

USP UNLOCKED

NEWSLETTER

We're award winners!



**Celebrating
our first T-Level
graduates**

Page 4

**Art installation
featured on
BBC News**

Page 7

**Student
Spotlight:
James Shadbolt**

Page 16

A message from the Principal

From the moment we returned in September, the pace hasn't stopped. We launched the year with cross-campus briefings and were incredibly proud to showcase the brand new Immersive Theatre space at our Palmer's Campus.

A major highlight was our first ever T-Level graduation, where we celebrated a phenomenal 100% pass rate. This remarkable achievement is down to the dedication of our learners, the commitment of our staff, and the strong partnerships we continue to build with employers. Our staff and students have also stepped beyond the classroom this term, heading into the community on CPD days and beyond, representing the College with pride.

We also welcomed the community for a two-minute silence and a parade on Remembrance Day. Moments like these remind us of the character, respect and unity that run through our College community.

Across the board, USP College have been recognised for excellence - in sport, in teaching, and in leadership. We were thrilled to see Dan Pearson, CEO take the incredible work happening here in Essex onto the world stage, shining a global spotlight on USP College and what makes us unique.

We've loved bringing this first issue to life, and we hope you enjoy reading it just as much.

Warm regards,
Clare White, Principal, USP College



Welcome to the very first issue of USP Unlocked! I'm delighted to introduce this new termly magazine, designed to give you a bright and engaging window into life across USP College. We hope you enjoy this little insight into what has been a jam-packed, energising and hugely successful first term.

USP on the world's stage



USP College's Chief Executive Officer, Dan Pearson, and Chief Technology Officer, James Parker, took centre stage at the Seamless Learning Conference in Vienna, showcasing the College's pioneering work in immersive education.

Their presentation, "From Essex to Europe: Connected Classrooms Without Borders," highlighted how USP College has transformed traditional learning environments into digitally connected, immersive spaces.

What began as a local solution to inter-campus teaching challenges has evolved into a national network of over 50 colleges and 80+ immersive classrooms across England.



It was brilliant to hear from speakers from all over the world, all grappling with the same core question: how can we best navigate the challenges and opportunities that technology presents to us as educators? I've come away with a notebook full of ideas and initiatives to explore back at the College."

James Parker,
Chief Technology Officer, USP College

Celebrating our first T-Level graduates



USP College proudly marked a historic milestone on Tuesday 9 September, hosting its very first T-Level Graduation Ceremony at the Immersive Theatre, Seevic Campus.

We were pleased to celebrate a **100% pass rate across our entire T-Level provision**, and were joined by students, families and some employers.



T-Level Education and Early Years Student, Holly O'Brien, did a lovely speech and had some complimentary words to say about the teaching staff and experience at the College.

Her next steps are to attend the University of East London on their special educational needs and disabilities degree to achieve her goal of becoming a SEND teacher.

Congratulations to all of our T-Level students, we can't wait to see what you do next!



To the amazing teaching staff at the College - you've listened to our worries and concerns, and worked with us to find solutions, helping us grow in confidence, resilience, and self-belief. You've shown me what patience, creativity, and dedication really look like."

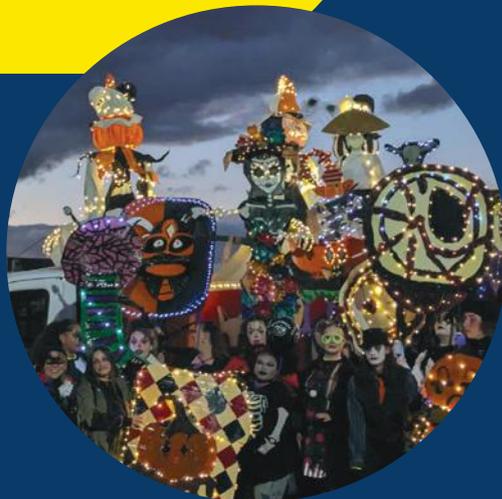
Holly O'Brien, T-Level Graduate



Creative Industries Students steal the show at Southend Halloween Parade



The winning concept, a float featuring three striking 10-foot Jack-in-the-Boxes, was designed by Leon Doveaston and was the centre piece of the parade.



First-year students added their own flair by creating illuminated rod puppets carried through the parade, while Level 3 Performing Arts students joined in costume, performing alongside the float to amplify the spectacle.

The students worked collaboratively and had to produce detailed proposals and present them to the Events Team from Southend City Council.

Art installation featured on **BBC News**



Dave Taylor, one of our talented Creative Industries teachers, created a stunning sculpture as part of the Pier of Poppies installation in Southend-on-Sea which appeared on BBC News.

The piece, titled 'The Unknown Soldier', is a large steel silhouette of a soldier, filled with 2,106 knitted and crocheted poppies – one for each member of the armed forces from the Southend area who gave their lives during the World Wars.

Community remembrance parade

A moving Remembrance Parade was led by our Uniformed Protective Services students attended by staff, students and members of the Community.

Amongst those that laid a wreath were Governor Phillip Lennon – Vice Chair of the Corporation, and USP College Principal Clare White.

The students also ran a fundraiser for the Royal British Legion engaging students in activities including a push up challenge and pin the poppy. This will now be an annual event in which we invite the local community to attend.



Scan the QR code to watch the parade



USP College and NHS partner to expand T-Level placements



USP College recently hosted its Further Education Placement Workshop: Essex, teaming up with NHS England and the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (MSE ICB) to strengthen clinical placements for T-Level Health students.

A key highlight: USP College is able to draw on the Employer Support Fund, which offers financial incentives for organisations hosting health T-Level placements, helping to reduce upfront burdens.

Second-year T-Level Health students attended and candidly shared their hopes for placements: hands-on clinical exposure, mentoring from qualified staff, clearer insights into day-to-day NHS roles, and confidence to transition into professional roles.

Speakers including James Cross (NHS England), Nicole Baker (NHS Foundation Trust), and Stacey Sherwood (MSE NHS Foundation Trust) led sessions on best practices, learner support, and innovative placement strategies. A USP College student offered a personal reflection on how meaningful placements foster professional identity and competence.

All agreed: T-Level clinical placements are vital – not merely as educational requirements, but as a strategic investment in the future NHS workforce. These students may be tomorrow’s employees.

USP College Health, Social Care & Early Years Curriculum Manager, Kara Stoker felt the event provided a valuable platform for networking and collaboration, with a number of strong partnerships formed between educational providers and NHS trusts. These partnerships aim to support the development of high-quality, hands-on clinical experiences that will enhance our learners’ skills and prepare them for future careers in the health sector.

We are excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to working closely with NHS trusts to ensure our learners gain meaningful, impactful clinical placements that align with their studies and career aspirations.



T-Level health students are quite simply our future NHS workforce. We have to work together in partnership to ensure that today’s T-Level students are supported to be tomorrow’s NHS workforce.”

James Cross, NHS England



Scan the QR code to view our facilities



Green Plaque unveiled to honour William Palmer's educational legacy



USP College proudly hosted the unveiling of a Green Plaque at its Palmer's Campus in Grays on Monday 6 October, commemorating the life and legacy of William Palmer (1633–1710). The plaque was presented by the Thurrock History Society to the William Palmer Trust, recognising centuries of educational benefit to the borough.

Palmer, a London-born merchant and Lord of the Manor of Grays, established a charitable Trust in 1706 to fund a school for disadvantaged children in the parish. His vision was to teach ten poor children to read, write, and learn Latin—laying the foundation for what would become Palmer's School and eventually USP College.

Do you have a memory of Palmer's School? We'd love to hear your stories! marketing@uspcollege.ac.uk

Our new facilities at Palmer's Campus

Palmer's Campus underwent some exciting upgrades over the summer.

The Immersive Theatre was a welcome addition to match the one at Seevic Campus. Students are able to share live speakers and seminars regardless of campus location. We also introduced a new digital computing suite with top-of-the-range equipment, and a living simulation space for Pathways department, including kitchen facilities.



A glimpse into Palmer's Campus past



Scan the QR code to watch the video

While exploring the archives at Palmer's Campus, we stumbled upon a reel of old tape tucked away in storage.

Curious, we had it converted and what we discovered was a beautiful piece of historic footage from a Palmer's School garden party - possibly in the 1950s. The scenes are full of charm, students laughing in the sunshine, teachers mingling in smart suits, and the unmistakable pride of a school that has been part of the community for generations. Watching these moments reminds us that Palmer's Campus has always been more than a building; it's a place where memories are made and futures begin.

Lighting up Palmer's Campus for mental health

Our Palmer's Campus was lit up green for World Suicide Prevention Day to support Thurrock & Brentwood Mind Charity's 'Light Up' campaign - a charity which supports building a brighter world for those struggling with their mental health.

Students at USP College have access to our Wellbeing services which provide quiet spaces, safeguarding support and 1-1 counselling.





Did you know USP College offers a range of **Higher Education** and **Adult Courses**?

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.

Apply direct on the USP website
(no need to go through UCAS)
uspcollege.ac.uk

- Foundation Degree in Early Years
- BA (Hons) Education & Early Years
- HNC/HND Games Development
- BA (Hons) Games Art
- HNC/HND Sport & Exercise Science
- Level 4 Public Services
- HNC Engineering

**Earn your degree your
way - right here in Essex
with USP College!**

Adult Education

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.

We work closely with universities and employers to ensure that our courses are designed with your career in mind. In doing so, we ensure that you will gain the qualifications, skills and confidence you need to be successful in your chosen field.



Scan here to view
our courses

Young Carers Award

USP College has proudly been awarded the prestigious Young Carers in Schools Award, a national recognition celebrating educational institutions that go above and beyond to support students with caring responsibilities.



The College achieved the award following a rigorous assessment process that highlighted its exceptional commitment to young carers across its campuses.

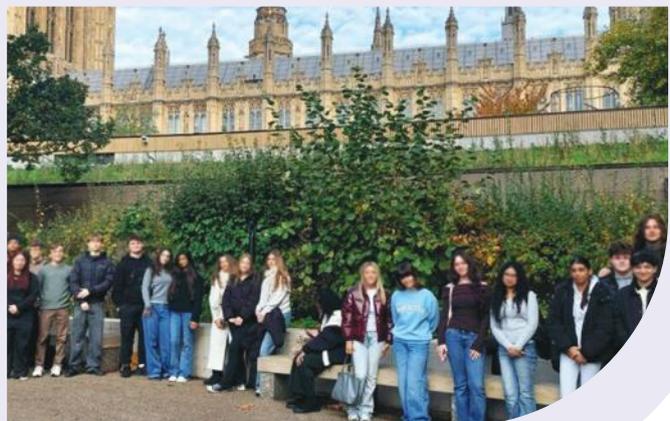
The award panel commended USP College for its innovative practices and inclusive ethos, meeting the core criteria with distinction.

This recognition places USP College among a select group of institutions leading the way in young carer support. It reflects the College's unwavering dedication to equity, wellbeing, and student success.

USP Students at Parliament

A-Level Law and Politics students from our Palmer's campus had the exciting opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament.

Students were treated to a VIP meeting with local MP Rebecca Harris, where they asked challenging questions on topics such as the government's handling of Covid-19, austerity measures, and the Brexit deal. Students then took part in an interactive law-making workshop in the Parliament Education Suite. The visit was a fantastic way to bring classroom learning to life. Law and Politics students from the Seevic Campus had the chance to take part in a similar visit in December.



Bringing **basketball** to life with tech and teamwork



USP College delivered two exciting enrichment events in November, blending sport, technology, and student engagement.

USP College continues to invest in facilities and partnerships that enhance student life, ensuring every learner has access to activities that build confidence, teamwork, and social connections.

The first event on 5 November at Seevic Campus showcased the College's cutting-edge facilities, as students used the Immersive Theatre's massive screen to play an interactive basketball game. This innovative warm-up combined physical activity with digital engagement, highlighting how USP College uses the latest technology to create unique experiences beyond the classroom.

The excitement continued on 18 November at Palmer's Campus, where the Sports Hall hosted a 3v3 Basketball Tournament in partnership with Bball Fundamentalz and sponsored by Decathlon. Students competed for prizes generously provided by Vue Cinema, adding an extra incentive to get involved.

We are proud to work closely with the local community and build partnerships with employers to enrich student life. These collaborations help create well-rounded young people who can cope with the demands of the future. By encouraging physical and social activity alongside academic learning, the College ensures students develop confidence, teamwork, and resilience—skills that matter in every career.



Our theatre space is adaptable for all kinds of events and I decided to get the kids on the big screen. Students battled it out in a lunch break to be the most skillful player. The tracking technology meant students would be handling the basketball in reality, but reacting to the on screen tasks through motion.

It brought out their competitive edge and curiosity, some without any prior basketball experience which was great to see.”

**Kerry Amos,
Student Engagement Manager at USP College**

In partnership with



Student Spotlight!

We're incredibly proud of James Shadbolt, a second-year Extended Diploma in Engineering student at USP College, who recently showcased his musical talent on a national stage!

James performed for the second year running with the RAF Air Cadets Marching Band at the prestigious Lord Mayor's Show in London, playing the snare drum and representing Basildon (2243) Squadron.

His dedication and passion for music have earned him the Gold Music Badge, a recognition of his hard work performing and teaching across his sector, wing, and region bands.



Semi-finals of the Jack Petchey Glee Club Challenge

A-Level Applied Drama students headed to a professional bootcamp for the Jack Petchey Glee Club Challenge.

Students attended workshops on vocals, performance, ensemble and choreography from real West End stars!

They'll be going to the Semi Finals at Chelmsford Theatre in March. Fingers crossed they make the finals!



We're award winners!



USP College is proud to announce we've won the Good For Me, Good For FE: Volunteering Accreditation Excellence Award!

This achievement recognises our fantastic delivery of the Change Maker qualification pilot to support student employability. We are proud that our career-focused approach to learning has been recognised at this level.

The official Good For Me, Good For FE Awards Celebration took place on Friday 5 December at the House of Lords, and we were represented by staff members Kerry Amos, Jason Bowen and Suzanne Perry. They were amongst the student-facing staff involved in facilitating the Change Maker qualification.

Through this project, 22 students proudly achieved the Bronze Volunteer Award, while over 100 students dedicated themselves to volunteering, together contributing an incredible 1,080 hours. Many hands really do make light work, a big impact and a caring community!

The following colleagues also contributed to supporting students achieve the accreditation: Mia Donovan, Katy Fenner, Linda Hammond and Danny Cleare. Well done - your work has been invaluable!

A special shoutout to Kerry Amos, Student Engagement Manager, for her individual shortlisted nomination for Inspiring Role Model of the Year.

Supporting students in developing employability skills alongside their main qualification is invaluable and continues to make a real difference to their future opportunities.



Young voices drive change at USP College: Citizen Essex Youth Assembly inspires action



The Immersive Theatre at USP College buzzed with energy as over 200 young people, educators, and community leaders gathered, both in person and online, for the Citizen Essex Youth Assembly, a landmark event aimed at amplifying youth voices and shaping the future of Essex.

Hosted by USP College students Logan and James, with Freya expertly keeping time, the assembly showcased the power of collaboration and civic engagement.

Attendees from schools, colleges, and universities across the county united under one mission: to identify key issues affecting young people and pledge actionable solutions ahead of the Mayoral Election Assembly in March 2026.

The event featured an inspiring keynote from Grace Akinyemi of Divine Assembly Ministries, Colchester, who outlined five steps to social change, setting the tone for a day of dialogue and determination. Interactive house meetings followed, where children and young adults took to the microphone to publicly pledge their commitment to listening and problem-solving on issues that matter most to Essex residents. Transport emerged as a dominant theme, with Chelmsford College students highlighting unreliable services that create barriers to education, healthcare, and employment—leading to isolation and anxiety.

USP College’s Logan issued a bold challenge to mayoral candidates: “Ride the Route 28 bus at the end of a college day and experience what we do.”

Meanwhile, South East Essex Academy Trust pupils Darcey, Ellie, Lexie, Sujana, and Lily shared plans for deeper listening initiatives, and Anglia Ruskin University’s Nisha introduced the Impact 24 Project, proposing a bus stop safety app, motion-sensor lighting, and reflective hoodies to improve student safety and sustainability.

The assembly’s purpose was clear: to build relational power among Essex’s educational institutions, ensure young people feel their voices matter, and prepare for meaningful engagement with mayoral candidates in 2026. Dr. Sebastien Chapleau, Assistant Director of Citizen Essex, closed the event by empowering students with strategies to build influence and drive systemic change.



Today’s Youth Assembly at USP College was a powerful reminder of what happens when young voices are truly heard. Seeing students from across Essex come together to share their ideas and pledges for change was inspiring. This event not only gave young people the confidence to speak up but also created a real sense of unity and purpose. The conversations around transport, safety, and access to opportunities show just how committed these young leaders are to shaping a better future for their communities, and that benefits all of Essex.”

Kerry Amos,
Student Engagement Manager at USP College

USP College Prospectus – Reimagined via Augmented Reality (AR)

XR Studios is delivering cutting-edge extended reality (XR) solutions for USP College that transform teaching, learning and business support.

This work ensures USP College remains at the forefront of immersive education, equipping students with practical skills and clearer career pathways. By integrating XR technology into the curriculum, we give students a significant advantage as they prepare to enter today's digital-first workplaces.

The latest prospectus developed with XR Studios reimagines how students explore USP College programmes by transforming printed materials into rich, interactive augmented reality experiences.



Got a smartphone ready?

Give it a go!

Scan the QR code and watch Principal Clare White come to life on the page.



XR Studios

→ Beyond Reality

XR Studios blends creative vision, technical expertise, and state-of-the-art facilities to deliver impactful virtual, augmented, and mixed reality (XR) experiences.

The team specialises in immersive solutions that captivate, educate, and inspire - helping educators, businesses, and creators unlock new possibilities. Whether enhancing curricula, improving training, or solving complex business challenges, XR Studios offers the expertise, technology, and support to bring your projects to life.

Student CPD Days

A chance for our students to step out of their usual classroom routine and engage with industry.

On 11 November, students took part in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Day designed to help them explore future pathways and build real-world skills. The day featured workshops from employers, alumni, universities, and creative professionals including sessions with Punching 4 Purpose, digital portfolio building with Create Britain, and hands-on activities such as dress-making, T-shirt design, and Animalistic Encounters.

Students also had opportunities to experience industry-led sessions from Billy Adams and Fourth Monkey Performing Arts, work on live briefs, visit the V&A Museum, Colchester Zoo and Southend FC. The day aimed to inspire learners to think bigger, discover new interests, and connect their college experience to their future goals.



Colchester Zoo



V&A Museum



Southend FC, Roots Hall



Self-defence sessions

Museum of Brands trip

A-Level Year 1 Graphic Design students took part in the Smoothie Lab workshop in partnership with Innocent Smoothie where they learned how branding and marketing for a product is conducted.

They were then given a challenge in groups to design their own smoothie, cost it and brand it. All groups presented and the winning group's smoothie was made and tasted. It was a brilliant workshop that really tested the students, who were innovative and courageous.



Innocent Smoothies

Student Conference

We held our Autumn Student Conference, where our 2025-26 Student Union members across all campuses met for the first time.



The conference, held at our XTEND Digital Campus, was a great moment to discuss the student experience and how it can be developed this year.

It consisted of a range of fun activities and workshops, and there were some exciting outcomes.

Thank you to our Student Engagement team for organising the day, and thanks to our guest Project Management Trainers for delivering their amazing session!

FEDEC Changemakers

USP College proudly hosted the first day of the FEDEC 'Changemaker' Programme at our XTEND Digital Campus.

The student leadership training was delivered by the dynamic team at Unloc, whose engaging approach truly inspired our learners.

In just one day, we witnessed a remarkable transformation in our young people, their confidence soared as they explored what it means to lead with purpose. Our emerging leaders shared thoughtful, mature, and forward-thinking ideas on how to drive positive change within their communities and beyond... and the cupcakes were a delightful treat!





IMMERSE YOURSELF IN COLLEGE LIFE

WELCOME DAY

SEEVIC CAMPUS | 29 & 30 JUNE

PALMER'S CAMPUS | 1 JULY

What's happening

Welcome days are designed to give you a taste of the right course for you. It's a chance to meet our tutors and have a look around.

- ✔ Grab a Starbucks from our on-site café
- ✔ Check out our Championship Sports Academies
- ✔ Chat with student ambassadors about college life
- ✔ Bring a friend – and make some new ones!



Apply Now to get Priority Access

APPLY NOW



SECURE YOUR INVITE TO WELCOME DAY

www.uspcollege.ac.uk

Priority Access gets you

- Guaranteed Welcome Day invite ✔
- Merch Pack ✔
- Private tour & Parent Q&A ✔
- Early access to exclusive perks ✔
- Entry into a prize draw ✔

