

How to build effective links and relationships with Universities

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Aims

WHERE TO START?

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

INCORPORATING UNIVERSITIES

WIDENING ACCESS & PARTICIPATION

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

FINAL THOUGHTS

Where to start?



How do you approach the process?

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS:

- *What is your experience of initial contact with Universities?*
- *How do you approach making initial contact?*
- *What sources/resources do you use?*



Where to start?

- **Who to link with** - destinations, aspirations, local, further away from home
- Who is the most **relevant person** - have you received digital or physical information previously - *avoid emailing multiple teams*
- **Unitasterdays/HELOA** - sends enquiries directly to University outreach teams
- **University website** - Student Recruitment team, Education Liaison, School and Colleges, Widening Access & Participation
- Each University will have either a **generic inbox** or a **specific contact** for your school or college
- Some may have **faculty outreach** staff rather than a centralised team



Where to start?

- Some Universities now focusing on a **regional approach** - representative based in your region
- Speak to **colleagues** in your area - who do they link in with?
- **Be patient** - especially at busier times of the year for teams
- Meeting **face to face** - in person or virtual - how can we build the relationship with you?
- **What do you want from us**, rather than what can we offer you
- We as Universities value building these links and relationships **just as highly** as yourselves
- **Activity planning meeting** - set out your activities for the year that you would support on - even if it's only proposed and not confirmed!



What do we offer?



What Support do you Need?

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS:

- What are the biggest demands from students/yourselves?
- What would we need to offer you to make a visit to campus worthwhile
- What would you expect from us when we visited your school/college
- The problems you face engaging students with these opportunities?
- Is there anything further you would like to see us offer as Universities?



What do we offer?

- Each institution will provide a menu of activity on workshops/presentations and events and what group they are aimed at
- Promote outreach in newsletters or via website pages
- Pre 16 vs Post 16
- Utilise Office for Students - Uniconnect Hubs
- Always ask - worst we can say is no!
- Each institution will have to assess every request - application numbers, distance, budget, context of school/college
- Be clear - what are you asking for? When? What Year group - we can make suggestions



Examples...

- Generic talks and workshops
- HE Fairs/Careers Fairs
- Information stands
- Subject Taster Days/Discovery days
- Bespoke on campus visits
- Subject taster sessions
- Summer Residentials
- Targeted and sustained programmes of activity
- Open Days
- Teacher & Adviser CPD

<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/support/studentrecruitment/>



Utilising alumni

- Using alumni of your school/college can be a beneficial way of encouraging your student to focus on the decisions they have to make
- On campus visits/careers fairs - some student guides/ambassadors that work for the university may be previous students
- Back to School initiatives - allows students at University to go back to their school or college to share their experiences
- Alumni based careers workshops
- Utilising alumni network may be a source of knowledge to make contacts and networks at university, apprenticeship and employer level



Widening Access and Participation

- Teams delivering activities which develop and support the aspirations and attainment of students from different social groups who **may not normally consider higher education** as an option, or are **under-represented within higher education**.
- Access and Participation Plan: <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/access-participation-plan/>
- **Priority groups**
- Programmes of activity, e.g. Edge Hill University Diversity Access Programme
- Dedicated support packages, e.g. Care experienced student support offer



Priority groups

- Care Experienced and Estranged Students
- Students who have caring responsibilities
- Mature students
- Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic students
- Students who are seeking asylum / refugee status
- Students from military families
- Students living with a disability or mental health condition
- Students who are or have been eligible for pupil premium funding/Ever6 free school meals
- Students from low participation neighbourhoods (where very few people go on to higher education)
- Students who are the first generation in their family to go to university.



WP support offer

What we can offer you:

- 1 to 1 or small group work with targeted students, whether in school/college or on our campus, e.g. CEES students or mature students
- Targeted programmes for students meeting our WP criteria, e.g. Diversity Access Programme, Neurodiversity Skills for Success Programme, Medicine Pathways Programme
- Introducing targeted students to support teams on campus whether pre-entry or to **support transition** following an offer, e.g. Inclusion and SpLD teams for disabled students
- CPD for school/college staff around supporting targeted students to access and transition into HE



Feedback: Working with Student Recruitment teams

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE
FOLLOWING THOUGHTS:

- *Would this be a useful resource for you?*
- *Is this something that would support your expectations or careers programme planning?*
- *Is there anything you think we could change?*



Incorporating Universities



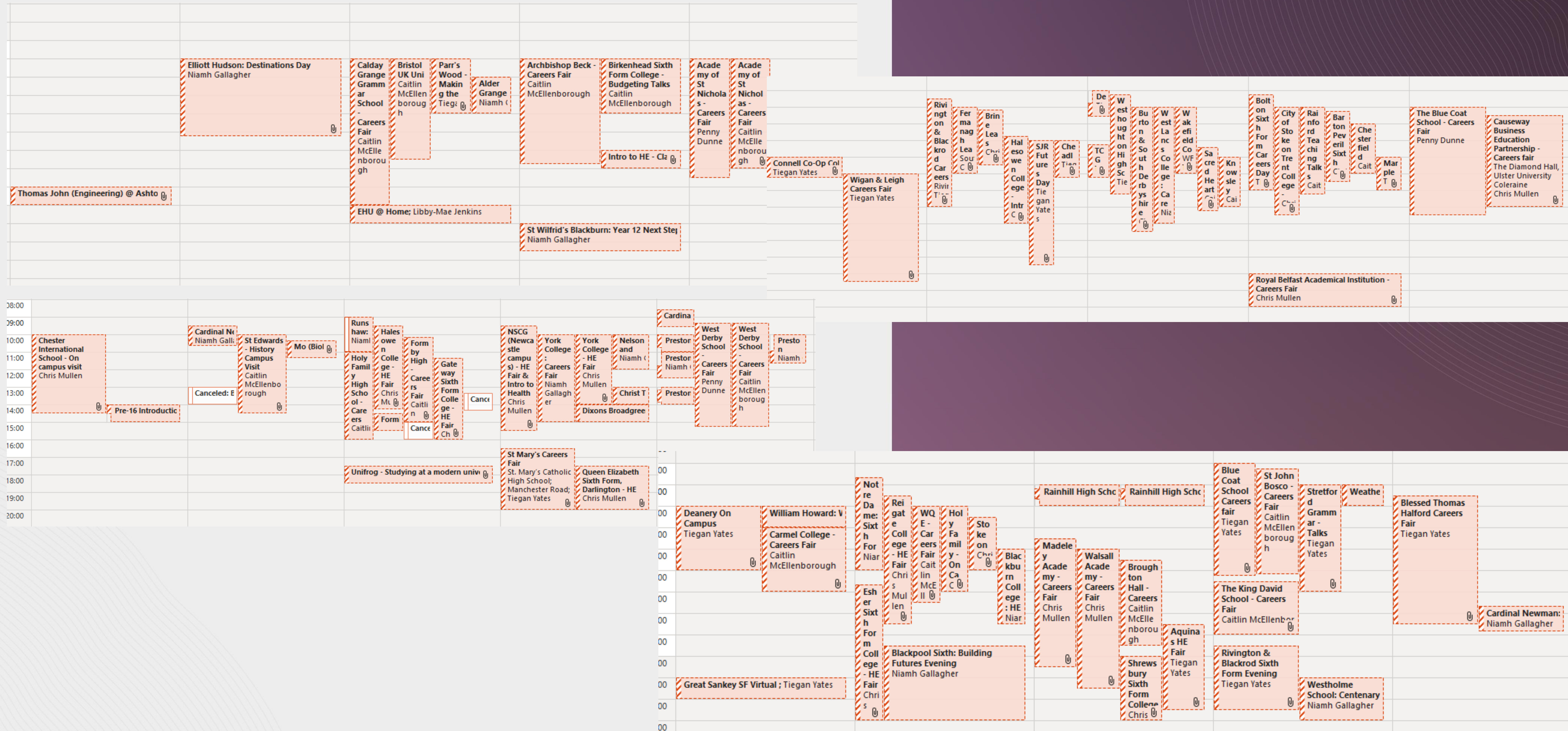
Your Careers Programme

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS:

- *How much support do you provide from internal or external services?*
- *How is the process managed at your school/college?*
- *What support do you provide pre/post application?*
- *What have you changed for this year that has worked well?*
- *How do you kept up to date with changes in the sector?*



“Mad” March...



Supporting events

- Letting us know about events as soon as possible - **even a save the date for the time being**
- Sept - Nov, March, June to July are our **busiest months**
- Does it conflict with a local or national event?
- Linking with another school/college within your trust or locally to encourage larger variety of attendees
- Or alternatively organise a day either side to allow Universities to attend both
- Information beforehand - **the more details the better!**
- Final details around 2 weeks before is ideal, including;
 - Dates, times, location, schedule, car parking, travel
 - Expected audience, refreshments, any impacts/issues on the day/arrival



Supporting events

- Physical vs virtual option - linked to institutional attendance
- Which online platform to use?
- Maximise any speaker efficiency - avoid booking multiple institutions to deliver the same talks to a handful of students each time
- Be clear on which Year Groups will be attending
- Consider room layout, setup and timings of events
- Empower your pupils in regards to format
- Prepare them as much as possible for any event - **we can help with this!**
- Ask for feedback from attendees - we will be honest and open about how we found the event!



Maintaining relationships



Maintaining relationships

DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS:

- *How do you maintain a good relationship with University colleagues?*
- *Do you keep in touch regularly through the year?*
- *Have you had to have any tough conversations with institutions?*
- *What would you like to see from Universities in regards to maintaining these relationships?*
- *Is there anything we can do that you feel we are missing?*



Maintaining relationships

- Regularly **keep in touch** with your contacts across the academic year - especially changes in staffing or contact details
- Student recruitment staff can act as **gatekeepers** to the University - Admissions, Student Support, Academics/Faculties
- Teacher & Adviser conferences, panels, surveys, podcasts and CPD - always give us honest feedback, we won't be offended!
- These relationships provide you with a wealth of contacts, resources and information - we will be open and honest
- Remember; Universities have their own targets and plans to achieve - **mutually beneficial**



Final thoughts

- Most relevant contact - generic, regional or faculty/subject specific
- Sign up for communications - newsletters, surveys etc
- Teachers & Advisers panels and conferences - don't be afraid to give us constructive feedback!
- Sept/Nov and March/June/July can fill up quickly - **even if it's a save the date!**
- We can be gatekeepers for the wider University
- We are **always keen to hear** what you want and need from us as institutions! (HELOA)
- Always factor in a **mutually beneficial** approach



Take away case studies



Expand your opportunities

WITH EDGE HILL

[EHU.AC.UK/DISCOVER](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/discover)