

Summer 2018 Newsletter

www.newcollege.ac.uk

STUDENT AND PARENT/CARER INFORMATION – SUMMER 2018

Welcome to the summer term, an important time for our students in their push to maximise their potential. This newsletter contains vital information and further advice and guidance will come via personal tutors. Students must make every effort to meet regularly with their tutors.

We wish all our students every success in their courses.

EXAMINATIONS

We would greatly appreciate parental help in ensuring students get to the right exams at the right time. Unfortunately we still have a surprising number of students who mix up times or days of their exams.

Exams for many students start on Monday 14 May. Some oral and practical exams will begin earlier. **Please note that the main external exams go on to 26 June this summer.**

Most, but not all of our exams will be held in the New College Sports Hall, but some will be held offsite at the Polish Community Centre on Whitbourne Avenue, the Queens Drive Methodist Church Hall next door or in other rooms in New College. Exam timetables with rooming details are displayed in the Reception area and on the VLE. Students who have exams are able to view their Statement of Entry on ProMonitor. Parents / Carers can see it too on the Parent Portal. **It is vital that students check their statement of entry and advise the Exams Team in BG20 if anything is missing or incorrect.**

The deadline for applications for special (access) arrangements has passed - this was 21 February. Students returning to New College for the next academic year and wishing to get special (access) arrangements in place should see the Additional (Learning) Support team in BG06 as soon as possible. Emergency arrangements can still be made for such things as accidents or a temporary illness, which would have an impact on an exam.

Students with exam clashes have had letters sent to them at their home address.

Please note that should exceptional circumstances such as a family bereavement or student injury impact on performance during an exam, the Examinations Manager should be informed immediately. You can email exams.office@newcollege.ac.uk or call 01793 611470 and ask for Shirley Westall. Note exams team staff are likely to be away from their phones for substantial periods during the main exam season, as they are setting up and supervising exams, so leave a voicemail message with your name and telephone number and they will get back to you.

Students are expected to bring all the necessary equipment to exams and should not rely on College staff to provide spare equipment.

INFORMATION FOR EXAM CANDIDATES

It is your responsibility to find out about your exams, to know when and where they are and to ensure that you understand and conform to the regulations. See the exams section on the VLE for details.

ALL MORNING EXAMS BEGIN AT..... 9.00am
ALL AFTERNOON EXAMS BEGIN AT..... 1.30pm

- Check your equipment needs — most exams need **black** pens but some exams need other equipment.
- You will need photo ID, this should be your New College ID card
- If any special exam arrangements have been made for you (eg extra time), be sure that you know what they are.
- Do not bring bags, coats, mobile phones or music players into exam rooms. It is unfortunately a regular occurrence that a student is found with a mobile phone on them in an exam. They are reported to the exam board and consequently lose all their marks for that paper or subject or all exams with that exam board. **New regulations from 2015, require exam candidates to take off their watches and display them on the exam desk so that invigilators can easily see them.**
- Do **not** bring food or drink into exams — bottled water is permitted in **clear containers with no labels.**
- If you are going to miss an exam through illness, contact the exams office and be prepared to provide a medical note.
- If you arrive late to an exam, report to an invigilator.
- If you feel your exam performance has been affected by something outside your control speak to an exams officer in BG20 straight after the exam.
- Full exam regulations are posted on the college VLE.

**Possessions are left outside exam rooms
or with invigilators at the owner's risk**

EXAM STRESS

Personal tutors will be running group sessions on dealing with exam stress in April as part of the Upskill tutorial programme. Useful exam preparation tips for students and parents are available on many websites, for example:

- www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/factfile_az/exams_stress
- www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zx67srd
- www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Examstress.aspx
- www.stressbusting.co.uk/how-to-deal-with-exam-stress/

STUDENT ID CARDS

A reminder that students should wear their New College ID badges and will need them for entry to exams. Replacement cards are available from the ICT Technicians for £5.00. Payment should be made at the cash office, G14. Our security guards will continue their ID badge checks around the college, any students who don't have a badge should report to Reception for a temporary day badge.

ADDITIONAL (LEARNING) SUPPORT

It is never too late to seek help with studies. Students who struggle to manage their time in exams, have difficulty getting thoughts down on paper, have handwriting which is difficult to read or think they may have a learning need such as dyslexia should contact our Additional Support Team in the Skills Development Centre, BG06. Please note that the deadline for setting up any special (access) arrangements for exams this summer has now passed.

We hold Study Skills Drop-in sessions in BG06 every lunch time:

Monday to Friday 12.00pm - 2.00pm. We have also acquired new maths apps which have recently been downloaded onto our iPads located in BG06 for students to use.

LOCKERS

All lockers will need to be emptied at the end of this term once exams have finished. Keys should be returned to obtain the £20.00 deposit. Students should look out for notices on lockers advertising the return dates in June.

ONLINE-SAFETY

Information technology brings many advantages to us all but also adds a new set of risks. Students are reminded to keep their passwords secure in all their uses of IT. It is also worth re-emphasising that the use of social networking sites and text messaging to engage in bullying or harassment is not tolerated. The College prioritised online safety by offering learning resources and an exam on e safety in the Autumn Term. More help and advice for students and parents is available on www.saferinternet.org.uk/.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM – THE 'PREVENT DUTY'

In the last couple of years, there has been a considerable amount of discussion about the role the internet and social media plays in the radicalisation of young people. All Further Education Colleges alongside schools, universities, the police, health professionals and local authorities now have a statutory duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Our tutors have been using a set of resources called Zak, purchased from Kent Police and Kent University, to highlight to our students the dangers of radicalisation and grooming. We also hosted an excellent presentation by the Counter Terrorism Police attended by over 200 students.

The Safer Internet Centre offers the following brief guidance to parents and carers:

- Have an open and ongoing dialogue with your children about what they are doing and who they are speaking to online;
- Help to build their critical evaluation skills;
- Make sure they know they can turn to you if anything worries them.
- If you are concerned about any online content you can report it via www.seeitreportit.org.

SMOKE FREE COLLEGE

The college is a Smoke Free site except in the two designated areas. Any student smoking on site is likely to receive staged disciplinary warnings. The 'No Smoking Policy' includes reference to the use of 'e' cigarettes — they too can only be used in the designated smoking areas. Our College nurses are keen to support students and staff who wish to stop smoking.

HIGHER EDUCATION PREPARATION

Level 3, Year 1 students:

By now, students who intend to apply for Higher Education courses which start in September 2019 should have their preparation well under way. They have been able to find out about the Higher Education courses here at New College and speak to visitors in college from various universities during our Futures Fair on 25 April.

Level 3, Year 1 students have had the opportunity to attend workshops on the benefits of Higher Education and how to choose their universities or colleges, as well as having access to Unifrog — a careers programme that helps students to compare different universities, including accommodation costs, average salaries on completion of their degrees, an indication of how competitive their course and university choices are, as well as information on how happy recent students were with their choices.

Students should try to attend university open days to help make sensible choices in the first term of the second year. These are advertised on www.opendays.com.

Our Parent/Carer Evening on 3 May introduces parents to UCAS and Student Finance and outlines what students need to be doing over the summer to prepare for making their Higher Education applications. Students should begin working with their tutors this term to help make decisions about their future plans.

Our leaflet 'Thinking about Higher Education?' with tips for researching Higher Education options is available from tutors, the LRC and on the Student Area of the VLE.

UCAS TV is an excellent source of information for anyone thinking about Higher Education, and can be accessed at www.ucas.com/connect/videos/ucas

The parents section of the UCAS website at www.ucas.com contains information about the UCAS application process, weighing up the options, and top tips on how parents can help at a very stressful time. If parents sign up at www.ucas.com/parents they will receive regular email newsletters from UCAS.

Level 3, Year 2 Students:

Level 3, Year 2 students have been able to attend a range of workshops around UCAS, Student Finance England, budgeting, and student life in preparation for starting a Higher Education course in September 2018.

The Unifrog careers programme has been available to help students with their shortlisting and Personal Statements.

FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

Final year students who have applied for university entrance in September 2018 should have completed their online Student Finance Applications by 31 May. Any parents or carers who need help in completing the Income Assessed elements of the Financial Assessment should contact the national Student Finance Helpline on 0300 100 0607.

Regular Drop-in sessions are offered in College for students needing help with their applications.

RESULTS ADVICE ON UNIVERSITY ENTRY

We want to support our students as much as possible in their efforts to secure university places. A Level and BTEC results will be available on Thursday 16 August from 8.00am in college and earlier via ProMonitor, to allow early use of 'clearing' and 'adjustment' processes where needed. Advisers will be available in college to help. Students can check their applications on the 'Track' section of the UCAS website.

UNCONDITIONAL OFFERS

Changes in Higher Education policy have meant there are now no caps on University places. We are finding, as a result, many more students are being given 'unconditional' offers through the UCAS process.

This is good news in one way, reflecting the quality of their application, personal statement, college reference and predicted grades. However there is also a danger that they may think there is less point in striving for the highest grades possible in their college courses. This is not the case. A level and BTEC grades will still feature in future job applications and on their CV and can be a very significant aspect in shortlisting for employment interviews, even after they have a degree. Most unconditional offers still require the student to complete the qualification by handing in all coursework and attending the exams.

STUDENTS PLANNING TO LEAVE COLLEGE

Students who are completing their studies with New College are able to access the Job Club for help with their CVs and job hunting.

They will have participated in the Upskill programme, which develops their employability skills and helps to prepare students to enter the world of work.

Students who are considering an Apprenticeship, can register on <http://apprenticeships.org.uk> and begin applying for suitable vacancies. They can also visit the New College Apprenticeship Team for help.

CAREERS PLANNING

All students planning to leave college at the end of the academic year and seek work, should prepare for this in the summer term. Their personal tutor can help by working with them using the 'Preparing your CV' and 'Preparing a Letter of Application' materials. Job search workshops and careers interviews can be booked through Student Services throughout the year. Individual support with CVs etc is also available at regular 'drop in' sessions in the First Floor of the Learning Resource Centre.

CAREERS SOFTWARE

New College holds licences for a range of Careers Software which can help students to identify possible careers choices.

- JED (Entry and Level 1 students)
- Kudos (Level 2 and 3 students)
- Kudos Adult Direction (Level 3 and 19+ students)

Details of how to use these programmes can be found on the Careers section of the VLE.

EMPLOYABILITY AND JOB SEEKING

The New College Employability team is available to support students with finding work experience, practice interviews and CV/job application advice and guidance. Students can come into BF04 at any time, or come to 'Job Club' in the Learning Resources Centre on Thursdays, 12-2pm.

For further information contact employability@newcollege.ac.uk or 01793 732887

STUDENTS PLANNING TO RETURN IN SEPTEMBER

All students planning to return to New College in September should by now have met with their Personal Tutor to complete a Learning Agreement and Progression Plan for 2018/19. Students needing more comprehensive advice will be directed to Schools Liaison for an interview by their personal tutor.

All students who have told us they plan to return in September, will receive posted information in the summer, with a date in the last week of August to return to college to confirm their course choices with their tutor. If they cannot make this appointment they must inform the Schools Liaison Team or risk losing their place. Instructions will be included in the letter sent out in August.

GRADE BOOSTER

As many of our students approach the end of their courses, we're bringing together a number of strategies to help support them to maximise their chances of high grades. This includes:

- Timetabling of private study rooms in each curriculum area
- Additional targeted study sessions for students performing significantly below their target
- Provision of revision grids and timetables to personalise
- Subject support sessions
- Study skills support sessions in the Skills Development Centre (BG06)
- Exam stress support sessions

ATTENDANCE

Full attendance maximises students' chances of success. We promote this in many ways including posters around college.

Wording from our posters -

ABOVE 95% ATTENDANCE

- You are missing less than one day a month
- Research shows that students with good attendance achieve higher grades and are more successful
- An attendance of over 95% will look good on a reference for a job

BELOW 90% ATTENDANCE

- You are missing for the equivalent of one day every two weeks
- An attendance of less than 90% on a reference for a job will not look good
- If you were in work and had this level of attendance you would be in danger of losing your job

It is not too late for students to boost their attendance in the final term this year and make a real difference to their chances of successful results. Any student who has not met our attendance standards and intends to return next year, is likely to have an interview with a college manager and a possible attendance contract put in place before their place in college is confirmed.

On the positive side we have a prize draw for all students who maintain 100% attendance in the year.

Parents/Carers please note that personal tutors are the first port of call for any attendance issues and that you should call or email the absence hotline for any notification of absence.

Tel: 01793732888 or email: hotline@newcollege.ac.uk

Up to date attendance information is available on the Parent Portal and Student Portal.

AUTHORISED AND NOTIFIED ABSENCES

Full attendance is very important to student success. Lost teaching time is difficult to recover and exams and assessments eat into term, more and more.

We want students to notify us about all absences from College lessons. Where they know about absences in advance, for example because of an interview, College trip or an unavoidable medical appointment, students should complete a notified absence slip available from the Absence Hotline staff in G02. Where students have flexibility over booking appointments eg for driving tests or dental appointments they should avoid College lesson times.

We strongly advise against students taking holidays in term time and **cannot** authorise these absences. They will show up as a negative in any factual references we are asked to provide about attendance. The real penalty will be the lost contact with their lecturers and fellow students, for which, no amount of 'copying up' of missed notes can fully compensate.

For absences which are not predictable, for example sickness, students or parents/carers should phone or email the absence hotline on each morning of absence.

Students should speak to lecturers about catching up on any missed work, either before or immediately after their absence, to maintain their progress on their courses.

In College we have a number of circumstances where absence will be authorised by the Absence Hotline staff if appropriate evidence is provided. These are listed in the Student 'Z Card' and on the VLE for student reference. Authorised absences are still not a present mark but they will be ignored in the calculation of attendance percentages for references or attendance data. Please note that sickness absence is **not** an authorised absence.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Learner Support Fund

Students who have received financial support for childcare, transport or food vouchers from the Learner Support Fund in terms 1 and 2, and whose attendance is below 90%, will need to ensure that they return the completed term 3 pro forma sent to them via their tutor in order to receive continuing support. Tutors need to authorise further support and may set targets for improved attendance before doing so.

Students who are planning to return next year, and whose financial circumstances dictate a need for further support, must re-apply in full. Application forms will be available on the VLE in June.

CARE TO LEARN

The national Care to Learn (C2L) scheme for young parents is due to continue next year. Up to date advice and application details will be available on the national website www.gov.uk/care-to-learn.

ADVANCED LEARNING LOANS

This national scheme for students on Level 3 courses or above (not Higher Education) is intended to be one way for students to fund their tuition fees if they are aged 19 or above at the start of their course and meet the eligibility criteria. Information is available from College and on the Government website:

www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan.

Tutors began to discuss possible fees implications of any of their tutees' progression choices in March, while completing Progression Forms with their tutees.

EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

New College is committed to enabling all students to participate fully in student life and does not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment. We promote equality in our tutorial programme and support students with awareness events and charity fundraising.

CAR PARKING

We are very fortunate to have a large number of free car parking spaces on site. However we do not always have sufficient car parking for all students, members of staff and visitors. In these circumstances we do have use of an overflow car park which is accessed via Shrewsbury Road. Please note that that it is illegal to park on double yellow lines or in a disabled parking bay unless you have the appropriate blue badge.

We have also been informed by the police, that following complaints by neighbours, they will be starting to issue parking fines where cars are causing an obstruction in nearby streets. Consider use of public transport, walking or cycling.

FEEDBACK

Feedback from our Student Reps

We have been developing a system of Tutor Group Reps this year. Reps have been engaged in various activities including our Student Conference on 22 March. We have been asked by these reps to explore more ideas to support three key health themes, which they identified as their priorities. Their chosen priorities were:

- Mental Health and well-being
- Suicide Prevention
- Sexual Health

These match national themes covered widely in the media.

We are producing an action plan alongside students, to further develop our information, guidance and support in these areas.

We are always keen to make improvements to our teaching and support for students and the service we provide to parents and carers. If you have any suggestions for improvements or comments about New College that we would find useful, please complete a Feedback form in College, or contact the Quality Team by letter, or email (quality@newcollege.ac.uk)

CHARITY FUNDRAISING

It's been another very successful and impressive fundraising year. Below are some of the charities and funds our students have supported.

CHARITY	2017/18
Macmillan Cancer	£377.13
Children in Need	£314.00
World Aids Day	£87.56
National Hijab Day	£240.00
LGBT+ Awareness Week	£400.00
Fletcher Payne Memorial Fund	£288.00

Our recent **Sport Relief** Fundraiser has been a major project last term. The event was very well supported by both staff and students who raised money in a variety of ways including:-

Organising a fun 'It's a Knock out' sports competition.

Selling cakes and raffle tickets.

Honouring Sir Terry Wogan with a memorial putt.

Selling our own in-house Sport Relief Quiz Sheets.

Sponsoring staff involved in a swimming challenging.

The current total for Sport Relief = £450.00

NC AMBASSADORS

In 2017/18 we introduced the NC Ambassador scheme to offer students an opportunity to develop a range of skills and the chance to share their experiences with students, parents and visitors to the College. These positions include a combination of both paid and voluntary work. NC Ambassadors:-

- Take part in a number of paid events to help promote and market the college.
- Represent students on college committees and working parties
- Take part in a number of voluntary events to get students involved in organising charity fundraisers, supporting theme weeks and college events e.g. Children in Need

NC Ambassadors act as role models to learners and are well positioned to give a unique perspective which can help to engage and inspire others. In the summer term we will be inviting students to apply to become a NC Ambassadors in 2018/19.

KEY DATES

Start of term 3	16 April
Introduction to HE Parents Eve , & HE Open Eve	3 May
Bank Holiday	7 May
Exam Leave * (AS students)	14 May — 8 June
Half term	28 May — 1 June
Exam Leave * (GCSE and 2nd year A2 students)	4 June onwards
AS students start A2 courses **	11 June
End of term 3	22 June***
Adult Open Evening	5 July
A Level & BTEC Results	16 August
GCSE Results	23 August

* There is no formalised Summer exam leave for students taking vocational and BTEC courses. Students will need to sensibly balance their exam calendar with any ongoing timetabled lessons.

** Students in the first year of 2 year programmes will begin their second year studies from 11 June following the first year exams. It is essential that students attend for this period to secure their place on year 2 courses, so holidays should not be booked for these weeks.

*** **Some exams continue until 26 June.** Students should check their personal Statement of Entry on ProMonitor.

Best Wishes

FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2018

STUDENT 'TO DO' LIST	BY WHEN (where applicable)	DONE OR N/A
Ensure progression form completed with tutor	20 April	
Check exam entries and see exams manager re any errors/clashes	20 April	
Check you have your college ID card ready for exams and summer term ID checks	20 April	
Prepare final revision / coursework completion timetable with personal tutor	27 April	
Continue to make Job and Apprenticeship applications		
Update CV & draft speculative job application letter		
Prepare personal exam timetable — use exams notice board, exams VLE site	27 April	
Update Personal Record on ProMonitor with tutor	4 May	
Confirm likely destination with tutor on ProMonitor (2018 leavers)	4 May	
Complete leavers' survey	11 May	
Confirm UCAS offers — University applicants for 2018 entry	UCAS deadline	
Complete online Higher Education finance forms	31 May	
Use 'Thinking about Higher Education', How to UCAS Apply, Personal Statements and Student Finance information and resources on the VLE in the Student Area/Careers section (year 1 advanced level students)	10 June	
Meet with Tutor to confirm enrolment — all returning students	w/c 13 June	
Return library books and borrowed subject resources (text books etc)	22 June	
Empty locker & return locker key for £20 deposit (all students)	22 June	
Put results days in diary, phone or calendar		
Apply (re-apply) for Learner Support Fund, Care to Learn, annual bus passes (returning students)	Mid August	
Confirm destination to personal tutors (leavers) via prize draw card in results envelope	Early September	