

COLLEGE

**HELP STUDENTS NAVIGATE THEIR
EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHS
AND FIND THEIR PASSION**

**AUGAR REVIEW DRIVES
SURGE IN APPRENTICESHIP
AMBITIONS**

BACKSTAGE ACADEMY

an alternative career path for pupils
interested in performance and the arts



WELCOME

to the first edition of QA College

As you will read inside, the first edition of QA College arrives at a time when huge debates about the future of Further Education are being picked up, having been overshadowed by the trials and tribulations of the pandemic. Funding for post GCSE education has been obliterated over the past ten years as the government swung the axe on grants for colleges and sixth forms across the country, with cuts of roughly 14% per pupil taking a toll on the number of courses that could be offered and naturally, the investment many education organisations could make in facilities and resources.

The government's well-intentioned bid to shake-up 16-18 education with the launch of T-Levels went ahead in September 2020 despite coronavirus wreaking havoc and many are only now starting to realise what they're about.

Nevertheless, the move to improve technical and vocational training for teenagers who might not thrive in the academic focussed A-Levels has been generally well received, after all, employers, and no doubt parents, have jealously looked at the technical training offered on the Continent for decades. But in recent months fears that some T-Levels weren't quite right for pupils and employers have started to emerge.

Now a petition to urge the government to have a re-think has attracted more than 100,000 signatures. The crux of the complaints is that T-Levels are causing many BTECs in similar subjects to be defunded, yet the courses are not equivalent. It has also been said that the requirement for T-Levels to feature 45 days of work experience is a somewhat unrealistic burden for some employers.

Meanwhile, with many children using BTECs as an alternative route to university, T-Levels are yet to be considered in the same light and appear to be more designed for those who want to go straight into work, closing a pathway to higher education for those not able to do A-Levels. I hope you enjoy our new publication and find the articles useful. If you want to be featured in a future edition or offer feedback on any of our content please email nick@euromediaal.com

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Augar Review drives surge in apprenticeship ambitions

Just 1 in 4 plan to go to university new research suggests

- Greater financial barriers and mismanagement during COVID in universities have deterred students and their parents
- As a result 16% are now considering apprenticeships for the first time as a less expensive route into sought-after industries

An anticipated clampdown on university admissions has driven nearly a million teens to consider apprenticeships for the first time.

In February of this year, the government issued its response to the Augar Review, announcing that student loans would no longer be available to those who fail their Maths & English GCSEs, in addition to restrictions to access "poor-quality, low-cost" courses.

As a result, interest amongst students is on the decline, just a quarter (25%) have their sights set on going to university, as many (36%) fear they won't be able to afford tuition fees without a loan.

Formerly cast off as less valuable than traditional higher education routes, a quarter (23%) of parents would now actively prefer their child to do an apprenticeship, rather than attend university, deterred by reports of teaching standards during the pandemic, and perceptions of university as poor value for money.

Growing sectors

While apprenticeship demand is on the up, there remains a misconception that work-based training only provides a pathway to certain sectors.

Science and technology apprenticeship provider, TIRO, commissioned the study of UK teens and their parents, in a new report, 'Shaping the science and tech workforce of tomorrow'. A growing number of young people are aspiring to roles in STEM, where they perceive the best earning and development potentials, but remain convinced that they'll need to go to university to secure roles in the field.

Engineering and manufacturing is the most sought after sector for parents when thinking about the industry they'd like their child to work in (25%), but many still mistakenly believe that access to the sector will be determined by a university



degree (38%).

Young people are equally enthusiastic about the developing science and technology industries, which have been identified as key growth areas by the current government, as one in three (34%) 11-18 year olds now consider tech as the most exciting career, closely followed by science (28%).

However, misconceptions about entry requirements may deter many from pursuing their aspirations, as 69% of students believe that you have to be extremely academic to work in a science or tech job.

But Charlotte Blant, CEO at TIRO, confirms that these barriers are on the decline.

"The perception that a career in science or technology requires straight A grades, or a university degree, is inaccurate and outdated," she said.

"Working with some of the UK's leading STEM employers, we've seen first hand that the most successful and sought-after candidates are those that demonstrate real passion for the sector, and have the ability to learn quickly on the job.

"It no longer makes sense for young people to expend time or money on a university degree, when plenty of viable roles can be learnt on the job."

Changing attitudes to apprenticeships

In addition to declining emphasis on university learning, prospective students and their parents are placing higher value on apprenticeships. More than half of parents (55%) consider apprenticeships and university degrees as equally valid routes into the workplace.

Again, this largely comes down to the financial benefits of work-based learning. According to prospective students, newfound emphasis on apprenticeship learning is driven by the ability to learn and earn at the same time (63%), followed by the career prospects (20%), and not being able to afford university (19%).

A knowledge gap in schools still exists though, 27% of students don't know anything about apprenticeships and the opportunities available.

Charlotte Blant added: "The decline in university applications presents an opportunity for employers to attract talent earlier, but they must do more to demonstrate the pathways available to talented young people.

"The education system is still geared towards the traditional school, college, university route, but this is increasingly unnecessary for a number of entry-level positions in exciting industries."

Craven College invests £1.5m with Apogee to modernise its IT offering to students and staff



Complete device refresh and ongoing management by Apogee boosts student satisfaction rates, supporting new ways of teaching and learning post-pandemic



Craven College has partnered with leading managed workplace services (MWS) provider, Apogee Corporation, to undertake a £1.5m IT refresh.

By upgrading its existing devices, the college has transformed its IT offering and successfully boosted student and staff satisfaction rates in IT equipment to 91%. The project involved a complete overhaul of Craven College's IT estate, including over 900 desktop positions being upgraded for its growing student base. Apogee also provided new laptops for all members of staff, further supporting the delivery of high-quality digital learning. Since the deployment of the new equipment, the college's IT department has experienced an 85% reduction in helpdesk incidents. Apogee continues to manage all technology through a simple point of contact, backed up by their industry-leading Care Packs, enabling college staff to focus on driving student success.

Adrian Lawson, Head of Information Technology at Craven College, said: "We couldn't have delivered this ambitious project without Apogee. We've only got a small IT team, so we were really grateful to

Apogee for coming in and installing all the devices, doing much of the leg work and taking the pressure off my team.

"We were looking for the very best of breed of technology and from the start Apogee's offering was far superior to the other tenders we received.

"Students and staff are delighted with the quality of the new equipment, and Apogee's ongoing service delivery means that high levels of performance are guaranteed as student numbers grow." A provider of vocational qualifications for 3,700 students across North and West Yorkshire, Craven College approached Apogee when it became clear that its current ageing IT estate was no longer fit for purpose.

With some machines taking up to 20 minutes to load each morning, poor performances and inefficiencies were resulting in low student satisfaction and an overstretched IT helpdesk. The move to remote teaching and learning during the pandemic further highlighted the need for updated technology.

The college was an existing client of Apogee for its Managed Print Services (MPS) prior to the project and turned to the Managed Service Provider (MSP) for its

Managed IT Services (MITS) to provide not only the latest and most reliable equipment, but also the services to ensure that the technology consistently supported student engagement, participation, and performance. Paul Rylands, VP of Managed IT Services (MITS) at Apogee, commented: "We are extremely pleased to be helping Craven College bring technology to the forefront of teaching and learning. As the college continues to invest in the development of their students, lecturers, and administrative staff, Apogee will continue to ensure they have not just the equipment, but the excellence of service required to enable them to focus on their educational goals." Aurelio Maruggi, Chief Executive Officer at Apogee, added: "As we continue to reposition Apogee Corporation as a Managed Services Provider (MSP), we are delighted that Craven College has chosen us for both their Managed Print and IT Services.

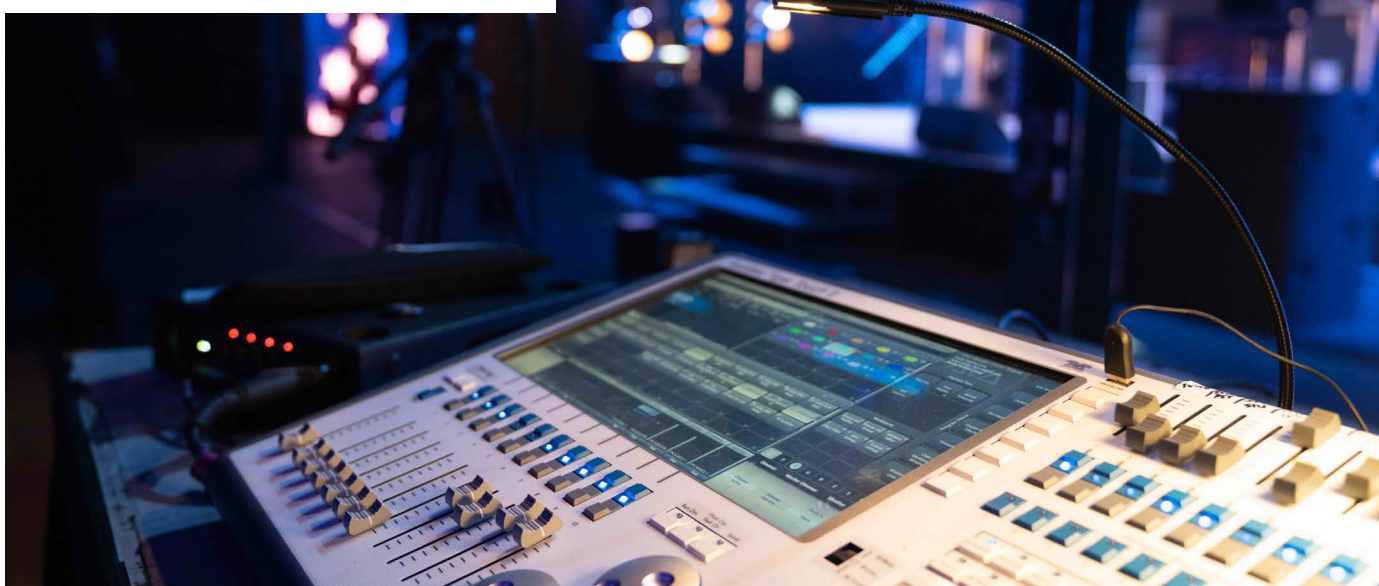
"The journey started with Managed Print Services (MPS), and after experiencing the quality of service delivered by our deployment services team, the college felt confident enough to entrust us with their Managed IT Services (MITS). This led to one of Apogee's largest deployments of Managed Workplace Services (MWS) to date, and testifies the strength of the expanded portfolio that we are now offering to our customers."



BACKSTAGE ACADEMY

an alternative career path for pupils
interested in performance and the arts

Unique live music and event training centre takes to the road to make more colleges aware of its resources



Final year students from Backstage Academy in West Yorkshire have recently toured schools and sixth form colleges with an immersive roadshow to highlight the Academy's industry-focused approach to higher education.

The roadshow offered new opportunities for headteachers, sixth form leaders and school careers advisors to learn about alternative pathways into industries that their students may not have considered, in this case, industry-integrated degrees for the live events and creative industries. Students got to see what they could look forward to as an undergraduate at the Academy, with students from a range of degree courses displaying their skills during a technical production of live band, Listomania.

Participating pupils were allowed to get involved in the show too, triggering lights and changing the visual content on the video walls so they could experience the core disciplines of lighting, sound and visuals. They also learned about stage and

production management as they listened to students share their experiences and raise awareness of the exciting careers in the industry.

A hands-on campus

For the growing number of students that put location, environment and vocational opportunities high on their agenda when looking for a suitable course, Backstage Academy's modern approach ticks every box. Located at the prestigious Production Park Campus, in Wakefield, students get to study at the world's leading campus for live events, film, TV and virtual production. Here, they get hands-on experience in lighting, live sound, live visuals, stage and production management, while learning from experienced professionals who work at the highest levels in the industry. Just as importantly, students also get to experience the next generation technologies that are at the forefront of the industry, providing them with the opportunities to be early career professionals and helping them into

potentially lucrative positions in areas like virtual production and immersive technologies.

At a time when both students and their future employers want higher education to provide not just knowledge, but the skills and some experience to hit the ground running, Backstage Academy offers a refreshing approach to studying for a degree. Its specialist undergraduate and postgraduate courses, bring together academic and vocational learning to deliver a world-class education that is completely in tune with the demands of modern industry.

Integral to the Academy's success are the partnerships with industry-leading organisations including JBL, Riedel, Sennheiser and KRS. Through these partnerships, students benefit from working with industry-experienced artists, technicians, producers and managers, not just on campus, but on live projects across the globe.

Lighting Designer, James Eccles, one of the Academy students who took part in



the roadshow, said: "My time at Backstage Academy has been brilliant. It is totally different from other universities.

Backstage is much more career focused and there are lots of opportunities to get hands on with the kit.

"The roadshow has been great fun too, it's been fantastic to have the opportunity to put what I've learned into practice on the tour."

For the fantastic turnout of school pupils that participated in the Backstage Academy roadshow, many were unaware that these types of industries and job opportunities existed, let alone the chance to take a new type of degree course specially created to find careers in them.

As a result, both pupils and the school staff tasked with responsibility for career guidance are now aware of the wider choice of careers, the modern pathways to them and the exceptional places to study.

For more information visit <https://www.backstage-academy.co.uk/>



So much more than device management!

The days of wheeling a trolley laden with laptops between classrooms is changing. Students want easy access to devices whenever they need them, teachers don't have the time to hand them out and monitor who is using which device. IT Technicians need to perform data transfer to all devices at once and often remotely. Not only that, we are all being targeted with reducing our carbon footprint.

LapSafe® are the original innovators of the laptop storage and charging trolley. Their flagship Mentor™ range, launched some twenty years ago, is still going strong today. The Mentor™ is one of the most sustainable trolleys in the market as it allows you upgrade your trolley whenever you change your device and its robust design means it will stand the test of time. Helping organisations achieve their carbon neutral goals, LapSafe® only use SmartLine™ charging to maximise safety and energy efficiency. The intelligent SmartLine™ charging system incorporates PowaSave™ as standard, so when your devices are fully charged PowaSave™ automatically turns off its internal power supply, rather than dissipating wasted energy



LapSafe®

Diplomat™ Self-Service Loaning Lockers
Southern Regional College

as heat. Charging is automatically reinstated when required by the devices. What about easy access to devices and simple device management? More and more schools, colleges and

universities are turning to smart locker solutions. Here LapSafe® excels further with their wide range of locker solutions. Whether it is simple keyed lockers to sophisticated intelligent smart lockers, LapSafe® can help.

Over 70% of UK universities and colleges around the World have LapSafe® smart lockers, allowing students to access fully charged devices when they need them, 24 x 7, without staff intervention. These lockers can incorporate data transfer to allow upgrades to all devices simultaneously and remotely.


This year LapSafe® are launching their NEW smart locker software, together with a variety of new locker bay sizes. The powerful ONARKEN™ software is at the heart of their smart lockers and combines all their software services in one centrally managed suite of

applications. The Intuitive self-check application allows users quick and easy access to the services they need such as borrow, return, reservations, drop-off and collect. ONARKEN® has been designed from the ground up, following years of user feedback and is probably one of the most universal, powerful and innovative smart locker platforms to date. Existing LapSafe® customers will be able to upgrade to the new ONARKEN® software if they would like the enhanced features and functionality. The new locker bay sizes will be available later this year. Leading the way in easy device management for schools, colleges and universities, LapSafe® has a solution to suit every need and budget. Visit www.lapsafe.com for more information



LapSafe®

Diplomat™ Self-Service Lockers at TAFE SA



“It’s all about the student experience
and what helps them through
their day here at college”

Haringey Sixth Form College

Flexible Learning Spaces

With FLEX™ & Diplomat™ Lockers from LapSafe®



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Help students navigate their education and career paths and find their passion

To say that career paths have shifted over the past ten years would be an understatement. With the boom in technology roles and the impact of automation on the number of traditional jobs available to school leavers, the employment landscape has changed considerably. Discover how UCAS can help you help your students



UCAS can help teachers inspire and empower young people to make aspirational choices to decide which pathway to take in further education.

UCAS is more than just an undergraduate admissions portal. It helps teachers and students get all the correct information and help with post-16 options such as apprenticeships, traineeships, T Levels, A Levels, BTEC, and Diplomas. UCAS can even help with employment and job vacancies

One of the certainties in professional life as a teacher is the many conversations that will be had with pupils about their career aspirations, plans, and worries. Helping students who don't know where to start can be demanding and stressful. UCAS can help with information for teachers to

ensure young students understand what is available to them.

There are lots of different ways for students to train or continue their education. It's important they decide on a direction that's right for them.

For many young people making their post-16 choices will be the first time they make important decisions that affect their future.

UCAS has compiled useful classroom resources to help get students thinking about what to do next. UCAS can help with advice on:

- where to study or train – FE colleges, training providers, sixth form colleges
- apprenticeships
- qualifications at FE level
- career options and jobs
- interview tips and how to write a

personal statement

- subject guides
- work and job-related courses such as **Diplomas, BTEC, TechBac,** and **Cambridge Technical** which are good qualifications to take if a student wants to combine hands-on, practical learning with studying subjects and technical skills

Apprenticeships

Many students want the opportunity to work and study at the same time. An apprenticeship offers exactly that. It is a real job where the apprentice earns a salary, has a contract of employment, all the rights of any other employee, and is given dedicated time for their studies. There are 649 English apprenticeships each designed for a specific job role from

engineering to boat-building or veterinary nursing to accountancy. In Wales, there are more than 200 different apprenticeships across all sectors from advanced engineering to marketing through to youth work. For students aged between 16 and 18, there are two main kinds of apprenticeships to consider.

Level 2 (intermediate) apprenticeship

As well as carrying out a role in the workplace, the apprentice will work towards an apprenticeship at level 2, the equivalent of five GCSEs (grade 4-9). The apprenticeship will take at least a year to complete and when the apprentice passes, they will have the skills and knowledge to carry out their role and progress on their chosen career path.

Level 3 (advanced) apprenticeship

The advanced apprenticeship is generally considered to be equal to two A level passes. In the workplace, a student will be gaining good work and training experience whilst they qualify – and getting paid!

Search UCAS Apprenticeships for lots of great advice (there are separate sections for England and Wales)

The importance of subject choice

Some students know for years what subjects they want to study. Some are overwhelmed by the different choices and rush into things. While some struggle deciding between subjects they enjoy and subjects they are told lead to better jobs.

On the UCAS website, there are more than 60 subject guides. From aerospace engineering to zoology. Each guide gives an overview of what the course is about, what entry requirements are needed, and if the course can be taken as part of an apprenticeship.

Search UCAS Subject Guides to explore lots of study options

Classroom resources

Quick and easy to do, the UCAS career quiz is a free service, available for everyone on UCAS.com and integrated into the UCAS Hub, increasing access to career advice, and helping teachers to support students to make informed decisions. Students as young as 11 can answer a series of questions about their interests, personality, and plans, and receive personalised career matches along with a list of courses that previous students studied to get there.

A new career quiz resource pack on the UCAS website can be combined with Hub Live sessions to bring these tools to life in the classroom.

Developed by expert careers advisers, the career quiz encourages students to consider career options across all industry sectors and to appreciate different routes and the outcomes of their choices and:

- cover two Gatsby benchmarks:
 - learning from career & labour market information
 - addressing the needs of each pupil
- Students can explore a variety of careers and save their results in their UCAS Hub to reflect on, revisit and start planning their next steps

Search UCAS Career Quiz



Lessons plans

To encourage students to consider career options across all industry sectors and to appreciate the different routes and outcomes of their choices there is a supporting lesson plan 'Why shouldn't you be a water slide tester?' developed by expert careers advisers.

There are lesson plans, toolkits, and lots of resources to help teachers with classroom students aged 11 to 14, 14 to 16, and 16 to 18 years old to accompany the career quiz.

Search UCAS Lesson Activities

Research Research Research

UCAS has three great ways to help students research careers and apprenticeships

- **Industry Guides** let students explore what an apprenticeship in a particular

occupation might look like with tips about how to get there. From marketing to construction, business, and so much more.

- **Employer Profiles**, where employers can create profiles on UCAS and showcase their offers to students. These include Jaguar Land Rover, Vodafone, Rolls Royce, Sky, and Keir Group.

- **Career Finder** is for students to search and apply for live jobs, apprenticeships, degree apprenticeships, internships, and placements. Students can also sign up for job alerts and keep track of any submitted applications.

And finally...sign up for the UCAS Hub

You can't tell students what to do, but you can help them make an informed decision. The UCAS Hub provides students with all the tools and information they need – in one place – and for free.

So, when it comes to exploring subjects, considering apprenticeships, shortlisting their final five, and writing a killer personal statement or CV, UCAS has got it covered. And the best bit – each student will have their own dashboard which they can customise and tailor to their needs, organise tools, remove the ones they don't need, and tick off their to-do list. It's their space and their future.

NMITE expands its offering with undergraduate engineering degree

Institute offers fast-track qualification and £5,000 bursaries to females



NMITE (The New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering), a new type of university backed by industry, which last year (September 2021) welcomed its first students onto its MEng Integrated Engineering course, has confirmed it will now be offering a Bachelor's degree.

From September 2022, NMITE will be accepting entries for its fast-track BEng programme, described as the "natural partner" to its existing MEng qualification. The BEng will have all the benefits of the MEng delivery in terms of the NMITE style and philosophy and hands-on learning, (Monday – Friday, 9 – 5) 46 weeks of the year. The BEng duration is confirmed as 26 months (September 2022 students will graduate in November 2024) so just over two years rather than the traditional three. Fees for the duration of the first BEng intake are £7,200 per annum.

Commenting on the news, Professor Elena Rodriguez-Falcon, President & Chief Executive of NMITE said "We had always planned to be a multi-course provider with a selection of pathways available. One advantage of being a new, nimble organisation is we can implement quickly and we have taken this decision based on feedback from our existing cohorts and

potential learners. We're excited to be able to deliver on our ambition."

Unlike the MEng which will accept another intake in January 2023, the BEng will be available to UK students with intakes each September (from 2022 onwards). As with the MEng, students will not be required to have A level Physics or Maths as these subjects will be taught as part of the course. Students will require 112 UCAS points with GCSE Maths and English Grade 6 or above so lower entry requirements than the MEng but with the same emphasis on finding applicants with individuality coupled with passion, grit, determination, creativity and curiosity. Professor Elena Rodriguez-Falcon adds "We are extremely confident of what we are already delivering and it makes sense to make this great offer available to a bigger range of people. This move gives our cohorts more choice and more accessibility and we will also keep open options for switching between postgraduate and undergraduate courses. We recognise that some will prefer a two-year commitment and some will have the ambition for three years."

Abu-Huraira Ishfaq, who studied Psychology, Geography and English Language & Literature at A-Level in

Peterborough, is one of the original September 2021 cohort. Commenting on his NMITE experience so far, he said "As an NMITE student I have had to evolve my learning abilities from predominantly essay writing to include mathematical calculations - a challenge, but one I am enjoying. My favourite experience has been the trip to JCB, an opportunity to learn the history of a large engineering company and how it has structured itself for global success. I'm ready to make a change to the world we live in."

ETL Systems, a world-leading manufacturer of satellites and RF products is one of NMITE's partners and were the main challenge partner for NMITE's Integrated Systems module. As part of this challenge, students needed to develop a model which allowed the user to predict whether a satellite communications link would work. Simon Swift, Engineering Manager from ETL Systems said "As a partner we have been impressed by the students we have encountered so far and their rounded skill set gives them a highly useful systemwide appreciation of product engineering. We are delighted to have supported NMITE since the start of their journey and we are very excited about the introduction of the BEng."

NMITE's teaching, or more accurately learning to be an engineer, concentrates on the core engineering concepts and content as well as ethics and sustainability delivered through a series of Sprints while NMITE's Toolboxes equip learners with skills like drawing, teamworking, programming, communication, certainty, management and business, creativity and design.

Working in small teams, similar to the real workplace, engineering and toolbox skills are used to work on substantial community-based challenges with local organisations. A forthcoming example is a project which will be delivered in partnership with Hereford Cathedral to create and develop a solution to illuminate the display areas of the Cathedral whilst avoiding traditional electrical installation methods which cannot be used in an important heritage setting. This project will include normal engineering challenges but will also require learners to work with a client to understand precise requirements,



comply with various regulatory and safety obligations and to protect the fabric of the building in which the solution will be deployed.

Meanwhile, NMITE has announced a £5,000 scholarship for every woman who will be joining their undergraduate Master's Degree in Integrated Engineering programme in September 2022.

NMITE's She / Her =Future Engineer scholarship aims to attract more women into engineering by offering a competitive funding package specifically for females, or those who identify as female, wanting to further their education in engineering.

"The engineering industry has told us time and again that there is desperate need for more diversity in the sector. NMITE has pledged to recruit a gender-equal student population, and these scholarships will enable us to attract a wider diversity of undergraduate engineers with greater gender representation," said NMITE President and CEO Professor Elena Rodriguez-Falcon.

Every student joining NMITE in September 2022, regardless of gender or background, will receive a £2,000 bursary with females receiving a further £3,000.

Natasha Tait, a member of NMITE's Pioneer Cohort, said: "I switched to NMITE



after beginning my engineering degree at a different university which wasn't right for me. Moving university was a tough decision to make and I was concerned about finances, but I realised that NMITE was really the place I wanted to be. "My experience so far has exceeded my expectations and I am excited to come in every day and learn.

The scholarship funding will alleviate some of the worries about paying for Higher Education, as it did for me. I think any woman who wants to see a change in

the world can find their chance to make that change at NMITE, so I encourage them to make the most of this opportunity." NMITE offers a number of other financial support options for future NMITE applicants, including means-tested bursaries and employer-funded scholarships, which will be announced soon.

More information about scholarships and bursaries offered by NMITE can be found at <https://nmite.ac.uk/bursary>

FNATIC BECOMES FIRST ESPORTS ORGANISATION TO LAUNCH COLLEGE PARTNER PROGRAMME

- Fnatic is supporting the Pearson Esports BTEC course to support the path into gaming careers
- Partnerships announced with three colleges, including Access Creative College, Queen Mary's College and Havant & South Downs College
- The partnership will officially launch at the beginning of the school term in September 2022
- The esports organisation will deliver lectures and networking events, provide insider industry access and help kit out colleges with state-of-the-art equipment

Global esports performance brand, Fnatic, has today launched the first ever dedicated college partner programme, supporting young people in their pursuit of a career in gaming.

Inspired by the launch of Pearson Esports BTEC, Fnatic created the programme to ensure the course is widely available to those hoping to break into the industry. From producing an esports brand to managing tournaments, Fnatic's objective is to provide students with direct access to a real-world gaming brand.

From guest speakers to the delivery of networking events, Fnatic's work will provide real industry insights, and highlight the variety of roles that sit within the esports sector.

The London-based organisation has partnered with three key college partners across the UK, including Havant & South Downs College, Access Creative College, and Queen Mary's College (QMC)

James Fraser-Murison, Esports Director at QMC and National Trainer for Pearson said:

"As the leading provider of esports teaching in the UK, this is huge for our students and also the college.

"To partner up with the biggest esports organisation in the UK, will mean we are directly giving our students a step-up into the industry with first-hand experiences, careers advice and opportunities from a global brand in one of the largest industries in the world."

Rhys Williams, Former League of Legends Coach and Player, Current Tutor at HSDC said: "We're very excited here at HSDC to be working with Fnatic as part of the College Partner Programme.

"This partnership will open doors for the next generation that were so hard to find over previous years, it has the potential to shape the future of the educational esports scene."

Sam Matthews, Fnatic Founder said: "We are super passionate about bringing new talent into our world and this partnership is our way of onboarding the next generation of gamers, whilst giving back to the community.

"We're so appreciative of the college partners who share our vision in



supporting the development of these upcoming esports hopefuls." To benefit future esports industry-professionals, Fnatic has outlined six key aspects of the community college programme which enhance the existing Pearson BTEC, and gives exclusive access to those on the course:

1. Delivering lectures and webinars

Fnatic will deliver hyper-relevant lectures and webinars specific to the curriculum that add value and support learning with real-world examples.

2. Networking events

Fnatic will host interactive networking events for students to prepare them for industry events and connect them with future peers. In addition, the Esports organisation will give students inside access to their offices, facilities and staff to provide on the ground learning.

3. Real world task setting

Based on the gaming curriculum, Fnatic will design creative tasks to give real-world examples of the challenges students may come across when working in the industry.



4. Discount on Fnatic GEAR

Fnatic will offer up to 20% discount on Fnatic GEAR to kit out arenas and classrooms with the best quality equipment for interactive learning.

5. Exclusive access to events and activations

Provide exclusive access to students wanting to get involved in events and activations with an announcement-only server.

6. Hosting tournaments and providing prizes

To incentivise learning Fnatic will host innovative tournaments and share prizes for winners

The partnership – which runs exclusively as not-for-profit – will officially launch for the new school term in September 2022. In the meantime, Fnatic will be working closely with the college partners to continuously refine and improve the programme to deliver the highest-level content for aspiring esports athletes.

For more information please visit: www.fnatic.com/company/collegeprogramme

Digital T Levels at a fork in the road

Two years into the flagship T Level programme would normally be an ideal time to review, take stock, and plot a clear route forward. When those two years coincided with a world-wide pandemic that massively impacted on face-to-face teaching, never mind the practicalities of lengthy work experience placements, the 'big picture' is much harder to clarify. This article is an effort to see through the mist to the way ahead for digital T Levels as they increasingly become the focus of post-16 technical study.



England's Department for Education have built great expectations for the digital T Level to provide a skilled workforce in high-growth areas including web development, games design, data analysis and IT support. With employers in these fields pointing to skills gaps, the need for such a qualification is obvious. In IT, however, existing qualifications such as Level 3 Diplomas and BTECs have a long and successful history, with teaching firmly embedded in many colleges and other post-16 institutions. The switch to T Levels has been met with caution but appears to be gathering pace as the threat to end some established IT applied courses becomes more real.

The providers that have jumped on board the T Level steam train offer a range of reflections. Many express satisfaction with the rigour and modernity of the specifications for the three digital T Levels: Digital Production, Design and Development; Digital Business Services; and Digital Support Services. The investment in modernising teaching

facilities is broadly welcomed, and staff seem to enjoy teaching in them. There have been challenges too, mainly related to the extended work placement of around 45 days. This aspect of the qualification was eyed nervously from the outset by anyone with responsibility for arranging work experience placements, acknowledging how much demand this would place on even the most supportive employer. While ministers claim that 90% of the first cohort of 1,300 students found a placement, some with 'virtual' components, there must surely be some adaptation to ensure that all students benefit. Allowing more than two employers to share the placement period, or changing expectations around attendance and supervision, are two of the changes requested by some providers in the first wave. There are calls for a review of the employer project which, say some, repeats aspects of the course content and creates unnecessary time pressures. These teething issues ought to be expected and all are solvable if the will is

there. A more significant barrier to the success of T Levels is a lack of understanding of technical qualifications among employers whose support is critical to this learning route. Providers need time and support to engage with local employers – to advocate for the new qualification and increase its perceived value; and to collaborate on curriculum design, industry placements and project briefs. The up-to-date subject knowledge that employers can provide, while highlighting rewarding local careers, are part of a partnership package that could make T Levels a massive success. If digital apprenticeships, HE qualifications, and employer training programmes become filled with diverse, skilled and informed young people, then that success will be worthy of celebration. For resources, CPD and connections to STEM professionals to support with digital T Levels, you can visit the STEM Learning website at www.stem.org.uk/QADT

Leading the way in sports flooring

DYNAMIK are a leading sports flooring brand within the UK who pride themselves on being Official Sports Flooring Partners to many National Governing Bodies (NGBs) highlighting their sports flooring specialism and reputable range of flooring solutions.



Supporting British Sport for over 20 years from Grassroots through to Elite level, providing clients with a true one-stop-shop due to the DYNAMIK in-house design, manufacture, supply and direct installation service throughout the UK.

DYNAMIK Sports Floors have provided courts to many prestigious events such as the Netball World Cup in Liverpool, The BT Futsal National Series, Basketball BBL Finals and most recently at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham where Netball, 3x3 Basketball and Table Tennis benefited from the quality and performance of the DYNAMIK Sports Flooring solutions.

In addition to Elite level sport, DYNAMIK are proud to have supported the National Schools Basketball Championships for over a decade and continue to support school sport and community groups. Having a choice of sprung systems and playing surfaces such as timber, vinyl or seamless PU provide clients with a wide choice of options to choose from when considering upgrading their sports or activity flooring.

Exams or non-sporting use within a sports hall is often as important to consider as the sports usage. Foam backed cushioned

vinyl's or pad-based surfaces often suffer from indentation damage when table and chairs are positioned directly onto the floor. Some thicker varieties of foam backed surfaces are not considered ideal for wheelchair usage due to their high rolling resistance and increased user fatigue caused by the extra resistance or cushioning. It is often beneficial for sprung surfaces to be installed due to the ability to have a solid, non-foam backed playing surface installed for the durability enhancement and indentation resistance.

DYNAMIK provide a range of surface options such as Sports Linoleum, Vinyl and PU all manufactured without a foam backing that come in a range of wood effects or standard colours.

Timber sprung systems are a big part of what DYNAMIK do day-to-day and are installed in many school environments throughout the UK although ongoing regular maintenance and aftercare requirements need to be considered as part of budgetary and future expenditure plans. If DYNAMIK Giant Protective Carpet Tiles are used during exams or non-sporting usage, sanding and sealing can be kept to a minimum to avoid costly damage repair and premature surface wear.

DYNAMIK provide clients with an in-house Aftercare and Maintenance Service where schools can request a free of charge visit to survey the condition of the sports flooring providing a proposal for cleaning, direct supply of specialist sports detergents, re-line marking applications or regular aftercare solutions.

DYNAMIK "Direct" was set up in 2020 to allow Schools to purchase rubber gym flooring for DIY solutions in gyms or fitness areas. Manufacturing a range of easy to fit, interlocking rubber tiles in various thicknesses, they are the ideal solution for a rapidly changing fitness environment. Help DYNAMIK to support British sport and fitness by requesting a brochure or free no obligation site visit.



MPs urge government to reverse plan to defund most BTECs

A petition to save the vocational qualification has been discussed in Parliament

A bid to stop the proposal to scrap some BTECs has been supported by more than 100 MPs from a range of different political parties. Battersea MP, Marsha De Cordova, raised the issue in the final week of Parliament following a petition signed by more than 108,000 people. Department for Education Minister, Andrea Jenkyns MP, claimed there was still a place for BTECs amid the reform of 16-18 education, which has seen the launch of T-Levels. Mrs Jenkyns said: "The introduction of T-levels is critical to driving up productivity and supporting social mobility. Based on the same standards as apprenticeships, T-levels have been co-designed with employers and draw on the very best examples of international practice. "They will raise the quality and prestige of the technical offer in this country, ensuring that young people develop knowledge and skills that hold genuine labour market currency. "It is this model that makes T-levels special, and it is the reason why we want them to be the qualifications of choice for 16 to 19-year-olds, alongside A-levels. "We have put significant investment into T-levels, as well as support for the sector, to help providers and employers prepare for them. We are confident that they will be a success and we will continue to carefully assess the progress of our reforms to ensure that no student or employer is left without access to the technical qualifications they need. "There are now 10 T-levels available at over 100 providers

across the country. By 2023, all T-levels will be available, and around 400 providers have signed up to deliver them." Mrs De Cordova urged the government to reconsider. She said: "The petition is about choice, and not forcing students to choose between studying only A-levels or T-Levels from the age of 16. As we come out of the pandemic, we need students to finish education well equipped to progress to further training or to get skilled jobs, allowing businesses to recover and young people to flourish. That is why I am extremely concerned about the Government's proposal to remove funding for the vast majority of BTECs. That will remove choice for many young people and may lead to some missing the opportunity to go to university. The introduction of T-levels does have value in terms of technical education; however, there is no rationale for why BTEC qualifications must make way for them. It makes sense to have A-levels, T-levels and BTECs in all future qualification landscapes. It is clear that the Government are forcing through these changes so they can drive up T-level take-up. It is still too early to analyse the effectiveness of T-levels. The Government should not be pulling away from BTECs without evidence about the success of T-levels. That is grossly unfair to young people, removing their choice and opportunity. Commenting before the debate, Victoria Sylvester – CEO Acacia Training and Vice Chair of Staffordshire Skills & Employability Partnership (SPES), said: "I hope the outcome of the debate will



ensure that employer needs are being met. We are getting feedback from employers that removing BTEC's would leave gaps in the skills provision that they need for now and in the future. For example, in Automotive there is a current BTEC certificate which has all the units and modules an

operative would require in the manufacture of electric/ hybrid vehicles whereas the T Level does not have this, and in construction we are having lots of employers say that the Level 2 Trade T level is not fit for purpose and will not give the learners the knowledge they need to function on site."

LOOKING TO REFURBISH YOUR SPORTS FLOOR?

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DYNAMIK are trusted by our NGB Partners and valued clients to offer advice based on our specialism in sports flooring and our technical support teams.

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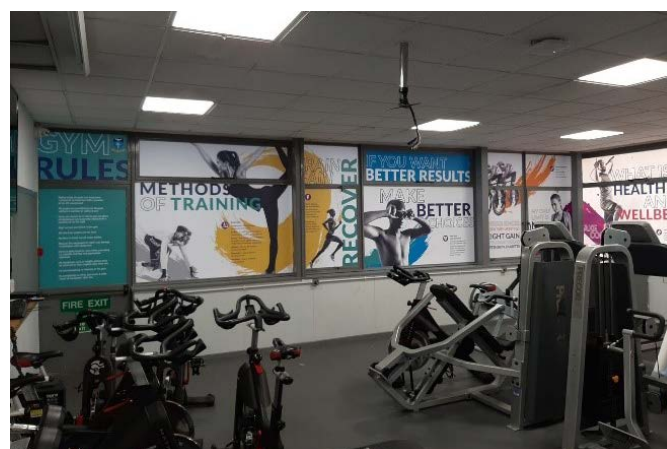
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Gym Equipment Rentals for Schools

PSLT Fitness Solutions is an independent supplier of re-manufactured and new fitness equipment.

PSLT Fitness Solutions offers gym equipment rental services to educational institutes (mainly covering Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities) to offer an affordable gym. A rental solution can help schools save money and wrap up full service and repairs in one monthly payments. The most common equipment rented into schools includes; treadmills, bikes, rowing machines, strength equipment, steppers and ellipticals. Renting gym equipment from PSALT Fitness Solutions means schools will not need to worry about the cost of the maintenance as any faults or repairs will be covered under the rental contract. PSALT Fitness Solutions are happy to send a consultant to visit the

school and talk through the rental plan, finding the best equipment for the school to rent and advise on a layout plan. Once this has been confirmed, a CAD Drawing will be sent out to the school with the final look of the gym space with the gym equipment. The school enters into a rental contract. PSALT Fitness Solutions have their own inhouse logistics who will seamlessly install the kit selected. PSALT Fitness Solutions offers a range of other facilities to schools such as classroom conversions, regular service of fitness equipment, outright purchases and flexible rental terms. 'We recently had a full gym installation by PSALT, including cardio, machine weight and free weight equipment. The



equipment is of a high quality. From the design to installation the process was smooth and quick. We now have a fantastic facility and all at a very competitive price. We cannot thank PSALT enough for making the process hassle free and easy. Since installation

customer service has been first class and nothing is too much trouble' Rhys Barber from St Albans School, Pontypool. Please contact us for no obligation consultations on 01282 969616 / info@psalt.co.uk. Visit our website www.psalt.co.uk for more information.

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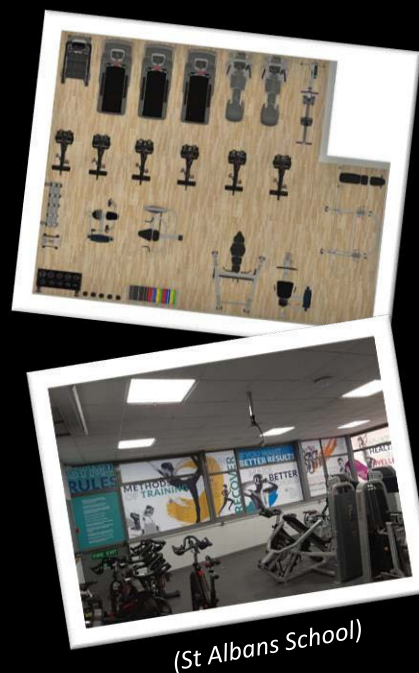
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(St Albans School)



