting Mr Grech and Dr Wilson, I look forward to helping students take their first steps into the future, with the confidence that, wherever life takes them, they will have the skills and ability to meet all challenges head on.

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IN-SCHOOL EVENTS

Sixth Form Information Evening

Back in September, our Year 11 students and other prospective Sixth Formers came along to our Sixth Form Information Evening to discover what makes Ashford School Sixth Form stimulating and special. Students attended subject talks for the Sixth Form courses on offer and had the opportunity to seek advice about their possible future pathways and where they may lead in life beyond school. As always, our guidance is tailored to the individual: we offer A Level and BTEC qualifications and can explore bespoke arrangements to ensure the students have the best experience possible at this exciting point in their educational journey at Ashford School. If any parents have any further follow-up questions, please do get in touch with Mr Curry (Assistant Head of Middle School) and Mrs Ndongong (Assistant Head of Sixth Form) via their PA, Mrs Stuart – stuartf@ashfordschool.co.uk.

PSHE

Students in Year 9 will have a PSHE session at the beginning of this term where they will identify which subjects will aid them in their future careers. With their options evening coming up on the 14th November, this will be a fantastic opportunity for the students to start thinking about skills, qualifications and the routes available to them to make this career goal a reality.

Students in Year 8 will be undertaking their Morrisby testing on Thursday 28th November during PSHE. Based on their responses they will be given some potential careers to consider. Students will then have a follow up session on Thursday 12th December where they will research some of these suggested careers and start identifying a plan to achieve their aspirations. These sessions will provide a strong platform ahead of Year 9 where they will make their GCSE option choices in the Autumn term.

Students in Year 10 will undertake a more detailed Morrisby assessment after they complete their end of year mock exams in the summer term. Once the test is completed they will then have a 1-1 meeting with Mr Grech to discuss the outcomes and next steps going into Year 11.

Students in Years 7 and 11 will have specific careers-themed sessions in PSHE during the summer term but of course if there are any queries and if guidance is required, the Careers team are available by email or in person.

Morrisby

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

Top Tips on Writing the Perfect CV

Monday 11th November at 16:30.

Employers will use your CV to decide whether you're fit for the job, so you need to make sure it stands out from the crowd. In this webinar, you'll hear from professional experts from the MET Office who'll give their insider tips and apprentice insights on how to ace your CV or written application and start your journey to your dream career.

Top Tips for Acing an Interview

Monday 11th November at 17:30.

You've applied for the job and been invited to an interview - excellent! Join professional experts from PwC and Armstrong Watson to hear about apprentice insights, the types of interviews you might do and how best to structure your answers.

Gen Z Marketing Secrets: How Innocent and Red Bull Hook You In

Thursday 14th November at 16:30.

Join the University of Huddersfield's award-winning business school for an exciting, hands-on workshop where you'll dive into the digital marketing strategies of top brands like Innocent and Red Bull. Discover how these companies captivate Gen Z through innovative campaigns and cutting-edge technology. This session will provide you with practical insights and the opportunity to create your own digital marketing ideas.

InvestIN run career experience programmes at weekends and during the summer holidays for students aged 15 to 18. With 15 competitive careers to choose from, each programme is delivered by accomplished industry experts to equip students with a 360-degree insight into their respective fields. 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, plus programmes tailored for EAL students. Ashford School students receive a 10% discount with the code ASHFORD10.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Gradcracker hosts webinars with guest speakers from a range of employers to explore graduate careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). Attend these hour-long sessions to discover an employer you'd love to work for or an industry sector you'd love to work in. Webinars in November and December cover such topics as careers in engineering and cyberspace, construction and risk management.

Get inspiring advice and in-depth insights from employers, careers advisers, students and graduates by attending the Future You webinars from Prospects. Covering popular topics, these webinars will help you take the next steps in your journey, whether you already have a detailed career plan in place or you're not quite sure where to turn next. You'll need to register to get the opportunity to put your questions to the experts at each webinar.

Recordings of past events are available on the Prospects YouTube channel and include Understanding Your Employment Rights, Looking After Your Mental Health at University and Boosting Your Employability.

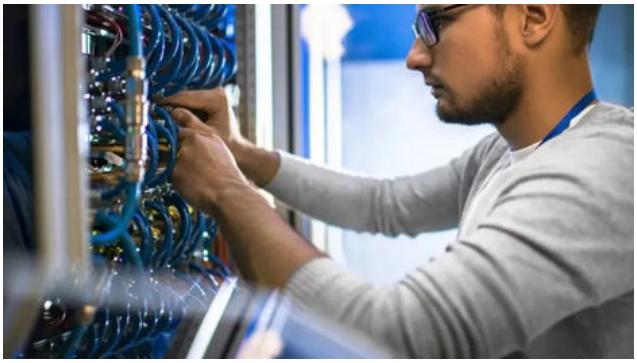
EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Apprenticeships

It's likely you'll apply to more than one apprenticeship, but it can be tricky to keep track of them all. Join professional experts from the National Grid and Government Economic Service to help you find ways to manage multiple applications and avoid the common traps when applying to more than one role, so you can increase the chances of being successful in your applications.

Applying to Apprenticeships: the Dos and Don'ts takes place at 16:30 on Tuesday 12th November.

unifrog



Leaving school or college doesn't have to be daunting if you know what to expect! In this free webinar, you'll learn what it's like going from school/college to an apprenticeship, the exciting things you may be involved in and how to get support if needed in the world of work. You'll also get some top tips on how to cope with the change and get the most out of your exciting next step.

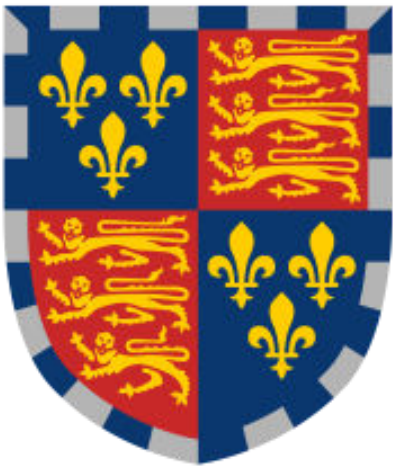
Apprenticeships: What to Expect takes place at 16:30 on Wednesday 13th November.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Christ's College, University of Cambridge, runs a series of webinars aimed at students considering applying to university.

Subject Matters: The Importance of Your Post-16 Subjects takes place via Zoom, 17:00 - 18:00 on Monday 11th November.

This session provides information, advice and guidance on what subjects to choose for post-16 study for competitive applications to top universities.



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

The Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge is holding an online study evening on Thursday 14th November. The session, on visual culture and for which you will be sent some pre-reading, will be with Dr Amy Morris and will be on "Poems and Monuments". The second half of the session will be spent looking at the English course at Cambridge and the application process and then talking about career options after completing the course and hearing from some current students.

Go to Cambridge English Masterclasses for more details.

GREEN CAREERS WEEK

Green Careers Week took place at the beginning of November, aiming to raise aspiration, support diversity, challenge stereotypes, and promote real opportunities for young people to have a career that will genuinely make a difference. Explore these resources to discover careers, jobs, roles, and career pathways that are green careers and develop green skills.

A green career can be any job, role or occupation that contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet. It can be any industry, not just those seen as 'green.' Green skills are abilities, attributes, values, attitudes, knowledge, and technical skills needed to adapt services, processes and procedures to support climate change.

The Parents' Guide to Green Careers provides information on routes into green careers, including apprenticeships and T Levels.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Year 13 have been hard at work on their university and job applications, and our first batch of UCAS applications were sent by the early deadline in mid-October. These were students applying for Medicine, Veterinary Science and courses at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and we wish them every success. Many other Year 13s are nearly ready to send their applications, and we are looking forward to seeing the university offers start coming in soon.

UCAS

ALUMNI CAREERS

Govind Dhiman Yeomen, 2017

Studying at Ashford School felt like I was in the perfect place at the perfect time. I was 12 or 13 years old when I really started to take a serious interest in classical piano which also happened to be the moment when Ashford School made the connection with Steinway and Sons in 2013 to become a Steinway School. This influenced and inspired me to want to become a concert pianist.

I remember trying out Ashford School's first ever full-size Steinway Concert Piano as a Year 8 student, moments after it was delivered to Brake Hall. That was also the first time I ever played a Steinway Concert Piano so it was a very special moment. There were always many piano concerts throughout the academic year and lots of emphasis on Ashford Schools pianists. I was surrounded by other enthusiastic musicians who also really enjoyed practising on the Steinways! This created a perfect environment for me to pursue my dream to become a concert pianist.

My piano teacher Stephen Dandridge supported and guided me through all my school years. Becoming a pianist was extremely difficult and I was very lucky to have him as mentor from 13 years old. The work that I did with him between 13 and 18 years old laid the foundation for the pianist and musician that I am today.

Ashford taught me to always be as well prepared as possible. Whether it's for a musical performance, public speaking, academic examinations or anything else, never become complacent and assume that you can get by without the preparation, focus and attention needed. I try to be thoroughly prepared as far in advance as possible for any upcoming performances to make sure that I can do my best.

It's difficult to pinpoint one specific moment or achievement of my career so far, but I am proud of having the opportunity to study with concert pianist Mikhail Kazakevich in London and performing solo and chamber music at different festivals, concerts and events over the last few years. I have had opportunities to play abroad on exchange trips in Europe and to perform in venues like Wigmore Hall and Blackheath Halls.

If I hadn't attended Ashford School, I might have never ended up going down the music path. Without the dedicated teachers and Music department, I might not have found the right atmosphere and inspiration to want to become a concert pianist.

ASHFORD SCHOOL

Inspiring Minds

HE & Careers Bulletin 2024-2025