

# Preparing for University and Independent Learning

Dear Year 13 Students,

I hope you are keeping safe and well during this period of lockdown. I am writing to you to provide guidance around the next steps that need to be taken in order to prepare for university and to offer guidance about what independent study should look like over the coming weeks.

## Preparing for University:

### 1) Deciding your University choices

All of you will have met with Mr Goorah or Mrs Stephenson re: your university choices before submitting your applications. If you need further support and advice, please email them on [sean.goorah@burlingtondanes.org](mailto:sean.goorah@burlingtondanes.org) or [anne.stephenson@burlingtondanes.org](mailto:anne.stephenson@burlingtondanes.org) to arrange a phone call.

Some of you may have been planning to visit universities before making your decisions. Whilst this is not possible, you could do the following:

- **Do a virtual tour of the university.** Below is a list of universities offering this.

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/open-days-and-events/virtual-tours>

- **Speak to people you know who go to that university.** If you don't know anyone at that university, see if you can get in touch with an alumni at that university.
- **Look at league tables** to see how your universities rank overall and for your subject:

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>

- **Research your course at your universities** - do you like the modules offered or the specialisms offered. How will you be assessed?
- **Understand location.** Don't assume how long it will take to a university based on distance alone – check train times on [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) and driving times on Google Maps. Consider how many times you want to come home in a 10 week term (if you live away) or how long you are prepared to commute (if you live at home).
- **Think about the long term** The university you goes to will be on your CV forever – so think about whether an extra 20 minutes travelling each day to attend a better university is better in the long term?

### 2) Prepare for Clearing

It is a good idea for everyone to consider what would happen if they don't achieve the grades to attend their firm or insurance choice. Look on [www.UCAS.com](http://www.UCAS.com) for vacancies. E-mail Mr Goorah if you want advice.

### 3) Apply for Student Finance

Remember that you must do this ASAP to ensure you have Student Finance pay you money at the start of term. Once you have completed your part of Student Finance, you will need to help your parents/do your parents part of the application for them.

If you aren't sure if you have completed everything for Student Finance, log in to your account and you will see a To Do List. If there isn't anything on this, then you have done everything you need 😊

You may find the following links useful for advice and guidance around Student Finance:

UK government: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-student-support/undergraduate-student-finance-and-support>

The student room: <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/student-finance/>

Finally a useful article debating what you should do after university with regards to paying off your student loan: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/repay-post-2012-student-loan/>

## **Independent Study:**

As you will be aware from Mr Bhatia's letter last week, staff will no longer be setting A-Level/BTEC work. It is important, instead, that we shift the focus of your work to help embed the independent learning habits you have already begun to establish and to prepare you for university study. Therefore, I have provided you with links to websites and to resources to support with your wider reading, study skills, communication skills and financial literacy:

### **University reading lists and additional wider reading drawn from:**

- Free access to FutureLearn (For sign up details, please see the information sheet enclosed)  
<https://www.futurelearn.com/sign-in>
- AccessEd  
<https://www.access-ed.ngo/>
- BASE and DOAJ for open access academic journals  
<https://www.base-search.net/> <https://doaj.org/>
- Project Gutenberg (out of print academic books)  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/>

### **Study skills, communication skills, financial literacy:**

- UCAS Study Skills Guides  
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/study-skills-guides>
- EtonX (register for free access)  
<https://etonx.com/fast-track/>
- The Brilliant Club  
<https://thebrilliantclub.org/the-brilliant-club-for-pupils/info-for-pupils/>
- RG academic skills guides (e.g. University of Manchester)  
<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/training-and-skills-support/my-learning-essentials/online-resources/>
- Young Enterprise  
<https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/teachers-hub/financial-education/>
- Student Budget Planner  
<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-budgeting-planner/>
- UCAS budget calculator  
<https://www.ucas.com/budget-calculator>
- Blackbullion (managing money at university)

I hope you find that this letter provides the guidance and support needed to make the next steps towards your exciting university journeys. If you require any further support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes to you all,



Mrs A Stephenson

Head of Sixth Form, Assistant Principal

# Year 13 students: free courses with FutureLearn to support preparation for HE

## What is FutureLearn?

- FutureLearn is an award winning digital learning platform offering courses across a wide range of subjects from the world's best universities. Ark has partnered with FutureLearn to offer all Year 13 students **free upgraded access to courses to help prepare them for the transition into Higher Education**.
- An upgraded course entitles the learner to a digital and printed Certificate of Achievement (if they become eligible), access to any tests in the course, and **long-term access to the course materials**.
- Students have the option of taking courses to help them with either with their **transition into university life**, or in the **subject area they plan to study**.
- The courses vary in length but are typically 2-6 weeks, and require 3-4 hours learning per week.
- NB: a new service called [FutureLearn for Schools](#) is launching in mid-May and will provide access to relevant courses for any student in the UK aged 13 or older. The voucher codes below allow **early access and upgrades to three full courses**.

## How do students access the courses?

To take advantage of this offer students simply need to do the following:

1. Go to <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/collections/futurelearn-for-schools> and find a course you want to take
2. Click on "Join course for free"
3. Sign in or register for an account
4. Start learning!

If a student is enjoying the course and would like long term access and a certificate (if you are eligible), select "**Upgrade**".

Fill in the details and when you get to the pink text "**got a discount code**" click on it.

## What are the discount codes for my school?

The three discount codes for your school are as follows:

BurlingtonDanesCourse1

BurlingtonDanesCourse2

BurlingtonDanesCourse3

- Students should use the first code to get their first free upgrade. To upgrade on another course for free, use the second code, and the third code for a third upgrade.
- Using the code will give students a 100% discount so they can upgrade for free
- If a student has any problem with using the code they can contact Futurelearn at [support@futurelearn.com](mailto:support@futurelearn.com)
- The codes will last until 30 September 2020.