



UNIVERSITY CENTRE
AYLESBURY VALE

A GUIDE TO THE PARTNERSHIP



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VISION AND INTRODUCTION

The Vision:

To be the local provider of affordable and relevant University Education within Aylesbury Vale and by so doing, make a significant social and economic contribution to the region.

“Bringing higher level skills needed to help a great place to grow”

Introduction:

University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) is a leading edge educational initiative. Education providers and stakeholders have come together in partnership to launch and sustain support for the provision of higher level, professional and university accredited courses. It is designed to help the region grow by providing Higher Education skills that will make a difference to Aylesbury Vale businesses and to the community.

The commitment and partnership, which is detailed within the following pages, confirms the overarching aim of the provision of education as a lifestyle and career enhancing balance. With the demographic and social infrastructure now changing in the light of unprecedented levels of development over the next 25 years, Aylesbury Vale through initiatives such as UCAV will offer fresh choices and opportunities for all.



AYLESBURY VALE

Aylesbury Vale covers some 350 square miles of Buckinghamshire. Aylesbury is the county town and is home to more than 40 % of the residents of the Vale which has a population of 166,600 living in the towns, villages and rural areas.

Its links to London just 45 miles away and proximity to major cities, Reading, Oxford and Milton Keynes make it a desirable residential area but its relative isolation from major arterial transport routes has limited its development in recent years in favour of more accessible locations.

The designation of Aylesbury Vale as a key growth area in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy (2003) anticipated a further 59,000 dwellings over a 30 year period effectively doubling the existing number of households. In the revised South East Plan the figure has risen to the completion of some 1000 additional homes and 1000 additional jobs per year over the 25 year period: 2001-2026.

The concept of sustainable growth of the Vale acted as stimulus for the development of a longer term economic strategy for Aylesbury Vale District Council, and this was prepared in 2003/04. The Strategy identified a number of likely causes. For its present circumstances Aylesbury Vale has a highly qualified workforce, low unemployment rate and in consequence residents have sought employment opportunities outside the area resulting in net outward commuting of 40% of the workforce each day.

The economic development of Aylesbury Vale depends upon many factors. It must provide an attractive and supportive range of services and facilities for the expanding population and make provision for businesses which will be drawn to the area. Among these necessary support services will be Health, Social Services, Public Services and Education, essential foundations for the economic prosperity of the area.



UNIVERSITY CENTRE AYLESBURY VALE (UCAV)

University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) is a collaborative venture bringing together universities and training providers to deliver a range of university level courses, professional and vocational qualifications in Aylesbury.

Currently people who wish to undertake higher education qualifications have to travel to Universities outside the Vale. With the increase in population projected for Aylesbury, the local provision of Higher Education is a priority to ensure economic prosperity of the area and support both the community and new businesses attracted to the Vale.

The University Centre will work closely with employers offering relevant programmes to support local businesses. Opportunities for new learners seeking higher qualifications will be available through 'bite size' modular programmes and a range of study modes will be developed to suit personal and employment needs.

Through the partnership of Bucks New University, The University of Bedfordshire with Aylesbury College and Aylesbury Training Group a range of new courses will be offered giving a wide choice of higher education locally. As a result of the collaboration between the providers and stakeholders, exciting new initiatives are planned to meet local requirements.

UCAV is supported by key stakeholders who have a powerful influence over the future development of the Vale which further strengthens the partnership; these include Aylesbury Vale Advantage, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aim Higher, Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership, Learning and Skills Council, and the South East England Development Agency.

The University Centre is based at Aylesbury College as the focal point within Vale offering both teaching accommodation and services to support Higher Education Learners. Additional facilities at the College have been supported by partners within UCAV.

For everyone living in Aylesbury Vale, UCAV offers opportunities to study at higher levels locally, a wider range of exciting professional and vocational programmes. The vocational provision focuses on the needs of local employers supported by a strong and enthusiastic partnership of Universities and vocational training providers.



PROVIDERS, PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) has been developed and supported through the activities of providers, partners and stakeholders.

A partnership action plan was developed to address the key challenges facing economic development and the increasing population within the Vale. In 2006, The Aylesbury Vale Learning Developments Group commissioned a report from C2Consulting into the feasibility of expanding the local provision of Higher Education. The feasibility study recommended a collaborative approach and the use of the new Aylesbury College campus to meet the demands of an increasing population (predicted as 20%) and employers over the next 20 years.

The formation of a public-private partnership to focus on the demand-led approach to the expansion of higher education has been significant in driving the initiative. The partnership consists of providers: Aylesbury Training Group (ATG), Aylesbury College, Bucks New University (BNU), and the University of Bedfordshire; and key stakeholders in supporting provision of learning services in the Vale including Aimhigher (MKOB) Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA), Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC), Bucks Lifelong Learning Partnership, Learning Skills Council (LSC), and South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

The partnership approach has been crucial in achieving the position that UCAV has reached today. Still more work and further engagement with employers and support from stakeholders is required to ensure the delivery of the key objective:

'To help the region grow by providing Higher Education Skills that will make a difference to Aylesbury Vale Businesses and to the Community'



➤ **Aylesbury College**

Aylesbury College provides education and training for more than 4,500 part-time students and 1,000 full-time students.

It is a 'traditional' FE College, operating a wide range of vocational courses including hospitality and catering, construction, care, hair and beauty and sport. A range of A-levels and GCSEs is also available. The college offers courses in all 15 sector/subject areas delivering Higher Education Programmes and Apprenticeships as well as a range of professional courses.

Founded in 1962, Aylesbury College of Further Education was maintained by Buckinghamshire County Council until incorporation in 1993. The College serves a population of 640,000, based in Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire wide (excluding Milton Keynes).

Operating from a 15-acre campus at Oxford Road, the College is a short walk from the railway station and town centre. The College is in the process of rebuilding much of the Oxford Road campus over the next three years. The recently opened £30 Million, state of the art building designed to inspire learning together with the recent successful OfSTED inspection has given us confidence about the future reinforced by a significant increase in student applications.

The College is responsive to the needs of employers and seeks to support businesses of all types to improve their commercial success. In addition, helping to create and being part of a life-long pathway of learning, is assisting with a commitment in building vital links already established with other providers of education and training, including schools, universities, professional associations and voluntary organisations.

The College seeks to inspire learning, achieve excellence and develop the skills for the future of our community to meet our Vision

"Building Better Futures"

For more details
Tel 01296 588588
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➤ **Aylesbury Training Group (ATG)**

ATG was formed by 90 local employers in 1967. With charitable status, ATG is designed to train and develop young people. Our nominated Board and Trustees ensure that ATG's programmes are suitable for industry needs and are adapted to changing employer requirements. All profits are re-invested to develop the programmes and to improve the training services to employers. Turnover is over £4.6m and there is more than 80 staff. We work with more than 1000 learners who are employed in over 300 companies and public bodies ranging from micro businesses with two staff to GE Healthcare plc, one of the world's largest companies.

Over 60% of our work is in technical training; apprenticeship and NVQs in engineering, electronics, IT, telecommunications and Cycle Maintenance. ATG is the Lead Partner in a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for Engineering and the Lead Provider Representative on the new National Skills Academy for Manufacturing (NSA-M) for the South East. We are also a partner in the Marine Industries Regional Resource Centre and the Advanced Instrumentation Regional Resources Centre based at Rutherford Appleton Laboratories.

At our Aylesbury centre we enrol over 140 unemployed young people a year (mainly aged 16-18). We give them six months' full time training in Engineering, ICT Systems or Electrical Installation and help them to develop their CVs. We also train them to improve their interview skills and arrange the interviews with local employers and over 90% go into full time work as apprentices. We source those vacancies and continue to train and develop the apprentices in the workplace until they complete their apprenticeship. Many of them progress onto Advanced Apprenticeships and some move on to degree programmes. ATG also has an extensive range of apprenticeship and NVQ programmes in Care, Child Care, Administration, Customer Service and Animal Husbandry. Our success rate is high through these programmes.

Although we have a large intake in September each year, mainly school leavers, we start a new group of eight to ten learners every six weeks. We do this to meet the needs of learners and to ensure that we have a constant supply of trained young people for employers. Ofsted commented, "ATG has very strong links with employers".

For more details:

Tel: 01296 481818

Email: info@atg-training.co.uk

www.atg-training.co.uk



➤ **Bucks New University (BNU)**

Bucks New University (BNU) formerly Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (BCUC) is the only state-funded higher education institution in Buckinghamshire. It has enjoyed a long and successful history since it was founded in 1893 as the School of Science and Art.

In June 2007, the institution was informed that it had met all the criteria for university title, and it will, subject to approval of a new name by the Privy Council, soon become the new university in Buckinghamshire.

BNU offers a range of exciting and innovative awards not widely available in the sector, from commercial pilot training to music industry management, textiles and furniture. A range of delivery methods are used, including collaborations with partner colleges.

Its faculties are aligned to employment markets: creative and cultural industries; the management and information management sectors; and the public sector. Staff and students have active links with the relevant industries, nationally and internationally, through partnerships, exchanges, visits and work experience.

There are around 9,000 students. BNU prides itself on being a genuinely student-centred institution, with an emphasis on quality teaching and student support. It is currently undertaking a major campus redevelopment project to consolidate its campuses on the High Wycombe site and provide state-of-the-art facilities for staff, students and the local community.

For more details:

Tel: 0800 0565 660

Email: advice@bucks.ac.uk

www.bucks.ac.uk



➤ **University of Bedfordshire**

The University of Bedfordshire was launched in August 2006 following the merger of the University of Luton and De Montfort University's Bedford campus.

The University has enjoyed a vast array of success over the last year. We have leapt a massive 24 places in the 2007 *Times Good University Guide* and, according to UCAS, there has been a 41.2 per cent increase in applications for the academic year of 2007/08, placing Bedfordshire at the top of the universities league table. The *Guardian* 2007 league table has also placed Bedfordshire third in the country for Media related courses and 12th for Sport. In 2006 our Nursing course was rated in the top 50 of all UK courses.

The University has an excellent teaching record, having received 'excellent' scores from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Sport, Media, Design, Education and Nursing, while three members of staff have been awarded National Teaching Awards for their outstanding contribution to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the Bedford campus' School of Education Initial Teacher Training courses have been awarded Grade One by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and the school boasts an impressive 100 per cent employment rate for most courses.

The University has recently invested £60m into improving both the Bedford and Luton campuses. The redevelopment has provided the University's students with an extensive range of state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, such as a new £5.5m Media Arts Centre, a £7.8m Learning Resources Centre, new £20m student halls of residence, £1.2m Business Pods, an £8m Physical Education and Sport Science Centre that will be used to train athletes for the 2012 Olympics, and a Campus Centre boasting a 280-seat theatre, dance studios, a fair trade café and social space for students.

The University of Bedfordshire offers high-quality teaching, a wide variety of courses, outstanding student support, excellent facilities and a friendly environment in which to live and study.

For more details:
Tel: 01234 400400
Email: enquiries@beds.ac.uk
www.beds.ac.uk



➤ Aimhigher

Aimhigher Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire is part of a national initiative to raise levels of participation in higher education. Our task is to work with a wide range of professionals to set up a variety of activities which will encourage more people to consider entering higher education and help them to succeed in gaining a place.

Aimhigher is a programme run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with support from the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS). Launched in September 2001 as Excellence Challenge, in August 2004 Aimhigher joined with the HEFCE / LSC-led university outreach programme Partnerships for Progression to form a unified national outreach programme operating across England on a national, regional and area basis.

Aimhigher aims to widen participation in higher education (HE) by raising the awareness, aspirations and attainment of young people from under-represented groups. The programme particularly focuses on young people from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds, some minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. The role of Aimhigher includes raising aspirations and motivation to enter HE among young people from under-represented groups, in line with the Government's target that by the year 2010, 50% of those aged between 18 and 30 should have the opportunity to benefit from HE. Further aims include attainment of potential students from under-represented groups and heightening awareness and understanding of the different progression routes into higher education via vocational courses – so that prospective students understand that A-levels are not the only option. Aimhigher also offers information, advice and guidance to potential students, tutors and families.

Everyone should be given the chance to benefit from higher education and Aimhigher are delighted to support the University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) which we believe will open up a wide range of higher education opportunities locally.

For more details:

Tel: 01865 487605

www.aimhigher.ac.uk/mkob



➤ **Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA)**

Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA) is a company limited by guarantee and with five shareholders: Aylesbury Vale District Council; Buckinghamshire County Council; The Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust; the South East England Development Agency; and English Partnerships. Funded by the Government – Communities and Local Government, AVA is responsible for establishing and managing a framework to deliver the growth agenda as outlined within The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (MKSM SRSS) and more recently the draft South East Plan. With an expanding population, increase in knowledge based industries, high number of entrepreneurs and availability of land, Aylesbury Vale is competitively placed take full advantage of all the opportunities outlined in the growth agenda.

A number of public and private sector partnerships are working together to develop initiatives that promote, enhance and protect Aylesbury and the Vale; whilst steering the area into sustainable growth and prosperity. University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) is an example of such collaborative work.

AVA's mandate of retaining and developing the local workforce is matched by attracting new businesses. Aylesbury has a comparable large economy by national standards; ranking 110th out of 408 districts with a GVA per head and productivity which is on par with regional performance. The highest growth rates in the knowledge-driven sectors are also in Aylesbury Vale: 31.7% (between 1998 and 2003). Aylesbury Vale therefore has a valuable role to play within the development of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc project.

It is these statistics that justify and support the creation of the University Centre Aylesbury Vale, which will assist knowledge-based entrepreneurialism and sustain businesses, encouraging retention of skilled employees for long term economic and social prosperity.

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➤ **Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)**

Aylesbury Vale District Council is one of the largest and fastest growing Districts in the South East and this growth is set to continue. Designated as a major growth area in 2003, the Vale needs to make provision for at least an additional 21,200 new homes and jobs in the next 15 years.

The Economic Development Strategy for the Vale identifies the key challenges that the area faces in the light of the growth proposals but also the many opportunities that this growth offers. Creating sustainable communities is the Council's overall vision and ensuring that the employment opportunities flourish alongside the new residential communities is critical.

The Council is making significant investment itself in major schemes across the Vale to help create truly sustainable communities. Of particular note is the new theatre in Aylesbury scheduled to open in 2009 and the Waterside retail and residential scheme, including the improvements to the canal.

Ensuring that the local residents and employees of the Vale have the education and skills to attract the range and quality of employers the area needs is also vital. The District Council is delighted therefore, to be one of the founding supporters of the University Centre Aylesbury Vale concept and has been working with partners to help bring the proposal to fruition.

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➤ **Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership**

Formed in 1998 the Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership is a collaborative venture that brings together organisations from across the County that are engaged in education, training and lifelong learning into a single, strategic body. Its establishment stemmed from the Government's objectives of widening participation, increasing attainment, improving standards and meeting the skills challenge. Its core functions are:

- Promoting learning provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning
- Maximising the contribution of learning to local regeneration, community cohesion, social inclusion and sustainable economic community development.

The Learning Partnership is a voluntary body working closely with the Buckinghamshire Economic Partnership in support of strategic developments across Buckinghamshire. Throughout the nine years the Learning Partnership has been facilitating and enabling collaborative ventures it has developed an extensive network significantly fostering the maximisation of synergy between partners. It has held fast to the vision developed in the formative stages of its establishment, namely that...

'The Learning County aims to improve the quality of people's lives by making lifelong learning attractive, accessible and relevant to everyone in Buckinghamshire.'

For more details:

Tel: 01296 619200

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www.learningbucks.org.uk



➤ **Learning and Skills Council (LSC)**

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure a workforce of world-class standard. The LSC is a non-departmental public body established in 2001, taking over the roles of the former Further Education Funding Council and Training and Enterprise Councils.

Responsible for the planning and funding of high quality post 16 education and training, with the exception of Higher Education, the LSC encourages progression into Higher Education. Developing links with the sector and industry allows opportunities for the fulfilment of learner-potential as well as the development of a world class, competitive workforce.

LSC's vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. LSC works with groups identified as main customers – employers, young people, adults, as well as colleges and other providers of education and training that are funded by the LSC. Raising participation, increasing adult demand for learning, and equalising opportunities through better access to learning are at the core of the LSC's main tasks.

The LSC supports Apprenticeships and Train to Gain, an initiative through which a network of brokers helps link employers to providers who can supply training tailored to their needs. There is a wide range of provision and additional support through initiatives such as Education Maintenance Allowances and the Entry to Employment scheme.

The LSC is working in partnership with colleges and providers to implement an Agenda for Change, reforms that will radically transform the sector by improving standards and making it more responsive to the needs of employers and individuals.

For more details:

Tel: 0870 900 6800

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www.lsc.gov.uk



➤ **South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)**

SEEDA is proud to support the creation and partnership of the University Centre Aylesbury Vale.

Aylesbury Vale forms part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area, and along with Milton Keynes is identified as a Diamond for Investment and Growth in the 2006 – 2016 Regional Economic Strategy. As such, Aylesbury Vale is expected to accommodate 18,300 additional homes and at least 12,690 net additional jobs by 2021. These Diamonds for Investment and Growth have the potential to act as a catalyst to stimulate prosperity across wider areas, and offer scope for further sustainable growth based on targeted investment in their infrastructure.

A successful further and higher education sector is a key component of the growth of Aylesbury Vale, as it supplies people with the right skills that are vital for creating sustainable communities. South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) strongly supports the University Centre Aylesbury Vale development and the key role it will play in providing the necessary skills and learning opportunities to create thriving and sustainable communities in Aylesbury Vale. The Centre will make a tremendous contribution towards the overall prosperity of the wider community in the area.

SEEDA is the Government funded agency responsible for the economic and social development of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK's economy. Its aim is to create a prosperous, dynamic and inspirational region by helping businesses compete more effectively, training a highly skilled workforce, supporting and enabling our communities while safeguarding our natural resources and cherishing our rich cultural heritage.

For more details:

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FUTURE PLANS

With a rising population within Aylesbury Vale coupled with the Economic Development Framework, it is envisaged that an increasing number of businesses will be attracted to the Vale thus reducing the net commuting exodus. The residential population in the Vale will also seek employment locally as issues of the green agenda and sustainability take effect. Improved public transport links will present a better alternative to private road vehicles and this will place University Centre Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) at an advantage with its proximity to rail and bus interchanges.

The anticipated emergence of high value, high technology, low /medium production will demand a more highly qualified technical workforce where industrial competitiveness will be maintained by continuous professional development and technical updating. These needs will be met through close engagement with employers, employers groups and networks to determine need. Responsiveness from UCAV will take the form of flexible provision, delivered through a range of different strategies and accredited by university partners, supported by excellent resources and highly qualified, experienced staff.

The increase in population will demand further development of provision in public services, health, care, leisure and business administration. As there is a gain in critical mass of population, the higher numbers of learners seeking programmes at HE level will enable a greater diversity in the programmes offered.

The development of UCAV is seen to be local in focus supporting the needs of industry and the individual offering programmes which meet the needs of professional and personal development for a successful thriving economy.

Working with Universities and other partners the expanded provision will offer local opportunities to meet the needs of those who have family or employment commitments and who do not wish to travel to gain higher technical skills or qualifications. UCAV will offer progression for higher level vocational courses creating further facilities for new learners locally.