

Westminster Tutors



Careers Guidance and Access Policy

2023-2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Careers Information, Education, Advice and Guidance (CIEAG) is available for all students throughout their time at Westminster Tutors. It is central to our aim of ensuring each student makes a successful onward transition to adult life at the end of their schooling. This successful transition depends not only on student attainment and academic results but also on students receiving high-quality advice and guidance that helps them secure places at optimal destinations that should contribute to their future well-being.
- 1.2 It is indicative of the importance that the college places on high-quality career information, education, advice, and guidance that the Careers Lead is Virginia Maguire, who has gained 20 years of experience in this field, both as the former Principal of Westminster Tutors and before that as Director of Studies at David Game College and as Careers and Higher Education Advisor at Queen's College, Harley Street. Students, parents and careers or providers are welcome to contact Virginia at any time by emailing virginia@westminstertutors.co.uk
- 1.3 A stable careers education programme is delivered to Year 12 and Year 13 students. In Year 12, students also receive at least one individual advice and guidance session with our Careers Lead, with the option of up to two more sessions as required. In Year 13, students will receive at least two individual career information and advice sessions with our Careers Lead and ongoing individualised support with higher education, apprenticeship, other training, or workplace applications.
- 1.4 Students joining us for A level retakes (Year 13+) receive advice and guidance on making new and improved applications for their chosen onward destinations. They also receive at least two individual advice and guidance sessions with our Careers Lead.

2. Principles

- 2.1 All students should have equal access to accurate, up-to-date, and impartial information free from bias and stereotyping.
- 2.2 All students should be inspired by our CIEAG offering and encouraged to have high aspirations for themselves.
- 2.3 All students are treated without prejudice, and all have an entitlement to high-quality CIEAG, regardless of race, gender, religion, ability, disability, social background, or sexual orientation.
- 2.4 Students' interests and aspirations are at the heart of our CIEAG offering. CIEAG underpins and runs through our sixth form provision and is what informs the successful onward transition of our students.

3. Aims

- 3.1 Careers guidance is essential in achieving Westminster Tutors' overall aims. It should allow students to build the skills, knowledge and values needed to manage their lifelong learning and career development. CIEAG should enable them to:
- Be aware of education, training, and career opportunities.
 - Be aware of how these opportunities can contribute to their well-being, economic prosperity, and broader society.
 - Be aware of A level and alternative technical routes such as BTECs or apprenticeships that pave the way to further/higher education or the workplace.
 - Make informed choices about education, training, and career progression.

4. SEND and Inclusion

- 4.1 Our CIEAG supports the college's policy on SEND and inclusion by:
- Providing a range of resources to match individual needs.
 - Providing individualised support for students with learning difficulties, disabilities, or health/ mental health needs.
 - Providing advice and guidance on transitioning from A level to further/higher education or other vocational training.
 - Providing individual advice and guidance on UCAS and applications for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or other support and SEND provisions in FE/HE settings.
 - Providing additional support in obtaining work experience.

5. The 'Baker Clause'

- 5.1 Although we are a sixth form college offering A levels rather than alternative technical routes, we are committed to ensuring that students are aware of all onward destinations open to them and do not feel pressured to apply for higher education, even if this is that stated objective of many of our students. The so-called 'Baker Clause' makes it a statutory requirement for schools that students are fully cognisant of both academic and technical routes and advice and guidance should not be biased towards either option. Although not bound by the statutory guidance as a private college of further education, the college adheres to the principles of the 'Baker Clause' as best practice, and we promote National Apprenticeships Week events to our Year 12 students.
- 5.2 Both in individual advice sessions and via the careers education programme, Year 12 students are aware of technical and vocational routes, including apprenticeships alongside further and higher education options. In Year 13 and Year 13+, the Careers Lead supports students wishing to take a technical or vocational path so that they can research and apply for opportunities that are a good match for them. In recent years, we have had two students who have been successful in applying for Degree Apprenticeships (Level 4) with PwC and Thales, and another student opted to complete a Level 3 Apprenticeship with Expedia in the gap year between her A levels and degree course.

- 5.3 Conversely, in situations where students are finding that they are not suited to academic routes and modes of assessment, including completing A levels, we have advised them on how to pursue vocational courses such as BTECs in further education, as well as helped them understand how these can ultimately springboard into higher education if they later choose to take this path.

6. Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks

- 6.1 The Gatsby Benchmarks are the eight pillars of CIEAG as identified by the Good Careers Guidance Report 2014 (<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>). Although not required to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks, the college has adopted the policy of measuring performance against these benchmarks every three years to evaluate the quality of our CIEAG provision. The last evaluation and audit was completed in October 2022; it indicated the college's CIEAG provision was significantly above national standards.

How the college aims to meet the eight Gatsby Benchmarks is set out below.

1. **The Careers Lead provides a stable careers programme for Years 12 and 13**, which is set out in the following section of this policy statement.
2. **Learning from career and labour market information:** as we are based in London and our students come from a broad area embracing Greater London and the counties beyond, we are less constrained by specific local conditions. However, based on salient data and research, individual advice and guidance are provided to students. This information varies according to individual students but includes such things as degree courses most/ least favoured by employers; the added value of certain degree course subjects and effects on lifetime earnings; added value in terms of higher education and how it may differ according to characteristics such as gender; future employment prospects and current/ future areas of demand etc. Therefore, this labour market information and guidance are geared towards enabling students to make informed decisions about onward destinations and how they may contribute to their career objectives.
3. **Addressing the needs of each pupil:** as with all our provisions at Westminster Tutors, every student is listened to, and this lies at the heart of what we do. Students' views are sought on priorities, concerns, and areas of interest, and both the careers programme and individual advice and guidance are adapted towards those needs on an ongoing basis. Students at the college have an extensive range of abilities and a wide range of aspirations as well.

There is a close liaison between the Careers Lead, Principal, SLT tutors, mentors and subject tutors to ensure that each student's individual needs are addressed, including those with disabilities and special educational or medical needs.

4. **Linking curriculum learning to careers:** we achieve this on a significantly individualised basis and can draw on our teachers' significant expertise. Students often engage their subject tutors in discussions about careers in their fields and more specialised degree courses.

The Careers Lead also liaises directly with teachers so that when a student expresses an interest in a particular field, the teacher can adapt teaching and practical work to enhance understanding and help them appreciate the real-life applications of their academic knowledge. An example is a Physics teacher focusing on force and drag with a student wanting to apply for aeronautical engineering. Teachers also support and advise their students on relevant aspects of the curriculum that they may wish to explore further or include in their personal statements. In addition, students can take an EPQ, which allows them to deepen their understanding and explore beyond the constraints of the curriculum. This research is often orientated towards their career aspirations.

5. **Encounters with employers and employees:** in person, meaningful encounters with the workplace were challenging to arrange during the pandemic, although we have invited guest speakers to PSHCE sessions where possible. UCAS has provided virtual opportunities in events for National Apprenticeships Week and National Careers Week, which are both promoted to students and offer online opportunities to encounter employers.
6. **Experiences of workplaces:** work experience opportunities were significantly depleted due to the pandemic, and many sixth form students felt the effects of this. However, since the pandemic, there has been a growth in virtual work experience opportunities, and the Careers Lead guides these. Recent instances of virtual experience include a student wanting to apply for Aeronautical Engineering, completing virtual work experience at Airbus, and a student wishing to apply for Medicine, gaining virtual work experience with Brighton & Sussex Medical School. Students also gain experience in the workplace through volunteering, in-person internships, summer taster courses led by InvestIN, their networks, and finding paid employment. The Careers Lead gives individualised guidance to students in Years 12, 13 and 13+ on gaining appropriate experience, which will enhance their CV or higher education applications. Students, therefore, have a clear and timely idea of what experience they need to gain if it is required either for their higher education application or their proposed onward destination. In 2022 and 2023, over 85% of our college leavers gained significant, meaningful workplace experience. Those who had not gained experience had generally been prevented from doing so due to health issues.

7. **Encounters with further and higher education:** students are given information and encouraged to attend relevant higher education and career events. These include UCAS events relating to National Apprenticeship Week, National Careers Week and HE exhibitions, Oxbridge open days, vocational events for Medicine, Law, Engineering, university or summer taster course programmes, and Year 12/Year 13 university open days.
8. **Personal guidance:** individual advice and guidance are provided as and when required, including meetings with parents. The minimum for each student is at least one one-to-one session with the Careers Lead in Year 12 and at least two one-to-one sessions for the Year 13 and Year 13+ students.

Advice and guidance embrace university and career choices; aptitude tests (BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TSA, HAT, etc.); American applications and SATS, and other overseas applications; Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine; Oxbridge; art college applications; music college applications; work experience and volunteering; job applications and updating CVs; alternative and technical routes into training and work, including BTECs and apprenticeships.

7. Pupil Entitlement

7.1 All school pupils in KS5, i.e., the sixth form, are entitled:

- To learn about technical education qualifications and apprenticeship opportunities as part of a careers programme that provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point.
- To hear from various local providers about their opportunities, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies, group discussions, and taster events.
- To understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

8. Careers Information Education Advice and Guidance Programme

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year 12	<p>Individual advice and guidance sessions (CIAG) with students and parents on request/ as required, particularly about A level options appropriate for desired onward destination.</p>	<p>February: National Apprenticeships Week UCAS events – information and virtual opportunities to meet providers.</p> <p>March: National Careers Week UCAS events – information and virtual opportunities to meet providers</p> <p>One-to-one CIAG and UCAS advice session for each Y12 student, focusing on gaining relevant work experience and acquiring skills that will be useful either in the world of work or for an HE application.</p> <p>Careers education programme relating to work and employment during PSHCE sessions:</p> <p>Putting together a school leaver CV.</p>	<p>Careers education programme during PSHCE sessions:</p> <p>Registering for UCAS Hub.</p> <p>Careers questionnaire.</p> <p>Researching potential universities/ registering for Y12 open days.</p> <p>Drafting UCAS personal statements and identifying suitable content</p> <p>Visiting speakers/alums now working in a variety of sectors providing authentic and meaningful insights into a) life at uni, b) how they progressed from their degrees to their careers, c) what a career in their sector is really like</p> <p>UCAS/ HE Event to provide information to students’ parents and carers.</p> <p>Oxbridge and Medicine preparation programme, including one-to-one advice and guidance, is provided throughout the summer holiday,</p>

Year 13	<p>One-to-one CIAG and UCAS advice session for each Y13 student.</p> <p>One-to-one UCAS session for each Y13+ student.</p> <p>Ongoing individual support for UCAS applications.</p> <p>Careers education programme relating to university applications during PSHCE sessions:</p> <p>Registering for UCAS Apply.</p> <p>Using UCAS Course Search and other research resources.</p> <p>Writing the UCAS personal statement.</p> <p>Access Providers are welcome to speak to Y13 students, parents, and carers in lunchtime PSHCE sessions.</p> <p>Individualised advice and guidance for:</p> <p>US applications.</p> <p>Apprenticeship/ Degree Apprenticeship applications.</p> <p>Admissions tests (for Oxbridge, Medicine, Law, etc).</p> <p>Mock university interviews (for Oxbridge, Medicine, etc).</p>	<p>Careers education programme relating to work and employment during PSHCE sessions:</p> <p>Interview skills, questions, and preparation.</p> <p>Online and AI interviews.</p> <p>Assessment Centres (including for degree apprenticeships).</p> <p>Psychometric and aptitude testing for different employment sectors.</p>	<p>Final one-to-one UCAS/ HE/ apprenticeship IAG session on making first and insurance choices,</p> <p>Individual support is provided on A level results day (August) and the following week: UCAS Confirmation/ Adjustment/ Clearing.</p>
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9. UCAS Support

- 9.1 The Careers Lead provides individual advice and guidance on:
- Gaining appropriate work experience or extending reading.
 - What should be included in the Personal Statement.
 - Selecting an appropriate range of universities.
 - The UCAS application system.
 - Developing a portfolio if required (for Art, Music, Film, etc.).
 - Mock interview preparation.
 - Technical queries concerning financial/ residential status, SEND, etc.
 - Setting out mitigating/ extenuating circumstances so the students' chosen universities give them due consideration.
- 9.2 Additional support is given by contacting universities/ UCAS if there are problems with an application and extensive support is provided on results day to cover Confirmation and Clearing.

10. University Admissions Tests

10.1 The Careers Lead provides individual advice on test preparation, booking, and test deadlines such as UCAT, BMAT, LNAT, STEP, TMUA and the Oxford and Cambridge admissions assessments. It ensures the college is supplied with sufficient and appropriate preparation resources. Uniprep test preparation courses and individual tuition are available for specific admissions tests.

11. University Interview Preparation

11.1 Interview skills:

- Advice on how to prepare for university interviews.
- For every student called for a university interview is given at least one mock interview session, followed by feedback and guidance on preparing for subject-specific interview questions.

12. Degree Apprenticeships

12.1 Degree apprenticeships can offer fully funded university studies, a small salary retainer, and a series of internships throughout the degree. Students wishing to apply for degree apprenticeships receive guidance on researching and selecting relevant opportunities and completing the initial application forms. They also receive extensive support for each stage of the selection process, which is more akin to graduate recruitment procedures. It will likely include video interviews, psychometric or aptitude testing, and a day at an assessment centre. Degree apprenticeships with top companies can be highly competitive, so students are generally advised to complete a UCAS application and a couple of degree apprenticeship applications.

13. International HE Applications

13.1 Students wishing to make international higher education applications, both to the US and other countries, are supported by the college. Where appropriate, they are referred to agencies such as the Fulbright Commission for information, and we advise using a specialist counsellor to help with i) making US college choices and ii). The Careers Lead checks required documentation and prepares students' transcripts and references for US and other international applications.

14. Student Finance

14.1 The Careers Lead provides advice on student finance, the deadlines, and the mechanics of applications for student loans, etc.

15. Disabilities, Special Educational or Medical Needs in Higher Education

- 15.1 The Careers Lead provides one-to-one advice and guidance to students with disabilities or special educational or medical needs to support them in making the transition to higher education and to ensure that they receive the support they are entitled to.

In certain circumstances, this will also involve advocating for the student so that personal circumstances do not prejudice a student's application and that higher education institutions apply contextual considerations to a student's application where appropriate. Additional advice and guidance are provided on the Disabled Students Allowance regarding entitlements and the mechanics of applying for DSA. This advice and guidance may involve coordination with the student's parents and LEAs, especially where students have an EHCP.

16. Gap Years/Post-Qualification Applications (PQA)

- 16.1 The Careers Lead can provide additional advice and support on planning a gap year. It will also support post-qualification UCAS applications if students prefer to apply to university after completing their A level studies. The point is that we remain committed to supporting our students until their onward destination has been secured.