

Pathways to Continued and University Education Award 2021

Shortlisted Initiative

English International College, Spain

Overview of the school:

The EiC, Marbella (founded 1982) was established to be “free of political or religious prejudice”. The school grew and, in 1993, it obtained membership of the European Council of International Schools. In 1997 EiC became an Educational Trust. The EiC is proud of its successes: examination results have been consistently impressive and students have graduated studying at many of the world’s most prestigious universities. It is this sustainable delivery of undergraduates that allows for such success, even in an ever increasingly challenging & evolving narrative where innovation alongside core liberal values are cherished.

Summary of initiative:

Horizons was developed to ensure our students are prepared for study at tertiary level. Students are given advice including work experience, Careers and University Week. Horizons is unique to our school, and also aims to nurture knowledge incorporating wider philosophy; moreover any issue which challenges students. Our course has also been a conduit for acclaim of prestigious schools and, indeed, global awards, with EiC twice becoming World Debating Champions. The course transcends academia by encouraging citizenship. The Horizons course includes initiatives in all key stages. KS1 and 2 students are encouraged to develop skills in independent learning through extended Primary Projects, KS3 students continue to hone their thinking outside of the curriculum with the Star Awards. The overarching aims of Horizons throughout the school climax in the sixth form through both the Horizons Diploma and the Extended Project 2 Qualification. The Team are pioneering a “Year of Innova-on” (2021) including online learning & alternative strategies of pedagogy in order to secure the continuity and sustained engagement- EiC has utilised “Firefly” as a secure platform.

How the initiative has demonstrated a positive impact on student aspirations and choices:

Through completing the Horizons Diploma, students are prepared for university including the aspiration to speak in public. We have our own version of TED talks. Horizons is allocated two forty-five minute periods weekly. There are six staff enabled to lead the programme. The Department has created a sustainable & innovative model, as those who participate become role models and, moreover, it is a whole school programme linking all key stages. The legacy of Horizons transcends school, and we have a rich pool of alumni who provide university tours and visits to deliver talks about university. Our robust alumni, through regular events, create networks that share a common purpose in preserving EiC’s unique ethos. What is conspicuous is the diversity placements within our alumni, prospering in a plethora from Oxbridge Academia, including boat race victors, TV presenters, the Intelligence Community, Law and Politics. But also creative conduits like art and design personified by Lexy who has completed her first animated children’s show on Netflix as production assistant for Unanico Studios released in March. Through discussion and feedback from our alumni, our school community prepares students for university academically but also the challenges socially and financially offering a pragmatic insight that transcends the glossy prospectuses.

How the initiative involved a range of colleges and universities, subject courses and destinations appropriate to the size and nature of our school:

Key Stage 4 students are immersed in several overarching career / university themes throughout their journey. They commence by compiling a CV. This process evolves into university course suitability searches and thereby dovetails with the Unifrog programme, widely used by Year 10 -13. The conclusion to Year 10 sees students embark on a Work Experience placement. Placements have ranged across the globe from the BBC, Ship Building (Seaspan, Canada), Dr Liam Fox (Secretary of State), CERN (Switzerland), COBIS (London), and shadowing professors in Buenos Aires and Cape Town Universities. Such a plethora of bespoke placements has engendered positive relationships with universities. A notable number of students have faced specific enquiries into their placement during Year 13 University Interviews and we believe they have been well equipped to field such questions to their advantage. The Horizons Programme is consistent with EIC's philosophy that "when students leave us for university, they take with them all of the attributes required as a foundation for success". This is an ambitious, evolving and innovative course providing an inclusive and sustainable model which stretches throughout the school. At every stage of their learning journey, EIC students are being prepared for university in the broadest sense.

How the initiative included the student voice and/or student action:

Our success at placing students in top universities is always a cause for celebration. This is a result of strategies, throughout a student's whole school life. Our SMT have attended many relevant conferences and visited universities including Oxbridge; in addition we have hosted the universities tour and invited key speakers. In this way we are able to keep abreast of all that is of relevance. Top universities have advised us that students should be widely read - they should enjoy reading for its own sake. They should have gone beyond their syllabuses – they should be familiar with key thinkers. They should be serious-minded adults. These sentiments, combined with the will of teachers to challenge any "spoon-fed" culture amongst some, proved the inspiration. The pandemic conspicuously highlighted the need to innovate the delivery and style of our programme if our ambitions were to be met.

How the initiative addressed a challenge and demonstrates the potential for longer-term development as a sustainable initiative for the school:

The Horizons Department hosted the COBIS World Debating Championships 2017 & 2020. It was a privilege to be formally awarded the prize by Simon Manley (British Ambassador of Spain). We were Winston Churchill Young Leaders Debating Champions (2018). We always aspire to welcome schools from across the globe once again to the COBIS World Debating Championships: to promote a positive and inclusive environment; to maintain rigorous standards of academic debate; to build lasting connections with schools all over the world, and to offer an unforgettable opportunity for personal growth and the development of lasting friendships; in that regard, our competition will emulate the goals of a university "Freshers Week". The Horizons Programme is consistent with EIC's philosophy that "when students leave us for university, they take with them all of the attributes required as a foundation for success". This is an ambitious, evolving and innovative course providing an inclusive and sustainable model which stretches throughout the school. At every stage of their learning journey, EIC students are being prepared for university in the broadest sense.

Sharing beyond the school community:

Through inclusive access to the Horizons Diploma our students are also encouraged to go beyond their specifications and complete online courses. A perfect taster into the calibre and nature of

reading at top universities. Horizons is one of community and invites students to be active citizens. Fundraising and voluntary work for charity are a big part of this and something we can be justifiably proud of. Horizons students have been heavily involved with the Debra Butterfly Skin Charity. Charo from the charity visited early on in the year and spoke about the work the charity does with children suffering from this cruel disease. She was delighted by the response she received; students dedicated 4 their time in the Debra shop to raise funds. She returned to thank our students for their selflessness. Instilling a sense of responsibility prepares students for their lives at university and beyond.