

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - APRIL 2026



Chris McLean

Principal's Message

“ As we reflect on an exceptionally eventful and rewarding term, I am delighted to share some of the highlights that continue to shape our college's momentum and community spirit. We were pleased to welcome our January student intake, whose energy and ambition have already made a positive impact across our campuses.

This term also marked significant progress in the refurbishment of our Birmingham campus, an investment that will further enhance the learning environment for our students and staff.

Our academic portfolio continues to grow with the launch of several new programmes, designed to meet evolving industry needs and expand opportunities for our learners. We also came together to celebrate International Women's Day, recognising the achievements and contributions of women across our university and beyond.

The Careers Fair proved once again to be a valuable platform, connecting our students with employers and opening doors to future opportunities. Meanwhile, the Teaching & Learning Conference held on 24 April was a resounding success, showcasing innovation, collaboration, and excellence in education across our academic community. A very big thank you goes to the partners and staff who made it such an impactful event.

Finally, I am proud to share that we have been nominated for Education Investor's Institution of the Year—an acknowledgment of the collective efforts and dedication of our staff and students. Thank you all for contributing to such a dynamic and successful term. I look forward to what we will achieve together in the months ahead.

”

AWARD NOMINATIONS

This quarter, we were proud to be recognised across **three national award shortlists**. This is a powerful reflection of the people, partnerships, and purpose behind everything we do.

Education Investor Awards 2026 - Higher Education Institute of the Year

CECOS College was named a finalist for Higher Education Institute of the Year, a recognition of our work as a social enterprise raising aspirations and supporting learners as they progress from further to higher education across our five city campuses.



NCFE Aspiration Awards 2026 - Learner of the Year

Our learner **Amani Sobhi** was named a finalist in the **Learner of the Year** category. Through our **Steps to Success** programme, Amani progressed level by level, building her confidence and skills despite every barrier in her path. Her recognition on a national stage is a reminder of why this work matters.

Islam Channel Business Awards 2026 Large Business of the Year

We were shortlisted as a finalist in the Large Business of the Year category, **recognition of the scale and reach of our work** as one of the largest independent providers of further and higher education to underrepresented communities across the UK. The nomination reflects not just our growth, but the values that drive it: opening doors, widening access, and creating opportunity in the places it is needed most.



LARGE Business of the year

Honouring industry leaders shaping national and global success

HIGHLIGHTS

Teaching and Learning Conference

On 24 April 2026, our staff gathered at the Kingston Suite, Birmingham, with colleagues from the University of Staffordshire and New College Durham for a day built around one question:

What should students expect from the future workforce?

Morning sessions tackled the everyday craft of teaching; engagement, online delivery, and the cognitive science behind how students retain what they learn. In the afternoon, five external voices from coaching, recruitment, marketing, and healthcare took the harder question: **what employers are really looking for, and where graduates still fall short.** The day ended with The Sector Challenge, where teams translated the day's debates into the changes they want to see in their own classrooms.

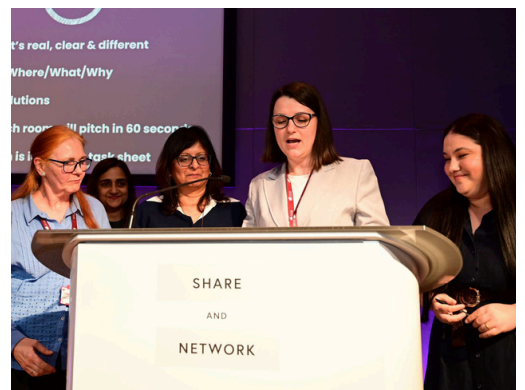


“ A key takeaway for me was the importance of adaptive teaching in delivering a meaningful and high-quality learner experience ”

Udenika Gunawardhana,
Associate Lecturer, Business Management

“ ‘Earn as You Learn’, an idea we developed to help bridge the gap between education and opportunity, empowering learners to move from ideation to becoming founders. That's what education should do. ”

Blessing Onwudiwe,
Student Services Officer



Careers Fair

On 26 March 2026, we hosted our 2026 Careers Fair at our Edmonton Green Campus, London, bringing together 15 employers, our learners, and the wider college community for an afternoon focused on opportunity, connection, and future pathways. Students engaged directly with employers across care, education, technology, and community services, gaining insight into different industries and exploring the possibilities ahead of them.

A particular highlight was seeing two of our own students and alumni confidently present their own businesses and organisations - a powerful reflection of the ambition within our community and what our learners can go on to achieve.



Visit from the Lord Mayor of Birmingham

On 9 April 2026, we were delighted to welcome Councillor Zafar Iqbal MBE, Lord Mayor of Birmingham, to our Edgbaston Campus. A proud servant of Birmingham for over five decades and a recipient of an MBE for services to education, the Lord Mayor shared his vision and goals for the city and its communities, a dedication to education and opportunity that resonates deeply with our own. During his visit, he spent time with our team, explored the campus, and learned more about the work we're delivering across the region.

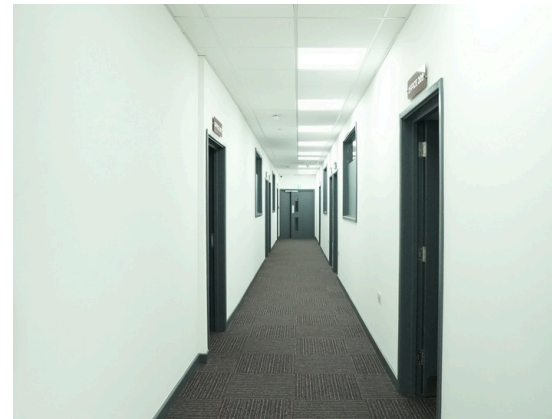


CAMPUS REFURBISHMENTS

Edgbaston, Birmingham



Edmonton Green, London



CECOS Cafe, London



STUDENT EVENTS

Freshers' Week

This quarter, we welcomed new students across all campuses, organising multiple induction sessions to help them settle in and get familiar with campus life. This was followed by Freshers' Week, filled with games, laughter, and opportunities to build meaningful connections. Weeks of introductions, campus tours, and fresh starts set the tone for an exciting academic journey ahead. With a strong sense of community taking shape, support will be available every step of the way.

**Freshers Week
across
7 campuses**



Beyond the Classroom

NatWest Workshop: Money Management & Financial Awareness



Thinktank Science Museum



Guest Lectures & Employability Sessions

This term, we were delighted to welcome three industry experts to our campuses, each bringing real-world experience into the classroom to support our learners on their professional journeys.



Aytun S. from ADS Employment Services joined our Level 6 (BA Hons) Business Management students for a bespoke employability session, offering practical guidance and thoughtful insights on navigating today's job market. His engaging delivery and tailored approach were genuinely appreciated by both students and staff.



We were also pleased to welcome **Seema Bhatnagar, IICA-Certified Independent Director, Leadership Strategist, and author of Unseen to Unstoppable**, to our Edmonton Green Campus for an inspiring session on Personal Branding & LinkedIn. Drawing from her own remarkable journey, Seema walked our learners step by step through building an authentic and powerful professional presence online.



At our Stepney Green Campus, we welcomed **Zahid Ghadialy, Founder and Principal Analyst at 3G4G**, with over 25 years' experience in telecoms and wireless technology, from the first 3G rollouts in Japan and Europe to building one of the most widely read blogs in the field. Zahid shared his perspective on what it really takes to build a credible, consistent professional identity, leaving learners motivated and inspired.

Career Events

This quarter, we proudly took part in **five career fairs** and recruitment events across Birmingham, London, and Leicester. Our team engaged with local providers, BMET lecturers, and potential learners, offering valuable information, advice, and guidance to support career development. It was a rewarding experience connecting with so many individuals, exchanging stories, and building new relationships to help shape future opportunities and academic journeys.



NEW COURSE

Level 3 Diploma in Gym Instructing and Personal Training

In collaboration with NCFE, we introduced a new further education course designed to broaden opportunities for our learners and respond to evolving industry needs.



STAFF EVENTS

International Women's Day

On 8 March 2026, our campuses turned green. Staff and students wore the official colour of International Women's Day, green, symbolising growth, hope, and empowerment, to honour the women whose leadership and work shape every part of life. Female staff and students received a small token of appreciation, and each campus hosted a session that mixed reflection with celebration: conversations about the women who paved the way, the ones standing alongside us now, and the ones still to come.



We also joined the **Women of West Yorkshire (WoWY) Gathering**, hosted by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Built around this year's IWD theme, 'Give to Gain,' the event brought together women from across the region to share skills, exchange ideas, and build connections rooted in a genuine desire to do more.

“It's the little things that make a big difference, these moments remind me how much our college values its people.”

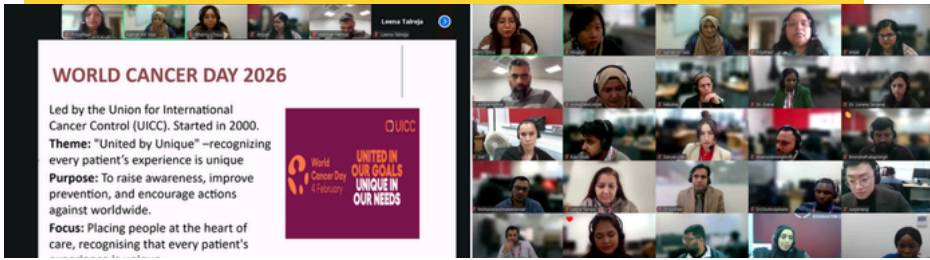
London Ping Pong Tournament

Staff from our two London campuses came together for a friendly ping pong tournament - a little friendly rivalry, a lot of fun, and a great reminder of the spirit that connects our teams across the city.



World Cancer Day

To mark the day, staff joined an online webinar exploring ways to raise awareness and promote healthier lifestyle choices across our college community.



Neurodiversity Week

Staff tuned in from across our campuses to learn, reflect and celebrate the unique minds that make our community stronger.



STAFF FEATURES

Multidisciplinary Surgical Research Annals

A Cross-Sectional Study On The Awareness And Prevalence Of Hypertension Risk Factors Among Low Income Employees Of University Of Poonch Rawalakot

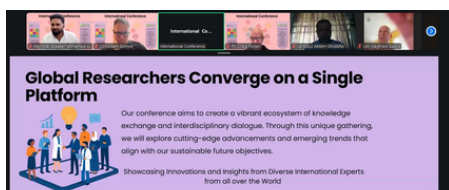
Salma Sultan

Co-authored a research article on hypertension awareness and risk factors among low-income employees, published in the Multidisciplinary Surgical Research Annals.



Dr Uzma Ismail

Featured by the Associated Press of Pakistan for her insights on organisational fairness and its impact on productivity, trust, and innovation in the workplace.



Mohamed Alfaz

Delivered a keynote at the ICBEDT-26 international conference, sharing perspectives on AI, business ethics, and the future of learning and assessment in a digital world.

In addition to the highlights, we also marked a range of important days and events, including:

- National Earth Day
- National Tea Day
- National Reading Day
- World Health Day
- World Poetry Day
- World Book Day
- Zero Discrimination Day
- Safer Internet Day

Pulse Survey



93% of staff feel comfortable speaking up within their team and department.

83% of staff reported a strong sense of belonging and togetherness within their team.

Gender Ratio



45.3%

Male



54.7%

Female

Every learner's journey helps build a stronger future for individuals, communities, and the society we serve. Thank you to our students, staff, and partners for making this quarter one of growth, achievement, and impact.

Together, we continue to discover learning and define the future.



STAFF EVENTS

International Women's Day

On the occasion of Mental Health Day, we introduced a **Gratitude Box** and **Tree** across all campuses, encouraging employees to appreciate one another, take a moment, and spread kindness. Practicing gratitude is a powerful way to support mental wellbeing, helping to reduce stress, boost positivity, and foster a sense of connection within the workplace.

We also hosted an online mental wellbeing session, "**Bridging the Gap: Accessing Mental Wellbeing Services**," open to both staff and students. The initiative provided valuable insights and resources to support mental health, creating a positive and caring community across our campuses.



International Men's Day

To mark International Men's Day, we celebrated the achievements, kindness, and contributions of men and boys, recognising the ways they make a difference in everyday life.

Across our campuses, **personalised gifts were given to each male staff member**, with female colleagues writing heartfelt notes to show appreciation. The initiative brought smiles, laughter, and a wonderful sense of connection, highlighting the positive impact of everyone in our community.



“Being part of these events made me feel really included and valued as an employee. It's great to see our workplace celebrating diversity, wellbeing, and community together.”

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

To spread awareness and raise funds, staff and students participated in the **Wear It Pink** initiative led by Breast Cancer Now during the month of October. Everyone enthusiastically wore every shade of pink, from soft blush to bold fuchsia, to support Breast Cancer Awareness. The initiative highlighted the importance of early detection and contributed to national fundraising efforts for life-saving research, showing how coming together can make a real difference.

In addition to the highlights, we also marked a range of important days and events, including:

- International Literacy Day
- World Menopause Day
- National Mentoring Day
- National Stress Awareness Day
- Remembrance Day
- World Diabetes Day
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Leaders Connect (Leicester, Edgbaston, Bradford)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



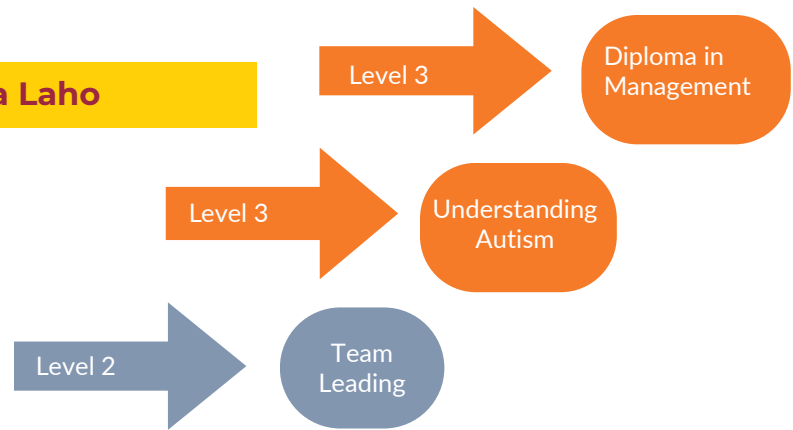
Saeed Ozbek

“ When I arrived in the UK from Afghanistan in October 2024, I had a passion for cricket but struggled with English. My social worker connected me with CECOS College, and it changed my life. The tutors believed in me from day one. **They helped me improve my speaking, listening, and reading skills**, and even worked with my social worker to get me a free bicycle so I wouldn't miss classes. I volunteered at a Cricket Academy training young people, and now I'm building the language skills I need to become a professional cricket coach. CECOS didn't just teach me English, they gave me the tools and confidence to chase my dreams in my new home. ”



Aurora Laho

“ I would recommend CECOS to anyone who wants to gain qualifications, improve their career prospects, or develop important skills with supportive tutors and structured learning. Through my studies, I have gained strong skills in leadership, communication, delegation, problem-solving, and understanding how to manage a team effectively. I am **currently working as a self-employed interpreter**, and I feel that everything I learned at CECOS will definitely support my career growth. My leadership and communication skills help me in my daily work and are especially useful when working with vulnerable individuals or families with additional needs. ”



Yanka Popova Todorova

“ My time at CECOS College London was unforgettable - **a mix of learning, laughter, and lasting friendships**. The supportive lecturers, diverse classmates, and vibrant London atmosphere made every day inspiring and full of growth. The most important lesson I learned during my studies was the value of perseverance and adaptability. Balancing coursework, deadlines, and personal growth taught me how to stay focused, manage my time effectively, and embrace challenges as opportunities to learn. ”

Higher National Diploma (HND) Business Management

Winter Wonderland, London



Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford Upon Avon



Camden Town, London



The National Gallery, London



To celebrate the festive season, we enjoyed **Festive Jumper Day** and a **Secret Santa** exchange among our staff members. It was a wonderful way to raise funds for charities while spreading joy and seasonal cheer across our campuses. The activities brought laughter, friendly competition, and a great sense of togetherness, giving everyone a chance to relax, connect, and celebrate the season as a team.

Charities Close to Our Heart



We celebrated **year-end parties** across our campuses in London, Leicester, Bradford, Birmingham, and Luton, creating wonderful opportunities to recognise and appreciate our staff's dedication, commitment, and hard work throughout the year.



STAFF EVENTS

National Mentoring Day

Job Openings

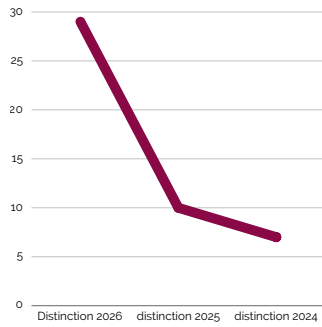
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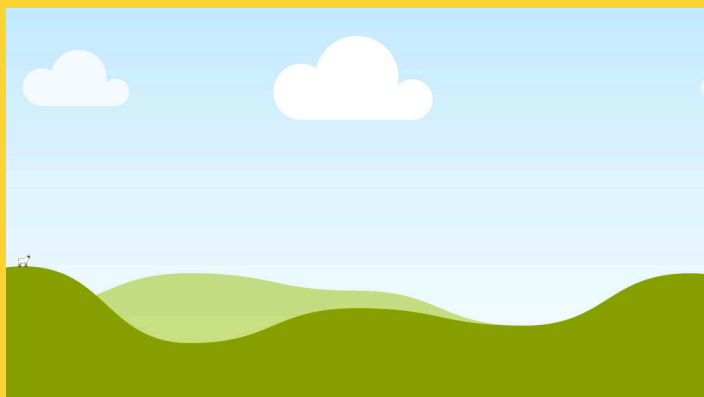
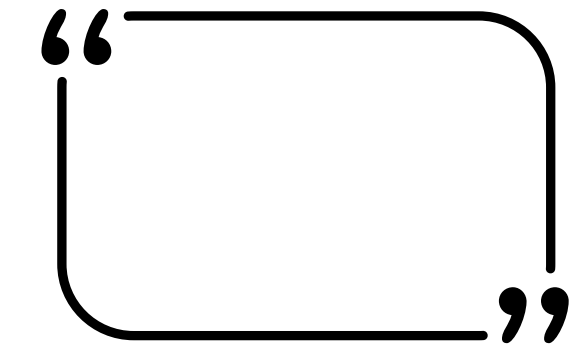
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Class recognitions



In January 2025, 29% of HNC/D submissions achieved Merit or Distinction, a sharp rise from below 10% previously. This success reflects targeted strategies including high achiever tracking, focused tutorials, tutor KPIs, and standardised training. Sustained monitoring and support aim to further strengthen learner performance in upcoming terms.



Alumni Feature

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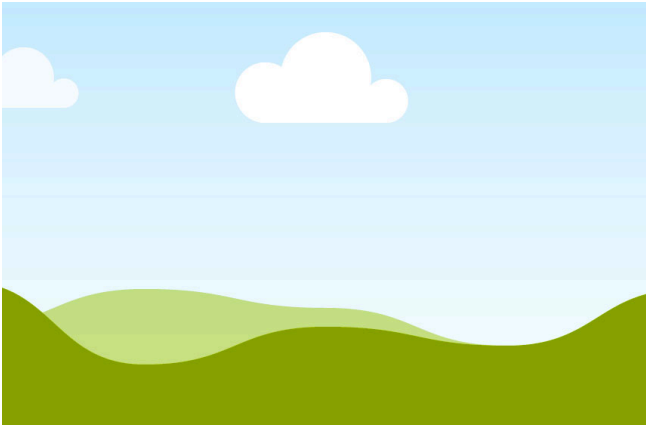
Enrolment:

You'll be invited to our enrolment in late August. You'll be sent an exact date and time to bring your documents to officially enrol on your course.

Induction:

Meet tutors, get familiar with the course, and prepare for the year ahead.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



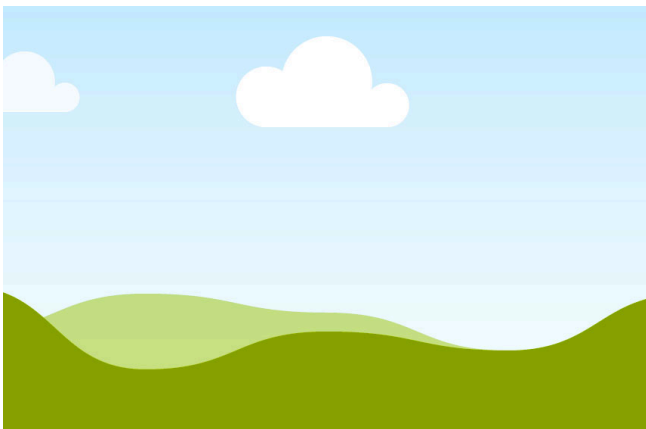
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HIGH ACHIEVERS

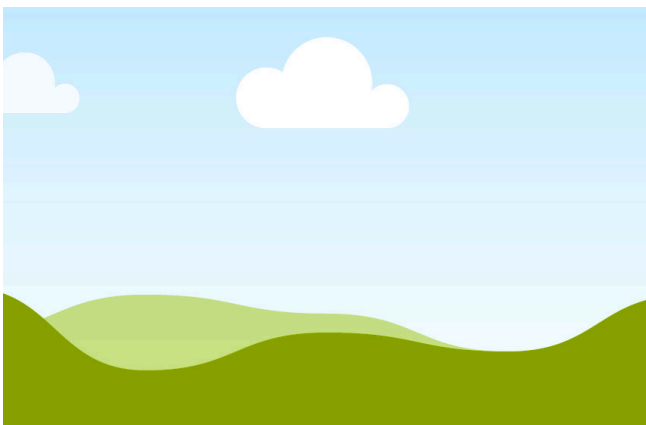
29% of all Higher National Certificate and Diploma (HNC/D) assignment submissions achieved Merit or Distinction grades. This reflects a strong academic performance and demonstrates an upward trend in learner achievement from previous higher grade achievement of below 10%. The high-achieving cohort was supported through internal performance tracking, which flagged students with consistent academic excellence across various modules.



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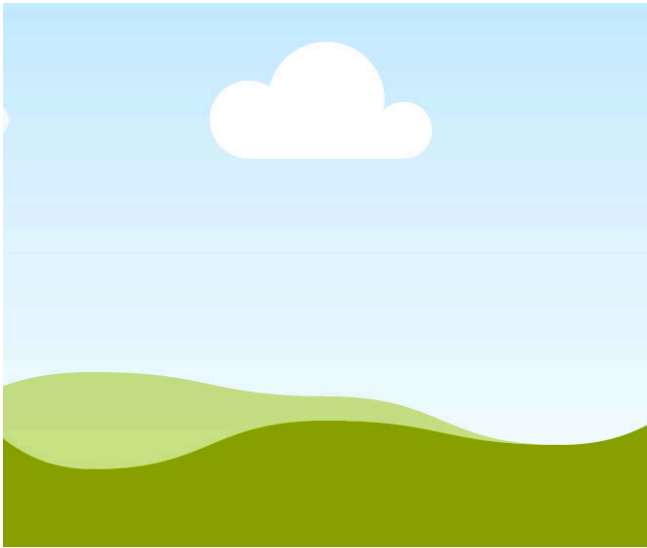
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STUDENT EVENTS

HSC Trip Term

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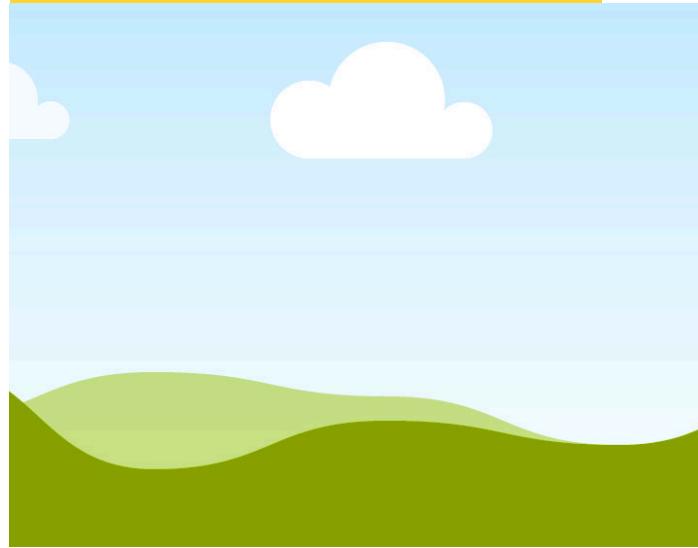
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Entrepreneurship Event

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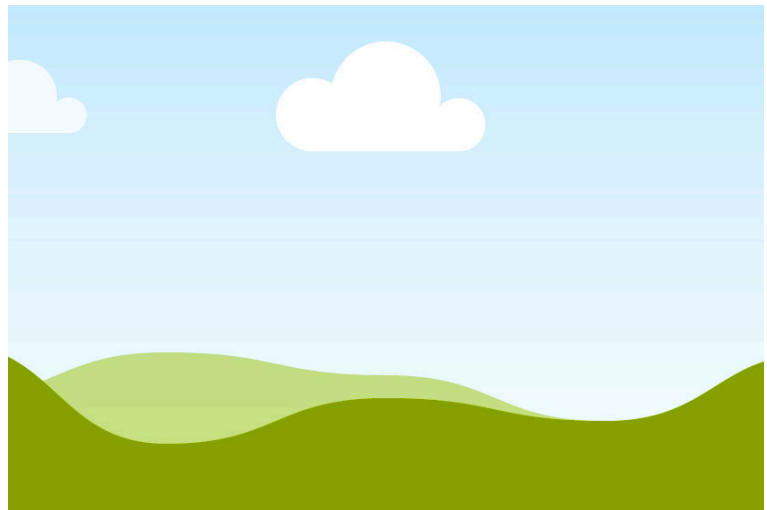
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BMS Field Trip Report

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Event

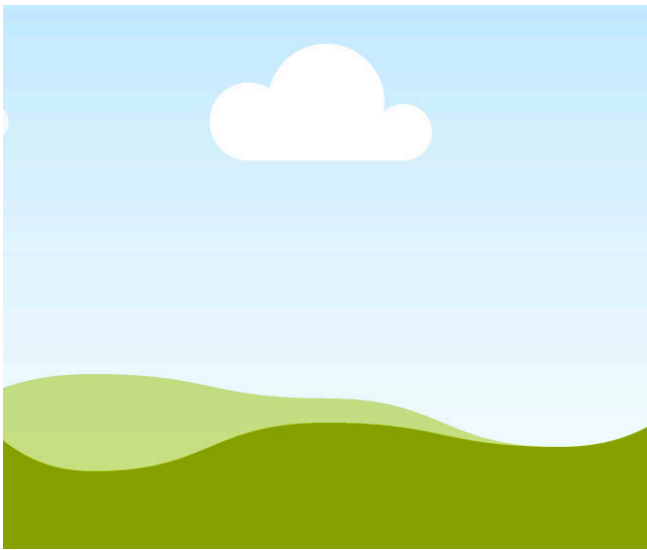
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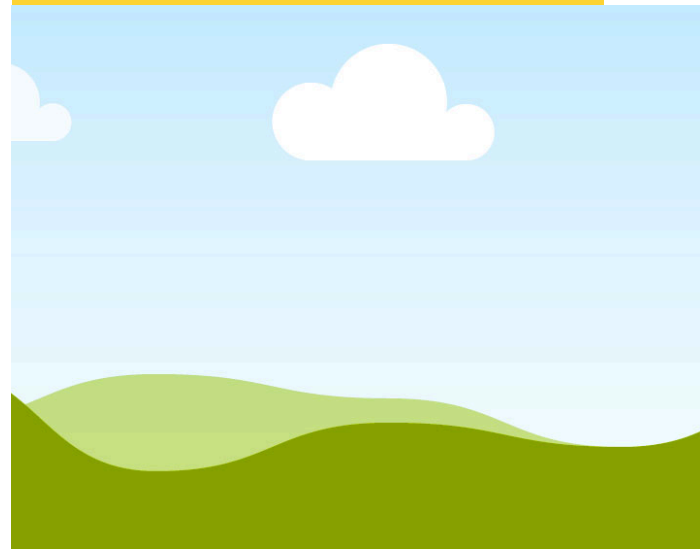
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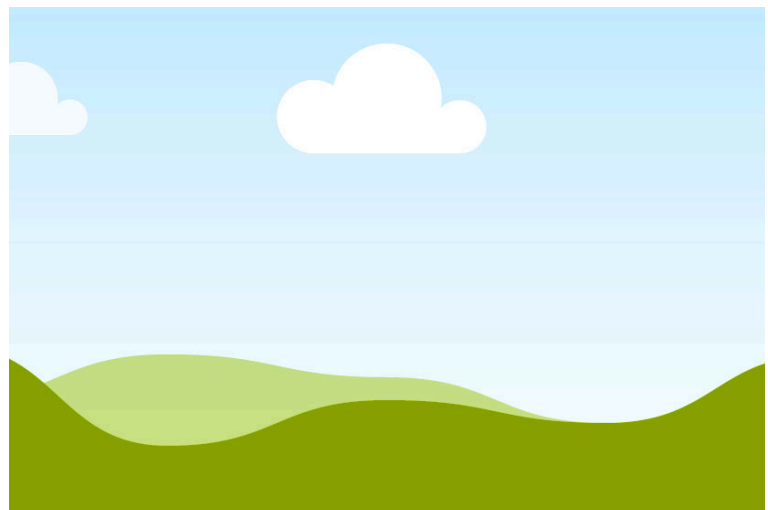
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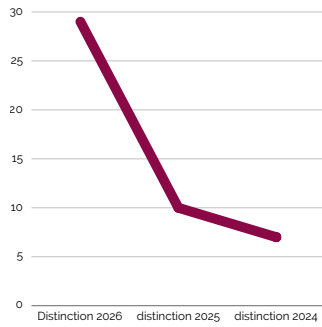


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Student recognitions

Priya ha

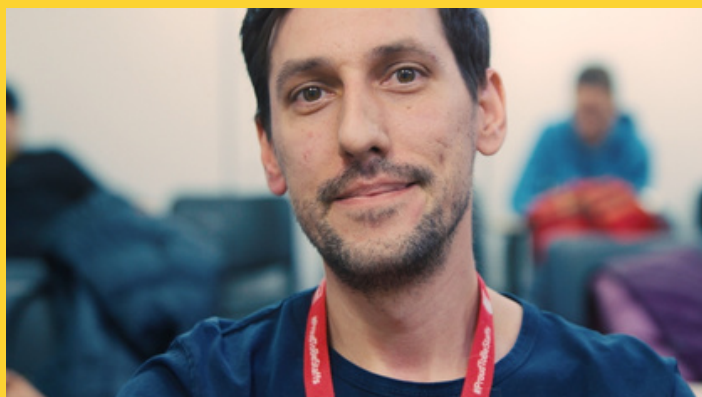
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Alumni Feature

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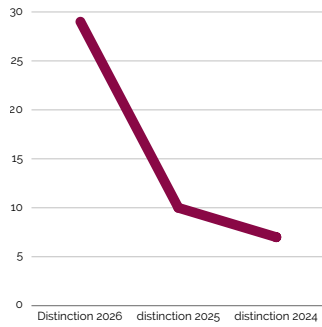
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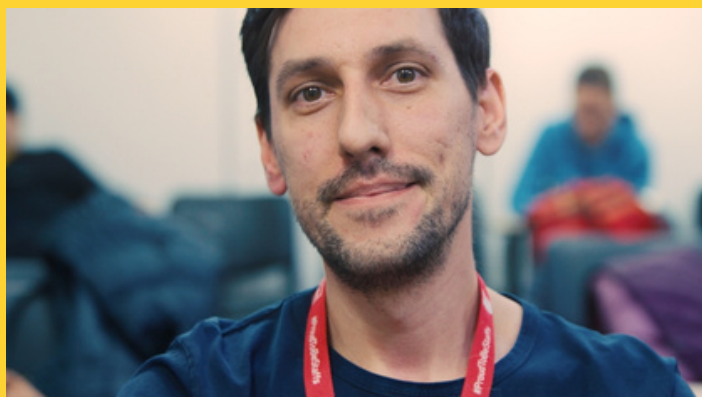
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We have a wide range of courses at both our Coulsdon and Croydon campuses. You can find more information and apply using the QR codes below.

Interview

As part of the application process, you will be invited to a 1-2-1 interview with a course specialist who can give you detailed information and ensure your chosen course meets your career aspirations.

Welcome Day:

An exciting opportunity to experience your chosen course and explore the learning environment.

Enrolment:

You'll be invited to our enrolment in late August. You'll be sent an exact date and time to bring your documents to officially enrol on your course.

Induction:

Meet tutors, get familiar with the course, and prepare for the year ahead.