

5th January 2021

Dear students and parents,

I hope you are well and keeping yourselves and each other safe.

I would like to update you all on curriculum developments surrounding examinations and distance learning.

Exams

January/February vocational exams

This section covers all students following vocational courses that were expecting to sit external exams/assessments over the coming few weeks. The relevant courses are shown in the table below:

Level and Qualification type	Subject	Year Group
Level 2 BTEC	Health & Social Care	Transition
Level 2 BTEC	Travel & Tourism	Transition
Level 2 BTEC	Sport	Transition
Level 3 BTEC	Applied Science	1A
Level 3 BTEC	Applied Science	2A
Level 3 BTEC	Business	1A
Level 3 BTEC	Health & Social Care	1A
Level 3 BTEC	Health & Social Care	2A
Level 3 BTEC	IT	1A
Level 3 BTEC	IT	2A
Level 3 BTEC	Media	1A
Level 3 BTEC	Media	2A
Level 3 BTEC	Travel & Tourism	1A
Level 3 BTEC	Travel & Tourism	2A
Level 3 BTEC	Sport	1A
Level 3 Diploma	Criminology	1A
Level 3 Diploma	Early Years Education	2A

Following the Prime Ministers public address yesterday evening we now know that schools and colleges will be closed until at least the February half term. Many students following our vocational courses have been working very hard alongside their teachers to prepare for external examinations and assessments scheduled during January and early February. We have taken the extremely difficult decision to cancel all vocational external examinations during the January and February period. This will no doubt come as a disappointment to students and their teachers who were preparing to sit these exams. Our priority is the safety of our students and their families, our staff, and the potential burden of outbreaks on the NHS.

The government has not yet taken a decision on exams/assessments in the summer for vocational subjects. Students may be able to sit exams/assessments in the summer for their January units, or we may provide teacher assessment to the exam boards.

We will of course keep you all updated on the situation.

2A Mid-Year Exams

Students in their second year of study following A-level subjects were to sit their mid-year exams during the week beginning the 25th of January. These will now not take place on site. We are working on developing an alternative method of assessment that may or may not be online. I will confirm the details and dates of these rescheduled exams shortly. In the meantime, students should continue to prepare for these mid-year exams as they represent a good opportunity to cement learning and provide an excellent opportunity for teachers to provide feedback.

Summer Exams

The government have stated that GCSE and A-level exams will not go ahead as planned this summer. They are yet to make a statement regarding external exams/assessments for vocational (BTEC, T-Level and Diploma) qualifications.

It is not yet clear how grades will be awarded this summer. As a college we are anticipating some element of teacher assessment and have been careful to provide multiple and regular opportunity for students to demonstrate their progress throughout their courses.

Distance Learning

Of course, all our students deserve to receive a high-quality education that allows them to continue to make the same progress as during normal times. All learning will move fully online with immediate effect. Distance learning will take the format that has been adopted since the Autumn half-term:

- All 4 lessons in each subject will be registered to provide structure for our students working week. Students will login via Microsoft Teams.
- At least 2 lessons each week will be live with a subject teacher.
- The remaining 2 lessons have a flexible format. These lessons will begin with registration before teachers utilise the time to best suit their students.
- Students will make the same progress through their learning as in normal times.

Students following our Transition programs and GCSE courses will have a slightly different balance of live lessons each week, continuing in the same format as followed during the Autumn term.

It is essential that all students continue to engage fully with their online learning. Students deserve to develop the same skills and knowledge as in normal times so that when they return to college they stand in excellent stead. Additionally, it is likely that teachers will have to assess student progress in some manner that may form some element of our student's final grades. Full engagement in online learning over the coming weeks will allow our teachers to make accurate assessment.

During online live lessons we ask all students to have their cameras on and turn on their mics when required. It really is to the students academic and social benefit to see each other and their teachers during online lessons. If a student has a learning need that prevents them from having their camera on, then could they please email their teacher to explain and make their teacher aware.

We have developed very strong platforms for effective online learning since last March. It has been impressive how superbly students and teachers have been in adapting to online learning especially during the Autumn term.

Thank you to you all for continuing to meet the challenges we face with such a positive spirit.

Kind regards,

Rob Hussey

Vice Principal: Curriculum

Please email admin@collyers.ac.uk with any queries whilst the college is closed