

UK colleges told to be truthful about online lessons

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Pic: BreakingNewsEnglish.com

A regulatory body in the UK that looks after student affairs has warned universities to be honest about online lessons. The Office for Students issued a request to higher education providers not to make promises that

lessons from September will be in-person or face-to-face. Currently, thousands of institutions worldwide are delivering lessons online because of the coronavirus pandemic. The quality of these lessons quite often depends on the proficiency of teachers to successfully exploit video conferencing platforms to replicate a classroom experience. The body said: "Tailored support needs to be put in place." Cambridge University has announced all of its lessons will be online until the summer of 2021.

The Office for Students chief executive, Nicola Dandridge, warned universities and colleges to be "as clear as they can" when informing students of what kind of teaching situation they will receive. She said: "None of us knows exactly what is going to be happening in the autumn. What we don't want to see is promises that it's all going to be back to usual with an on-campus experience, when that is not the case." She added: "The point here is absolute clarity to students so they know what they are getting in advance to accepting [university] offers." She said that, "every reasonable effort" should be made to ensure that students, "receive good outcomes and that the quality of their teaching is robust".

Sources: thepienews.com / bbc.co.uk / the-times.co.uk

Writing

Online lessons are better than classroom lessons. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

regulatory body / universities / online lessons / face-to-face / worldwide / summer / executive / clear / autumn / promises / experience / clarity / reasonable / quality

True / False

- a) A teachers' union has warned universities to be honest. T / F
- b) A regulatory body told universities not to make promises they can't keep. T / F
- c) Lesson quality varies because of teacher-proficiency in technology. T / F
- d) Cambridge University will start face-to-face lessons this September. T / F
- e) A chief executive stressed to colleges that clarity was important. T / F
- f) The executive said we all know what will happen in the autumn. T / F
- g) The article said many students are refusing university offers. T / F
- h) A chief executive said teaching quality should be robust. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. body | a. total |
| 2. issued | b. make the most of |
| 3. depends on | c. results |
| 4. exploit | d. sent out |
| 5. replicate | e. cautioned |
| 6. warned | f. copy |
| 7. informing | g. rests on |
| 8. absolute | h. beforehand |
| 9. in advance | i. telling |
| 10. outcomes | j. organisation |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of online lessons?
- b) What are the good things about online lessons?
- c) Why might online lessons be better than face-to-face lessons?
- d) Should all lessons be online?
- e) What do you think of learning English online?
- f) What are students worrying about during this pandemic?
- g) How good do you think teachers are at using technology?
- h) What do you think of Cambridge University's decision?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. A regulatory | a. outcomes |
| 2. higher education | b. will be online |
| 3. be in-person or | c. of teachers |
| 4. depends on the proficiency | d. as they can |
| 5. announced all of its lessons | e. to usual |
| 6. be as clear | f. body |
| 7. it's all going to be back | g. advance |
| 8. absolute | h. providers |
| 9. know what they are getting in | i. clarity |
| 10. students receive good | j. face-to-face |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the bad things about online lessons?
- Where do you learn best?
- What do you hope will happen in the autumn?
- What experiences have you had of online lessons?
- What would you really like to learn online?
- How 'robust' do you think online teaching is?
- What questions would you like to ask an online teacher?

Spelling

- A oeglraurty body in the UK
- Students issued a reutesq
- thousands of iiitntusnso
- because of the coronavirus ienapcmd
- depends on the epocyrcnifi of teachers
- nnceaonud all of its lessons will be online
- The Office for Students chief icxtuveee
- gnfinmior students of what kind
- an ou-scmnpa experience
- absolute itrycal
- every reslnaaboe effort
- the quality of their teaching is otburs

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. d	3. g	4. b	5. f
6. e	7. i	8. a	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – English

You think English is the best thing to learn online. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the most difficult of these to learn online (and why): yoga, gardening or art.

Role B – Yoga

You think yoga is the best thing to learn online. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the most difficult of these to learn online (and why): English, gardening or art.

Role C – Gardening

You think gardening is the best thing to learn online. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the most difficult of these to learn online (and why): yoga, English or art.

Role D – Art

You think art is the best thing to learn online. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the most difficult of these to learn online (and why): yoga, gardening or English.

Speaking – Learning

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to learn online at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| • English | • yoga |
| • cookery | • art |
| • coding | • car mechanics |
| • gardening | • customer service |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.