

CBHE Festival 2026

Abstracts

Festival 2026

The 2026 CBHE Festival focused on Enhancing Student Success in Challenging Times: Collective Practice, Shared Learning. The event marked the culmination of a year of collaborative professional development and brought together colleagues from across the sector to explore approaches to student progression, retention and inclusive practice. Through presentations, discussions and shared experiences, attendees exchanged ideas, learned from sector peers and strengthened professional connections, reflecting the collaborative spirit at the heart of the CBHE Network.



01 Chichester College Group

How can teaching and learning in college based Higher Education evolve to meet future employers' needs?

Abstract

This collaborative project explores how teaching and learning in college-based Higher Education (CBHE) can evolve to meet the changing needs of future employers. As industries transform, so do the work-ready skills students need. Leia Gifford (HE Teaching and Learning Coach) and Tanya Da Silva Cabeleira (BA Hons Illustration student, CCG) will share insights gathered from students, staff, and employers across the Chichester College Group. Drawing on evidence from the Student Voice Conference, CCG-wide surveys, Curriculum Management focus groups, job advert analysis, and employer feedback. This session presents co-designed findings and recommendations that strengthen students' progression into their chosen career pathways.

02 Wiltshire College and University Centre

The role of Further Education Colleges in widening participation for rural students: a case study in a West of England college

Abstract

Widening participation and college-based higher education are not new concepts. There is an abundance of literature on both topics, particularly how non-traditional students are often associated with each. They are often defined as mature students, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and lower-socioeconomic status. The literature that exists to improve participation is valuable and advantageous, however, there are other groups that are at risk of low participation. There is a growing body of evidence of a geographical element to widening participation – specifically that potential students based in rural areas face additional barriers or the same barriers are felt more keenly.

03 University Centre Peterborough

Postgraduate studies in College Based HE: Towards a Practical Humanities

Abstract

In 2025 University Centre Peterborough designed an MA Creative Writing programme with the aim of being 'Humanities applied'. We believe we are the first college group to offer a Masters programme. This presentation will share the approach and how other colleges can offer Postgraduate studies.

04 East Lancashire UC. (East Lancashire Learning Group)

Promoting Student Belonging at East Lancashire UC.

Abstract

The focus of the presentation is to present the initial findings from the Mixed Economy Group funded research on Promoting Student Belonging in East Lancashire UC. This research is heavily influenced by the work of Blake et al. (2022) Building Belonging in Higher Education and the work of Charlie Thewell at Bedford College, whose work I was introduced to at the AdvanceHE College-Based Higher Education Festival of Scholarly Activity in July 2025.

05 University Centre Somerset

ADJUST - A Development Journey through Undergraduate Student Nurse Training

Abstract

ADJUST - A Development Journey through Undergraduate Student Nurse Training

Nurse education demands multi-faceted self-development, transforming our students into registered professions.

ADJUST an innovative approach that integrates and promotes self-development across the nursing curriculum, using material already delivered, but with well-defined supplemental learning, including evaluation.

In development, we recognise the current challenges in health, education and research, and aim is to normalise self-development discussions, underpinned by a trauma informed coaching style approach.

We are currently undertaking a research project using nominal group technique workshops, to ensure student participation and co-creation. Preliminary results will be presented with information about further development.

06 Newcastle College

Creativity in progression, partnership and co-creation

Abstract

As a Further Education College offering Higher Education programmes of study, it is vital to improve progression and retention of students, as well as consider student partnership and co-creation. Over the past 4 academic years we have developed student partnership through a national performing arts festival, Acting Committee roles, and the introduction of student fellowships.

07 University Centre Middlesbrough - Middlesborough College

Co Creating Professional Pathways & Student Partnerships in Aviation Work Based Learning

Abstract

This session explores how UCM students help shape their own learning through co-created work-based modules and ongoing industry engagement. Drawing on experience from course validation and delivery, it highlights how students build professional networks through annual networking events and conversations with alumni who return to share their career journeys. The session will show how these partnerships strengthen confidence, deepen industry understanding,

and ensure the curriculum reflects real workplace expectations.

08 Chichester College Group - Brinsbury Campus

Growing Sussex Project

Abstract

This session explores how Brinsbury College is leading innovation in digital agriculture through the Growing Sussex project, supported by £3.8 million from the UK's 5G Innovation Regions programme. It will showcase how 5G and AI technologies are enhancing sustainable food production through smart farming, remote monitoring, and live data integration. Real-world case studies from agriculture and horticulture will highlight impacts on productivity, animal health, environmental monitoring, and support student learning. The session will be informative and followed by an open discussion and Q&A, with practical relevance for colleagues working in agricultural and land-based colleges.

09 Heart of Worcestershire College

Bridging FE to HE Through Targeted Staff Development in TLA

Abstract

As FE colleges expand their higher education provision, staff are increasingly required to deliver at HE level without structured pedagogic preparation. This session showcases a small-scale research project exploring how targeted staff development and mentorship can enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) practices and support effective FE-to-HE transition. Attendees will gain practical insights into staff upskilling, reflective practice, and pedagogic alignment with HE expectations, alongside transferable approaches for strengthening teaching quality, student experience, and confidence in college-based higher education delivery.

10 Chichester College Group

AI Assessment Scales

Abstract

As generative AI becomes increasingly present in higher education, assessment design is under pressure from unclear guidance, inconsistent interpretation, and growing concern about academic integrity. This session introduces the AI Assessment Scale (AIAS) as a research-informed framework currently being used to support staff and student understanding ahead of institutional implementation. Rather than focusing on detection or enforcement, the session explores how explicit assignment-level labelling of permitted AI use can support transparent assessment design, shared academic language, and curriculum development. Participants are invited to consider how such frameworks might inform their own contexts as part of responsible AI adoption.

11 Chichester College Group

Personalising Learning: The Effectiveness of AI Tools for Neurodiverse Learners

Abstract

This session explores how CCG-approved Microsoft AI-powered educational tools can enhance engagement, accessibility, and academic progress for neurodiverse learners. It is based on the research project Personalising Learning: The Effectiveness of AI Tools for Neurodiverse Learners, which evaluates real-world classroom use to identify which AI features—such as adaptive feedback, speech-to-text, and visual supports—best meet individual needs. The project captures the experiences of neurodiverse students and their educators, highlighting enablers, challenges, and impacts on learning confidence. The session shares practical, evidence-informed recommendations for embedding inclusive AI practices across the curriculum to support accessible, responsive learning for all.

12 Loughborough College

From Coping to Confidence: Flexible Assessment as a Confidence-Building Intervention in HE

Abstract

This poster presents findings from a small-scale mixed-methods research evaluation exploring the role of flexible assessment as a confidence-building intervention in higher education. Conducted with a Level 6 CBHE cohort, the study compared student experiences across flexible and prescribed assessment formats. Qualitative data suggest that flexible assessment supports students to move from coping to confidence with academic demands to engaging more proactively with subsequent tasks. A conceptual model is proposed to illustrate this progression and highlight implications for inclusive assessment design.

13 The Northern School of Art

GRASS ROUTES: Connecting Creative Practice and Academic Inquiry through a Co-Curated Conference Programme

Abstract

Grass Routes: Connecting Creative Practice and Academic Inquiry through a Co-Curated Conference Programme explores the annual student research conference at The Northern School of Art as a model of co-creation. The conference programme highlights the interplay between creative practice and academic theory, centring on tacit knowledge, through the celebration of arts, heritage and creative ecologies in the North East from the perspectives of students and staff.

14 Birmingham Metropolitan College

Beyond the Hype - Use of AI in Higher Education

Abstract

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how students learn and how educators design learning experiences. Rather than viewing AI simply as a tool or threat, this interactive workshop explores how AI can support student partnership and co-creation in teaching and learning. Participants will examine practical models where students work alongside educators and AI to design prompts, generate ideas, critique outputs, and co-construct knowledge. Through hands-on activities and discussion, the session will demonstrate how structured prompting, AI personas, and collaborative

critique can transform AI from a shortcut into a cognitive partner that strengthens critical thinking, creativity, and shared ownership of learning.

15 Newcastle College University Centre

Breaking Barriers: Co-Creating Solutions with Multilingual Students and Staff

Abstract

Co-Creating Solutions with Multilingual Students and Staff is a collaborative initiative at Newcastle College University Centre (NCUC) that brings together multilingual students, EFL/ESOL specialists, and curriculum and research staff to enhance learning experiences in higher education. As the multilingual student population grows, their linguistic and cultural assets are often underused due to limited staff training in language-aware teaching. This project creates a co-creative space where students and staff jointly explore challenges, question assumptions, and design practical resources for educators by strengthens belonging, representation, and confidence, supporting multilingual learners to overcome barriers and achieve meaningful academic success.

16 Coleg Gwent

Gain4Growth

Abstract

Gain4Growth is a proactive, learner centred intervention supporting Higher Education (HE) students across the full learner lifecycle within college based HE and beyond. Learners' confidence and growth is tracked over time, supported by the 'Gain4Growth Skills Builder' that helps strengthen academic readiness and progression. This session showcases how Gain4Growth enhances educational gain and creates scalable, collaborative support, enabling all learners to thrive within an inclusive HE-in-FE environment. The project enables learners to take ownership through self-discovery by encouraging learners to recognise strengths and address challenges, whilst also providing valuable information to support developments for the learner and institutions across Wales.

17 University Studies, West Suffolk College

Seeing the Unsaid: Using Film Clips to Illustrate Micro-communications and Group Dynamics

Abstract

Film clips offer a vivid way to reveal the subtle micro-communications that shape how groups function — the shifts in power, the silencing, the invitations or blockages to connection. This session shows how short, well-chosen scenes can deepen students' awareness of relational dynamics, enhance reflective practice, and build confidence for people-facing vocational roles. Participants will explore practical, accessible methods for integrating film into teaching, alongside key ethical and inclusivity considerations, leaving with adaptable strategies for their own classrooms.

18 Brighton Metropolitan College

'In our own words' - student centred podcast series

Abstract

In Our Own Words is a collaborative podcast initiative that brings students and staff together to explore critical issues shaping higher education, from decolonisation and neurodivergent learning to AI and hidden curricula. This interactive session invites participants to experience podcasting as a tool for amplifying student voice, fostering partnership, and reimagining inclusive, student-centred learning. Through dialogue and creative co-creation, attendees will explore how low-cost, high-impact approaches can capture authentic student insight and strengthen engagement, belonging, and collaboration across institutional contexts.

19 Gower College Swansea

The CBHE Pitchcard - Messages that connect

Abstract

We know that College-based higher education is one of the best-kept secrets in the UK skills landscape. Yet public awareness of CBHE remains low, in part due to lack of clear and consistent brand identity. This fast-paced, practical workshop draws on learning from a Reaching Wider-funded project in Wales. Participants will use a rapid design thinking approach to develop a collective narrative, strip out deficit framing and identify what differentiates CBHE. The aim is to develop a shared language that builds collective voice across the sector, and succinct messages that help to communicate CBHE to diverse groups.