

## Higher Education (HE) and Careers information at West Buckland School

West Buckland sixth formers benefit from first class information, advice and support from the Head of Careers and Higher Education and the team of tutors who possess a wealth of experience in a variety of key areas. The diversity of courses West Buckland sixth formers choose to study is remarkable, and is a clear reflection of the breadth of their education at this school.

A consistent 70% of international students have taken up places at universities in the Russell Group, often recognised as our most prestigious, research intensive universities. These universities invariably make very challenging offers to A-level students, usually expecting grades of at least ABB and in many cases significantly higher than this. Many students frequently move on to specialist courses at other outstanding higher education institutions of all kinds, including music conservatoires, specialist dance and drama schools, colleges of art and agricultural colleges, as well as excellent departments in many of the newer universities. Increasingly, students are considering other options. Some are choosing to study overseas in areas such as Hong Kong, the USA and Europe. The school also has a positive relationship with the University of Sydney and facilitates discussions on scholarships for talented sportsmen and women at colleges in the USA.

A planned programme helps students to gain the knowledge and develop skills for planning and managing their careers. This is done in a number of ways, including:

- Real life contacts with the world of work and higher education, including workplace visits, work experience, visiting speakers and trips to open days to universities such as Bath, Bristol and Oxford
- Inspirational role models, including alumni, from the careers to which they aspire through the weekly careers lunch programme
- Promoting a range of career choices in a variety of areas including STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), languages, social sciences, arts and humanities
- Using appropriate information in the specialist area in the Michael Morpurgo Library and web based information including the National Careers Service and UCAS.

Contact with parents is considered as vital and is done in a variety of ways, including:

- A monthly newsletter containing news, information and opportunities
- Letters from the department giving advice and information about vital issues such as careers interviews, student finance and higher education choices
- Presence at parents evenings as the sixth form open evening
- A presentation to Year 12 parents in June each year on the process for university applications and student finance
- Response to ad-hoc requests for advice and information, including appointments in school.

The Head of Careers and HE is always happy to meet with parents and students and can be contacted on [mtb@westbuckland.com](mailto:mtb@westbuckland.com).

In both Year 12 and 13, the tutors are key players in the advice given to the students, particularly in the application process and reference writing for HE courses and/or employment. That said, the Head of Careers and HE (who is a 6<sup>th</sup> form tutor) is a continual presence and offers one to one advice and guidance where needed.

After Christmas in Year 12, through to June, there is an emphasis on the variety of education, training and career paths both in the UK and abroad. A visit to the UCAS convention is organized in March and there is an annual HE/careers day every June in which speakers from universities, including alumni, provide information to the students, including writing personal statements and choosing degree courses.

In Year 13 a further HE/careers day takes place in September each year and the emphasis is on researching and applying for employment or HE courses. Enrichment lessons are also given over for this purpose and include advice on personal statements, completing the UCAS form, choosing universities, student finance, life at university and confirmation/clearing procedures. Several mock interviews are provided for those students who are applying to competitive courses where interviews are required such as Oxford and Cambridge and for those studying Medicine. In addition, talks and interviews with careers staff of all three armed forces are organized for students who are interested and an agent from Sporting Elite USA can talk to those interested in sports scholarships at US colleges. These last two opportunities are also available to Year 11 students.