



Education and Skills Pledge

June 2020



Education and Skills Pledge



The impact of Covid-19 on learners and businesses in the West Midlands has been unprecedented. As we move through the public health emergency, further education colleges in the West Midlands will play a pivotal role. We recognise that Covid-19 may change ways of studying and working in the future. Many of you, as residents in the region, may need to refresh and redevelop your skills.

Colleges in the West Midlands are working collaboratively for you. We have agreed this **Education and Skills Pledge** to support both individual learners and the region's businesses.

In addition to the great courses offered across our colleges, we are committed to supporting anyone who is out of work, helping them to gain new employment or re-train. We will also support businesses, helping them to restart and flourish again. We will provide more higher and technical skill development opportunities required by employers.

Colleges West Midlands is delighted to be working collaboratively for you in these challenging times.

Lowell Williams
Chair Colleges West Midlands



Our Pledge



1 All learners will continue to receive online or distance learning delivery right through to the end of the summer term.

Access to college sites from June will be prioritised for those learners needing to complete technical elements of programmes in order to progress or for some elements of transition programme delivery, subject to safe working conditions being in place.

2 All full-time learners (whether new or continuing) will receive an enhanced transition programme at the start of the new academic year to ensure they are able to successfully move on with their studies.

This will include online enrolment, support with returning to learning on-site, opportunities to address gaps in technical or practical knowledge or experience, enhanced induction, individual advice, guidance and support, and taster sessions to ensure they make the right choice in next steps.

3 Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or long term unemployed will be supported directly through college focussed programmes and with specialist help and referrals.

Support will be tailored to meet individual needs, where traditional programmes are not appropriate. The support could include: One to one mentoring and guidance, providing in college and outreach information, advice and guidance for young people and their legal guardians. This support will be increased as access to volunteering and work experience placements become available as we ease out of lockdown.



"Solihull College and University Centre has been so helpful during the lock down and continued to support us in meeting our learning outcomes and assignments. I think the way the modules were taught via e-learning using the Teams programme was admirable and took a lot of hard work from the tutors".

Lisa Yates
Chartered Manager Degree Apprentice

Nothing had prepared me for the fear, worry, uncertainty and mental health struggles that all my students were now facing. To date, all our Access to Health students have remained on track and look set to complete, so despite their initial difficulties they have shown themselves to be a cohort that can cope with online learning.

Laura Nicholson

Access to Higher Education/Health Sciences Lecturer,
North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

4 Our adult education provision will be reconfigured to focus on areas of need and to support more flexibilities in the way adults may wish to study.

This will include blended and online delivery options, programmes to support adults through redundancy and re-employment, development linked to priority sectors of need and high-level professional updating programmes. Some to be available immediately and a fuller offer from September. Adults will be able to enrol online without needing to come into a college and be able to access individual advice guidance and careers support remotely.

5 Unemployed adults, recently redundant, or long-term furloughed employees from high risk industries, will have access to an expanded range of redeployment programmes to enable a prompt return to employment.

Delivery of programmes in colleges will begin immediately as employers ease out of lockdown and gaps in the workforce are identified.

6 Apprentices will continue to receive learning and reviews online until safe working arrangements at employer premises are agreed by both parties and employers will still be able to sign up new apprentices and begin their programme at any time during the period where access to college sites is restricted.

It is expected that day release students will return to their college-based programmes from September. Apprentice programmes will be delivered flexibly throughout the year to allow apprentices temporarily unable to continue their programme (due to pressures on their employer) to re-join as soon as they are able. Employers will be able to complete the contract and enrolment processes remotely via online tools.





7 Learners progressing to higher education will be able to access an optional transition programme to support their next steps.

Delivery of higher education programmes in colleges will begin from late September to allow students to complete a transition programme before moving onto higher study. The focus of the transition programme will be on practical / technical skills, underpinning knowledge and returning to education.

8 We will create a single access point to support employers looking to recruit new employees.

To simplify engagement where employers are unsure of where to access support, *Colleges West Midlands* will provide a simple web page access point where they can log the vacancy and employment requirements/specialisms.

"Dudley College of Technology has been a supportive partner during this challenging period. They have continued to deliver learning remotely to our apprentice and have kept us updated monthly as to their progress. Just recently I attended a Webinar run by the College which I found really useful, giving up to date information on college's plans going forward."

Diane Pittom

Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Officer,
West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS
Foundation Trust



Visit our college websites for more information.

Birmingham Metropolitan College
www.bmet.ac.uk



Burton and South Derbyshire College
www.bsdc.ac.uk



City of Wolverhampton College
www.wolvcoll.ac.uk



Coventry College
www.coventrycollege.ac.uk



Dudley College of Technology
www.dudleycol.ac.uk



Fircroft College
www.fircroft.ac.uk



Halesowen College
www.halesowen.ac.uk



Heart of Worcestershire College
www.howcollege.ac.uk



Hereward College
www.hereward.ac.uk



Joseph Chamberlain College
www.jcc.ac.uk



Visit our college websites for more information.

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