



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: FUTURELEARN FOR SCHOOLS**

Thank you for your interest in FutureLearn. We've been working with schools to understand the opportunity FutureLearn presents for A Level students, and have compiled the answers to frequently asked questions that we've received from teachers across the country.

### **What is FutureLearn?**

FutureLearn offers a powerful new way to learn online. Every course has been designed according to principles of effective social learning, through storytelling, discussion, visible learning, and using community support to celebrate progress.

World class university partners and institutions create the content, often a mix of video, audio, articles and quizzes. Please see a full list of partners [here](#). The Open University, who have a long heritage in innovative approaches to learning, have funded the platform. FutureLearn is responsible for the platform itself, including its marketing and product development.

### **What is a MOOC?**

MOOCs are 'massive open online courses'; you may have read about them in the press as they have received a lot of coverage. They are designed as a new way to enable people to learn, en masse, for free. Coursera, Udacity and Edx are all US-based MOOC providers. FutureLearn is a social learning platform based in the UK, providing Massive Open Online Courses from 40 partners including leading UK and international universities, the British Council, British Library and British Museum"

### **How much does it cost?**

Access to FutureLearn is completely free.

### **What are the benefits for students?**

There are many benefits for students which have been identified by schools so far:

- Improving UCAS application forms and interviews (Universities are well aware of these courses; many have invested substantially in creating them)
- Getting a view on subjects they may wish to study in future
- Getting access to new ideas, topics and resources outside of their current scope
- Feeling more comfortable for the transition to University
- Improving learning techniques and styles
- Having courses set as summer work; bridging gaps that currently exist between GCSE and A Level, Years 12 and 13, A Level and University

In a recent survey undertaken with students doing FutureLearn courses, 92% believed that doing the course was valuable to them; 77% believed it would be valuable in terms of preparing for university, 69% believed it would improve their UCAS applications/interviews; 50% believed it would give them new ideas and 37% believed it could even help improve their A Level results.

### **How are schools currently using it?**

Our Beacon schools have been using FutureLearn in various ways.

- Some have entire year groups doing courses in tutor time or other sessions
- Others have 'FutureLearn Clusters' or 'MOOC Groups', whereby students do the course in their own time then meet as a group with a teacher to discuss progress and learnings
- As part of enrichment programmes; to stretch selected Gifted and Talented students
- Interested students (once benefits of the courses have been explained in assemblies) make the choice about whether to learn independently
- Promoting the courses at Parents Evening to encourage parents to get involved and raise awareness
- Setting courses as summer work for students

### **What sort of courses do you have?**

FutureLearn offers a wide variety of [courses](#), which are continually being announced. Please see a list of recently announced courses as well as courses that have started but can still be accessed [here](#).

### **Can students take as many courses as they want?**

Yes, there is no limit to the number of courses that can be taken at one time.

### **How do we sign up?**

Students simply need an email address to sign up; they can do it themselves in less than a minute. Once signed up, it is beneficial for them to add to their profile, as well as perhaps follow other students who are taking the course. If not every student has access to a desktop computer, they can use their smartphones too.

### **I want to do a course that has started in the past, is this possible?**

If the course is listed in the 'in progress' tab, you can join it, even if it has already started. Once you have signed up, you can revisit that course at any time. However, if you did not sign up whilst the course was 'upcoming' or 'in progress,' you will be not be able to access it. We are reviewing this process and feedback is always valued.

### **What do we do if we don't have a computer for every student?**

FutureLearn courses have been developed with a 'mobile first' mindset; students can use their smartphones. They can also do the courses at home.

### **Your schedule does not fit with when I want to do the course.**

Once your students have signed up for courses they can be revisited at any time. A course that started many months ago can still be accessed and be valuable to students. We are working to ensure that FutureLearn is as valuable as possible to schools, so any feedback of this nature is valued. Please contact [schools@futurelearn.com](mailto:schools@futurelearn.com)

### **What age is this created for?**

FutureLearn users have to be over the age of 12 to access the platform. The content is university calibre, but designed to be accessible for all. Some courses have been specifically created for A Level students.

### **What happens if I don't have enough time to reflect the time needed for a course?**

The time indications for the courses are given as a guide; it is possible to use selected resources, and the time taken will vary from student to student.

### **What is your moderation policy?**

FutureLearn is a reactively moderated platform; that is, a comment or profile must be 'flagged' by another user to alert our moderators. The moderators will then review the list of flagged content and either let it remain visible, or hide it. In addition, most courses are actively monitored by educators and support staff whilst they are in progress (though not usually for 24 hours a day) who provide an additional view on the comments, and will escalate or report anything they are concerned about.

Our terms and conditions (and the easier to read [Code of Conduct](#)) make clear that FutureLearn is only for users over the age of 12. If there are indications that they are under the age of 12 their comments and profiles are hidden.

There are no private ways to communicate on FutureLearn: everything is visible to other learners and educators, who tend to be vigilant about anything amiss. In addition, it is against our code of conduct to exchange direct contact details or personal information on the platform, and this material will be hidden when escalated.

### **What are the most popular courses for students?**

Unsurprisingly, *Preparing for Uni* by the University of East Anglia has proved very popular. The forensic science courses have also been very well received by A Level students. Southampton's *Developing your Research Project*, which is ideal for those doing EPQs, has also been very successful. Students are taking a full range of courses depending on their

interest – you can see the full list here: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/upcoming>. Please do also take a look at the 'in progress' tab, as you can join these course too.

### **Can teachers/parents do it too?**

Certainly – FutureLearn is open to all, and we strongly recommend teachers and parents try the platform. Some courses have been created specifically with teachers in mind, for example UEA's *Teaching Computing* course has been designed for primary and secondary school teachers who are preparing to tackle the new computing curriculum.

### **How should I get started?**

Please sign up to our newsletter [here](#), to keep up to date with latest course announcements and news from schools using FutureLearn.

You can sign up to any course [here](#), to get a feel for the course style and content.

Once you have decided how you would like to use FutureLearn (please see **How are schools currently using FutureLearn?** above for ideas), there is nothing stopping you getting started. Registration for learners is free and takes less than a minute.

A presentation that can be given at assemblies about FutureLearn is available in the resources section.

We can provide design work and assets as required for posters or leaflets if you wish to create them.

If you have questions or requirements, please get in touch: [schools@futurelearn.com](mailto:schools@futurelearn.com)

### **What happens if I don't have enough time to reflect the time needed for the course?**

The time indications for the courses are given as a guide; it is possible to use selected resources, and the time taken will vary from student to student.

### **I have some feedback I want to give**

We are always very pleased to receive feedback/ideas/comments - please do contact Lorna on [schools@futurelearn.com](mailto:schools@futurelearn.com)