

Careers Advice for Students in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

We know that this is a very worrying time for students and their parents. We have therefore put together FAQs below to help provide support during these uncertain times.

Apprenticeships

1. Will Employers be more flexible about my qualifications to start my apprenticeship?

Employers look for a range of personal qualities and skills when interviewing for an apprenticeship. They will be aware of the awarding process for exams put in place, but above all they will be assessing candidates in terms of their potential. For example, they may well be interested to see how you have been filling your time whilst off school.

College Interviews

2. How will I do my college interview if I'm on lockdown?

Each college will have a different process, but it is likely that your interview will still go ahead but it will now be via telephone or similar. If you had a college interview planned, we recommend:

- Check your email account regularly: it's likely that the college will email you to let you know the plan
- Answering your phone, even if you don't recognise the number. If a local number or withheld number is calling you, it may well be the college
- Log in to your account on the college's website and check that your email address and telephone number are correct
- If you still aren't sure, telephone the college and ask to speak to their admissions team

3. How do I prepare for my college interview over the telephone?

Do exactly the same as you would have done if the interview was face-to-face:

- Have a think about why you want to do the course(s) you have chosen
- Dress up smart and sit at a table/desk during the interview– even if the college can't see you, it will make a difference to your answers and your tone of voice (sounds silly, but it really works!)

- Check that your phone/tablet/computer (whatever you are using) is fully charged and has signal. If applicable, check that your microphone and camera are working well in advance of the interview so that you can fix any issues without a rush

Preparing for College/University

4. I'm bored at home – what can I do to prepare for starting college/university in September?

Take a look at the college/University website: many have information on the courses, timetables and extra-curricular activities you can do. This is your chance to plan ahead! If you're going to University, check out UCAS' guide to preparing for University: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/preparing-your-studies>

Do some reading around the subjects you will be taking at college/University, just for interest. This will also help you keep your reading, research and other academic skills up to date. There are lots of websites for this, but as a start: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> and <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/> both offer information based on specific subjects.

5. What's the point in continuing my studies now that exams have been cancelled?

Imagine two students: one has spent the summer on their sofa watching TV and playing video games, whilst the other student has done this but also spent time reading up on their favourite subjects and completing activities on educational websites. Which student do you think will have the biggest shock when they start college/University? By continuing to study, you can keep your subject knowledge up to date and develop your study skills. By getting up at whatever time you usually get up for school/college, you can keep your body used to early mornings and keeping to a routine. You don't need to be studying all day, every day. You can still have (socially distant) fun too!

6. What if my college doesn't open in September?

The Department for Education is working closely with schools and colleges ensuring that they are provided with the latest advice. Many colleges have extensive experience of providing online and remote learning and many more are working hard now to put

together new online resources. If your college is unable to open in September as planned, you may find that your first lessons are conducted online. For more information you can visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

7. Will my College be more flexible about the grades I need to start my course?

There will be an established process by which your grades are calculated and awarded, including an appeals process. (Visit OFQUAL for the latest information on this - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>). Colleges are very experienced in assessing student abilities and their entry criteria are primarily based on ensuring each student will be able to enjoy and thrive in their learning. As a student you can help yourself by continuing to study so that you can demonstrate your enthusiasm for your upcoming college courses.

8. It's hard to study at home; what happens if I haven't learnt enough by the time, I start college?

Colleges will be aware of the challenges facing their September 2020 students following the closure of schools in March. It is possible that there may be some introductory work for students to undertake during the summer in preparation for the new college term. You should raise any difficulties you have with home study with your school.

9. Will T levels be starting in September?

The colleges offering the new T levels are working closely with the Government, Awarding bodies (<https://awarding.org.uk/>) and the employer partnerships they have established, because these courses involve extensive work placements. In the event that restrictions on workplaces are extended, it is possible that the T levels could be delayed. In that situation, your college will be speaking to you to discuss alternative equivalent courses. For the latest information, speak to your college.

For further guidance or to speak to a Careers Adviser, please email
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