

# Chesterfield College:

## Using Career Coach to help achieve official acclaim, higher application conversions and increased student retention

When it comes to IAG, Chesterfield College is proving to be one of the most innovative colleges in the country. Over the last few years, the College has introduced a number of initiatives designed to create a holistic careers service for their students, and their efforts have now received official acclaim, having been praised in a recent Matrix Assessment by the quality assessment organization, EMQC.

The Matrix Standard is designed to assess and measure the advice and support services that support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. Their assessment of Chesterfield's careers provision was glowing, with the report citing the "clear strength in leadership and direction of the service." According to the report's conclusion:



“

*In the space of three years there has been a remarkable transformation in the quality of information, advice and guidance services at Chesterfield College. Bold decisions have been taken and implemented successfully... Management and staff should be very proud of their achievements to date.*

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### Career Coach – An Integral Part of the College's Careers Service

One of the areas singled out for praise in the report was the College's "excellent developmental relationships" with external IT solutions providers. A great example of this is the partnership the College has forged with EMSI, particularly through Career Coach, which has become an integral part of the College's careers service and which was named several times as a resource in the Matrix Assessment. For instance:

“

*As well as information relating to the College and its courses, students and prospective students are given access to labour market information through the commercial Career Coach tool.*

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# Application Conversion and Retention Rates

Yet it's not so much just having Career Coach that impressed the assessors, as much as the College's unique way of integrating it into a holistic system to give their students a highly personalised careers service:

“Of particular note is the creation of personalised web pages (P-URL) for all prospective students, into which individually tailored information including localised LMI has been incorporated ... This is an excellent way of presenting tailored information to prospective students, and one which was seen during the assessment to impress service users and to encourage them to explore the information further.”

According to Ben Owen, Head of Student Services, the heavy focus on career development within the recruitment process, including the use of LMI, has ensured that only those with the right eligibility and clear career focus are passed through to interview stage. This has led to reduced time wastage for curriculum staff equating to two full time teaching salaries. It has also led to increased application conversion and retention rates, as the following statistics clearly show:

93%

**The percentage of students who agreed that the process had given them a clearer idea of where their course will lead to in terms of local job opportunities**

5%

**The number of students who dropped out last September after going through the recruitment process – a far higher retention rate than in previous years**

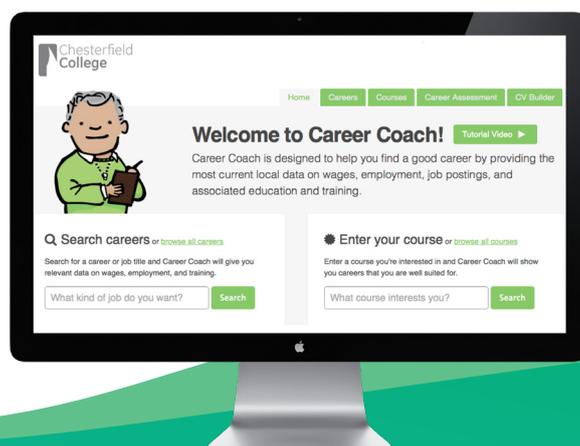
77%

**The total application conversion in the last academic year (10% higher than the national average)**

10%

**Curriculum interview turnout up by over 10% on previous years as people have become more engaged by the new process**

According to Ben, the recognition from Matrix, along with these statistics, is confirmation that they are moving in the right direction. The College now has plans to expand the careers process into tutorial delivery, as well as developing a charged Careers Service to schools.



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