

Onto the Open Evenings

PROCAT
PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Colleges around your area are likely to have started advertising for open evenings.

These are a chance to visit a possible further education venue for next year to see what the building is like.

You can also ask questions, meet staff/tutors/people, find out more about chosen courses and any discounted rates you could be entitled to if you use public transport to travel there.

It's important to remember at this point that the College is promoting itself to any students looking to study here.

Be prepared for lots of people and perhaps some marketing freebies.

Taking that into consideration...

- **Arrive ahead of time to park and get in early as it gets busy**
- **Does the environment appeal to me now I'm at College in person, not just looking at its website or making phone calls to people who work there?**
- **If you're thinking "this isn't what I expected" then it's worth remembering that you're at an Open Evening and a College will run a lot differently during a normal day**
- **It's worth chatting to the learning/pastoral support team based in the Colleges. They will ask you and any companions some questions about support you're getting now and what you feel would help you in College. This is so they can start to put in place any additional support early so College life is made easier.**



Picking your course



After a few days of pondering, work out which College courses feel right for you.

Use the Prospectus that the College open evening would've given you.

Inside it will explain about the courses, qualifications, support, facilities, admission form and perhaps even more.

Send it through the post and the College will hopefully be in contact when they received it.

Top Tips

- **Focus on what courses sound enjoyable**
- **Do you feel you could meet the entry requirements?**
- **Would you like to learn something just for fun, for work, because you must or all the above?**

What happens next?



PERFORMERS
COLLEGE



About a month after applying, a letter/email will have come through to invite you to an interview.

(An audition if you want to be on a performing arts course is part of this)

This is not a you must come letter!

If you can't make it or have changed your mind on applying to the course, let the College know as soon as possible so they can reschedule/ remove people from the list to be interviewed.

Make sure to turn up in appropriate smart/casual dress for the interview unless requested otherwise.

Bring along anything they've asked for in the accompanying letter too.

Each College conducts the interview differently, but members of staff will always speak to you about the entry requirements and why you want to study the course.

Bring a friend/family member along if you'd like so they can help you with any uneasiness.

The interview is also a chance to ask further questions and fill out some fun forms. (I'm being sarcastic readers!)

Hopefully, with a conditional offer letter in one hand and a little "Welcome" booklet in the other you've now passed the interview!

Don't worry if you didn't get yours straight away, some Colleges send this out in the post or shock horror, they may have run out and will send it to you when they can.

After this, any worries about College can try to be parked, because there will be GCSE exams to focus on.

The College (s) may still be in contact with you sending various general letters some to check whether you're still interested in the course.

Guided tours and taster sessions can still be arranged if you haven't had them already.

Contact with you will stop around exam time, when suddenly...

They may be in touch after GCSE exams to offer you a taster day.
This isn't to taste food, I'd love if that happened though.

On the taster day you can meet tutors that are on your course and get a snapshot of what lessons and facilities will be like.

Particularly brave? Make new friends or at least get to know some people.

After this taster day you will have a good idea as to whether College is for you but think it through carefully with those close to you before rushing into a decision.

Wait until the Summer holidays where some pre-enrolment activities may be organised by Colleges to help pull you in.

After GCSE results in August, attend the enrolment date that's been allocated.

If you can't, then the enrolment team can reschedule it at a more convenient time for you.

At enrolment, your course start date will be given, personal details logged into the online systems and this date will also give you a chance to speak to various teams and people working in the College in person if necessary.

College life



What is College like?

Different. It's less of a security blanket than Exceptional Ideas can be. (As referred to in Shannon's first blog) You couldn't meet as many people, build contacts for the future, get used to more self-motivated learning and join in with things like a Student Union or club if College didn't exist though, so the changes can feel good in time!

When do I come in?

Whenever your timetable says, which is generally given on the first day at College.

Depending on the course you come in for 1- 5 days a week. Study hours vary, but except to start from 9am onwards then finish at about 5pm.

Currently I attend my College three days a week and start at different times, only having one full 9am-5pm day.

If it's easier to do work at College than at home for you, I'd suggest maximising the time you're there for and arriving before lessons start.

It's important to attend regularly so you can get in good habits for the future and not fall behind on any work or information given out.

Will I get support in College?

Absolutely, although how this works is lead more by you. Colleges can offer 1-1 support, group support, mentoring, pastoral care, extra classes and this can be tailored towards your personal preference and circumstances.

The format of the support will probably be a bit different to Exceptional Ideas but what you needed in Year 7 or 8 is different to now, so surely support changing over time is a good thing!

Being a student in our unique little schools really helps in speeding up the support process.

Mentors, transition co-ordinators and College staff work closely together so transitions can be as smooth as possible for you.

I didn't meet the College entry requirements what now?

Firstly, don't worry however you did in your exams the College will put you on a course if you've enrolled with them.

It may mean you need to go on a lower level course for a year or re-take Maths and English GCSE's but considering it's a big thing even going to College, it's not the end of the world. Being on a lower level course may mean the work is less time-consuming so you can focus on settling in at a slower pace, which I feel is a good thing.

How many students will be in my class?

Around 10-20 so a lot more than 1-1.

There's never 30 students and one teacher like in most secondary schools though.

What are the tutors like?

More relaxed than a school teacher but that's something you'd be used to after having mentors for so long.

Not all of them you'll really gel with but that's the same with anyone you meet.

Expect your course tutors to...

- **Deliver a lesson to the class, explaining the key points and any extra work**
- **Be approachable contacts for any course-related concerns**
- **Respond if you send them e-mails or any completed work but not straight away**
- **Offer guidance, feedback and resources if you ask for any help with your work if you've given it a try yourself first**

- Turn up when the lesson starts unless they're ill or have been briefly called away elsewhere
- Have some awareness of any extra needs you may have

What if I pick the wrong course or College?

You have the option to move Colleges or courses within the first three to six weeks of first starting.

After this point, options are more limited.

Therefore, it's worth discussing any concerns beforehand and going with your gut choice of College course, so this problem won't occur.



How do I travel to College?

By bus, train, a form of post-16 transport or a lift from a parent or carer. Plenty of options, especially if you're too young or don't feel ready to start driving lessons yet.

What can I buy or bring to eat at College?

No lunch checks from now on so you can bring a student friendly packed lunch or buy a meal from the College canteen, this will have an option for a variety of budgets/dietary requirements.

Unfortunately, fans of ready meals, instant noodles will have to their cravings satisfied outside of College as there isn't any communal microwaves. 😞

(In my College at least)

Don't forget about visiting any cheap high-street student hangouts either.

The big yellow arches, sausage roll sellers and sandwich shops really value your custom.

Parents and carers remember these perks of student life though, so make sure to keep quiet about this and just have it as an occasional treat!

Can I have a job at the same time as going to college?

Yes, you can.

Bear in mind though that College is likely to improve your job prospects. Anything extra on top of studying in term time will need good time-management skills and an ability to work after-hours to fit it all in.



Will there be somewhere quiet I can go to get away if I need to?

Yes, although some quieter spaces can end up being used by others.

If it's really got too much, leaving the classroom or just getting some air is a good option.

Just try to let someone know where you're going before you do this.

If this a concern to you Colleges have options available to make sure there are plans in place if you need space.

Several staff will be made aware of this.

Who is there to help me if I have any questions or problems?

Tutors, learning support staff, receptionists pretty much any staff member!

People who work on your course are the best people to ask for most questions or problems.

If they're not, they can help you get hold of the right person.

What sort of equipment will I need to take with me or will everything be provided?

Most equipment isn't provided apart from work/textbooks, so anything mentioned before, during the course itself is worth buying.

A pencil case, notepad and a Maths set if you need to re-sit are important whatever course you end up on.

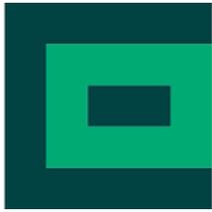
Anything else that can help?

The exam newsletter links well to what's been wrote in this issue; the editor think it's a good read too.

<http://exceptional-ideas.co.uk/newsletters/>

I did personally write, edit and gather most of the info for it though, so I'm just a LITTLE biased!

If you have any further questions, the internet, mentors or College staff themselves may be able give a more specific answer for you.



**Easton
+ Otley
College**

Nerdy Nora's Newsletter

Nugget



According to AOC (Association of Colleges) they're over 2 million students who study College courses in the UK.

Although costs vary depending on your age and personal circumstance, you can go back to College or University at any time in your life.

The Plugs



Don't forget to like and ...



for regular content, information and a chance to chat with the school community.

Check out our new Transition blog too.
just control, right click and it'll load up the link quick!

<http://exceptional-ideas.co.uk/blog/>



Thanks to the transition coordinators for their support in creating this newsletter.