

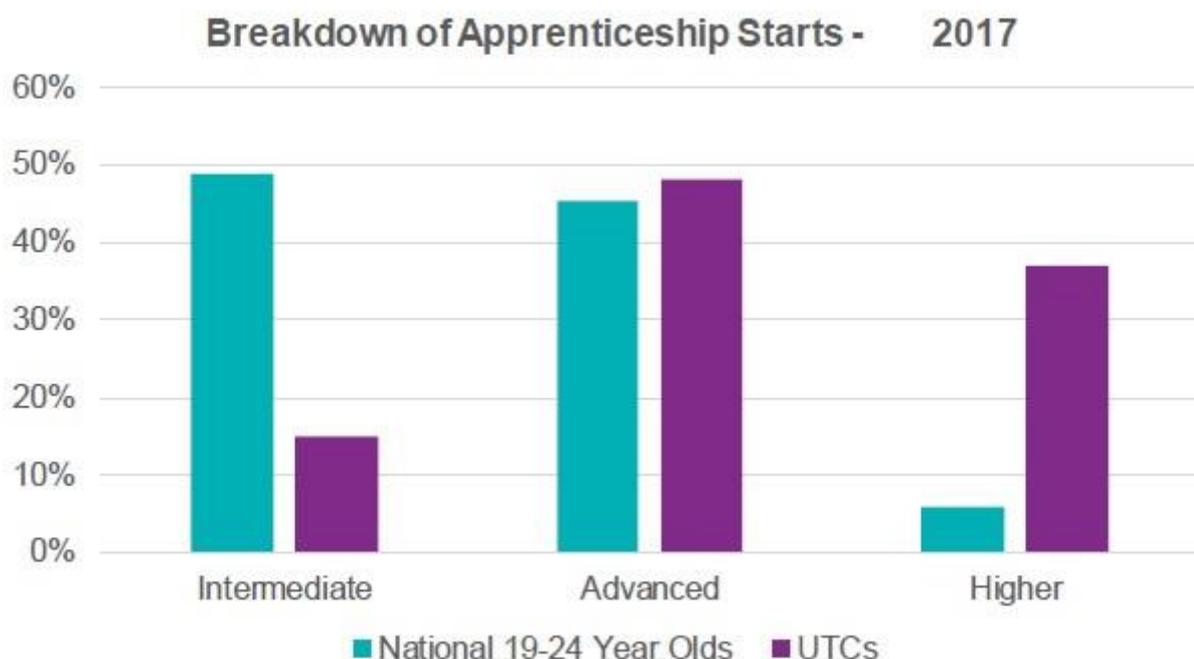


Parent Update – November 2017

Dear parents/carers,

With a well-earned half-term break over, it is back to work for students with the end of courses fast approaching in Years 11 and 13. The main priority for us is to ensure that students make positive career progression at the end of their time with us and maintain our growing success in destination outcomes for past students.

Nationally, UTCs continue to provide exceptional opportunities for students, with 37% of exUTC students leaving Year 13 advancing to Higher level Apprenticeships, compared to 6% nationally.



We continue to work with employers in overcoming the local shortage of skilled engineers and digital practitioners and positive career progression is at the heart of our purpose.

Curriculum

We have redesigned the Engineering curriculum to deliver a more relevant, applied learning experience in KS4 with the introduction of new courses. Year 10 and 11 students are following the NCFE Certificate in Engineering during 2017-18, which will result in a completed qualification in the summer (<https://www.ncfe.org.uk/media/833091/601-4532-8-12-engineeringqualification-specification-issue-7-sept-17.pdf>). Option subjects include Smart Product Design and Manufacture for Year 10 and a 3D Printing award for Year 11. This has significantly increased practical time as students develop their engineering skills, with some excellent work being produced.

Year 12 students have embarked on updated BTEC National qualifications in both Engineering and IT, requiring external assessment of core units by examination. This makes the courses more aligned to A Levels, although the majority of the learning is still assessed through moderated assignments. Further information on these qualifications can be accessed through the following links:

Engineering: http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/Engineering/2010/Specification/9781446934647_BTEC_90c_L3_Eng_Iss4.pdf

IT: http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/InformationTechnology/2010/Specification/9781446934203_BTEC_90c_L3_IT_Iss3.pdf

Supporting Learning

Whilst we do not set home learning as a matter of course, there are occasions when additional work is essential (i.e. revision for assessments/exams) or to boost understanding. For KS5 students, it is expected that students should spend 2-3 hours per day on preparation, follow-up or extension study in order to fully develop their knowledge and its application. In addition to resources provided by staff, we have several on-line resources that students have been registered with that can be used to extend their learning, including **GCSEpod** (<https://www.gcsepod.com/>) and **Kerboodle** (<https://www.kerboodle.com/users/login>). Your child is able to access revision and extension activities from home and this provides an excellent opportunity to support progress and confidence.

On the Friday of the half-term break, Donna Gunn (Science) and Dani Amorim organised our first **Parent Partnership Workshop**, with sessions being attended by 20 parents/carers with the aim of introducing strategies that can be used to support students' learning at home. It is very much hoped that this project will be extended as the academic year progresses.

Year 11 Exams

Mock exam week is from **Monday 27th November to Friday 1st December** and students have been briefed and timetables issued. This is an important week as it will replicate exam procedures that will be experienced in the Summer and consequently students need to be suitably prepared. In addition, results will be used for references and interviews that students attend in the coming months. Therefore, your support in ensuring your child's revision will be much appreciated.

Results will be presented in a similar manner to next Summer's day in August and we will provide feedback to each student.

KS5 Enrichment

We have recently established an exciting package for students in Years 12 and 13 that complements their academic studies and extends employer-led projects.

This involves Year 13 students competing against other UTCs in the Craftsman Cup, sponsored by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) at MOD Lyneham, a mentoring scheme run by BMW to guide students in career planning and participation in the Duke of York Award for Technical Education. The latter recognises the combination of qualifications, work experience placements and the development of wider competencies required in the workplace such as communication skills and problem solving. On successful completion, students are awarded their certificates and ceremonies have been held at Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace. Further details can be found if you follow this link: <http://www.utcolleges.org/duke-of-york-award-for-technical-education/>.

UTC environment

As part of continuing to refresh and improve our environment, we have enhanced the Sixth Form study area to allow students to work productively during study periods. Future plans include displaying historic pictures from the Swindon Railway Works and further inspirational images to highlight the links between UTC Swindon and industry.

Autumn Reports

Students will receive their first academic reports for the year next week, which is the first opportunity to review their current performance towards their challenging targets at the end of Year 11 or 13. We are not organising an Academic Review day this term as we had an Information Evening in September, but do contact our Student Support team if you have specific concerns regarding your child's progress (Liz Clarkson – lclarkson@utcswindon.co.uk).

Changes to the working day

In response to last year's consultation on changes to the working day, we are proposing reducing lunch by 20 minutes (from 50 mins) and afternoon break times by 10 minutes (from 20mins), which will result in an earlier end to the formal day as follows:

Mondays 3.20pm

Tuesdays-Thursdays 4.30pm

Fridays 3.40pm

This will allow additional time for individual student mentoring and staff training and would take effect from the start of the Spring term.

If you have any comments on the proposal, please do contact us (info@utcswindon.co.uk).

Careers Convention

We are holding the 3rd UTC Careers Convention on **Thursday 23rd November**, which builds on the hugely successful previous events. Students will be off timetable for the day to participate in a range of workshops focusing on careers guidance, CV writing and personal planning for possible progression following their time at UTC Swindon. In the afternoon, students will visit the Careers Fair in the LRC, at which over 25 companies and businesses will have stands and personnel, including apprentices, to outline opportunities and finish at 3.40pm.

Between 4-5pm the Careers Fair will be open to parents/carers and external students. It is hoped that you will be able to attend this session.

Student Wellbeing Day

We held our annual personal development day at the end of last half-term, to which we invited several partners to deliver workshops aimed at further developing students' skills, understanding and awareness across a wide range of activities, ranging from First Aid, selfdefence, knife crime, career planning and art. Thanks to all those who gave up their time to make this another roaring success!

GCSE Geography Fieldwork visit

At the end of September, the Year 11 Geographers carried out part of their GCSE fieldwork at Westonsuper-Mare, with the objectives of identifying coastal defences and evaluating their effectiveness as part of a coastal management scheme. This involved conducting surveys and questionnaires with local businesses, analysing the contrasting coastal defences and their impact on the local community. The obligatory ice cream and candy floss were also sampled!



Jack, Nadia and Nathalli get to grips with the sea wall!



Royal Navy Challenge

Entries for this year's competition are being compiled by students in Years 10 and 11, with the aim of qualifying for the finals, to be held at HMS Bristol, Gosport in the Spring. This is the first time we have entered the RN Challenge and the competition, Exercise Clean Sweep, has the objective of building a remote controlled vessel that is capable of recovering hazardous objects from Portsmouth Harbour and placing them on the quayside, in preparation for the visit of HMS Prince of Wales. This simulated activity will involve a range of skills, teamwork and leadership and we are

hopeful of gaining our first representatives at the finals.

Key Dates

Thurs 16th Nov

Tues 21st Nov
Thurs 23rd Nov

27th Nov – 1st Dec

Weds 6th Dec
Tues 12th Dec
Weds 13th Dec
Fri 15th Dec

Weds 3rd Jan

November

Open Evening 5.30-7.30pm (School ends 3.40pm)

Year 12/13 Honda visit

Year 13 Future of the Engineering workshop

Careers Day. Open to visitors from 4pm. School ends at 3.40pm

Year 11 Mock Exams **December**

KS5 BMW Mentoring

Student Board Parliament visit

Presentation Evening (ex Y11/13) – 6.30-7.30pm

End of term (finish at 12.50pm) **January**

Start of Spring Term (8.30am)

With all good wishes,

Jon Oliver
Principal

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