



West Kent College

Key Facts

- West Kent College has over 12,000 students.
- The College consists of two main campuses in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells
- In 2006 it was one of the first colleges within the South East to be awarded Action for Business College status.
- The Health and Social Care department within West Kent College has been awarded a joint Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status with South Kent College for the quality of their training and services to the Care sector.
- If planning consent is given, West Kent College hope to undertake a £60million project to rebuild their Tonbridge campus over the next 3 years. They hope to begin work later on this year.

Location and Facilities

West Kent College has two main campuses based at Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. The College facilities include the following:

Information Systems

- The College provides up to 450 PCs with a range of specialist software for particular fields of work - such as AutoCAD for technical design - and a suite of AppleMacs for graphic design and desktop publishing.

Learning Resources Centre

- The learning resources centre is well stocked with about 30,000 items, including books, periodicals and audio-visual materials to help students with their coursework.

TV, Radio and Photographic Studios

- For students choosing to study television production at West Kent College, the following facilities are available: Two, fully-equipped, TV studios with 'green screen' – a 70 square metre studio with four cameras (two with Autocue prompter) and a 25 square metre studio with three cameras, Studio control gallery with full mixing and sound desk, Apple G5 suites with AVID Express DV PCs with AVID Express DV, Sony PD 150/170 DV cameras and Dedo location lights.

The Language Centre

- The language centre is available to all students wishing to learn any language.

Drop in workshops and learning centres

- West Kent College has a range of learning centres and workshops which students can drop into during their private study time.

The Gallery Restaurant

- The College's Gallery Restaurant offers guests the opportunity to dine in modern stylish surroundings. The restaurant is staffed and operated by our students and provide quality cuisine at the highest standard to the general public.

Hair and Beauty salons

- The college has modern recently updated salons that are open to the public throughout term time and even during some holidays. They offer a fantastic service at excellent value.

Health and Fitness Centre

- The college has the following facilities and activities: Fitness Studio, Fully equipped gym, Aerobics Studio, Health & Fitness Screening, Showers and Changing Areas, Step Aerobics, Aerobics (Hi/Lo Impact) and Body Balance.

Facilities and Departments

Tunbridge Wells- Construction, Crafts and Engineering Centre.

- The Construction Crafts Centre opened on the North Farm Retail Park, Tunbridge Wells in September 2004.
- It provides some of the most impressive and up to date facilities to learn a trade in the South East of England.
- The Engineering department also moved to brand new facilities at the North Farm site in September 2005.
- The Centre is a fully self contained learning environment, with classrooms and especially prepared bays for learning skills such as; Painting, Decorating, Plastering, Electrical installation, Carpentry, Plumbing, Brickwork, Motor Vehicle Engineering, and Engineering.

Tonbridge

The Tonbridge Campus is home to a wide variety of courses including: Health and Beauty, Art and Textiles, Dance and Drama, Science and Maths, Music and Electronics. This campus also houses the Higher education centre, from which HNDs, HNCs and degree programmes are taught.

Student Facts and Figures

- There are 12,768 students studying at West Kent College.
- 2,654 of these students are studying full time and 10,054 part time.
- 767 of these students are of non UK nationality.
- Every year, 45% of students continue with their education on an existing or new course at West Kent College
- 25% find employment and 10% go on into higher education.

Links with Business

The College sets itself rigorous standards and was recently awarded the Matrix standard to acknowledge its commitment to customer service. Staff development is an integral part of College life and has earned **Investors in People** status. West Kent College is dedicated to providing an exemplary service to employers and, in 2006, became one of the first College's in the South East to achieve Action for Business College status for its commitment for engaging with the local business community. The Health and Social Care department within West Kent College has been awarded a joint Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status with South Kent College for the quality of their training and services to the Care sector.

The Business Development Unit is a dedicated team whose remit is to service the training and development needs of the business community locally and, where appropriate, across Kent and Sussex.

West Kent **Business Development Unit** is committed to providing education and training of the highest possible quality to the local community and businesses so that they become more productive and economically successful.

The key objectives of the Business Development Unit are:

- To provide a comprehensive and current range of training courses to meet employer/employee needs.
- To provide local employers with a fast and reactive training service.

- To deliver training dedicated to developing the skills required for business growth.
- To provide flexibility in the delivery of training.

Skills Advisory Service

In response to the needs of the local business community, in partnership with other Further Education Colleges and other private training providers, West Kent College offers local businesses and employers a free and impartial Skills Advisory service. The Business Development Unit offers all local businesses personal visits to give advice, training needs analyses and information on how The Business Development Unit is able to assist with issues such as recruitment, retention and staff development.

Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a new government backed training programme designed to increase the skills of all staff. In most instances the courses may be part or fully funded and may be delivered at the College or on premises. There are a huge number of different courses. All arranged under either 'Skills for Life' or a NVQ Level 2 training.

'Skills for Life' can focus on improving English language skills or bring maths up to a better working standard. They are focused, practical courses that address these areas and boost employees' confidence and skill. 'Skills for Life' training takes place on site. So there's little or no disruption to the normal working day.

NVQ Level 2 training is vocational training to develop focused and practical skills. When staff are trained for Level 2, they learn how to apply their knowledge across a range of 'real world' work activities. The qualification they receive may be a NVQ Level 2.

West Kent College also offers arrange of apprenticeships.

Future Activities and Highlights

Exciting plans are underway to rebuild West Kent College's Brook Street campus in Tonbridge. The circa £60million project will represent the most significant development of any educational institution in the history of the West Kent region to date. The vision is to develop a high quality, contemporary, flexible learning environment for students well into the 21st Century. Unlike the existing campus, the new College building will form one cohesive unit linking all areas, and will provide the latest specialist facilities for vocational courses and academic qualifications at further and higher education levels. There will be new accommodation and facilities for the local community including music, dance and drama, sport, TV and radio production, restaurants, and hair and beauty salons. Computer facilities will be a key feature throughout the new campus for students and staff.

The College secured in principle funding for the development from the Learning and Skills Council in February 2007. Views of the local residents, students, staff and key community groups were sought during a week long presentation of conceptual drawings and plans in a public exhibition in February. This was followed public consultation on 21st March 2007. An application for full planning permission was submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in April 2007.

A decision on planning is expected in early summer 2007. Once underway the project will be started in summer/autumn 2007 and will be completed in stages over a three year period. The College will continue to operate normally from its Brook Street base throughout the duration of the building programme. In the last two years, the College has successfully established Construction Craft, Motor Vehicle and Engineering Centres in two adjacent buildings on the North Farm retail park in Tunbridge Wells. These thriving centres will remain at their current location in the long term.

For more information visit: www.wkc.ac.uk