

## **The Pros and Cons of Distance Learning.**

People decide to embark on distance learning courses for a variety of reasons. It can often be the only practical option for those that need to stay in full time employment or chose to continue with their careers. It can also be an attractive choice for the mature student who wishes to re-enter the world of education without the pressures associated with the traditional classroom. Distance learning is also undertaken by many who feel that regular University life just isn't for them. Whatever the reason, with the variety of courses and institutions now available, distance learning can be a daunting but exciting experience.

The following list of pros and cons should not be assumed to apply to every distance learning option available. It can however give a broad understanding of what such a course of study may offer, beyond its educational content!

### The pros of distance learning:

- Cost – For many, the primary consideration in undertaking any form of education is the cost. Often it can be found that most distance learning courses are cheaper than the traditional option, with degrees being significantly lower cost.
- Time – Most distance learning courses enable the structure of study to be left to the student to arrange around their life (as long as deadlines are met!) This is particularly important for those in employment.
- Convenience – Many distance learning courses can be completed exclusively at home which can be a very attractive positive.
- Choice – The choice of course and organisation now available is impressive, and rivals that of the traditional university, making distance learning an option to be considered for its variety alone.

### The cons of distance learning:

- Tutor – Where courses do have an allocated tutor, this can sometimes be purely electronic, and those that do have face to face contact may find time extremely limited. Support can be nonexistent on some courses.
- Interaction – Many distance learning courses offer no chance for student interaction. This can leave people feeling alone in their studies.
- Preconception – Unfortunately, distance learning can sometimes come with the preconception that a course is somehow inferior to classic teaching establishments.
- Activity – Distance learning requires serious motivation. Isolation, lack of structure, and limited support can be real possibilities with some distance learning courses, and the student will be required to have a real commitment to succeed.

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