

About the College

Location

Richard Huish College is situated close to the centre of Taunton, the thriving retail and administrative county town for Somerset, in the heart of the beautiful South West. Taunton is within easy access of the M5 to Bristol and onward links to London and Birmingham. There are excellent cross-country and Great Western train services, including trains direct to London.

Background

Originally founded as a grammar school by the benefactor Richard Huish, the College was incorporated as a sixth form college in 1993. Huish prides itself on its academic excellence and strong reputation across Somerset and the South West. With over 2,500 students, an annual turnover of c£11 million and an Outstanding Ofsted status, Huish is also the sponsor of a local 11-16 academy and a primary school. All students are supported by a strong ethos of personal attention and support. There is a strong Huish 'brand', carrying with it a reputation for high standards, academic excellence, provision of quality teaching and a commitment to develop the holistic needs of the individual learner. Every year around 80% of leavers progress to Higher Education; most other leavers are successful in gaining training in employment and a growing number are taking up professional apprenticeships. The College received outstanding inspection reports from Ofsted, published in January 2004 and November 2007. In the latest report each of the five reported areas was graded 1. The most recent Ofsted Inspection report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk or www.huish.ac.uk.

Campus

The Huish campus is self-contained with excellent sports pitches immediately adjacent. The original buildings date from the 1960s and the College has made significant investment in improvements, refurbishments and new buildings with specialist facilities developed over the years and this investment is set to continue. The most recently completed project is the Sycamore Sports Hall, with fitness suite, teaching and conference facilities. We are currently creating a new Visual Arts building and the next confirmed project is a purpose built music hub.

Curriculum and achievement

The Prospectus details the range of around fifty A level and BTEC Level 3 courses which the College offers. The entry requirement for students wishing to undertake a Level 3 Study Programme is a minimum of five A*-C (9-4) grades at GCSE. There is also a Level 2 or Traineeship curriculum offer for students to develop their skills. This curriculum offer enables students to progress to a Level 3 programme or apprenticeship over a three year period. The provision of high quality information, advice and guidance is pivotal in ensuring that prospective students choose the most suitable courses within their Study Programme.

The College Curriculum also includes professional and Higher Education qualifications as well as opportunities for members of the wider community to engage in learning programmes which help them to progress to employment or other courses of study.

Finance

The College has a sound financial base and is graded 'good' under the EFA Financial Health Criteria.

The Huish Experience

In addition to the value placed on provision of high quality teaching and learning, the learner experience is supported and enriched through an extensive programme of other activities and opportunities, including fieldwork expeditions and trips in the UK and abroad, exchanges and volunteering. Most recently this includes: geology field trip to Spain, Archaeology field trip to Rome, Classics field trip to Greece, Geography Field trip to Iceland, Sociology and German cultural visit to Berlin, Spanish cultural visit to Seville, Business field trip to Disneyland Paris, volunteering in Sri Lanka, surfing in Morocco, as well as local and regional visits associated with specific subject areas. Both staff and students take part in a wide range of outstanding musical activities, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, BELA, drama and dance productions, competitive and recreational sport, public speaking and debating. Students come from Europe and further afield to study at the College. The cultural diversity and enrichment which they bring to the learning community brings significant benefit.

The College places high value on the contribution which learners make at all levels. Students are encouraged to have a strong voice in expressing their views and needs. The Student Union represents student views and needs at all levels within the organisation of the College, including student representation at Corporation Meetings.

Support for students

All students receive very effective personal and pastoral support to help them achieve their full potential whilst studying at the College. All full and part-time teachers undertake a personal tutor role, working with students on a one-to-one basis and students are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with their personal tutor. Group tutorial sessions form part of the initial induction programme and are calendared during the year to provide whole College information. Tutors also take charge of helping their tutees realise their academic potential through careful management of study.

Specialist Student Services tutors are easily accessible to staff and learners supporting the work of personal tutors by providing additional personal or study skills support over a longer period. Students are able to gain access to specialist support throughout the academic year to support them to learn in the classroom. If appropriate, Student Services tutors arrange other professional services such as counselling or health advice as appropriate.

Learner Centre Services

The Arthur C. Clarke Learning Centre, named after an eminent past student, is situated at the heart of the College. It offers a supportive, staffed and friendly study environment providing space and academic resources to help students make the best use of study time. Refurbished in Summer 2015, the LC offers a range of study environments, self-issue laptops and study resources: books, films, journals, textbooks, PCs, cameras and film equipment, e-books and online resources -these last two accessible 24/7 from PC and mobile devices. Support and help with Moodle, our Virtual Learning Environment is available from the Learning Centre Team. There are further study spaces located across the College offering a variety of environments ranging from social study spaces to study centres and silent study rooms for revision.

IT Facilities

The College strives to keep up to date with advances in technology and uses a number of sophisticated IT systems to aid teaching and learning, management and administration at the College. There is considerable on-going investment to ensure that systems take full account of the constant advances in hardware and software.

The new Sycamore sports Centre has been equipped with sports analysis cameras and interactive screens that provide an invaluable teaching aid and feedback mechanism.

The network supports over 1000 College devices including Windows PCs, Windows Laptops, Apple iMacs, Apple MacBooks and a range of mobile devices. There is a campus-wide Wi-Fi network installed with compatible mobile devices to access the college network. Printing is provided by Multi-Function Devices, configured with 'Follow me Printing' which allows printing to take place across the campus.

Staff and Students can also easily work from home using the College's 'Remote Desktop' service and can use any of the three banks of 'self-issue' laptop lockers to enable them to access IT resources anywhere on campus. We deploy industry standard software where required, such as the latest versions of Adobe Creative Cloud, Microsoft Office and music editing software.

The College internet connection on the JANET network is currently 500MB allowing the College to make more use of 'cloud' services, including Office 365. Investment is being made in new 'interactive TVs' rather than projector based smart boards.

Quality

Huish is committed to a policy of Quality Management, with all staff required to support, develop and maintain the systems which achieve the high standards set. Quality management systems are at the heart of our culture enabling the College to be a mature, self-critical organisation and to continue to achieve high standards and continuous improvement. Provision of the highest quality Huish brand for students, parents and the whole community is paramount.

Our staff

We employ 300 staff at the College, 114 full time and 86 part time. There is a real commitment to employing well qualified and forward looking staff at all levels across the organisation; all teachers are graduates with 100% having teaching qualifications. A significant number of staff are active at national level working as examiners or in-service training providers.

The College is committed to the health and wellbeing of staff and offers the following range of benefits: an Employee Assistance Programme, a Health Cash Plan, Childcare Vouchers, Cycle Scheme, free eyesight tests, discounted Gym membership, free flu jabs, in-house fitness programme and discounted shopping and leisure vouchers.