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ASK Programme Funding to End in July 2025 Despite Growing Success

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The Department for Education has announced it will stop all funding for the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme for schools and colleges from July 2025, despite its success at raising awareness of apprenticeships. At FutureSmart Careers, we are greatly saddened by the news. Through our valued partnership with the programme, thousands of students across Devon, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire have been supported thanks to our team's great passion and expertise and we are very grateful to the schools and students we've worked with for their trust and engagement.

Our Latest Blog Explores MOOCs and University Taster Sessions



This month, at FutureSmart Careers, we are delving into the benefits of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and university taster sessions. Platforms like Coursera and FutureLearn provide flexible learning opportunities, while universities offer in-person and online tasters to help students explore subjects before committing. In our blog this month, we highlight how these courses and sessions can support informed academic and career decisions and help students to plan their next steps confidently. Find this and our other blogs [here](#).

UK Government Appoints New Expert Adviser on Skills



FE Week reports that Oli de Botton, a former Head Teacher now Chief Executive at the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), has been appointed Expert Adviser to PM Kier Starmer on skills [Oli de Botton appointed expert adviser](#). A member of Teach First 2003, de Botton was later head of School 21, a renowned progressive free school. John Yarham will become interim CEO at the CEC.

UCAS News - Project Next Generation: A Focus on Diversity



UCAS have recently completed work on their latest insight report [Project Next Generation: A Focus on Diversity](#), with the report revealing how 13-17-year-olds from underrepresented groups navigate their education and career choices. Drawing on insights from over 1,000 young people, the report highlights how four key student groups engage with early career pathways: those from ethnic minority backgrounds, women considering stem careers, neurodiverse students and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Cross Background Friendships Drive Social Mobility



This article from WonkHE [Social Mobility is in the Mix](#), covers a report showing how cross-background friendships are a driver of social mobility, and that such ‘economically connected communities’ “predict future earnings better than almost anything except household income itself.” There are implications for Widening Participation, as “access to HE alone is insufficient – it’s the composition of the student body and resultant social networks that significantly influence mobility outcomes”.

Young Cadets Do Better at School



‘The Impact and Value of School-based Cadet Forces in the UK’ report, published earlier this month, shows the positive impact of the Cadet Forces on social mobility, employability, mental health and schools. Cadet Force UK, a publicly funded national youth organisation for 12-18-year-olds, builds resilience and improves school attendance, behaviour and the chance of attending university. Read more at: [Young cadets do better at school, report finds | Education Business](#).

Thousands of Green Jobs To Be Created



In a recent Evening Standard article, Ed Miliband describes the push towards net-zero as “the growth opportunity of the 21st century”. Announcing Great British Energy’s first project, he shared details of investment in solar panels for schools and hospitals and funding for councils and community groups to build local clean power projects. Read the feature [here](#).

Upcoming Events

University of Cambridge – Online Subject Masterclasses in May



REMINDER: University of Cambridge online Subject Masterclasses in May. These sessions, running from 4:15-7:00 pm, are a great way to deepen subject knowledge while experiencing what it's like to study at the University of Cambridge. Masterclasses include Neuroscience (1st May), Natural Sciences (13th) and Land Economy (14th). Cost is £15 per student, but funded places are available. Register [here](#).

Oxford Admissions Webinars



The [Adventures on the Bookshelf](#) blog, written by Modern Languages staff and students at the University of Oxford, is aimed at Year 11 to 13 students and teachers. This month, they have shared the Keble College Oxford Admissions webinar dates which cover: Oxford Explained, Super-Curricular Activities, Personal Statement (new format) and Preparing for Oxford Interviews. Find out dates and times for these [here](#).

Meet The Russell Group Webinars



Meet the Russell Group webinars have been taking place again this year, in partnership with the UK University Search Fairs. With topics such as: Student Life at University, Considering Clinical and Health Professions, Personal Statements and Applying to a Russell Group University, it's worth registering to be able to access the recordings of past sessions. Sign-up at [Russell Group Webinars](#).

University of Cambridge – Faculty of Maths Open Days



The Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge is holding two Open Days on **3rd and 10th May** at the Centre for Mathematical Sciences. The activities will include Mathematics talks, STEP workshop, Preparation for Interviews sessions, plus talks for parents and supporters, as well as 'drop-in' sessions with students and staff, where you can ask questions about admissions or the course. Book online at: [Faculty of Mathematics Open Day](#).

University of Cambridge – Law Webinar Series



The Murray Edwards College is running a Private Law webinar series on **22nd May at 5-6pm and 19th June**. Aimed at students in year 11, 12 and 13, the first session will cover Tort Law, while the second will cover Contract Law. Delivered by Christopher Hose, the sessions promise to be insightful events for those with an interest in a career in Law or applying to study Law at university. For more information and to book, see [here](#).

Big Bang Young Scientist Fair – 17th to 19th June 2025



The Big Bang Young Scientist Fair returns this year at the Birmingham's NEC from Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 June [The Big Bang Fair 2025](#). With hands-on workshops, activities and exciting live shows, the event is free to state-school students in England and Wales in years 6 to 8. Sessions for budding scientists, engineers and designers include Biomimicry, Drone Coding, Climate change and Design solutions. Register [here](#).

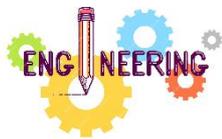
Smallpeice Trust: Human Habitat on Mars: 20th - 22nd Aug 2025



What will life on Mars look like in 2050? How will we build, survive, and thrive on the Planet? Join leading academics at City, University of London for this three-day virtual course exploring the cutting-edge science and engineering behind human space habitation. From Aeronautical and Biomedical Engineering to Computer Science, you'll dive into the innovations of the future. Register at: [Human Habitat on Mars](#).

Recommended Websites & Resources

Spotlight On: Engineering



Recent queries to our helpline have shown interest in Engineering careers and training. Check out some of the resources available: Dream Engineer's [Top 10 Engineering Podcasts](#) ; various industry magazines: [The Engineer](#) ; [Engineering and Technology Magazine](#) ; [Professional Engineering magazine: IoME](#); Free MOOCs: [Engineering the future - University of York](#) ; [Digitalisation for the Chemical & Process Industries - FutureLearn](#) ; [Electric Vehicle Operation and Diagnosis | Coursera](#); [Introduction to Electronic Engineering - FutureLearn](#).

Tough Job Interview Questions with Answers



Being interviewed for a job can be intimidating and preparation is essential. You should research the company, decide what you are wearing and rehearse your journey. You should also think about the questions you might be asked. Adzuna has listed some of the toughest questions and provides some advice on how to answer them [here](#).

The Medic Portal's Free Resources



The team at the Medic Portal have some great free resources for students who are considering applying to study Medicine, including webinar recordings, quizzes and blogs such as [Top Tips For Choosing Medical Schools in the UK - The Medic Portal](#). Factors covered include location, learning and teaching methods, admissions tests, university experience, clinical specialities, financial aspects, student support services and employability and alumni success. To explore other resources go to [The Medic Portal](#).

UCAS – Apprenticeship Application Guides



UCAS have recently created some useful Apprenticeship Application Guides: [Apprenticeship Application Guides | Apprenticeships | UCAS](#). Tailored to areas such as Business, Construction, Engineering, Finance & Accounting, Healthcare, Legal, Creative, Digital and IT and with top tips from both employers and current apprentices, the guides prove to be another helpful resource for both students, teachers, advisers and parents or carers alike. Look at the guides [here](#).

Apprenticeship Opportunities

Vehicle Maintenance Level 3 Apprenticeships with the Royal Mail – closing 30th April



Apprenticeships available in the Southeast, Greater London and East England. With a fleet of 50,000 vehicles, including 6,000 HGVs and trailers, 5000+ alternative fuels such as EV's and hydrogen fuel Royal Mail is a leader in the industry. Our team of technicians ensures the fleet runs efficiently, handling routine servicing, major rebuilds and modifications while embracing cutting-edge vehicle technology. Starting salary £17,272. Find out more and apply [here](#).

Reminder – Apprenticeships with the National Trust launch in May 2025!



The National Trust are working with Amazing Apprenticeships to launch apprenticeships for 130 young people who might not otherwise consider a career with the National Trust. Apprenticeships will be based at locations round the country and provide opportunities for a range of careers including horticulture and countryside management, as well as project management, information technology, finance and HR. The first round of apprenticeships will be open for applications in May 2025. Individuals and those supporting them can register interest [here](#)

Apprenticeships with the Royal Navy



Interested in a Royal Navy Apprenticeship? Explore a wide range of apprenticeships with the Royal Navy [here](#). There are roles available in Engineering, Aviation, Warfare, Logistics and Medical - you could be embarking on an adventure that will take you around the world whilst you earn and learn!

Discover your potential with a QA Apprenticeship



Kickstart your career in AI, data, cloud, business administration, digital marketing and more. Explore the various opportunities available with QA, including an opportunity as a Networking Engineer Level 4 apprentice based in Swindon (closing date 30th May). Check out the opportunities [here](#)

Apprenticeships Opportunities with Atkins Réalis



Graduate schemes and apprenticeships are now open at Atkins Réalis, a world-class engineering service and nuclear organisation. Help to create sustainable solutions that connect people, data and technology to transform the world's infrastructure and energy systems. For more information click [here](#)

Level 3 Civil Engineering Technician Apprenticeship launching October 2025



In partnership with Cormac, Truro & Penwith College are launching a new Level 3 Civil Engineering Technician apprenticeship in October 2025: [Civil Engineering Technician Apprenticeship Truro & Penwith College Oct 2025](#). The qualification aims to address the region's skills shortage in construction and civil engineering, one of Cornwall's most in-demand sectors. The 30-month programme will combine Cormac's industry expertise with Truro and Penwith College's high-quality teaching.

For Careers Leaders/Heads of Careers Department

CDI Launches New Technical Education Resource Hub



The Career Development Institute is thrilled to announce the launch of the new [CDI Technical Education Resource Hub](#). This brand-new hub is your go-to source to stay up to date and confidently guide young people on apprenticeships, T Levels, Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), and qualifications reform. Supported by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, this hub is managed and regularly updated by CDI to keep you informed.

Southampton University – Teachers' and Advisers' Conference, Wed 7th May 2025



REMINDER: The University of Southampton is holding its Teachers' and Advisers' Conference this May. With a Keynote titled "The impact of AI breakthroughs in Education" and interactive subject talks to include flight simulators in Engineering, lab tours in Biological Sciences, and video otoscopy in the Health Sciences session. Register for your place [here](#).

CDI Conference for Careers Leaders 2025 – 18th June 2025



The National Careers Leaders Conference 2025 - Wednesday, 18th June, at the Royal National Hotel in London, £135 to CDI members. Keynotes include Looking beyond the Benchmark and the Good Careers Guidance Report and Reflections on a Career in Career Education. For further information and to book, click [National Careers Leaders' Conference - CDI](#).

National Apprenticeships Events – Oct 2025 - Feb 2026



Events will be taking place across the UK to bring school and college students, and parents or carers, together with Top UK employers, universities, colleges and training providers to discover more about career options. With the events in North and South London in October and November 2025, Cardiff in February and Bristol in April 2026, you can book to attend as an individual or send a school group. Find out more [here](#).

Smallpeice Trust – Join the Teacher Panel



Looking to improve their collaboration and connections, the Smallpeice Trust are formalising and expanding their existing engagement efforts through dedicated panels, with the aim of helping the trust to refine their approach and ensure their initiatives remain relevant, impactful, and forward-thinking.

The Smallpeice Trust are therefore calling for Teachers to join their Teacher Panel: [Smallpeice Trust newsletter - April 2025](#). You can register your interest by contacting them [here](#).

Get in touch



FutureSmart Careers offers a range of well-loved packages for schools but can also tailor a plan to fit schools' needs exactly. Our FutureSmart Essentials package includes:

- Suite of downloadable resources
- 9-5 careers advice helpline
- Monthly newsletters with news, events and opportunities

Many schools upgrade to **FutureSmart Pro** which includes all of the benefits of Essentials plus additional in-school support from our team of qualified advisers for workshops, personal guidance sessions, talks and other activities tailored to the schools' exact requirements.

Contact us



For all other enquiries, please contact our team at enquiries@futuresmartcareers.co.uk or give us a call on Tel: 0330 311 9509

We'd love to hear from you!

No responsibility can be taken for the content of external websites mentioned in this newsletter

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