Remote Education Offer 2020-21

Introduction

These guidelines outline the arrangements for remote study for West Thames College students in the event that the College is required to temporarily suspend its face-to-face learning and business operations in light of Government guidance for Colleges and Schools on the Coronavirus.

The College will endeavour to maintain a "business as usual approach" to ensure that all our students have every opportunity to successfully complete their qualifications.

This document has been prepared following the announcement of a further national lockdown commencing 6 January 2021.

For the remainder of the lockdown, all central information will be provided directly to students using their College email address. In addition, curriculum related information and updates will be posted on Microsoft Teams. Support staff and teachers will also contact students via telephone, when required.

Students, parents/carers and support workers should check the College Coronavirus web page regularly – this is accessed at www.west-thames.ac.uk/collegeupdate

Remote Education for students aged 14-16

The College has a very small number of 14-16 students, they study within our 14-16 Alternative Provision or within our ESOL (Threshold) provision.

Students in the 14-16 Alternative Provision area all access a Year 10 or Year 11 curriculum that provides an alternative to studies in school. This has been shared with schools and/or sponsors/local authorities. Liaison with schools and/or local authorities is on-going. All students are expected to continue their studies supported by the 14-16 Alternative Provision team, additional wraparound team and ongoing liaison with parents/guardians as required.

Students aged 14 -16 within our ESOL (Threshold) provision will continue with their studies supported by the ESOL team. Liaison between the team and support workers allocated to individual students will take place on a regular basis to maximise engagement and provide students with a consistent level of high-quality support.

For both groups of students, Microsoft Teams, BKSB and MyMaths are used as platforms to deliver and support remote learning during periods of closure or restricted access into College.

Remote Education for Full-time students aged 16-19

For all students on full-time courses, Microsoft Teams and Moodle (our Virtual Learning Environment – VLE) are the key delivery platforms for remote learning that will be utilised by staff and students to provide blended learning during periods of closure or restricted access into College. In addition, WordPress is being used in Creative Industries.

Timetables have been updated and the majority of lessons (other than practical or where specialist software is required) will be delivered online. DfE and Ofsted guidance on remote education provision has been considered and adapted to ensure our blended learning delivery fits our students' needs. Where possible, courses with a large practical element will focus on theory-based aspects of the curriculum which can be adapted to suit the situation e.g. staff will use technology to film and thereby demonstrate practical skills to students who can then submit footage of themselves replicating the skill. Managers will continue to

monitor all aspects of curriculum delivery and uptake, intervening when necessary to minimise the disruption to students during lockdown periods.

Adaptations to assessment requirements will be made where necessary to support young people to achieve their qualifications. Any adaptations will adhere to guidance received from the different awarding organisations we work with and/or the regulatory authority, OFQUAL.

Support for Vulnerable Students

Some students are classified as vulnerable under the Children Act 1989. This includes those who have an Education Health Care Plan, Looked After Children, Care Leavers, and those in temporary living accommodation or at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'). All vulnerable students will receive on-going support from their teacher and SSA (Student Support Assistant) and will be offered the opportunity to attend College on site instead of via remote learning if there are no shielding concerns and (where appropriate) their parents/guardian consents.

Support for Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Students with additional learning support requirements in lessons will continue to receive remote learning support through the work of the Student Support Assistants and/or the Inclusion Team.

Both the Supported Learning and the Inclusion Teams will maintain contact to provide guidance to students and parents during periods of remote learning. The College will meet any additional alternative methods of remote delivery required by students, for example, paper-based materials will be sent out when required.

Where applicable, Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP) reviews will continue through a remote process in agreement with the local authority, parent/carer and student. The College will continue to liaise with local authorities throughout periods of closure to ensure students' needs are fully met.

Remote Education for Adult Students

Remote delivery is in operation for adult students across a wide range of curriculum areas except for any practical workshop elements requiring the development of new skills.

In line with guidance from awarding bodies and OFQUAL, the College will prioritise this learning and adapt the delivery and sequencing of the course of study to ensure no one is disadvantaged.

Staff will continue to make good use of a repertoire of technological and teaching skills to ensure learning is taking place in all sessions. Staff are fully conversant with Microsoft Teams and this is used to deliver all curriculum provision, including English and maths lessons. All adult students have full access to Moodle for the purpose of accessing resources, materials and in order to submit completed work.

For students who do not have access to online learning we prepare and deliver paper-based resources and maintain contact via telephone.

Remote Education for Higher Education (HE) students

Remote delivery has become established practice across HE programmes with large elements successfully being planned and delivered remotely. Microsoft Teams and live streaming of lessons forms the main part of the remote offer, with scheduled tutorials and group working utilising Microsoft Teams functionality. Moodle acts as a central hub of information and each module has a dedicated page of resources, portals and learning materials.

Assessments are submitted in the most part electronically via Turnitin.

Timetables have been updated and the majority of lessons (other than practical or where specialist software is required) are able to be delivered online.

Students are expected to remain in close contact with their HE lecturers. Assessments where specialist equipment or practicals are required, are very likely to be adapted. This will be carried out through close liaison with our awarding organisations.

Remote Education for Apprentices

Apprentices will continue to meet the 20% 'off the job' element by a range of flexible models already in place, for example, apprentices will continue to have regular sessions via Microsoft Teams with a blended approach to learning.

All reviews are currently conducted remotely with employers and apprentices to ensure knowledge, skills and behaviours continue to be developed. Targets and actions will be set accordingly and progress reviewed with performance monitored against planned expected end dates.

Expectations of all students

Remote learning expectations have been shared with all students so they know when and how they are expected to engage and demonstrate their learning, including how to keep safe online.

Students are required to participate in all remote learning opportunities provided to ensure progress is maintained. Systems have been put in place to check for persistent non-attendance or lack of engagement in sessions. It is not enough to merely attend the session: students must demonstrate engagement and actively participate in learning. Where students are unable to participate due to illness or other issues, College protocols for reporting absence remain in force and registers will be marked accordingly.

Our guidance for students on safe and effective use of Microsoft Teams is available from the College website along with our current Standards for Success.

Support for Students without devices, connectivity or a suitable environment for learning

The College provides devices to students in receipt of 16-19 discretionary bursary where they do not have access to a device.

The College will decide what support a student needs based on individual assessment, in line with bursary fund rules, i.e. that all support must be based on individual circumstances and needs. In an extended period of remote learning, the College will aim to provide devices to all students in need.

The College will work with the Local Authorities to ensure Looked after Children and those with social workers access the scheme to provide devices.

The College is actively working to access funds available from the Department for Education (DfE) to provide devices and connectivity options for those students who do not have access to technology.

Further Information
If you require further information about the College's remote education offer, please visit the College Coronavirus web page regularly – this is accessed at www.west-thames.ac.uk/collegeupdate