

The Association of Distance Learning Colleges



Newsletter March 2024

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MAX FAULKNER - AN ELEVATION

So, another year, another AGM. All our meetings are important and we hope both interesting and enjoyable, but this one is just a bit special.

Chairman **Max Faulkner** has announced his intention of stepping down from the hot seat. Max has been on Council since 2001, when his name first appears in the Minutes, representing the Open Learning Centre International. He has also been a Director long-term of OakCAD/NCT, one of our most valued Member Colleges.



In 2010 he was elected Chairman, taking over from **Peter Fisher** – the Minutes for that year show that he was proposed for Chairman by Peter, seconded by **Trevor Leach** and elected unanimously.

In all this time, his enthusiasm for distance learning, and his passionate advocacy of adult education generally, has been an inspiration to us all, and his wise and steady guidance has seen the Association through some rough times and very strange circumstances - most notably during the Covid pandemic.

We are therefore very happy to say that Max has agreed to step up, rather than down, and become the Association's **Honorary President** – assuming that the meeting elects him, but we think this is a fairly foregone conclusion. The Presidency is a largely decorative role, we won't be calling on Max to attend meetings or take on any responsibilities, but it will be good to have his expertise and wise counsel to call upon whenever necessary. In fact according to our Articles of Association we are supposed to have an Honorary President at all times, which has been vacant since Lord Clark stepped down. It will be good to rectify this omission, and to have Max still part of the Association family.

VICE-CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome from myself and the association as we finally head into warmer, sunnier weather. It is fantastic to see new members and associates joining us. As always, the invite is extended to bring along new people and organisations that you feel may benefit from ADLC membership.

I want to pick up on a few topics briefly:

A depressed market

Both the consumer and business markets are currently depressed, with people holding back from purchasing. I'm sure we're all feeling it.

Political turbulence is certainly a factor here and a looming general election means possible change in policies and governance. I'm sure high-interest rates and a slow housing market are also playing their part.

Another noteworthy development is the Advanced British Standard, which aims to replace both GCSE and A-levels and is now being consulted on. I feel it's ambiguous and almost a 'dumbing down' of British qualifications, not necessarily an improvement. I am lobbying against the A.B.S. as I don't feel it solves any of the issues it is intended to address, and I believe it actually muddies the water for learners and employers.

Employer skills report (skillswmw.com)

I'd like to share this with you all. Although this was a regional report for the West Midlands and Warwickshire, it's safe to assume it's a similar picture of the U.K. The report further confirms a huge skills gap for basic digital skills such as Microsoft 365 (Outlook, Word, Excel etc.).

An ageing workforce and not enough skilled new workers are coming through.

Employers state that they must increase salaries to find the right staff.

Manufacturing and engineering are all reporting huge skills deficiencies at lower levels.

The contents of this report is a huge opportunity for all of us as most of us offer these essential skills at various levels, so we should be able to service this market gap.

The continued A.I. Race

A.I. continues to play a huge part in our future considerations. It will most definitely change our course offerings over time if it isn't already.

Although it's a fast pace of change, I don't believe the race to A.I. takeover will happen as quickly as we're led to believe.

With almost all traditional trades being identified as least exposed to A.I., such as plumbing, bricklaying and plastering, mechanical and metal/woodworking skills,

this could also pose some interesting opportunities for us all.

Round up of previous meetings

During our last two meetings, we had a presentation on automated A.I. Marking by Graide, and we discussed “How to foster community at a distance (removing the ‘distance’ from distance learning)”

Our January meeting was focussed on public funding and buying and selling of training providers by ESS Assist, and we discussed the question of: “Supporting students virtually, how can we best manage the student experience at scale?”

I’d like to thank everyone for the continued input to our new-style meetings and would love to hear your individual feedback on items you would find helpful in future gatherings.

Looking forward and some hope

Distance learning has always excelled through times of change, crisis and turbulence. After all, isn’t all learning fundamentally about change? I do not believe in letting markets happen to me; instead, I believe in grasping opportunities. I see plenty of opportunity in today’s somewhat unfamiliar world.

Matt Jones

Founder & MD of Oxbridge and Vice-Chair of the ADLC.

In October 2023, Oxbridge founder Matt Jones completed a gruelling trek across the scorching Sahara Desert to raise money for Acorns Children’s Hospice. Acorns has three main hospices, based in Birmingham, Worcester, and Walsall, all of which provide vital care for children living with life-limiting conditions and their families.

The charity requires an estimated £27,000 daily to maintain its services. Matt was part of a group that raised more than £100,000 collectively, and his own fundraising total has exceeded an astounding £6,000. Not only that, but the journey provided Matt with an opportunity to gain a unique insight into the way of life of the nomadic Berber communities that call the Sahara home.



NEWS FROM MEMBER COLLEGES



Left, an artist's impression of Maidenhead College

Right, an Ideal party; Brian, Elaine, Al and Scot

Below right, artwork by student Leonie Schottler

Maidenhead Tutorial College – our newest Member - is an independent tutorial college developed from BYT one of the UK's leading names in secondary education. Established in 2010, BYT developed a number of learning centres across the Thames Valley and Surrey with distinctive and effective learning solutions to complement traditional schools, from which **Maidenhead Tutorial College** was born.

As a Tutorial College, we believe learning happens throughout the year. Not just prescribed traditional term times.

Our holiday revision courses and exam technique workshops help GCSE and A-Level students gain and edge and boost their exam performance.

Serving the community and beyond with quality small group & online tuition for A-Levels, GCSEs and other qualifications. Once you register with us, depending on the level of support

chosen and provision available you will have access to an online tutor along with the School's latest extensive past exam paper support. Further Maidenhead Tutorial College is a registered exam centre and priority is given to our registered distance learners.

Ideal Schools

An Ideal Celebration

Cheers to 40 Years – Ideal Schools celebrates 40 Years in business

We recently celebrated our 40 years in business with a reception and dinner at the Voco Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. The event was attended by students past and present, tutors, examining bodies ICB and AAT, business associates and members of our staff team.

At the event, as well as being congratulated on his achievements, Al announced he is stepping down from an active day-to-day role in the business. His long-term colleague and Director



Brian McVean will take on the position of Managing Director. His son, Scot, will become the Chairman of the company. These changes at the top of the college will take effect from 1st September 2023.

The new management team is excited to grow the college in the years to come while still retaining the student-centred approach so characteristic of AI's way of working, where we take a genuine interest in every individual and do our utmost to help them succeed.

London Art College

London Art College - International Students

While the majority of our students continue to be based in the UK, we are pleased to have a significant number of international students pursuing their studies from their respective countries. Simply as an example; in 2023



students have enrolled on our courses from USA, Australia, India, Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Germany, Saudi Arabi, Netherlands, Greece, Thailand, Canada, France, Austria, Luxemburg, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Belgium, Argentina, Brazil, China, Denmark, Egypt, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Turkey, Qatar, UAE and Italy. Each year, we also welcome students from numerous other countries across the globe. The London Art College has a diverse and international student body, and with the increasing accessibility of the internet, enrolling and studying with us has become more convenient than ever.

Our student community at the London Art College comprises individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Both international and UK-based students have the flexibility to enrol at any time that suits their schedule. It's important to note that all our courses are conducted in English, and we do require students to have a reasonable standard of proficiency in both written and spoken English.

Our courses are entirely conducted online, eliminating the need for any in-person sessions or visits to the UK. Students receive the full course material digitally, organized into progressive study units. Assignments can be submitted electronically, and tutors' feedback will be uploaded for easy access.

Oxbridge

Oxbridge have again come on board as a sponsor for the 6th Birmingham Awards, showing their support and the importance of these awards for the City of Birmingham. Birmingham Awards



have been called the people's awards and its reputation as being transparent and authentic is paramount for the organisers.

Oxbridge believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to better themselves. Whether it's getting that promotion at work, setting up the business you've been dreaming of for years, or making the career change you know could be the missing piece in the puzzle of your happiness; no dream should be off-limits, and everyone should have access to the right tools to push the boundaries of their own potential.

Matt Jones – Founder & MD - said: "Oxbridge is delighted to be a long-term supporter and sponsor of the Birmingham Awards. We believe it is essential to champion our great region and celebrate the amazing community and people that we hold so dear. We look forward to celebrating with you all on the night."

School of Health The healthy wallet diet

Eating healthily can seem hard when food prices are rising and you are on a tight budget. Last week we looked at how it was possible to get your 5-a-day for less than £5 per week – now we turn

our attention to adding in some more healthy foods, to complete the diet in the most cost-effective way possible without compromising on health!

So what makes up a healthy diet?

The basic nutrients are protein, carbs, fats, vitamins, minerals and water. Fibre is also included within the carbs category. By consuming a minimum of 5-a-day fruit and veg we will already have a good contribution towards fibre, vitamins and minerals.

So, what else do we need?

Good quality proteins – high quality proteins include eggs, meat, fish, soy and quinoa. Vegetarian proteins like rice and pulses can be eaten together to provide the body with all the amino acids it needs. Dairy is also a good source, for those who are able to eat it.

Good quality fats – these can be found in raw nuts and seeds, avocado, fish, and oils like olive and flaxseed. Good quality fats can be one of the more expensive elements of your diet but don't overlook them – they help regulate hormones, brain function and cardiovascular health.

Complex carbohydrates – these include wholegrain rice, wholemeal bread, barley and oats. Pulses like chickpeas and lentils are also good. Too many refined carbohydrates (cakes, biscuits and white bread, rice and pasta) can cause issues with energy and blood sugar balance, and are also stripped of valuable minerals and fibre - so try to choose less processed versions where possible.

Fibre – found in fruit and vegetables, pulses, wholegrains, nuts and seeds. Fibre is vital for good digestion and bowel health, as well as to prevent

weight gain, keep blood sugar stable and cholesterol low. There is no fibre in animal products, and most meat eaters do not eat anywhere near the recommended 30g daily.

Vitamins and minerals – eating a varied diet is the best way to ensure you get a good range of vitamins and minerals. Cooking from fresh or eating minimally processed foods helps maximise vitamin and mineral consumption.

So how to get all this on a budget?

We have written before about cooking in bulk and avoiding food waste – this is especially relevant to fresh foods with a short shelf life. Buying longer lasting foods in bulk can also be cost effective – check the 'world food' aisles of supermarkets as they often have larger sized bags of grains, nuts, pulses and spices – these usually work out cheaper per 100g

So you see, healthy eating doesn't have to cost more! If you plan ahead and shop wisely there are plenty of great deals to be had. If you are interested in learning more about the best foods to choose for a healthy diet, why not check out our flexible Diet & Nutrition programmes?



NEWS FROM ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Prisoners Education Trust

Prison Education unlocked: The system that's failing its learners *(from FE Week online)*

The prison population is estimated to pass 100,000 by 2030. With re-offending rates starting to increase and new prison education contracts out to tender, Jessica Hill and Sophie Carlin explore this hidden world – and find out what needs to change

After prisoners at HMP Warren Hill in Suffolk have been unlocked from their cells, got showered and had breakfast, they wander over to a building with a sign above the door that reads 'college'.

Mike Hallatt, a teacher there for PeoplePlus (one of four core education providers operating in prisons) smirks at this.

"Don't be fooled. It's all smoke and mirrors," he says.

The 'college' boasts a "huge chapel", "massive kitchen", supermarket and medical rooms. But its core education provision is "a tiny office where we're literally sitting on each other's laps" and four classrooms – one which Hallatt claims has not been used since courses were "cut back" during Covid, although PeoplePlus says it rotates classrooms.

HM Inspectorate's last report on

Warren Hill found it "excellent", with "impressive" educational activities on offer. There are far worse prisons for education. But there's little choice for prisoners over what to learn, with all core courses being only levels 1 and 2. PeoplePlus says its delivery model is "both inclusive and well established from entry level up to level 2".

Since one inmate, 'Tom' (name changed) was incarcerated seven years ago, he's completed 42 courses – including three level 2 courses in food safety and preparation. But none will help him achieve his ambition of becoming a mechanic.

Similarly, Josh Betford found all the courses he took while imprisoned at HMP Guys Marsh "too easy, teaching me things I already knew".

"It felt like a box-ticking exercise, they even give you the answers half the time. The focus was on people getting maths and English qualifications and maybe forklifting or bricklaying. But being a tradesman isn't for everyone."

He wishes he'd been taught "investing or law, something useful".

Government funding changes have resulted in a 90 per cent drop in prisoners studying level 3 or above courses since 2010, a 2022 House of Commons report found. Hallatt says his learners are "crying out for decent qualifications. They keep asking me, what does an employer want?"

After the 2016 Coates Review called for education to be put "at the heart" of the prison system, 11 prison ministers

have overseen a decline in both quantity and quality of provision. The number of prisoners doing courses dropped from over 100,000 in 2014/15 to 63,744 in 2022/23.

While in 2014/15, four per cent of Ofsted judgements for education, skills and work provision were 'outstanding', 20 per cent were 'good', 60 per cent 'required improvement' and 16 per cent were 'inadequate'.

By 2022-23, none were 'outstanding', nine per cent were 'good', 47 per cent 'required improvement' and 44 per cent were 'inadequate'.

Prisons' chief inspector Charlie Taylor sees this as "catastrophically bad".

"Prison education was nothing to open the champagne about before the pandemic, but it's got worse."

Much of the slide in standards is blamed on the Ministry of Justice prioritising value for money in the contracts it signed in 2019 with providers such as Novus (LTE Group), Milton Keynes College, PeoplePlus and Weston College, to provide English, maths, IT and ESOL classes. (Prisons buy in other education activities under a separate system.)

The University and College Union (UCU) prisons official, Paul Bridge, claims these contracts introduced "a greater layer of administration" and that the "purpose of education has been lost".

"Educators are tasked with managing the regime, instead of delivering a broader-based educational experience. There is gaming and perverse incentivisation... it's pretty fundamentally flawed."

UCU prison education chairperson Brian Hamilton says the "very binary"

The Power of Education

A spark, and the combustion of joy and wonder.

The plug electrified with the power of an inquisitive nature.

The fuel of knowledge and wisdom – thirstily consumed and transformed into momentum; the ability to endeavour into The Journey.

A quest through amazing things never before possible, and a light – to see into a future never before dreamt of.

W. G. Sebald

contracts treat education "like they're buying toilet roll". But education can make a "measurable" difference because ex-prisoners are "contributing to society if they don't re-offend".

Prisoners are nine per cent less likely to re-offend if they've engaged in prison education, research shows. The re-offending rate fell from 31 per cent in 2010 to 24 per cent in 2021, but rose to 25.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2022.

aat

AAT

AAT has published its latest gender and ethnicity pay gap reports, ahead of Equal Pay Day on 22 November 2023.

AAT has been publishing its gender pay gap data since 2017. It also began publishing its ethnicity pay gap data in 2021, despite there being no legal requirement to do so, as part of the organisation's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Both reports are based on hourly

rates of pay at the snapshot date of 5 April 2023. Key findings from the reports include the following.

- The mean gender pay gap has increased from -0.2% in 2022 (when it was in favour of women) to 3.1% in 2023, and the median gender pay gap rose from 9.8% in 2022 to 17.3% in 2023. The mean pay gap is the difference between average hourly earnings, and the median pay gap is the difference between the midpoints in the ranges of hourly earnings (lining up all salaries in the sample from highest to lowest and picking the middle-most salary).
- The mean ethnicity pay gap increased slightly to 25.3% in 2023, up from 24% in 2022. The median ethnicity pay gap rose from 23.6% in 2022 to 25.6% in 2023.
- For bonuses, the mean gender bonus gap rose slightly to -9.7%, up from -11.9% in 2022, revealing there is still a bonus gap in favour of women. The mean ethnicity bonus gap was 14.3%, a decrease from 15.5% in 2022. The median bonus gap was 0% for both gender and ethnicity.
- As of 5 April 2023, 15% of AAT's upper pay quartile (where the hourly rate is ordered from highest to lowest and split into four equal groups of 60, with the upper quartile representing staff at the highest end of this range) were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Over half (52%) of the upper pay quartile were female.

AAT is already taking steps to reduce these pay gaps and continues to maintain its focus on diversity and inclusion within the organisation. This includes:



- developing a specific action plan to support recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff to more senior grades, following confidential listening groups led by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI)
- implementing a new HR system which introduced name blind recruitment to AAT for the first time, and also enables greater data collection and analysis of candidates' diversity profile throughout the recruitment process
- recommitting as signatories of the **Women in Finance Charter** and setting a new target to ensure the percentage of senior women in management does not drop below 45% by March 2027
- continuing to embed actions supporting diversity and inclusion into the business through training for all employees, participating in ENEI's annual benchmarking process, and maintaining commitments to the **Race at Work Charter**.

Olivia Hill, AAT's People Director, said: "AAT remains strongly committed to diversity and inclusion within our organisation. Our priority is to enable all our staff to bring their whole self to work and achieve their full potential.

"Whilst it is disappointing that our

mean gender and ethnicity pay gaps have widened since 2022, we are taking ongoing action to tackle this. This includes introducing name blind recruitment, as well as developing actions that will support with the recruitment and progression of ethnic minority staff. This effort has already been recognised by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, who awarded us a bronze TIDE award in 2023 for our work in this area.

"We will continue to gather feedback from across the business and embed this into our ongoing diversity and inclusion strategy, to ensure all employees are recognised for their contribution and rewarded fairly for their hard work."



HighGround
A Productive Week for HighGround Charity: CEO Jamie Engages in Key Employment Discussions and Landex Conference
March 01, 2024

Introduction

It has been an eventful and productive week for HighGround Charity, with CEO Jamie, actively participating in significant industry gatherings and contributing to discussions that shape the landscape of employment and support for service leavers, veterans and their wider community. From the first face-to-face meeting at Cobseo's HQ in London to the Annual Landex Conference in Northampton, HighGround has been

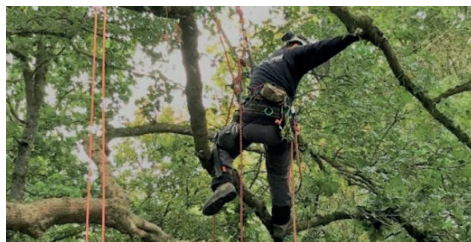
making its mark on the broader spectrum of employment within the Rural Sector and education initiatives.

Cobseo Employment Cluster Meeting

HighGround Charity's CEO, Jamie, recently participated in the Cobseo Employment Cluster meeting chaired by Alistair Halliday FEC. The meeting, held at Cobseo's HQ in London, saw a robust turnout both online and in person, with valuable contributions from external entities such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Defence Relationship Management (DRM). The discussion delved into the latest UK employment data, offering insights into the general employment situation, specific industry challenges, skills shortages, and regional dynamics.

Landex Conference

CEO Jamie also attended the annual Landex conference, where leaders from the ESFA, Department for Education, FE Commissioner, Minister for Skills, Further and Higher Education and Ofsted were present as Key note speakers. Landex – the Land-Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence, is an organisation that represents and supports land-based colleges. Land-based colleges focus on education and training related to land-based industries, which encompass a wide range of sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, animal care, environmental conservation, and forestry.



Landex plays a crucial role in promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, and advocating for the interests of land-based colleges.

HighGround has aligned its delivery to land-based colleges and so the importance in attending these events is vitally important.

The conference showcased the incredible work land-based colleges do, in a series of breakout rooms, sharing best practice. Jamie seized the opportunity to deliver a presentation on HighGround Charity. Demonstrating the fantastic work HighGround does to support the positive transition of service leavers and veterans into employment within the Rural Sector. Outlining its key focus for the year and aspirations for 2025, concluding with a call to action.



ICB

Legislation has recently been passed in Great Britain that amends various employment law payments and awards.

For example, the legislation details the limit on the amount of a compensatory sum that can be awarded for unfair dismissal and the maximum weekly value of a week's pay in redundancy situations.

The Employment Rights (Increase of Limits) Order 2024 reflects the increase in the Retail Prices Index (RPI) of 8.9% from September 2022 to September 2023. The amounts contained in the legislation are payable from the first day



of the tax year with the main points as follows:

- The daily guarantee payment increases from £35 to £38
- The value of 'a week's pay' increases from £643 to £700 per week
- The maximum compensatory award in unfair dismissal claims increases from £105,707 to £115,115, or one-year's net salary, whichever is the lower. This unfair dismissal cap has been in place since 29 July 2013.



PETbc

The Pet Education Training and Behaviour Council (PETbc) of Great Britain acknowledges the concerns surrounding dog-related attacks in our communities. Whilst there have been calls to single out specific breeds, such as the American XL Bully, in an attempt to prevent such incidents from occurring, we firmly believe that addressing this issue necessitates a broader and more comprehensive approach.

Current laws already in place regulate the responsibility of owners

for the behaviours of their dogs, both in public spaces and within private homes. They provide a framework to ensure responsible ownership and the safety of everyone: they need to be applied but seldom are.

Our stance, supported by expert opinions from our canine specialists, is that simply singling out particular breeds or breed types will not effectively prevent future incidents. Dog ownership involves not only the breed, but also the responsibility of the individuals who own and handle these animals. Therefore, we advocate for a multifaceted strategy that encompasses both breed-specific and owner-focused measures.

Banning specific breeds has historically shown that it can lead to a cycle where one banned breed is replaced by another. For instance, when Pit Bulls were banned, we witnessed the emergence of not only 'Pit Bull Types', but also American Bully types.

Whilst breed-specific bans may seem like a quick solution, they do not address the root causes of dog-related incidents.

We must focus on the people who own and handle these animals, ensuring that they are educated, responsible and accountable for their pets. By taking this comprehensive approach, we can work together to create safer communities for everyone.

RFS

ROYAL FORESTRY SOCIETY



Royal Forestry Society Royal Forestry Society Enhances Professional Certification

The Royal Forestry Society (RFS) is enhancing its professional certification requirements to reflect changes in woodland management and forestry practices.

By **Wendy Nekar** · January 15, 2024



RFS Certification recognizes practical professional skills. Both the Certificate in Arboriculture (Cert Arb) and the Certificate in Forestry (Cert For) require applicants to hold a relevant theory qualification and to achieve four compulsory modules and at least four optional modules.

From this year, Emergency First Aid at Work + Forestry (EFAW + F) will be compulsory modules for both certifications. The First Aid requirement is among a number of changes made.

RFS Learning and Outreach Manager Becky Wilkinson says: "These changes reflect on-going discussions we have had with those working in the

sector. Professional Certification is an important signal. It tells the public, employers and contractors that the holders are both professional and competent.

“Many applicants will already hold First Aid qualifications. By including First Aid as a compulsory module we are emphasizing health and safety as a priority.

“Other changes are the direct result of changing practices. Ash dieback, for instance, means many affected trees may be dangerous to climb. Working from an elevated platform instead may be the only practical solution.”

Those applying for the Cert Arb will now be required to have a Level 2 Award in Accessing a Tree Using a Rope and Harness among compulsory modules. A new optional module, the Level 3 Award in Use of a Chainsaw from a Mobile Elevated Platform – MEWP, has also been added.

Those who have already applied for the Cert Arb or the Cert Forestry have until the end of June 2024 to complete their application under the former requirements. All new applicants will need to apply using the new modules.

RFS is the longest standing professional certification organisation, with the Cert Arb succeeding the Woodsman Certification.



Royal Horticultural Society **The man who ‘saved’ the daffodil**

Seeing vibrant yellow trumpets of daffodils bursting from fields, roadsides and gardens each spring, it’s hard to believe that a hundred years ago they came close to being entirely wiped out by disease.

By 1915 daffodil growers had realised that a disease, which had been known about for several decades, was reaching a level which threatened the very existence of their stock of bulbs. It was thought to be a fungal infection, but despite spraying with fungicide and dipping the bulbs in various chemical solutions, the disease continued, wiping out many commercial crops, specialist collections of rare varieties and newly developed varieties.

Born in 1891, James Kirkham Ramsbottom suffered poor health in his youth, which led him to pursue a career outdoors. After working as a gardener at Chelsea Physic Garden he went on to study at RHS Wisley in 1911. He completed his Wisley Diploma in 1913 and achieved the top mark in the final examination. From Wisley, he went into journalism, working at *The Gardeners Magazine* until 1915, when he returned to Wisley as a research student.

In 1916, Ramsbottom was given the job of leading a study into ‘rootless’ disease in daffodils. Ramsbottom



concluded that the culprit was actually a kind of eelworm and discovered the comparatively simple remedy of soaking the bulbs in hot water before planting. He discovered that boiling the narcissus bulbs in a hot water bath at 43°C killed the eel-worm but didn't destroy the bulb.

The bulb growers of Spalding presented him with a gold watch in gratitude for 'saving the daffodil'. In recognition of his work, Ramsbottom was awarded the Barr Memorial cup in 1924. The 1967 Daffodil Yearbook wrote, "Never was an honour more fully deserved than this and it is an uplifting experience to pause for a moment and consider the enormity of the debt that we owe to the labours of this dedicated pioneer." The daffodil cultivar 'J.K. Ramsbottom' is named after him.



Skills and Education Group

A successful Skills and Education Group course which was designed to help tackle human trafficking and modern slavery will now receive funding from the UK Home Office Modern Slavery Fund to expand its delivery, after 100% of the attendees rated it 'very good' or 'excellent'.

The Romanian Workers' Rights project was a collaboration between the Skills and Education Group and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and focused on increasing awareness within the Romanian community in the UK of their workers' rights under UK Law, and how and where to report issues they may face.

The course, which was based on the pre-existing and award-winning Level 1 Award in Workers' Rights and Labour Exploitation qualification developed by the GLAA and Skills and Education Group, was piloted in February and March 2023.

A total of 33 training courses were delivered in 5 weeks across London, Manchester, Birmingham and North East Lincolnshire – enabling 271 learners to successfully complete the course. Now, the Skills and Education Group in partnership with The Romanian and Eastern European Hub, aims to deliver training to 4000 people and reach a further 10,000 through social media video content. This project continues to be supported by the GLAA, along with

the Romanian Embassy in London and the Consulate General of Romania.

“Our group is committed to empowering marginalised communities through skills and education. The feedback from those who have attended the course so far has been amazing and we are extremely proud that we were able to act and deliver in the time frame we did, and to have now secured funding to expand our offering further.”

Scott Forbes, Deputy Chief Executive, Skills and Education Group

The course consists of six modules and will be delivered through a blended approach – face to face, (delivered by trained Romanian facilitators to ensure consistent and coherent delivery within Romanian communities in the UK) and online via MS Teams or Zoom. An accessible, inclusive and interactive online self-study version of the course is also being developed to reach communities in Romania.

And, we hope, an about-to-be-Associate Member -



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CERTIFICATES OF EXCELLENCE - TUTORS

The Association of Distance Learning Colleges awards Certificates of Excellence to students, tutors and teams who have done exceptionally well - exceeded expectations, overcome obstacles, astonished us!

This year we are focussing on some of our amazing tutors - those who, as one grateful student puts it, never hesitate to go that extra mile. We are always very happy to hear these stories - college representatives, do please nominate your amazing tutors for our award. It's a simple thing, but gives great pleasure to the recipient, and the stories we hear can be used in our mission to promote distance learning as a force for good in the world.

TERESA ELLIOTT Tutor with Oxbridge

Teresa has long been part of Oxbridge's growth and development. A team player, always willing to help others. Providing excellent support to our learners, embodying Oxbridge's core values at all times. Showcasing determination, positivity and a solution focused approach throughout her time. Oxbridge feel very fortunate to have tutors like Teresa working with us. What our learners have had to say about Teresa:

Teresa has been super, always there if I need any questions answered

My tutor Teresa was very supportive

Teresa herself has said:



I love working with Oxbridge. We have a very tight-knit team of tutors who are supportive and keen to help learners achieve. I am currently the personal tutor for education and

childcare which means I am the first port of call for the learners. My aim is to provide a quick, one stop solution response to ensure they are able to meet their goals in a timely manner.

MARY SHARMA Tutor with The School of Health

Mary has worked with the School to create the Naturopathy course; she started as a Nutrition tutor in 2014, but also worked with us to update the Nutrition courses and then brought the idea of the Naturopathy course to us. Originally, she wanted help making it into an attendance course but then realised the School of Health could help her write and administer a home study course. The course is amazing and has proved popular. Mary also always goes above and beyond in her



face-to-face training events, preparing wonderful presentations and handouts.

FAYE HALL
Tutor with Oxbridge

Faye has huge amounts of experience with the Childcare curriculum, she has been expertly supporting students since 2018 and has been working with Leads to organise EQA and CASS visits since August 2021. Recently her work with the Childcare team gave us overall positive outcomes for our CASS/EQA visit.



TIM SEED
Tutor with Oxbridge

Tim has been an incredible source of support for Oxbridge and the learners. He has consistently demonstrated Oxbridge's core values. He is a team player, but also a leader. His attitude

is of the highest calibre and he goes above and beyond in all that he does. Learners and tutors value the



knowledge and experience Tim shares. Oxbridge are very fortunate to have tutors like Tim as part of the team.

Tim himself has said:
Throughout my time with Oxbridge, I have interacted with inspiring learners and colleagues, making the work so enjoyable. It is a real privilege to play a part in helping individuals working in such a huge range of contexts progress with their English qualifications and I love being able to lend my experience and knowledge to their studies. I very much appreciate my role with Oxbridge and know that I am alongside colleagues who have the learner experience at the centre of our work.

KAT MORGAN
Tutor with Regent Academy

Kat is incredibly helpful to students and student advisors in her field of Fashion design and Dressmaking. She goes above and beyond to help students achieve their best and is always happy to help the student advisors. Marking is always completed and returned quickly with in depth feedback for the students.

CANDICE GREEN
Tutor with Oxbridge

Oxbridge is very fortunate to have tutors such as Candice Green. Her knowledge and expertise is invaluable in the support she



gives in learner feedback. She is also passing on her knowledge through her course writing skills, creating exciting, engaging and informative course materials.

Colleagues have said: she works very hard keeping the student marking list down, has helped so much with our EQA preparations and has made excellent progress with IQA work this year.

Candice has said -

I am grateful to have joined such a supportive team who have enabled me to develop in my career and provide positive support to the diverse students at Oxbridge. I am happy to be a part of the student's learning journey and to support them throughout the entire process. I have enjoyed course writing and sharing my own knowledge and experience to enable others.

NICOLA FISHER

Tutor with Ideal Schools

It is a pleasure to nominate Nicky for this award, as her hard work and dedication as a tutor and course author deserve the recognition. Tutoring the payroll subject includes the responsibility of annual course updating, but Nicky uses her wealth of experience in working in a payroll environment to ensure these changes are implemented seamlessly each and every year. However, it's the relationship Nicky has with her students that makes her the perfect choice for this recognition. She is approachable, attentive, dedicated and passionate about what she does, and this bears

out in the exceptional pass rates of her students.

Last year, we were so proud of Nicky when she won her ICB Tutor of the Year Luca award, and we know it meant the world to her.

She deserves

all the recognition she receives.

We asked Nicky for some background, and she provide the following:

I completed my first adult learning course 23 years ago in January 2001, I now have a total of 37 certificates, ranging from computer and typing courses to bookkeeping and accounts courses. I became a tutor for Ideal Schools in 2017 it is such a satisfying and rewarding job. I enjoy watching students grow in confidence in their abilities as they progress through the course, gaining their own qualifications and achieving their own goals it gives a great sense of achievement and pride to me as a tutor.

LISA JORDAN

Tutor with Oxbridge

Lisa covers an enormous amount of work in both Teaching and Business curriculums. She has worked really hard to ensure everything is prepared and organised for EQA visits. She





has both marked and IQAd work in both curriculums so learners can be certificated as promptly as possible. Lisa strives to provide the best possible support to learners and ensures they have an enjoyable experience on the courses with Oxbridge. Most recently Lisa has led on our observation co-ordination creating new processes and procedures, providing the template for others to follow. We're very fortunate to have Lisa as part of Oxbridge.

What our learners have said about Lisa:

Not only was she polite and professional in her communication, but she also took the time to provide detailed explanations and guidance. She never hesitated to go the extra mile to ensure that I fully understood the concepts and units. Her patience and willingness to answer all those who, as one grateful student puts it, my questions made the learning

process much smoother and enjoyable.

ELAINE WATSON

Tutor with The School of Health

Elaine Watson has worked with the School since 2006, first as a medical science tutor, she went on to write completely new

versions of the School's Anatomy & Physiology and Pathology & Disease courses.

These have been very successful.

Elaine also always goes above and beyond when it comes to student support, feedback and engage, especially online. She is always generous with her time.



REBECCA OSBORNE

Tutor with Oxbridge

Rebecca's growth during her time with Oxbridge has been great to see. She has been an excellent source of support to our learners helping them to



achieve their goals on the functional skills courses. Rebecca is not one to shy away from situations, she steps in and steps up. Helping colleagues and working well as a team. She is always striving to improve the outcomes for our learners and works hard on quality improvement.

MELANIE LANCLEY **Tutor with Oxbridge**

Melanie has been a pillar of support to the whole team. She is always positive and does what she says she is going to do. Melanie provides excellent support to her learners ensuring they have the best experience possible. She is friendly, approachable and extremely knowledgeable. She has been key to the launch and continuing improvements to our Access to Higher Education provision.



AMANDA TRIMBLE **Tutor with Health and Safety College**

Amanda is a huge support to both the students and myself. She is very accessible and very quick to respond to students, offering lots of knowledge and support. Amanda is a very reliable and dedicated tutor and we are very grateful and proud she is part of our team.

DEBORAH PARRY **Tutor with Oxbridge**

Debbie has been an amazing observer and her feedback has been valued by all the learners she has observed across the teaching curriculum courses. She's a detailed and supportive marker, her feedback has been invaluable in helping learners to progress with their courses. She is reliable and has been willing to visit learners outside of her local area. We couldn't be prouder of the dedication and commitment Debbie has shown to Oxbridge and the learners.

Debbie herself has said:
It's great to be part of a very supportive team that puts the learner at the heart of everything they do !! I remember how nerve-racking it was to be observed when I trained and how hard it can be getting back into education



and I try to use all of my experiences to put learners at ease and offer the best feedback and guidance that I can.

CERTIFICATES OF EXCELLENCE - STUDENTS

And finally -

There have been very few submissions for the Certificate of Excellence for Students this year.

This is disappointing - we feel sure that there are still many interesting and inspiring stories to be told about the achievements of people studying with our Member Colleges. Whether they have achieved particularly high marks, made rapid progress or overcome difficulties in their lives to study and succeed - we want to hear about them!

The Certificate gives great pleasure and encouragement to recipients - one winner told us that he framed his and hung it over his desk, to look at whenever he felt himself flagging.

And it affords us an insight into our learners - what they do, how they can succeed, how they feel about their studies. We can use this information when we are publicising the Association and the advantages of Distance Learning generally,

So come on, Members, find us some more high flyers!

ELAINE STAVERT

Student with The School of Health Studying Naturopathy

Elaine came to us after suffering a brain injury, but it was clear she was a very dynamic and accomplished student, she started on Nutrition and then went on to study Naturopathy with us to. Elaine has lots of knowledge in natural health and was always generous with her time and contributions, especially on the School student closed Facebook group. Even now she has graduated she continues to support, encourage and motivate students on Facebook.



FRANCES PITMAN

**Student with The School of Health
Studying Homeopathy Practitioners
Advanced Diploma (PDHom Adv)**

Frances first started studying with the School in 2004, she wanted to follow in the footsteps of her gran and was given a grant to help with her studies.

Life had many obstacles, and she came and went from the course many times over the years, however she demonstrated great dedication and perseverance and kept coming back to her studies, often having to repeat years and work due to times of absence.

She did not let that put her off and she continued with her studies, finally graduating this year. Her whole family came to the graduation to celebrate her huge success.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AAT - The Association of Accounting Technicians

www.aat.org.uk

020 37352468

HIGHGROUND

07951 495 272

<https://highground-uk.org>

ICB - The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

www.bookeepers.org.uk

020 7398 4440

THE MARINE SOCIETY

www.marine-society.org

020 7654 7050

NEBOSH

www.nebosh.org.uk

0116 263 4700

PETbc - The Pet Education, Training and Behaviour Council

www.petbc.org.uk

The Prisoners' Education Trust

www.prisonerseducation.org.uk

0203 752 5680

RFS - The Royal Forestry Society

www.rfs.org.uk

01295 678588

RHS - The Royal Horticultural Society

www.rhs.org.uk

01483 226500

Skills and Education Group (ABC Awards)

www.skillsandeducationgroup.co.uk

0115 854 1626

LIFE AND HONORARY MEMBERS

Al Vanden Akker

Diana Nadin

Ian Campbell

Mike Rigby

Peter Fisher

Carol Vick

John Mercer

Walter Vick

Christopher Middleton

MEMBER COLLEGES

The Animal Care College

www.animalcarecollege.co.uk
0800 041 8500

APeducation

www.apeducation.co.uk

The BSY Group

www.bsygroup.co.uk
0800 731 9271

Esoteric College

www.esotericcollege.com
01672 511427

Fitness Courses College

www.fitnesscoursescollege.co.uk
0800 781 6188

Foot Health Practitioner College

www.fhpcollege.co.uk
01553 768661

HCC (Horticultural Correspondence College)

www.hccollege.org.uk
0800 083 9191

Health and Safety Training College

www.healthandsafetytrainingcollege.org.uk
0800 977 4007

Ideal Schools

www.idealschools.co.uk
0141 248 5200

London Art College

www.londonartcollege.co.uk
0800 3280 465

Maidenhead Tutorial College

www.maidenheadcollege.co.uk
01753 463648

Oxbridge

www.oxbridge.uk
0121 630 3000

Regent Academy

www.regentacademy.com
0800 378 281

The School of Health

www.schoolofhealth.com
01453 765956

Code of Ethics

Members of the Association pledge themselves to maintain the highest standard of integrity in all their dealings and, in particular, they undertake:

1. To ensure that any information they give about the choice of a career, the prospects in a particular career or a prospective student's studies shall be accurate to the best of their knowledge, and that any advice they give to prospective students and others shall be given in good faith and the best interests of the persons to whom the advice is tendered.
2. To take every reasonable care to enrol students only for courses that are suited to their individual needs and educational status, or for tuition for examinations for which the students are likely to be eligible.
3. To inform students in their prospectuses and/or enrolment application forms of the conditions on which they are enrolled and to include in advertisements only statements which accurately reflect such conditions.
4. To make fair regulations governing their relationship with students, and to treat equitably those who, through circumstances beyond their control, are unable to comply strictly with their regulations.
5. To provide efficient tutorial service, to maintain adequate and appropriately qualified tutorial and administrative staff and to issue to their students without undue delay adequate and reasonably up to date tutorial literature and instruction suitable to each student's needs.
6. To encourage their students to complete their courses of study and to do everything reasonably possible to enable the students to derive full benefit therefrom.
7. To issue only certificates or diplomas that fairly represent the instruction given and not to make any statement or to imply that any such certificates or diplomas are equivalent to a degree or to a certificate awarded by a recognised examining body.
8. To ensure that all examinations and assessments related to accredited courses are administered and supervised to the standards as laid down by the appropriate external body.
9. To maintain the highest ethical standards in their publicity by making no statement in any advertisement, prospectus or publicity literature, or by correspondence or orally, that is knowingly untrue or wilfully misleading; and in particular by publishing no examination results or statistics or particulars of their tutorial service of staff that are knowingly inaccurate or misleading.
10. To implement values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace and in their relations with students, and to make sure that these values are reflected in their publicity and teaching materials and online resources.
11. To prepare and maintain a record of the working procedures of the business that can be readily available to a responsible person in the event of the sudden death or major illness of the principle manager of the business. According to the set up of the business alternative arrangements are acceptable. The Association is prepared to hold confidentially a copy of such a document.
12. To arrange for the Association to be notified immediately if such an incident occurs that might cause the business activities to be in jeopardy.
13. To encourage fair, dignified and honourable competition.
14. To ensure that their staffs are acquainted with this code, that they are given all facilities for complying with it, and are encouraged to honour it in the spirit as well as the letter.