



21 April 2021

Dear student,

What a busy start to this half term it has been. Of any Year 12 group, you are the least experienced at exams and I am impressed that so many of you have achieved really impressive results in your recent mocks – well done. However, I recognise that the last year has not been favourable for some of you but as I said in assembly, we can only move forward and you are not alone – we are here to support you. You have received your reports, and made decisions regarding Year 13 courses and AS qualification entries. Where an intervention interview has followed your report, we have been impressed with your willingness to commit to an improved work ethos. In Year 13 most of you will follow 3 courses to full A level, and these grades will be the ones that university offers for 2022 will be made on. Hopefully, as lockdown eases, we will be able to get back to lots of the academic and extracurricular activities that make up the rich tapestry of sixth form life; preparing you for academic success and life after A levels.

AS Entries and Dropping Courses

At Durham Johnston sixth Form, we encourage you to study 4 AS courses in Year 12 for a number of reasons, including helping you choose the best 3 to take forward into Year 13, for assessment in summer 2022. For the courses you are not continuing with to full A level, you have been entered for an AS qualification where we have evidence to support this. Your mock exams are of course significant here. From 26th April, you will not need to be in lessons for any subject you are dropping at AS level and you will be given a new timetable that shows this, please check it carefully. This allows you to fully focus on your core courses where you will be making progress with new content. As always, there will be ongoing assessments in these subjects, allowing you to demonstrate your developing competence and confidence with your core A levels. UCAS references and predicted grades will take account of your continued progress. Where your mock exams showed concern regarding your progress so far, the April – June / July period is so important in turning things around and I will be asking your teachers to identify any student they still have concerns about in late June. These students and parents will be contacted; it would be unwise to continue with courses where you are unlikely to achieve a grade.

Any student who wants to provide further evidence to support their AS grade should carefully consider the pros and cons of this and should discuss this with Mr Wilbraham or me. The **deadline for this decision is 4pm Monday 26th April**. For more detail: any additional assessment would only cover work taught to 23rd March and preparation would need to be completed independently. It is likely that these assessments would take place on Thursday 6th May and, just like GCSE and A level entries, grades will be awarded in August and there will be no feedback. It is important to remember that any new assessments could improve or reduce your current position.

Academic Progress

Although you will be making progress with content, your A level assessments throughout Year 13 (next mock period will be end of September 2021) will reflect the linear nature of your exams next summer and will therefore cover work you have covered so far. It is important to build consolidation of **all** work covered into your regular study routines. In assembly this week, we looked at other academic opportunities including EPQs and FutureLearn courses. These are some links I shared with you yesterday:

- EPQ – <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/projects/project-qualifications/EPQ-7993>
- FutureLearn - <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/categories>



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What's Next (PHE)

Your timetabled lessons to help you research your options for after A levels start next week. Check your timetable carefully – come and ask if you have any questions. Here are some of the things we will be exploring in our PHE programme.

- Why consider university – **what is right for you?**
- Types of courses / universities – **what is right for you?**
- Alternatives to university, including degree apprenticeships.
- **Measure twice – cut once.** The importance of *research* to make *informed decisions*. E.G. – check your emails (& the weekly notices when you return) for opportunities / experiences – including virtual work experience. Also, lunchtime / afternoon sessions with universities / apprenticeship / studying abroad opportunities.
- Newcastle University – researching university – virtually - [Researching University in a Virtual World](#)
- How to apply – UCAS.
 - Sign up for UCAS convention / exhibition - <https://www.ucas.com/events/ucasdiscovery-north-389071>
 - UCAS Hub – for individual sign up. <https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options/create-your-ucas-hub-today>
- Finance – student loans, budgeting & beyond.
- Interviews – university & employment.
- Living independently: with others, healthily & respectfully.

Other Opportunities

I hope that we will shortly be able to reintroduce those extra activities, opportunities and responsibilities. You will shortly be the most senior members of our school community (approximately 1700 students). Look out for further information on:

- Head student roles
- Student Associate Governor roles
- Sixth Form Committee – what do you want to be remembered for?
- Subject Ambassador roles
- Societies – leading and active roles in
- Mentoring others.....

As always, if you have any questions, please come along and talk to Mr Wilbraham or me.

Sincerely,

Mrs Lennon
Head of Sixth