

Distance learning - FAQ's for Year 13 learners

This document is sent in out with the purpose of trying to answer/predict questions you may have at this time. It is not a definitive answer to all, as some responses still require information to be given to schools and colleges before we can look at the implications and communicate with you further.

Please make sure you are continuing to complete task set. Education and learning are lifelong skills and a thirst for knowledge is how we all continue to grow, problem solve, develop our imagination, empathise with others and maintain a positive mind-set.

1. What should we continue to study, if there are no exams?

There are a number of reasons why you should continue to work even if the exams are not taking place this summer some of them are related to the intrinsic value of education, some are more practical in terms of the qualifications that you are likely to get at the end of the year.

- a. Firstly, many of you will have not fully finished all the content of your qualifications. If you are heading off to University or progressing on to college or sixth form you will continue to learn in subject areas. You will need to minimise the gaps in your knowledge as you will rely on these in your future learning.
- b. Secondly the work being produced during self-isolation/social distancing may add to the work you have previously done and assist teachers in making judgments about predicted grades. This is very important if you feel you have underperformed in mock assessments or know that the work you have produced thus far is below the standard that you are capable of.
- c. Thirdly given that the vast majority of people are confined within their home, keeping an active and inquiring mind is important for your own health. Taking your learning beyond the content of the work that is set by your teachers, exploring the next challenges in the subjects that you wish to take, familiarising yourself with online resources, research articles, blogger's views, current contemporary issues related to your subject. All of these will help you develop your subject in its broadest context. This will be very beneficial in your future learning. Remember the Theory of Gravity was first considered in 1665 when Sir Isaac Newton was quarantined from his college at Cambridge following an out bread of bubonic plague at the college!
- d. We believe a lot of students may wish to take their examinations once the coronavirus crisis is over. Government has said it will make a very early opportunity available for students to do this. This could be in September. We are therefore mindful that students need to adjust their preparation; it will be far too late to do all the extra study, if they wait until the exam results are issued in the summer. The government has indicated that the date for grades to be published will be in July, but there is no confirmation of this yet.

2. Why are other schools and colleges saying you don't need to work?

There are many different views on what schools, colleges, pupils and students should be doing in these very unusual times. There is no certainty other than the work being produced at this time will contribute towards your learning and potentially final assessments. Different schools will have different compositions of year groups and therefore will prioritise slightly differently. It is our belief that both year 11 and 13 should continue to apply themselves to learning, not to do so may have negative consequences in the future.

3. What work can I do beyond the work set by my teachers?

There are so many wonderful online platforms that students can explore related to further learning in their subject areas these include: national associations such as the geographical organization: online TED talks, MOOC's, online daily news feeds, resources to be found on Twitter. There are a number of resources that you can access directly from the school or college websites, many through the library page, these include: online journals, access to the Philip Allen archive of periodicals, access to free books that can be read via Kindle, books that you can download to Audible, documentaries that are uploaded by BBC iPlayer and other organizations, online podcasts that are downloadable to PC's, laptops, personal devices (available from the App Store or directly from the provider). Many educational resources are now being made free for use for both teachers and students, as these become clearer, we will produce a list for you, even better still you can share the ones you're using with us and others. Departments and teachers are promoting wider engagement with learning in subject areas in the distance learning tasks they are setting.

4. How can I keep myself motivated?

This is tough as there is no obvious end to the current situation. It is really important that you maintain a positive mindset and challenge yourself to stay healthy, emotionally physically and academically. One way to approach this is to have a clearly organised timetable and stick to it, building in rewards, Set yourself goals and challenges and challenge others also. View the current situation as an opportunity and explore the positives.

5. How can I support others to keep motivated?

Check in on friends regularly, you may already have social media platforms where you share information about your subjects. Use these to see what others are doing and look out for those that are not contributing to discussions. Consider random acts of kindness, send compliments to build confidence in others. Share freely your resources, including those which you have found online that you know will be of benefit to others.

6. When will I know about the arrangements for awarding my grade when there are no exams?

So far schools and colleges have not been given clear guidance on how grades will be awarded for final qualifications. What we do know is that the work students are doing now and work they have done in the past will contribute towards final teacher judgement. It is important to note that this is not the only factor that will contribute towards the award of grades. Once the mechanism of awarding grades is made clear to teachers, we will communicate this to you. In the meantime, please maintain the mindset that education continues and the work that you are producing is of value.

The following quote from Ofqual, the Government office for examinations on 26th March 2020 www.gov.uk/government/news/further-update-on-2020-exams

“We are rapidly working up plans to implement [the arrangements the Secretary of State for Education has set out for exams this summer](#) and, with exam boards and teaching bodies, are making considerable progress.

Students understandably want reassurance, and teachers urgently need to know what to do, and when. We expect to publish detailed information about the process and timetable which will apply this summer next week. This will include the steps we would like teachers to follow and more detailed guidance on how to consider the full range of evidence they will have available when submitting their assessment grades. We are talking to teaching representatives to make sure that what we are planning is manageable and appropriate, so that students, parents, carers and teachers can have confidence in the approach.

We will outline by Easter the process we will follow to make sure grades are fair across schools and colleges, as well as our proposals for appeals. We will also say more as soon as possible about the arrangements for additional exams in the new academic year.”

7. What happens if my predicted grade is lower than I feel I'm capable of?

If the grade awarded by the exam boards at the end of this process is lower than the grade you feel that you're capable of, then the government has indicated there will be an opportunity to sit an external assessment in the subject "at the earliest opportunity" We are not yet sure when the earliest opportunity will be but in all likelihood will be sooner rather than later. It is therefore imperative to continue to work and consolidate your knowledge in your subject areas should you wish to avail yourself of this opportunity. Where these exams are to take place is still unknown.

8. Can I stay on for another year if I'm unhappy about the grade awarded?

We would expect the government to give all schools and colleges guidance on this point. Currently we cannot answer the question. Historically, around five or ten students in a year group, have requested to remain in college for a third year. Where possible we have acceded to those requests, but there are very big funding implications in doing so.

9. What are universities saying about my place, what should I do?

We have already sent out letters from Mrs Stewart our UCAS coordinator outlining the current policy related to applying for University in 2020. You are advised to keep checking the UCAS website, this website is maintained daily. As advice and guidance emerges this will be passed onto applicants. UCAS have a very good social media presence, we recommended that you follow them on Twitter and make sure you check their website regularly. You need to check Track and the email address that is logged with your UCAS application daily as UCAS or individual universities may well be getting touch.

10. Will my apprenticeship still be available?

Businesses and employers will be struggling at this time too. You will need to ensure that you are in communication with anybody who has offered you an apprenticeship. It is vital you also let the college know if this is what you're intending to do so our records are accurate, and we can support you. You are also recommended to check the government apprenticeship website, <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship> for any information related to apprenticeships and the implications that coronavirus may have had on this progression route. If you are considering an apprenticeship route, here are some other links that might be of interest to you.

Unifrog: www.unifrog.org

National Apprenticeship Service: www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Higher and Degree Apprenticeships listings: www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships

Amazing Apprenticeships: www.amazingapprenticeships.com/vacancies/

If you have any further questions related careers questions, please don't hesitate to contact our careers team at careers@wootton.beds.sch.uk how will do their best to advise you.

If you have not filled in the destination survey sent by Mrs Ashby, please follow this link to do so. It will help our team provide you with resources linked to future progression
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6D9ZYKN>

11. I receive support from Wootton Academy Trust for special educational needs and/ or disabilities (such as a pupil profile sheet or exam dispensation). Could this be forgotten about because I'm potentially missing out on time to transition to college/ apprenticeship or university?

No - we keep records of all support in place for you and will liaise with you and your next steps providers as required to ensure no young person loses the support they are entitled to. Please do continue to communicate with us as you usually would and let us know if you need any paperwork to pass on when the time comes.

12. How often should I be logging into emails and SMH?

As the minimum we would be expecting you to log on to show my homework once a day just to ensure that you are aware of any changes your teachers may be making some work that has been set. We will also be asking you to submit work through Show My Homework so make sure you are familiar with how the program works. There are tutorials and guides that are within Show My Homework that will help you with this if you are unfamiliar with submitting work in this manner.

13. What if I can't access emails, SMH, remote desktop with student intranet?

If you are unable to access any of the above programs then you should email IT@wootton.beds.sch.uk in order that your passwords and user accounts can be reset.

We wish you all well in these challenging times. We will update the FAQ's as more information becomes available.

Tim Detheridge and Liz MacKay

Kimberley College

Wootton Academy Trust

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Wootton Academy Trust operates:
Wootton Upper School & Arts College
Kimberley 16-19 STEM College
Registered in England and Wales
Company No. 7740758

Wootton Academy Trust
Hall End Road, Wootton
Bedford, MK43 9HT.
01234 767123
Email: wootton@wootton.beds.sch.uk
www.woottonupper.co.uk
www.kimberleycollege.co.uk