

ENGAGE

Winter 2020

The digital newsletter for Newman University Alumni



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Our Newman Community in Lockdown

Newman Health & Wellbeing staff help deliver local food parcels

Newman Health & Wellbeing, as part of Newman University, seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and make a positive contribution to the communities and organisations to which they belong. One of the ways they have been able to do that during this current crisis is through involvement in the delivery of food parcels to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the local community.

Newman Health & Wellbeing Development Manager, Melanie Glass, has been volunteering up to four evenings a week with B32 CommUNITY – a social enterprise based in Quinton where Melanie lives. They are one of the 60 community partners and organisations from across Birmingham working with The Active Wellbeing Society to support vulnerable communities during this time.

Newman Health and Wellbeing counsellors also collaborated with Living Well UK to deliver a dedicated crisis call-line for Key Workers in the West Midlands during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Virtual Tea and Teach

Earlier this year, our Faculty of Education introduced 'Tea and Teach' lunchtime sessions for our own undergraduate students and those outside of the University interested in a career in teaching. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this series of virtual events took on greater significance as it allowed those considering a career as a teacher, to be able to access information from our expert academic staff.

These sessions helped our students who were finalising plans for further study on the Faculty of Education's PGCEs with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and students/ career changers outside of the University to be able to acquire more information about the various routes available. This not only covered the postgraduate one-year University based PGCE, but also the postgraduate School Direct route via our partner Teaching School Alliances and the undergraduate pathways.

The tea and teach events hosted via zoom were well attended across the late spring and early summer, where visitors could drop in for a chat and a cuppa.

That attraction of teaching as a rewarding and essential professional career in today's society, has been further emphasised by the role that teachers play and how much they contribute to society and our communities. This has never been more so than in the current pandemic where this September we saw a significant rise in applications to study a PGCE at Newman.

If have family or friends who are thinking of changing careers to become a teacher, or who wish to find out more, please contact fed@newman.ac.uk.

Tea and Teach

It really is true that no-one forgets a good teacher. Could that be YOU?

It's this time of year when many students start to finalise plans for further study or the move into employment. We'd like to support with this by offering an opportunity to discuss routes into teaching. In the current situation, I am sure you will appreciate the very rewarding and essential role teachers play and how much they contribute to society and our communities.

On Thursday afternoons at 1.00pm
we are holding weekly virtual
Tea and Teach events on Zoom.

Please can you reply to S.Cable@staff.newman.ac.uk with an email address to contact you on and download the Zoom App (if you haven't already done so). Each session will be open for 30 minutes, for us to share information with you and to reply to questions you may have. These events will be hosted by colleagues from the ITE Department in the Faculty of Education. Over the coming weeks please look out for Student Bulletin cohort emails updates signposting specific events for our Primary programmes and our Secondary PGCE.

As the title suggests, please bring your cup of tea with you! Look forward to seeing you virtually.
Caroline Montgomery, Head of Secondary ITE

Thought for the day – Seeking solace in a time of Covid-19

When I think back to March and the conversations we all had in response to the national lockdown, I remember hearing people say, “we’ll check back in May” or “let’s see how things are in September” and even recently “maybe in January”. As six months have passed and that initial solidarity of being part of something new, something global, has lost any sense of uniqueness and given way for lots of people to weariness; a weariness either in having to deal with the restrictions on our social contacts and engagements or a weariness with the discussions and arguments that accompany any mention of Covid-19. For others acceptance of how things are has become a way of living and making the most of what is possible.

For Chaplaincy, we have spent the past six months finding ways to be alongside you in this journey. One idea that was suggested to us from the outset was that we created a ‘Thought for each day’ as a way to practice this. As the weeks unfolded, we realised that it was in the sharing of our own experiences that we best found ways to help

those who were reading along. What people found supportive was the opportunity to reflect on the day to day happenings and consider how we each respond to these. Along the way there have been wobbles, struggles and some smiles.

The thoughts have always invited readers to respond and share their own thoughts and experiences, these have been great to receive as it lets us know that someone out there is reading. We have really appreciated your positive feedback, such as “I think you struck the right balance of humanity and faith” and “thank you, your words always have great meaning for me.”

After sixty posts and a move from daily to weekly, the good news is that we will be posting a twice weekly thought, which can be read on the Intranet, in the realisation that this ‘new normal’ will indeed be our normal for a while yet. We hope you continue to read and find support and know that Chaplaincy continues to be here alongside you and available to offer you a listening ear. Do keep in touch with us and importantly keep yourself and everyone else safe.



Health and Social Care department donate PPE

The Health and Social Care department at Newman University have donated valuable personal protective equipment (PPE) to ExtraCare, who manage numerous care homes throughout the UK. The University responded to a plea from the company who asked for donations during the current coronavirus pandemic, as they were in urgent need of equipment to allow their staff to continue caring for over 4,500 people across the UK whilst remaining protected.

Bonnie Bullivant, Lecturer in Health and Social Care at the University, put plans into action to ensure that

Newman University could help as best as possible. Bonnie was able to deliver hundreds of disposable aprons and gloves, as well as a number of bottles of antibacterial handwash to the ExtraCare facility in Coventry.

Many Health and Social Care students at the University are currently working within care home settings, Bonnie commented, “Many of our students work in Care Homes, so we are acutely aware of the difficulties they face and thus wanted to respond to this request for help as soon as possible.”

SUCCESS OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS

Student Bridget graduates with First Class Honours with help of Newman's Sanctuary Scholarship

Bridget Obi, was born in Nigeria and after seeking asylum in the UK with her daughter, wanted to ensure that she was able to help and support others who are going through the immigration system. Bridget wanted to help people integrate into society and be the voice as an advocate on behalf of those who are not able to speak up for themselves.

With this in mind, Bridget began looking to study towards her degree, commenting:

"I had the first opportunity in 2012 to study an access to Nursing course but unfortunately, I was told I was not eligible for a student loan because I was an asylum seeker. That really knocked me down. But I was over the moon when I heard about the article 26 project.

There was just a week to the closing date but being the fighter I am, I decided to go for it. This has given me the opportunity to study at ease without thinking of paying back a loan like some students would do when they eventually start working. This has given me the opportunity to study a course of my choice, where I can give back to the society at large.

This is an opportunity for those of us not eligible for student loan wishing to study irrespective of their status.

It was an opportunity and I grabbed it with both hands. It was the only choice and I am glad I did not look back. They say first impression matters and I was impressed when I walked into Newman University; the warm welcome and smiles."



Newman University's Sanctuary Scholarship, which is part of the Article 26 Project, promotes access to higher education for people who have fled persecution and sought asylum in the UK.

Bridget studied her Health and Social Care degree at Newman University and has this year completed her studies, becoming the third Sanctuary Scholarship graduate to graduate with a First Class Honours in the past three years, commenting:

"Newman University is the first university with a very good student/tutor relationship. They encourage one-to-one tutoring which has really helped me especially during my dissertation. The small class sizes are good for interaction between students and tutors. Staff in my departments are just blessed with a big heart to see that each student are duly listened to, to bring out the best in each of the student."

WhatUni Award success for Newman

Newman was shortlisted in three categories including Student Support; Course and Lecturers; and University of the Year for the WhatUni Student Choice Awards. The awards are the only university experience awards based on student reviews and allow universities to be compared in various ways.



Newman was awarded third place in the Student Support category, with student quotes including the following from Criminology student Amy: "The support is excellent. Couldn't fault it. Always on point with communication and always there when you need them."



The University was also shortlisted in the Course and Lecturers category where Newman had been named in the top 10 in 2019. The 2020 results placed Newman once again in the top 10 for the category of course and lecturers.



The University of the Year award category focuses on the best overall experience whilst at university and Newman was named in the top 10 of universities for overall experience.



Newman moves up the rankings in Complete University Guide



The Complete University Guide released their 2021 league table in June, which saw Newman University climb five places overall.

Newman University did extremely well when focussing on student satisfaction, taking 20th place in the UK (from 130 English and Welsh universities), a huge increase of 54 places. This means that Newman is the highest ranked university for student satisfaction in the

West Midlands County, and third in the wider West Midlands region (geographic parameters set out by CUG), as well as being fourth amongst the Cathedrals Group universities.

Good Honours and Degree completion also saw Newman climb the rankings by 11 and 12 places respectively.

Subject areas such as Business Management, Drama, Education and

Theology saw student satisfaction rankings increase dramatically resulting in a top 10 place (9th) for Drama and top 5 place for Theology (4th).

At Newman University, we pride ourselves on consistently receiving positive feedback from our students and graduates as we ensure that the education and support provided for students enables graduates to succeed in their careers.

Sarah Parkes receives National Teaching Fellowship

Newman University is extremely pleased to announce that Tutor for Transition and Retention, Sarah Parkes, has received a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship Award.

The award scheme is run by Advance HE, and is dedicated to helping higher education shape its future. The National Teaching Fellowship scheme celebrates and recognises individuals who have made an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession in higher education and is open to all UK HE providers.

The award is extremely well-known around universities and has been

running since the year 2000 with over 915 National Teaching Fellows with up to 55 individuals receiving the award each year.

Sarah is a Tutor for Transition and Retention at Newman University and is one of the latest named for the award. Sarah has worked on numerous projects, including a Student-Staff Partnerships Project focusing on developing data-informed pedagogic innovations that support student progression and success. The project received Advance HE's Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence in 2019.



Sarah commented, "My collaborative work with students and staff in HE is underpinned by a belief that the University can be a site of positive change; one where fostering person-centred student-staff and student-student relationships is at the heart of student transformation and success. I am delighted that AdvanceHE have recognised my work in this area through the award of a National Teaching Fellowship."

Doctor of Education student wins Rising Star in Education and Academia Award



Doctor of Education student and previous PGCE student Sarah Mullin has been recognised for her contributions and achievements within the education sector by being named as a 2020 Rising Star in Education and Academia.

The Rising Star Awards presented by WeAreTheCity showcases the UK pipeline of female talent, which recognises exceptional female role models across different industries and professions. Sarah

was crowned one of the five inspirational winners from 1000 nominees for her significant and sustained contribution to education. This adds to Sarah's award for the 'Contribution to Education' in 2019 and her shortlisting as a Positive Role Model by the ITV National Diversity Awards.

Sarah is a Deputy Headteacher and best-selling author who is currently researching the under-representation of women head teachers in secondary schools in England.

She supports student teachers and also coaches women aspiring to school leadership.

Sarah comments "I am honoured to have been named as a Rising Star in Education and Academia and I am very grateful to Charlotte and Newman staff, students and alumni for your continued support in all that I do. The Newman University Faculty of Education is incredible; it is a privilege to study alongside such wonderful lecturers and peers who are a constant source of wisdom and positivity."

Newman People



NAME:

Dilwara Begum

ROLE:

Muslim Chaplain

carnival floats, and deliver creative community workshops (aka 'mas camps') to children and adults. The workshops allowed me to meet women from a range of backgrounds, and help encourage them back into work and education.

In 2012, I took a career break to focus on my family, bringing a natural closure to this creative chapter of my early working life. I instead focused on the art of life and raising a child to be a positive contribution to the society they grow up in. I decided to pursue a career which would allow family to be my main focus, and chose to train as a teaching assistant. I did this gradually, eventually signing up to an agency, which led to me working with children from all types of backgrounds including those with disabilities and globe delays. This work helped me to feel like I was making a difference to people's lives which really motivated me.

The role at Newman of Muslim Chaplain seemed like a natural progression for me, and a way to bring together all my life and work experience. I now have the opportunity to empower and help students in their journey and work with staff to identify needs that I can help with.

What were you doing before Newman?

At university, I did a degree in Textiles Design. Following my studies, I initially worked as a freelance artist, with clients such as Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Belgrade Theatre, Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid and Shenley Fields Nursery. With these clients, I was able to explore the themes of faith, Islam and culture through arts and creative mediums. I also helped women work through trauma and domestic issues, again through the arts, whilst engaging staff, parents and young children with cultural food workshops. Connecting with a variety of people brought an important social and civic element to my work.

I then went on to work for Imagineer Productions, focusing on the carnival sector and 'mas camps'. Here I was a designer contracted to design and make

Tell us about your role at Newman; what does a typical day look like for you?

Due to Covid-19, like many I am working remotely. A lot of my work is happening through Zoom, video calls, 1 to 1 telephone conversations or via WhatsApp. I miss the face to face interactions, but it is important to be safe. Regardless of the fact I am working remotely, I will still operate an 'open door' policy. Any students who need support or spiritual guidance can reach me via d.begum@newman.ac.uk, from this point we can arrange the best form of communication to suit the individual.

This year I am looking forward to working with the university on Black Lives Matter and BAME work, SU with their Black and Asian Experience Panels, our very new Islamic Society (NIS) as well as across the board. I only work 15 hours a week though it goes really fast.

What's the most enjoyable part of your role?

I enjoy engaging with people, just talking, giving advice or being a helping hand. I find that really worthwhile.

How do you relax after a long day at work?

Since my childhood, I have always enjoyed being out in nature and gardening. I'm a seasonal gardener and like to include nature in my artwork when I'm not busy gardening. I find that when I'm gardening, I feel a spiritual connection to my creator, and I have shared this with my daughter. Gardening is an activity that allows me time to slow down and nurture something. Sometimes, I sow seeds and they might not grow into anything, but this allows me to practise being grateful and celebrate my successes, whilst

accepting that failure is a part of life. It's nice to be able to share the plants and food that grow.

This year, gardening has become even more important. I am exploring ways to not only grow to eat in spring and summer seasons but how to become self-sufficient with what we grow, through best method of storage, preserving and growing year around.

Given a chance, if you could do any job for a day, what would you choose?

I've loved all the jobs I've had, and I've always been happy at work, but in this role of Muslim Chaplain I feel like I've arrived at my destination. I would like to do this role forever! It's given me chance to grow and develop; professionally, personally and spiritually which is a full package.

What is your motto or personal mantra?

My mantra is one word, gratitude. I try to make gratitude a part of my everyday life and it's had a really positive impact on me. Sometimes, we can forget to be grateful for what we have and always be in a rush to get the next thing; the next house, job, car... If we are grateful for the basic foundations of our lives, our problems become easier to deal with and less important.

Dilwara can be contacted by email: d.begum@newman.ac.uk (or in DW109, by appointment due to Covid-19) on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings (term-time only).

A WARM WELCOME FROM THE CAREERS SERVICE

Firstly, we would like to thank academic staff for the collaborative work that has happened, to enable the Careers Subject Level Agreements to take place between the Careers Service and subject areas over the summer period.

We will work together to enhance student's employability. Careers subject links and academic leads will be meeting again in the New Year, particularly to discuss Careers Registration data, but for those of you who don't know about it, here's some information.

At enrolment each year we are asking students questions about their career readiness and emailing them to suggest their current career pathway and hints and tips to move forwards. Check out our [Decide](#), [Plan](#), [Compete](#) and [Sorted](#) pathways. We are listening to what students want, for example, 'Health and Social Care' is one of the biggest sectors students are interested in so we have invited relevant organisations to meet students, such as the NHS Leadership Academy and Skills for Care.

More excitingly we are sharing this data with academics and key staff across the institution about what stages their students are at, sectors of interest, levels of experience and career aspirations. This information can be used to support your personal tutoring role and keep students on track during their time at Newman.

Careers and Employability Update – Being Resilient in Tough Times

Although times are tough, this hasn't stopped the Careers Service developing lots of initiatives for 2020-2021 that will help students and graduates navigate their journeys over the next 12 months and beyond. There are lots of things your students and recent graduates can get involved in during this year. Everything is available through their [My Career](#) account. The next 12 months will pose challenges, however we are going to work with students and graduates to be RESILIENT and even more attractive to potential employers and course providers. Please check out below the messages we are communicating with our students and graduates and push these messages within your areas.

Read our weekly careers update that you will receive every Friday, jam-packed with updates, opportunities and things you can get involved in to enhance your employability and build your resilience.

Engage with one of our insightful workshops or events to enhance your knowledge and employability. All bookable through your [My Career](#) account. Some of the workshops we are offering include:

- CV Writing and Application Forms
- Interview Techniques
- Jobs and Placement Search
- Career Planning – What Can I do With My Degree?
- Disclosing a Disability Positively as Part of The Recruitment Process
- How to use LinkedIn Successfully
- Applying for a Postgraduate Teacher Training Course
- Getting Your First Teaching Post (Job Search, Application and Interview)
- Teaching Applications and Interviews – An Employer Perspective
- Thriving in Tough Times to Keep Moving Forward - How to Build Your Resilience
- Postgraduate Funding Through Grants.

Shortlistme is our brand new interview simulation platform, where you can practice interviews. The aim is to build confidence in interviews and it is a great way to practice in a safe environment. Students and recent graduates can access Shortlistme via their [My Career](#) account through the resources tab, or they can click through to the [Newman University Shortlistme Market Place](#). Full instructions are given. After answering each question, individuals will be given the opportunity to self-assess their response using careers and employer insight. They will also be able to utilise this feedback to enhance their interview performance by booking a Careers appointment within [My Career](#) to go through the interview with an Adviser or Coach.

Improve your career management skills by completing the ACE: Award for Careers and Employability. You will cover the key skills in career management, enabling you to make decisions and implement personal, realistic and informed career choices.

Through a flexible programme of extra-curricular activities you will:

- Develop self-awareness and knowledge of career options open to you.
- Research career routes of interest and navigate next steps.
- Learn how to present yourself successfully to employers and course providers through the recruitment process.

Find out more about the [ACE](#).

Learning from experience is an excellent way to build your resilience. The Careers Service can support you in finding part-time work, work experience/placement opportunities, volunteer positions and graduate jobs. Some may be virtual opportunities during the coronavirus crisis or might involve doing something to help others, but this all contributes to developing your employability and enhancing skills such as leadership skills, digital literacy and emotional awareness and resilience. [My Career](#) and the weekly Careers email will open you to all of these experiences.

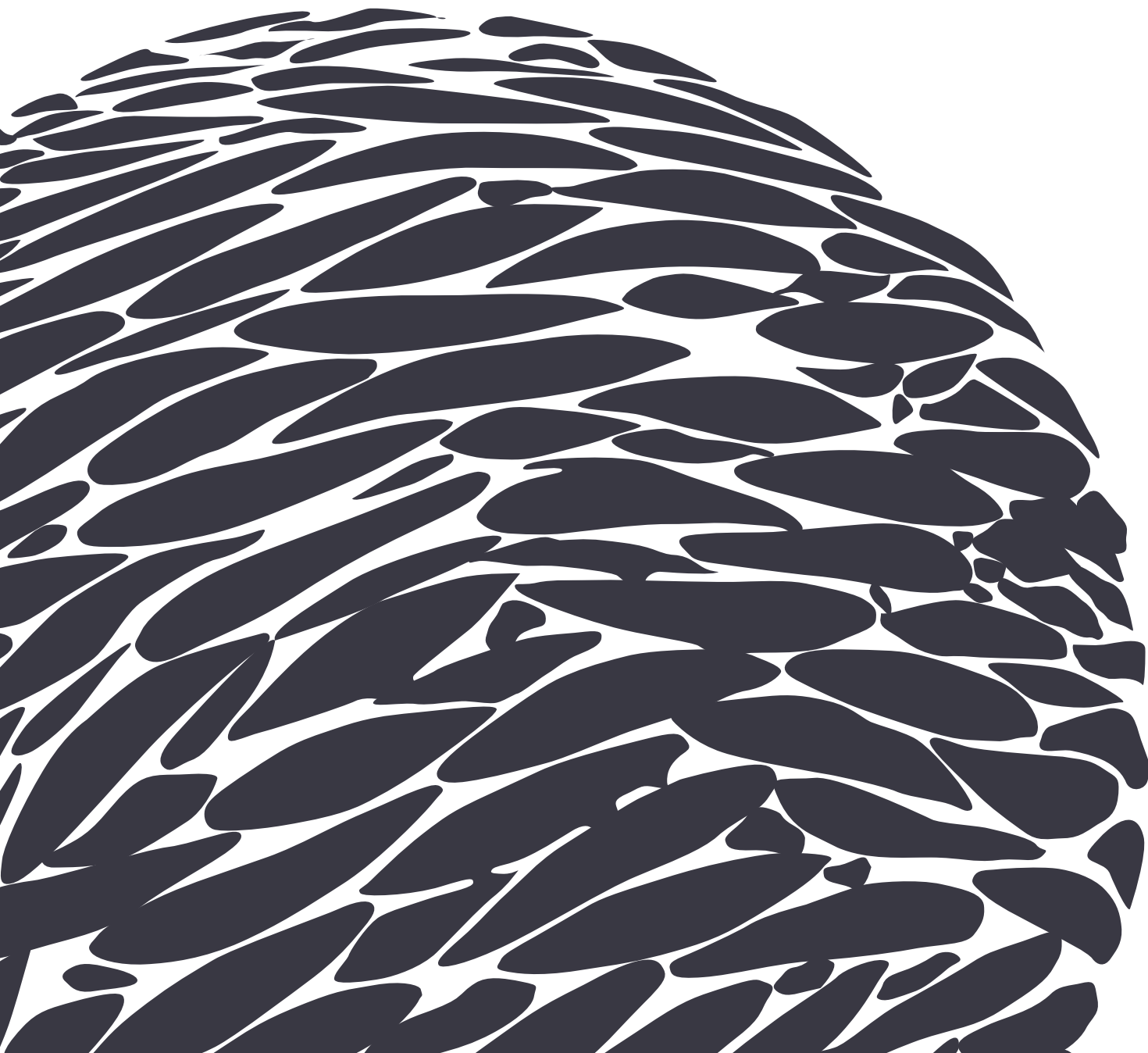
Investigate your options. If you are interested in postgraduate study but think funding might be an issue, Newman University Careers Service subscribes to The [Alternative Guide To Postgraduate Funding Online](#). This means that you can access the UK's biggest and most popular postgraduate funding guide for free! Just visit the [Postgraduate funding website](#) and access from campus or at home using your Newman email address!

Embrace change! Flexibility is an essential part of resilience. Utilise these opportunities to branch out into new directions. Something that many students don't realise is that many graduate recruiters will recruit from any subject discipline, so if you are studying English, this doesn't mean you couldn't train to be an accountant after you graduate. During your time at University and beyond, the Careers Service want to broaden your horizons, so speak to an Adviser or Coach and check out all of our useful resources on the [Careers Intranet Resources Page](#).

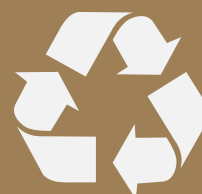
Networking and making social connections is a really positive way to look for opportunities for self-discovery and to build your resilience. One really good thing to come out of the coronavirus crisis is the amount of virtual and online opportunities being provided by employers, like our exclusive Newman University Virtual Careers Fair that took place in October 2020. Newman University Careers Service will promote these opportunities over the next 12 months. [Next Step Support](#) has a variety of useful resources and virtual events you can get involved in.

Transformation West Midlands is an exciting project we are delivering in collaboration with the University of Birmingham and University College Birmingham, to break down barriers and support our final year undergraduate students and recent graduates into local highly skilled jobs and postgraduate study. We offer an enhanced Careers Service through progression coaching. Book an appointment through [My Career](#) for access to local exclusive opportunities and the [Transformation fund](#). To get an edge and be the first to find out about local jobs in this highly competitive labour market, join and sign up for alerts from our [Transformation West Midlands LinkedIn page](#) – It is free and we will help you set up your Profile so that employers can find you! Any questions about the services on offer, email us at careers@newman.ac.uk.





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