SUMMER 2026

USP UNLOCKED MAGAZINE

Celebrating Success at our Student Spotlight Awards!



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USP College

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A message from the Principal



Welcome to this special summer edition of USP Unlocked.

Throughout the year, we've continued to make strong progress towards the priorities in our Strategic Plan. By putting students first, strengthening partnerships and creating more opportunities for every student, we're continuing to meet our objectives and build an even stronger future for USP College.

Our students have continued to impress us with their talent, commitment and ambition. The powerful production of Annie in our Immersive Theatre was a real highlight, bringing energy, teamwork and outstanding performance to the stage.

I'm also especially proud of our Supported Internship students and their Amazon graduation. This is one example of the employer partnerships that help to change lives, creating meaningful opportunities for our students with special educational needs and disabilities.
I'd also like to recognise our prize-winning staff, whose dedication and care make such a difference every day. I know how good they are, and it's wonderful to see their work acknowledged externally too.

Warm regards,

Clare White
Principal at USP College

> As we reflect on another busy and inspiring year, I'm incredibly proud of everything our students and staff have achieved. From our Student Awards and end-of-year celebrations to the creativity on display in our Creative Industries students' final shows, there has been so much to celebrate across the College."

Pathways Summer Show and Graduation celebrates student success



Students in USP College's Pathways provision marked the end of the academic year with a joyful Summer Show and Graduation celebration at the Palmer's Campus.

Families, friends, staff and fellow students came together in the Immersive Theatre to celebrate the achievements and progress of Pathways students. The event featured rehearsed dance routines and live singing performances, with students taking to the stage to share their talents with a packed and enthusiastic audience.

A special highlight of the afternoon saw students don graduate caps and gowns as they celebrated their time in Pathways and looked ahead to what comes next.

Pathways Manager, Mandy Brown, and Deputy Manager, Kim Gilmore, shared personal reflections for each student, recognising their individual journeys, achievements and growth. The Immersive Theatre screen also displayed highlight reels from the students' time in the provision, capturing proud educational milestones, memorable experiences and personal development.

It was a warm and emotional celebration of everything students have achieved. As some students now progress onto courses elsewhere in the College, USP is excited to continue supporting them through the next stage of their journey.

Creative Industries End of Year Shows



Students from USP College's Creative Industries sector celebrated their hard work at this year's End of Year Shows, showcasing an inspiring range of projects created throughout the academic year.



Held across both the Seevic and Palmer's campuses, visitors were able to experience a wide range of creative projects, including film reels from Media students, a stunning display of garments handmade by Fashion & Textiles students, and model buildings crafted by Architecture students.

A standout moment from the show was the display of a football shirt designed by Ruby, a Level 3 Illustration & Graphic Design student, as part of an Adobe competition. Ruby's design was selected and worn at the Women's FA Cup Final, showcasing the exceptional talent and creativity of USP College students on a national stage.

"Ruby has grown in confidence over the last 2 years. This will be so valuable within her portfolio and will help kick-start her future career in design perfectly. I am so proud of her achievements!"

Tara Bowman
Teacher of Illustration & Graphic Design

The event also celebrated the department's collaboration with Harp, a local homelessness charity. Through this partnership, Creative Industries students worked on an upcycling project, transforming clothing from Harp's charity shops and reselling with all profits going to Harp. Representatives from Harp joined the showcase to sell the upcycled garments, highlighting the importance of sustainability and the impact of creative skills beyond the classroom.

Creative Industries at USP College continues to give students opportunities to develop industry-relevant skills, collaborate on exciting projects with employers, and explore their creativity across a range of disciplines. The department's focus on practical learning and real-world experiences helps students build confidence and prepare for future careers in the creative sector.



Ruby's winning design was printed on mascot shirts during the FA Cup Final - and Ruby and her family received VIP tickets to watch the game. USP College's Creative Industries department holds a range of courses for those with bright ideas like Ruby's.

I was amazed to find out my design was selected as the final winning entry for the competition. It helped me develop my Adobe skills. In the future I would love to be a designer in the football world."

Ruby Robinson
Level 3 Illustration & Graphic Design Student



Student Experience Team named Silver Winner at the Pearson National Teaching Awards 2026



The Student Experience Team at USP College was named a Silver Winner for FE Team of the Year at the Pearson National Teaching Awards 2026 – one of the most prestigious recognitions in UK education.

The award celebrates the joined-up support network that sits behind every student at the College.

Safeguarding staff, progress coaches, careers advisors, work experience officers, student services, enrichment and student voice leads, and the Learning Resource Centre team work side by side to remove barriers, raise aspirations and drive achievement. Their combined effort creates a seamless system of support that keeps students safe, engaged and ready to progress into employment or higher study.

Behind the recognition is a team that has reimagined what support looks like in Further Education. More than 97% of students took part in planned industry placements, gaining real workplace experience alongside lecture-theatre sessions on professionalism and safeguarding. The team's joined-up approach to careers advice and guidance earned the respected Matrix Accreditation, and the impact is felt by individual students every day. One Level 2 student who had struggled with attendance saw it climb from 62% to 89% in a single term, then went on to progress to Level 3 and secure a placement in their chosen field.

That same care runs through everything the team does. Students can reach round-the-clock confidential counselling through the Wisdom App and Health Assured, trained Mental Health Peer Mentors are on hand to support their classmates, and students build a record of their growing skills through Grofar Passports. A trauma-informed, restorative culture has strengthened relationships across the College, and students have a genuine say in how things are run: ideas raised at a cross-college Student Union Conference, shared directly with senior leaders, have been put into action.

The Silver Win means the department is now in with a chance of being named a Gold Winner, with the final announcement taking place later this year at a special ceremony in Pall Mall, London. Gold Award winners are revealed at the UK Ceremony, the national celebration of the people who make a real difference in education.

> **"This is a tremendous achievement and a testament to the dedication, professionalism and care shown by the entire team every single day. I would particularly like to extend special thanks and congratulations to Assistant Principal Hannah Johnson, whose leadership, passion and unwavering commitment have played a pivotal role in this success."**

Clare White
Principal at USP College

97%

97% of students took part in planned industry placements

PEARSON NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS

USP College wins two Essex Teaching Awards 2026



It was a proud night for USP College at the Essex Teaching Awards 2026, with two of its curriculum teams taking home a trophy.

The two awards were:

FE Team of the Year - Health and Social Care and Early Years Team

School or College Partnership of the Year, won by the Early Years Team

Run by Essex County Council and now in their 12th year, the Essex Teaching Awards celebrate the educators and support staff making a difference across the county, from early years and schools through to further education. With nominees drawn from settings right across Essex, recognition in two categories on the same night marks a real high point for the College.

Recognition for Health and Social Care

The FE Team of the Year award honours teams in further education whose combined skills, creativity and energy deliver outstanding results for learners. For the USP Health and Social Care team, the win reflects the consistent progress students make and the strong links the team builds with employers and the wider care sector across South Essex.

A partnership that delivers for early years

The School or College Partnership of the Year award recognises schools, settings and colleges that work together to tackle a shared challenge and make a measurable difference for children and young people. The USP Early Years team won for exactly that: the practical, sustained partnership work that connects classroom learning with real placements and prepares the next generation of early years practitioners.

What this means for students

For prospective students, the message is straightforward. The people teaching Health and Social Care and Early Years at USP College are recognised at county level for the quality of their work and the outcomes they help students reach. For anyone in Essex thinking about a career in care, health or early years, that is a strong reason to take a closer look.

> I am immensely proud of this achievement. These awards are a testament to the dedication, passion, and devotion of our staff, who consistently go above and beyond to support our students and help them succeed."

"Seeing how far our curriculum areas have progressed over the past few years fills me with pride. Together, we have built a culture of excellence, innovation, and support that continues to make a real difference in the lives of our students. These achievements reflect the hard work of every member of the team and our shared belief that we can always achieve more."

Ritchie Naylor
Curriculum Director of Sport and Healthcare Professionals at USP College

Interested in studying Health and Social Care or Early Years at USP College? Explore our courses or book onto an open event to see the campuses for yourself.

ADULT COURSES

APPRENTICESHIPS

The College has launched two new apprenticeships this year to support people who want to upskill into new careers. The courses we are offering are:

- Teaching Assistant Level 3
- Business Administration Level 3

Apprenticeships are a powerful way to gain real skills, experience & a nationally recognised qualification, all while earning a wage and developing whilst on the job.

For employers, this means you can hire someone new or upskill an existing employee, allowing you to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Discover more on our website uspcollege.ac.uk



ACCESS TO HE

USP College provides outstanding education, training & support for adults.

We are passionate about helping you to achieve your ambitions and our courses are consistently recommended by students and employers.

The Access to Higher Education Diploma is designed for people who have been out of education for some time or for those who left school without the qualifications needed to go straight to university.

It provides you with a good foundation and the skills needed for studying at university level, so you can be confident and well prepared when you go on to study a degree.

HIGHER EDUCATION

At USP College, we offer a wide range of Higher Education courses in Essex, including Level 4 qualifications, Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, and full Undergraduate Degrees.

Whether you're a sixth-form or college leaver, or you're looking to upskill and advance your career, our flexible study options are designed to fit around your life.

Every programme is built to give you the skills employers demand today and help you achieve the career you want.

For more on Adult Education Scan the QR code

NCFE Aspiration Awards 2026

The NCFE Aspiration Awards are a national celebration of outstanding achievement in further education, run by NCFE - a leading educational charity and champion of vocational and technical learning.

Now in its ninth year, the awards recognise students, apprentices, educators, and support staff making a genuine difference across the UK. Julie Snelling has spent 30 years as Manager of Learning Support at USP College, championing inclusive practice and ensuring students with additional and high-level needs can access, participate in, and thrive within further education. Her finalist place in the Support Staff of the Year category recognises a career built on advocacy.



Support Staff of the Year
Finalist Julie Snelling, Manager of Learning Support

> Julie's dedication to our students with additional needs, and the outstanding work of our Health and Social Care and Early Years teams, reflect exactly the kind of college we are — one that puts students first and works hard to make a lasting difference to lives across Essex."

Clare White
Principal at USP College

USP College students get career advice live from Rockstar Games co-founder



Students from USP College's Seevic, Palmer's and XTEND Digital campuses took part in an exclusive live fireside chat with Jamie King, the BAFTA-winning co-founder of Rockstar Games, joining live from New York City.

The event was hosted by XR Studios, USP College's specialist digital and gaming facility based at the XTEND Digital Campus, as the inaugural edition of its new "XR Studios Presents" series. The programme is designed to connect students directly with leaders from the games, technology and creative sectors.

Jamie King co-founded Rockstar Games in 1998 alongside Dan Houser, Sam Houser, Terry Donovan and Gary Foreman. During his time at the studio he served as Vice Principal of Development, overseeing the production of more than 80 video games including Grand Theft Auto, Max Payne, Red Dead Revolver and Bully. He holds a BAFTA for Lifetime Achievement in Video Games, one of the most prestigious honours in the industry.

Speaking live from New York, King delivered a candid session sharing hard-won insights on building a career in the games industry under the theme "head, heart, hands." Students from across all three campuses put questions directly to King during the session, which was sponsored by ClassView Community and hosted by Giuseppe Circelli, Digital Commercial Director, and Jordan Barzoukas, Curriculum Director of Creative Industries.

XR Studios has confirmed that further events in the "XR Studios Presents" series are already in the pipeline.



Jamie King
Rockstar Games co-founder

> **Stepping into the world of work in today's climate can feel a little scary, and is genuinely life-changing. Hearing directly from someone who helped build one of the most iconic gaming studios on the planet? That's the kind of insight and inspiration that shifts perspectives, opens doors, and plants seeds. Sage advice from a true industry legend, delivered to the next generation of creative talent. Honoured doesn't quite cover it.**

Giuseppe Circelli
XR Studios

USP College students interested in games, digital technology and creative media can find out more about courses at the XTEND Digital Campus at uspcollege.ac.uk

USP College becomes first college in the country to achieve Good for Me Good for FE Changemaker Awards



> USP College students have demonstrated exceptional commitment to social action this year, contributing 6,890 hours of volunteering. Their work has strengthened our USP community and set the bar high for future students to follow."
>
> **Kerry Amos**
> **Student Engagement Manager, USP College**

This Term, USP College hosted the very first Good for Me Good for FE Changemaker Awards Ceremony, celebrating 101 students who completed the Foundation Changemaker Programme across the Seevic Campus in Benfleet and Palmer's Campus in Grays, Essex.

USP College is the first college in the country to achieve the new Changemaker Programme Awards through the Good for Me Good for FE framework - a national campaign championing volunteering and social action in further education. The milestone recognises not just individual student achievement, but the College's broader commitment to developing young people who are ready, confident and motivated to contribute to the world beyond the classroom.

For parents and carers, the Changemaker Programme reflects something that exam results alone cannot show: that USP College actively invests in developing the whole person. Students who volunteer and lead build their confidence, communication skills and sense of responsibility that employers look for and that help young people navigate adult life. The 101 students celebrated at Monday's ceremony are proof that further education in Essex can be genuinely life-changing.

This year, USP College students collectively contributed an extraordinary amount to their communities:

6,890
volunteering hours

100+
events delivered

£3,117
raised for charity

250
250 food donations

180
clothing items donated

Students supported food banks, homelessness charities, mental health organisations, hospitals, animal welfare groups and local schools, taking on roles including STEM Ambassadors, Sports Leaders, Wellbeing Peer Mentors, Student Union project managers and more. Fifty Level 3 Business students were recognised for organising a Spring Fete and fundraising for charity, while IT student Kishopika Prathees achieved the Gold Award after completing over 220 hours of volunteering and community leadership.



Being part of this programme has helped me build confidence, responsibility, teamwork and communication skills that will continue to support me in the future. This achievement means so much more than receiving an award - it represents growth, perseverance and the support of everyone who encouraged me along the way.

Kishopika Prathees
Information Technology Student, USP College

Drama students bring Annie to life in stunning showcase

USP College's A-Level Performing & Production Arts Year 2 students marked the end of their studies in the most memorable way possible, performing Annie: The Musical Showcase to an audience of parents, friends, and members of the public at the Immersive Theatre, Seevic Campus.



The production brought the beloved story of Annie to life with high-energy performances, lively dance numbers, and real emotional depth. Set against the backdrop of 1930s New York, students delivered a joyful celebration of everything they have learned throughout their A-Level journey, proving that theatre is about far more than performance. It is about community, empathy, and connection.

Donations were collected at the door in support of Silver Birch, a local Essex charity run by Carers Choices that provides specialist dementia day care for individuals and vital respite for their families. With centres in Benfleet and Wickford, Silver Birch offers a warm, welcoming environment where people living with dementia can enjoy purposeful activities, companionship, and expert care. It was a fitting cause for a group of students whose work embodies exactly the kind of compassion and humanity that Silver Birch stands for.

Behind the scenes, students also managed sound, digital production, props, costume, and marketing, showcasing the full breadth of talent within the group.

"I am beyond proud of what these students have achieved, but more than anything I am proud of the people they have become. Theatre isn't just about the final product. It teaches you how to connect with others, how to show empathy, and how to be part of something bigger than yourself. This group has shown all of that in abundance."

Rebecca Lynch
Curriculum Manager – Creative Industries

V LEVELS

A NEW ERA OF EDUCATION

V-Levels are new post-16 qualifications in England that are coming in 2027.

From September 2027, students will have access to new qualifications designed to provide clear routes into further study, training, higher education and skilled employment.

The new pathways are designed to help young people develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to progress into further study and future careers.

WHAT ARE WE OFFERING?

Digital Systems & Data

Education

Accounting & Finance

WHAT QUALIFICATION COMBINATIONS CAN YOU STUDY?

1 V- Level (Digital Systems & Data or Education) and 2 A-Levels.

2 V-Levels (Digital Systems & Data and Education) and 1 A-Level.

V-Level Accounting & Finance is built into our Level 3 Business, Accounting and Finance qualification, so there's no need to apply for this V-Level separately.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

You can apply for a V-Level qualification the same way you would any other! On our website, when picking your courses simply click 'Academic' and select your combination of A-Levels and V-Levels.

For more information please visit

uspcollege.ac.uk

Results Day



USP College students are celebrating their A-Level, T-Level and Level 3 vocational results, with strong performances across a wide range of subjects.

Among this year's highlights are the College's T-Level results, with 100% pass rates across a number of subjects including Health; Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing & Control; Digital Production, Design & Development; and Education & Early Years.

A particularly strong performance came from Education & Early Years, where 78% of students achieved a Distinction or Distinction*, the highest T-Level grade. We're delighted that so many of these Education & Early Years students have chosen to continue their studies with us, progressing onto the Early Years Foundation Degree at our XTEND Digital Campus.

A-Level students achieved strong results, with Geography, English Language & Literature and Film Studies all recording 100% pass rates. A-Level student Sebastian Rapley Mende achieved AAA across Geography, Economics and Politics, securing a place at the University of Oxford to study Geography. He thanked his teachers and support staff for helping him during his time at USP College:

"Thank you to USP College for helping me achieve AAA at A-Level and secure a place at the University of Oxford. It's such a nice atmosphere to learn in, and I'm delighted with my results."

Sebastian Rapley Mende

Vocational students also achieved excellent results, with Level 3 Extended Diploma in Engineering standing out, with 100% of students passing the qualification. Students have highlighted the industry-standard facilities at USP College as playing an important role in preparing them for their future careers, providing hands-on experience in an environment designed to reflect the workplace. At USP College, we aim to combine high-quality teaching and learning with real-world experiences, ensuring students develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to progress into further study, employment and their chosen careers, so we are delighted to see so many students securing places in their first-choice next steps.

On Results Day, the College hosted a celebratory breakfast for students to share their successes with friends, family and teaching staff. Students were also joined by Dame Rebecca Harris MP and Cllr Kate Knott, Mayor of Castle Point, and her consort Cllr John Knott, who shared in their excitement.

We are so proud of our students. The results they have achieved reflect their hard work and commitment, supported by the dedication of our teaching teams and the strong relationships we have built with employers and industry partners. These results are a testament to what our students can achieve when they are given the right support, opportunities and encouragement to succeed."

Dan Pearson
CEO, USP College



USP College celebrates students at Annual Student Spotlight Awards



USP College celebrated the achievements, resilience and ambition of its students at the Annual Student Spotlight Awards in July.

Hosted in the College's Immersive Theatre, the well-attended event brought together students, friends, families, teachers and local Mayor Cllr Kate Knott and her consort for a joyful end-of-term celebration.

The venue was beautifully decorated, creating a special setting for students to be recognised for all they've achieved.

Guests were treated to food and drinks throughout the event, while professional photography captured the special moments and created lasting memories of the occasion. Principal Clare White presented awards to students as they took to the stage. In her speech, Clare congratulated the award winners and told them how proud they should be of their achievements. She also thanked teachers for their dedication, guidance and hard work in supporting students throughout the year.

There were smiles, proud applauses and even a few celebratory dances as students collected their awards.

One of the highlights of the evening was a motivational speech from award winner Ashley, who spoke as the student representative. Ashley studied T-Level Digital Production, Design and Development and shared an inspiring message with fellow students as they look ahead to their next steps.



Ashley is now preparing to begin a role at Amazon in DevOps, an exciting achievement that reflects the skills and confidence developed during her time at USP College.

The Annual Student Spotlight Awards are always a fantastic way to close the academic year, recognising success, celebrating the College community and looking forward to the opportunities ahead.



Welcome Days bring the USP community together from day one!





USP College welcomed all applicants to its campuses for a brilliant three days of sunshine, new connections and festival-style fun.

Students got a real taste of life at USP College as they met future classmates, chatted with teachers and started making new friends. From the moment they arrived, everyone had the chance to feel part of the USP community.

VIP lanyard holders also entered an exclusive prize draw, with prizes ranging from power banks and drinks bottles to an iPad and other exclusive merchandise. Ice cream vans at each campus provided custom treats that helped everyone stay cool, while deckchairs added to a relaxed summer festival atmosphere.

Welcome Days were the perfect start to the USP College journey bringing students together before term began in September.

Want to join in next year?
All you have to do is apply early!

SHAPE THE FUTURE

WORK WITH US AT USP COLLEGE







Looking for a career change or want to bring your real world skills to help shape the workforce of tomorrow?

USP College has a number of opportunities that might just be right for you!

We have roles across;

Teaching
Curriculum Support
Business Support

We believe in investing in our staff, offering competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities.

For more information, contact us by emailing **recruitment@uspcollege.ac.uk** or view our vacancies online by scanning the QR code below.

Scan the QR Code to view our current vacancies today or visit uspcollege.ac.uk

DISCOVER FUTURE YOU



Open Evenings

BENFLEET
Seevic Campus
18 November 2026
21 January 2027

GRAYS
Palmer's Campus
4 November 2026
28 January 2027

CANVEY ISLAND
XTEND Digital Campus
25 February 2027

BOOK ONLINE

uspcollege.ac.uk