



Weekly Bulletin for Braintree Sixth Form Students, Parents and Carers Friday 5 June 2020

This has been a rather poignant week, as the majority of students in Year 13 would have been in the midst of their public exams under normal circumstances, and it is still slightly difficult to believe that these will not be taking place. We know that a number of Year 13 students have questions about next year and what they should plan for and we would encourage you to keep in touch with the pastoral team and Mr Bridgwater if you have any concerns or need advice.

You may be aware that the Department for Education has asked schools to prepare for some face-to-face contact for students in Year 12 from 15 June 2020 onwards, and that guidance about this was issued to schools during half term. We have been putting in place our plans for how we will deliver some face-to-face support for students from this date, including our risk assessment, and will be in touch early next week to confirm these.

Vocational Courses and Grade Awarding this Summer

The process has now been confirmed for these:

Year 13 - BTEC, OCR & WJEC Applied Diploma

For all units that have already been completed or where the examinations have been taken these grades will be awarded as they stand.

For examinations and coursework units that were due to be completed or taken after March 2020, the school has been asked to submit a grade based on the work completed and their judgement as to how you would have done. Likewise, if you would have been able to re-sit or re-submit work, school grades have been given. The examination board will use this information to help them award a calculated grade.

Year 12

BTEC: if you were due to sit unit examinations, or complete coursework, this summer, the school has been asked to give a grade based on the work completed and their judgement as to how you would have done. The examination board will use this information to help them award a calculated grade. No more work is required on these units.

There will be opportunities to sit examinations in Year 13 if you are not happy with the calculated grade awarded by the examination board and wish to improve it.

OCR Technical: For any units that have been completed or examinations taken, these grades will be awarded as they stand.

If you were due to sit unit examinations, or complete coursework this summer, you will be given a calculated grade for these at the end of the course. No more work is required on these units.

The calculated grades will be given by OCR based upon your average performance across all of your other units.

When you return to school, you will be able to discuss with your teachers whether you would prefer to take these components yourselves during Year 13.

University Applicants for 2020

I was able to attend a webinar earlier this week with Admissions Tutors from the Universities of Bath and Exeter, one of whom sits on the task force who are working on the ways universities will be operating from the Autumn term. The focus was on finding out how universities are planning for the next term, and what students' experience of university will be like next year.

It is clear that the approach will vary across universities and courses, and the most important advice I would give is to make sure you read any updates from your chosen institutions carefully. I have summarised the main points made in the webinar below in case they are helpful:

- Most universities are likely to be using a hybrid model of teaching from September, with some teaching such as lectures moving online but retaining small group teaching such as seminars and supervisions. Many universities already record lectures online in any case.
- Universities are looking at adjustments to prioritise students' safety on campus – this includes social distancing and timetabling adjustments. Reference was made to examples of things like installing more washbasins so that each student has their own and the ways that a shared flat can be regarded as a household.
- Student induction will focus on aspects such as ensuring that students are comfortable with using any digital platforms and that they know how to access support services. Planning for the social side was mentioned, although larger gatherings are likely to be pushed back until later in the year. Universities are also planning to address the 'knowledge gap' for students who have missed out on their last term of school study.
- Deferral – there has been some discussion in the media about students wishing to defer. The advice was that if you are thinking of deferring your place, you should contact the university sooner rather than later, and avoid leaving this until results day when they anticipate being very busy.
- Fee reduction – they do not anticipate doing this, in part because of the cost of moving some teaching to digital platforms.
- Practical components and placements – universities are working on plans for these at the moment, such as introducing safety measures and in some cases restructuring the sequence of learning so that there is more theory in the first term, with the introduction of practical elements later.

UCAS Launch

Mr Bridgwater has kindly recorded his UCAS launch presentation, and students have all been emailed about this. It is available on the website so that parents/carers can view this as well.

EPQ Launch

Mr Morris has also kindly recorded his EPQ launch for Year 12 students. This is available on SharePoint for students and Mr Morris is emailing the details to students. The Extended Project Qualification is an excellent way for students to develop their independent study skills and prepare for the sorts of ways they may be studying at university or in adult life and we would advise students to at least consider undertaking a project.

This week has seen the introduction of a new timetable and a new way of working using Microsoft Teams with Year 12 students. There has been a great deal of very encouraging feedback about the ways more structure and interaction are benefiting students. Any further feedback is always welcome, as we are all learning from our new experiences at the moment.

I wish you all a peaceful and relaxing weekend.

Yours faithfully

Mrs M Townsend
Assistant Headteacher - KS5