

Brush Up On Your Excel Skills

[pay people to do your homework](#)

[pay people to do your homework](#)Whether you are thinking about re-entering the workforce or just looking to better organise your home, Excel is an invaluable tool. This program, originally created in 1987, allows you to create and manipulate data spreadsheets. Excel is useful for keeping track of information, creating reports and exporting graphs. Typically, an excel spreadsheet is made up of individual cells arranged in horizontal rows and vertical columns. Within each cell, you will include a piece of data. That data can then be viewed and analysed within the larger dataset based on the row and column it is in.

Excel offers a wide variety of functions, the ability to perform calculations and enable the easy tracking and storage of data. Many working and stay-at-home mums rely on Excel to keep their personal, family and professional lives in order. Whether you want to streamline how your home runs from day-to-day or seek out formal or informal employment, brushing up on your Excel skills is a sure-fire way to get ahead.

There are many ways in which you can use Excel. For many stay-at-home mums, Excel makes organising the day-to-day tasks of life significantly easier. Excel can be helpful for keeping track of daily expenses, such as bill payments, shopping expenditures or income. It can also help sort daily tasks – for example, by creating a chore chart for the children (or the partner!). It can even help with planning for an upcoming holiday or school field trip, as you can easily budget and plan within the program. Excel can also be a useful tool for storing and searching information, such as recipes, books or shopping lists. Regardless of your specific needs, Excel's adaptability and multiple functions will ensure it fits you and your family's needs.

Outside the home, Excel can be a useful tool for stay-at-home mums thinking about re-entering the workforce, whether formally or informally. Nowadays, many employers expect employees to be proficient in computer programs, such as Excel. Regardless of the specific industry, knowledge of Excel will always be helpful. For stay-at-home mums considering re-entering the workforce informally, Excel can be a valuable tool to help grow a home business or personal brand. Many mummy bloggers use Excel to track viewers, blog posts or advertising expenditures. Excel is also helpful for keeping track of sales of products, whether that is a homemade product or something like Tupperware or makeup.

For any mum, Excel is a useful and necessary skill. While it may seem daunting at first, there are numerous ways you can strengthen your existing Excel skills and develop new ones. This article outlines some of the key features of Excel all mums should be familiar with, as well as how to get the most from using them.

Excel Basics

Even if you're familiar with Excel, it can still be helpful to review the basics. Although you may be comfortable creating an Excel spreadsheet, make sure that you are creating your Excel spreadsheet with the right formatting for your needs. Tips for formatting are to pick one font and stick to it. This will help your spreadsheet to look neater and more uniform. Also, consider using italicised or bolded fonts to identify column and row headings or subheadings. You may also manipulate the size of your font to identify a title, heading or subheading. Typically, the larger the font the more important the information is perceived to be and vice versa. For example, you wouldn't want the title of your spreadsheet to be smaller than the data. Ensuring your spreadsheet has proper formatting will make it easier to navigate and ensure that it looks polished once it is finished.

Excel Shortcuts

Now that you are comfortable creating a spreadsheet, the next thing you should learn is the program's shortcuts. Learning shortcuts will allow you to navigate Excel easier and faster, saving time as you use the program. For busy stay-at-home mums, these shortcuts can help save critical time when using Excel. Many shortcuts can be used through the keyboard. For example, hold down the 'Control' and 'C' keys simultaneously to copy text, numbers or images. To paste text, numbers or images, hold down the 'Control' and 'V' keys simultaneously. If you've made a mistake – don't fret. You can easily undo your last action by simultaneously holding the 'Control' and 'Z' keys. To automatically insert the current date into a cell, hold down 'Control' and ':' to make it appear.

Shortcuts can also be used to navigate your Excel spreadsheet. For example, holding down 'Control' and '+' will select the current region; holding down 'Control' and 'Space' will select the current column; and holding down 'Shift' and 'Space' will select the current row. You can also use shortcuts to hide parts of your Excel spreadsheet. Use 'Control' and '0' to hide the current column and use 'Control' and '9' to hide the current row.

You can also use a shortcut to search your excel spreadsheet, which is useful to find specific information. For example, imagine you had an excel sheet of all your daily family expenses and you wanted to find out how much your family spent on a particular day. You can hold down simultaneously the 'Control' and 'F' buttons to open a search bar in the upper-right corner of your computer screen. In that bar, type the date you are looking for and click 'Enter'. You will automatically be taken to that date within your excel sheet. This function is also helpful to locate repeat information. For example, imagine you wanted to search the same Excel spreadsheet for any time your family made a purchase related

to the groceries. Hold down both 'Control' and 'F', then type into the search bar 'groceries' and click 'Enter'. Automatically, every use of the word 'groceries' will be highlighted in the spreadsheet. By clicking enter, your computer screen will automatically jump from one use of the word to the next. In that way, you can easily navigate to see any time that word is used within your spreadsheet.

Filtering Results

Another way to easily search your Excel spreadsheet is to learn how to filter your results. Excel offers an Auto filter feature, which will quickly and easily filter information for you. To use this function, go to the top of your computer screen and click Data > Filter. You will then be presented with the option to click on options which will automatically filter your spreadsheet by the information you select.

AutoCorrect & AutoFill

To save even more time while using Excel, you must also learn how to use the AutoCorrect and AutoFill functions. AutoCorrect is a feature which will automatically identify and correct misspelled words and grammar errors. Words that are flagged by AutoCorrect will appear on your computer screen as underlined in red. To fix a flagged word, right-click on it. You will then be presented with options of suggested words or a suggested grammatical fix. Simply click on the correct option and it will automatically be updated. AutoFill is another tool that will save you time while using Excel. To use AutoFill, highlight the cell with the data in and the cells next to or underneath it where you want the new data to appear, navigate to the Home tab and in the Editing section click on Fill, then Series. This will allow series, such as a numbered list or a list of dates, to fill-in automatically.

When creating an excel spreadsheet, you may want to include

information from a website. For example, if you are a mummy blogger, you may want to convert information about your blog's views into an Excel spreadsheet. To import data from a website, scroll to the top of your computer screen and click Data>From Web. This will open a New Web Query display window in which you can type or paste an online URL. Copy and paste the URL of the website from which you wish to import data into the display window, then click Import. This will automatically import the data from the website into an Excel spreadsheet.

Manipulating & Exporting

Once you've created your Excel spreadsheet and understood the basic commands of Excel, there are many ways in which you can manipulate it or export the data within it. One way you can do this is by creating a chart. There are numerous types of charts you can make in Excel, including column charts, line graphs, pie charts, bar graphs, area graphs and surface graphs. The type of chart you use will depend on the type of data you are working with and how you want it to be displayed. To create a chart, you will first select the data you want included in your chart. To do this, click and drag across the cells you want until they appear shaded. Next, go to the top of your computer screen and click Insert, then go to the Charts section and choose your preferred chart. Automatically, the chart will be created and inserted into your Excel spreadsheet. From there, you can change the layout, style and location of the chart. If you'd like to change the chart's title, simply double-click the placeholder title and type in your new title.

Another helpful tool for analysing your Excel spreadsheet's data is the Subtotals command. Imagine once again that you had a spreadsheet of your family's expenses each day. Let's say you want to find out how much your family spent within one particular month. Rather than adding up each of those daily expenses, you can use the Subtotal command. To do so, select

the cells you wish to add, then go to the top of your computer screen and click Data>Outline section>Subtotal. This will automatically add up the sums within those selected cells.

In addition to using the pre-set Excel commands, you can also create your own formulas to search and format your data. These cells can help save time by completing addition, subtraction, multiplication or division for you automatically. To create a formula, begin typing in the cell in which you want the answer to your formula to appear. All formulas will begin with the equals sign (=). Then, type the mathematical formula you want Excel to calculate, making sure you are identifying the specific cells you want the formula to calculate with. For example, if you wanted to know the difference between cell A1 and cell C1, you would write =A1-C1. Once the formula is written, click enter. The answer will appear in the cell automatically. When writing a formula, the plus sign (+) represents addition, the minus sign (-) represents subtraction, the asterisk (*) represents multiplication, the slash (/) represents division and the caret (^) represents an exponent.

Once you have created your Excel spreadsheet, you may want to save a copy for yourself or share it with someone else. If you would like your spreadsheet to look more polished and to not be available to change or edit, then you should export it as a PDF. Exporting an Excel spreadsheet as a PDF will also hide any formulas you may have used, instead showing only your data. To do this, go to the top of your computer screen and click File>Save As. Once the window opens to save, click 'File type' and select PDF. This will automatically export your excel spreadsheet as a PDF.

Brushing up on your Excel skills will allow you to take advantage of all the functions and tools Excel has to offer. Whether you are working or staying at home, Excel makes the tracking, storing and calculating of data easier and faster. This can help to track family expenses, a budget for an

upcoming holiday or schedule children's after school activities. Excel also is a valuable skill to add on to your CV, as well as an asset in any professional setting. By strengthening your Excel skills through the tips and tricks in this article, you can use Excel to organise and streamline your personal, family and professional life.

Your Step-by-Step Guide on How to Start a Career in Fitness

Health awareness is on the rise in England, and British residents enjoy more fitness choices than ever before. Fitness not only reduces risks of sickness and injury, it imparts a sense of wellbeing to our everyday lives and keeps us happy. Regular fitness activities also help alleviate depression and anxiety and it also aids healthy weight loss. Overall, a regular fitness regime helps us live a longer, stronger and healthier life.

With the impressive number of interesting career options available in the fitness industry, it's time to decide on the one that best suits your abilities and talents. Compared to say, 20 years back, careers in fitness are well-defined and simpler to pursue than before. The good news is that the fitness industry in the UK offers an abundance of career opportunities for diverse personalities, skill sets and aspirations. What used to be regarded as a hobby or pastime is now considered as a full-fledged employment option. Nowadays, full-time and part-time jobs in the fitness industry are no longer scarce, you can avail of excellent opportunities at the

local, regional or even national level. This is a promising time to enter fitness either as a trainer, instructor (for individuals or groups) or specialise in the business side of fitness.

This leads to an interesting line of thought: have you considered the idea of starting a career in fitness?

As a mum returning to work, a career in fitness may be just the right choice for you. A career in the field of fitness is not only an exciting option, it comes with a range of impressive benefits. However, with the myriad choices available in the field, it can be daunting to know how to begin or how to navigate the overwhelming options that exist today. Should you consider narrowing down the possibilities or keep your mind open to diverse options? This article will describe how to kick-start a career in the field of fitness.



of British women are the main income earners in the family

Let's begin with a brief overview of why you should consider a career in fitness. Each person pursues a career in fitness for different reasons. Some are driven by their wish to help others, others decide to start a career in fitness because a

motivating life experience may have instilled an appreciation of fitness (perhaps a personal experience of sickness or injury). In addition, fitness careers are slated to demonstrate dramatic growth and expansion over the next twenty years. Besides, this is one market that will not lose jobs to overseas markets; no customer will be willing to fly overseas just to see a personal trainer.

What are the benefits of a fulfilling career in fitness?

Firstly, you are making a crucial difference to the lives of people by helping them become fitter, healthier and stronger. Many of us look forward to the time that we attend a Pilates or aerobics class before or after a hard day. Fitness makes everyone feel better about themselves so you can look forward to an exciting new day every day. A career in fitness necessarily involves face-to-face contact with people and this way, you get to meet new people all the time.

You are also likely to enjoy more time to yourself during the day as most of your fitness sessions will be before and after work. You can look forward to completing other chores, looking after young children, etc. One of the best perks of becoming a fitness instructor is that you get to be in great physical shape too. This is especially true when you train groups. In addition, many well-reputed gyms and clubs offer exclusive deals and discounts to their staff on merchandise and services, etc.; you'll get to enjoy the perks.

If you read through the following checklist and most of the answers are 'yes', you are probably a good fit for the fitness industry:

- You have a strong desire to help others (social orientation)
- You love planning workout routines and schedules

- You read articles, blog posts and magazines on fitness
- Your family members and friends often ask you for advice regarding fitness
- Routine 9 to 5 jobs do not motivate or interest you
- You enjoy making new friends and possess excellent communication skills (communication skills can always be polished up)
- You love spending all your free time exercising or at the gym

What does a Career in Fitness Involve?

Once you have identified your interest in the field of fitness, it's time to understand what the job entails. According to popular belief, a fitness instructor or trainer is often synonymous with a drill sergeant who comes across as intimidating. However, this couldn't be further from the truth. Successful fitness instructors are pleasant, communicative people with a friendly disposition. You also need a good working knowledge of anatomy, physiology and psychology combined with the basics of business (if you intend to freelance or open your own business). In fact, you should devote the same time and attention in planning your career in fitness as you would to any conventional occupation like banking or IT.

You may have to design exercise programmes that will potentially help your clients achieve their goals. Fitness trainers also help them adhere to healthy lifestyles and incorporate mindful eating techniques. Starting a career in the intensely competitive fitness industry may seem challenging at first, but once you collect a regular set of clientele, you will find it financially and personally rewarding. Collecting a set of regulars (whether in a club, gym or visiting clients in their homes) takes a little time as

you need to establish your credentials and credibility. However, remember that in the field of fitness, word-of-mouth recommendations play a crucial role. Once people begin to see that your clients are starting to look more toned, stronger and fitter, you are likely to enjoy a larger clientele.

For example, you may wish to ask yourself if you want to work for a large or small club or gym or work on a freelance basis. The answer to this question may be related to your own goals and vision. Working for a large or reputed company will provide long-term security, opportunities for promotion and growth. On the other hand, smaller companies will offer improved opportunities to learn the ropes and open your own business someday. Some may enjoy the peace of mind and security that comes with a regular fitness job while others may prefer taking a more entrepreneurial approach.

You not only need to ponder over what you want from your career in fitness, but also how you plan to reach there. As you start, the jobs that you accept along the way may act as stepping stones to the job that you ultimately want. It's important to have a clear picture of how you want your career to shape up; keep in mind that it will not all happen in a day. But enjoy the journey to your ultimate destination, invest energy and enthusiasm and cherish your job – people will always recognise that. If you pursue your ambitions with passion and keep a close watch on your career trajectory, your dreams will certainly transform into reality.

Consider the pluses and minuses of the following options before you actually go to work:

Going back to college

The obvious positive is that you will learn about biology, anatomy and physiology from reputed sources and you will earn a qualification which lends authenticity to your credentials. The negatives include the fact that this takes quite some time

(perhaps a minimum of two years) and you may have to spend hundreds of pounds towards the certification. Lastly, formal and classroom education does not always prepare you for real-life training of people physically.

Obtaining certification

Certification again will help you gain knowledge and credibility and, in addition, it will cost less than a qualification from a college. Negatives would include the facts that it is often challenging to decide on reliability and authenticity. Also, being faster to obtain than a college qualification, it does not impart as much knowledge.

A good way is to start working in fitness and perhaps study a little at the same time at your own pace so that you are able to relate the knowledge to your ongoing experience. The earlier you can gain some experience and put it down on your CV, the better it is for future job prospects.

However, although many of us may secretly yearn to start a career in fitness, we may have no idea how to go about it. There is not just one single path to starting a career in fitness, so let's explore the different career options. Once you understand what each one entails, you can decide to go with the one that resonates with your personal objectives. Further details about different types of fitness career options help make the selection process a more informed one.

Gym Assistant

If you are returning to work after a gap and want to get a foot in the door, try starting out as a gym assistant. Most gyms are extremely busy and need extra help. Although it's basically a customer service oriented role, you can still get the benefit of gaining fitness training experience. In fact, you can look forward to learning several things while performing your duties.

- You will learn about the best and safe gym practices
- Help patrons use gym equipment and encourage fitness practices; specific knowledge of muscle groups targeted by each machine
- Ensure that gym rules and regulations are maintained
- Adjust each machine to the requirements of individual patrons
- Act as first point of contact for prospective patrons; explaining fitness packages, timings and rates, etc.
- Provide basic assistance to patrons with regard to shoulder and chest presses, squats and lifts (incorrect techniques can result in injury)
- Oversee maintenance of gym equipment and ensure that they are all in good working order (this helps you learn a lot about the way gym equipment works)
- Maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene standards
- Supervising stock control and storage; ordering stocks

The following skill sets are useful in order to become a gym assistant:

- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work under minimal supervision
- Organisational and planning skills

You may be required to work weekends or evening hours when the gym is busy. You may also be required to obtain CPR/first aid certification. This may not be the job that you ultimately want to be doing, but it will help to immediately put you on the fitness scene and get updated with exercises, programmes and so on. It will also help you become familiar with gym equipment, fitness machines and so on.

Personal Training

Personal training is one of the most sought after jobs because of the benefits and flexibility associated with it. Moreover, you can work as a personal fitness trainer in a club, gym or

through a reputed fitness company. In addition, you can consider freelancing as a fitness trainer and establish your own hours and pay. Being a full time trainer is not only a viable option, it is also one of the most competitive fields to break into. However, regardless of whether you are employed or independent, you may eventually want to consider specialising in training a specific group of clients or developing your own fitness programme. For example, you may wish to focus on beginners, older adults or women.

If you've obtained personal trainer certification, then you may wish to first gain experience, contacts and skills as an employee at a gym or club before branching off on your own. Working as a personal trainer with a company will also provide job security and a predictable (but reliable) salary. As you learn the ropes, you can focus on being a personal trainer instead of having to worry about other aspects of the business such as administration, advertising and public relations, etc. Challenges of working as a personal trainer with a company include being obliged to cater to a diverse set of clientele (as opposed to working with specific groups) and also working at fixed hours or timings. If you become popular and well-known, you are likely to earn much more as an independent trainer but this takes time.

Aspiring to work as an independent trainer comes with its own set of benefits and challenges. Benefits include the potential to earn a higher income (you can enjoy your profit margins instead of giving over a sizeable percentage to your employer) and being your own boss. You are likely to enjoy increased flexibility with regard to hours and days, etc. You also have the professional freedom to develop your own fitness routines and programmes geared towards the requirements of your clients. Challenges include added responsibility of handling other aspects of the business such as billing, accounts, marketing, administration, buying equipment and so on. You may also have to rent space at a gym or club to conduct training

sessions. You may be a very good fitness trainer but it also pays to develop business development and marketing skills.



Workers who exercise for at least **30 minutes a day at least 3 times a week** have a **15% higher output work performance** at work

In addition, working as a personal trainer involves one-to-one interaction and this means understanding your client's fitness goals and physical limits. The only factor to bear in mind is that it takes a lot of job experience (with a company or gym) and credibility to be able to gain a foothold as a personal trainer. Once you've gained the experience and reputation, you can earn thousands of pounds training clients personally.

Group Trainer

If you plan to return to work as a fitness trainer, becoming a group trainer is a good way to do it. The field of group fitness training is less competitive compared to personal training and it's an excellent way to learn the ropes. In fact, you can expect to be hired as group instructor if you are capable and tuned in to the fitness demands in your local area. You also have the option of striking out on your own and training different groups in the outdoors (in parks, for example), church halls or even in your home. You can work part-time in a company and freelance at the same time (say, in the evenings). This is an excellent way of gaining ongoing experience as well as becoming entrepreneurial at the same time. At one time, choreographed aerobics classes, for instance, were the rage, and fitness instructors had to spend time planning workouts. Nowadays, there are diverse choices

available: you can either specialise in choreographed aerobic workouts (if you are inclined towards rhythm and dance movements, go for it by all means), or athletic non-choreographed workouts where you lead the class. This is usually conducted without music.

Every time you teach a class, you are promoting your fitness training skills to a group of enthusiastic and receptive customers. As a matter of fact, many famous personal trainers and directors first made their name by training groups. By keeping your ultimate aspiration in mind, you can strive to build career momentum by working as a group fitness trainer and working on other fitness endeavours at the same time. This will help you gain comprehensive experience while enhancing your skill set at the same time. The main benefit is becoming a group trainer puts you directly in front of prospective clients. Moreover, group training is fun and collaborative.

Challenges include the fact that it is difficult to develop specialised training programmes for a diverse group of clients unless you are training special groups. Also, this can be physically exhausting and it may not be possible to train groups day-in and day-out; you may end up over-straining yourself. Hence, group training may not be the right choice for a long-term career but it can serve as an excellent stepping stone to a full-fledged career as a fitness trainer or as a part-time vocation.

Fitness Management

With gyms and clubs mushrooming virtually everywhere, along with training, there is a real, active need for efficient management of the business. Some of us may be more interested in working behind the scenes ensuring smooth operation of fitness businesses rather than training patrons throughout the week. At the same time, you will enjoy a ringside view of the fitness business as you will be actively involved in organising, planning and coordinating schedules. Your job will

be 'on the field' as you manage administrative and business aspects of the business. In fact, fitness programming and management can be a regular, meaningful and lucrative employment for those who are passionate about the behind-the-scenes action in the fitness industry. You can expect regular pay cheques, perks and benefits (bigger companies will offer medical and dental benefits).

While there are a few professionals who work as independent management consultants, this profile is usually associated with being an employee. With the rising number of gyms, franchises, equipment companies and clubs, managerial positions in fitness companies are becoming increasingly popular as a career option. Over time and after gaining the requisite experience, you can expect significant growth in your career and aspire to more senior posts with greater responsibilities and attractive remuneration. Some challenges of becoming a fitness management professional include the ability to multi-task under pressure and juggle multiple responsibilities with efficiency and tact. You may feel overwhelmed at times until you are familiar with the duties and parameters of the job. The duties of a fitness manager can be summarised as below:

- Meeting target revenues by promotional activities and marketing
- Recruitment and training of staff for group trainer and personal trainer roles
- Ensuring that high standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained
- Interaction with individuals as well as corporate clients and ensuring satisfactory client experience
- Managing supplies, stocks and equipment and coordinating with equipment suppliers and manufacturers for maintenance
- Preparation and maintenance of daily records, finance management and report generation

- Coordinating schedules and ensuring maximum utilisation of resources
- Conflict resolution and staff management

In the early stages of your career, you can hope to earn anywhere between £17,000 and £28,000. As you gain experience and upgrade your skills, you can expect to earn anywhere between £35,000 and £60,000 (or even more for large companies). The job usually involves very little travel (so you need not be nervous about disrupting your family life) and you can also enjoy the prospect of bonuses, perks and pensions. While many companies will provide on-the-job experience and structured training, many times, your ability to learn will depend on initiative.

Many British organisations offer certifications and diplomas for fitness manager training including CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) and BASES (British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences).

Health and Wellness Coach

A health and wellness coach helps clients achieve health goals which may or may not have an athletic aspect associated with it. However, health and wellness coaches also fit into gym or club work settings easily and are often sought-after professionals. A health and wellness coach provides information to clients on ways to achieve health (including weight loss) and wellness through diet as well as exercise. The duties and responsibilities of a health and wellness coach will involve:

- Encourage habits that are conducive to a healthier life and higher fitness levels
- Develop and implement seminars and talks on health and wellness onsite at gyms, clubs, offices, etc.
- You will work with clients to explore their lifestyles,

habits and environments in order to promote positive choices

- Communicate and motivate clients to make changes to their lives

As a health and wellness coach, you may work fulltime for a company, part-time or as an independent contractor.

Jobs increasingly involve working on the computer and sitting down in one place. Household chores can be conveniently completed with the help of equipment like washing machines, dishwashers and mixers. As a result, physical activity has reduced since earlier days where we walked long distances to get somewhere or washed clothes or did other physical work that kept us automatically fit and strong. However, the good thing is that there is increasing awareness regarding the importance of fitness. People of all ages and income groups are now beginning to realise that they have to invest special effort into toning and strengthening their body. Moreover, different people prefer different forms of exercise according to their inclination and interests. Some may prefer brisk walking or jogging in the open air while others may prefer an intense gym workout, aerobics, Pilates or yoga.

The important thing to keep in mind is that fitness is not about body aesthetics or weight loss; these are additional advantages. It's more about toning and strengthening your body for a better quality of life. Fitness awareness is here to stay and the number of people actively pursuing different modes of fitness is increasing every day. Hence, fitness trainers and instructors are in demand.

If fitness is your passion, then pursuing a career in fitness can help add value, meaning and purpose to your life as well as to other people's lives. Whether it's personal training or group fitness training or any other career in fitness, you can enjoy a long and successful innings if you're willing to invest the effort and dedication. The fitness industry in the

UK is booming and the sector is generating revenues in millions of pounds. This can promise to be a flourishing career if you adopt the right mindset and attitude.

Looking to Enhance your Skill Set and Jump Start your Career? Online Courses offer Multiple Benefits

The evolution of the internet and related online technologies has led to a growing emphasis on online education. This form of learning is especially valuable to students who juggle family and other responsibilities and who require access to innovative forms of learning. By facilitating different forms of interactivity, the Internet became a game changer with regard to imparting education. Online courses and institutions are investing effort into building a competitive workforce in the UK by empowering students with the necessary knowledge and skills required for a successful career.

With the government confirming that they are no longer able to subsidise university and college education to the extent that they did in earlier years, the overall costs of a formal college education have escalated significantly over time. Administrative, educational, manpower and technological costs have added to the financial pressures of studying at universities and colleges. There are other problems and complexities involved. For example, if you happen to be a mother of young children or toddlers, it may not be a viable solution to have to commute daily to attend classes, take

exams and so on. Moreover, with busy classrooms, competitive learning environments and course shortages, you may not always be able to study the course that you really want.

Online education is the most important revolution that has transformed the face of contemporary education. It has helped create thousands of opportunities for all those who are genuinely interested in learning something.

Let's explore the benefits of doing online courses:

Added flexibility:

Online education provides added flexibility, but not at the cost of rigour or practice. Online courses are not easier or harder than traditional courses, they are simply delivered differently. You can plan your study around your free time instead of the other way around. For busy mothers with children, added flexibility is a crucial benefit because they are in control of their times and schedules. You can schedule your study time at nights or in the early mornings. Regardless of the time, study material will always be available online and this helps you balance your family and work commitments.

If you've had a sleepless night tending to your baby, you don't have to be nervous about running bleary-eyed to class early the next morning.

Improved opportunities to concentrate:

Classroom learning environments can be a source of distraction for students. Every individual is unique and for reticent or shy people, online learning may represent the perfect opportunity to learn in their own space. Not everyone is comfortable with direct, physical classroom interaction and many prefer the improved opportunities for concentration that

online courses offer. Online course students are happily exempt from distracting conversations, whispering, mobile phone beeps and relationship complexities that one invariably encounters during classroom learning. You can interact at the level that you are comfortable with.

Comfort:

Sitting for hours in a hard-backed chair can be extremely harsh on the back and legs, especially if you have been busy with household chores and children all day. If you opt to study online, you can study comfortably by seating yourself on a couch or a chair of your choice and even putting up your feet, if you like. While comfort is a strong advantage, perhaps it would be better not to get too comfortable either. You may wish to create an inspirational space for studying in your home consisting of a large table and chair.

When you enrol in an online course, you enjoy much more control over your study environment. You can reduce the TV volume or keep music playing softly in the background. In addition, you can control heating or air conditioning to comfortable levels. You can decide what works best for you.

Self-paced learning:

Self-paced learning implies learning at your pace and this is a crucial benefit of online learning. Everyone learns differently and when you learn at your own pace, it becomes easier to attain your learning objectives. In a typical classroom environment, the group of students consists of individuals with different learning abilities. According to research, teachers typically address the middle third and learners who do not belong to this group, or who learn at a different pace are usually lost or simply bored. Fast learners have the opportunity to gain competencies at a rapid speed while slower learners are not forced to forge ahead at an uncomfortable pace. You can always go back to portions or

chapters that you found challenging and you can repeat this as many times as you need to.

Moreover, self-paced learning allows you to concentrate at your convenience. Some students study best during mornings while others prefer evenings or nights when the house is quiet. As a mother, you may be faced with unpredictable schedules during the day, especially if you are caring for babies or toddlers. Self-pacing allows you to weave in the learning process around your other priorities. Your learning becomes more personal and effective because you are able to do it in the way that works best for your requirement. Most online courses offer the option of learning at your pace as well as interactive learning. This way, you need not feel stressed about forcing the pace and struggling to understand difficult portions. Moreover, you can also choose to study full-time or part-time as your time and schedule permits.

Please note that students are expected to take exams, tests and assessments and complete assignments in order to earn online certification – just as you would if you attended conventional college courses. The only difference is that you gain the opportunity to learn in a way that helps you meet the course objectives in a more effective manner. Online courses have the potential to offer a customised learning experience.

Range of courses to choose from:

The field of online education has evolved and offers a wide range of choice to students. You can earn certification in any subject you can think of, giving you the opportunity to gain knowledge in your chosen career.

Lower costs:

Cost is a major point of difference between face-to-face education and online learning. However, it must be noted that the costs of online education are not lower due to lower

quality of learning. The underlying objective of traditional and online courses is the same: Imparting learning experiences to students. On the contrary, you can save on costs because other incidental expenses are lower when you opt to do an online course. The following points illustrate why online learning is a more economic option:

- By studying from home, you do not have to pay for apartment or residence fees and meals etc on the campus.
- Commuting expenses are literally non-existent as you do not need to spend on petrol, parking fees and vehicle maintenance.
- Even the simple process of applying to different traditional colleges can prove to be expensive because students often have to pay for the prospectus and processing fees, etc. Comparing online courses is a relatively cheaper option.
- Online education usually does not involve bricks-and-mortar premises and regular tuition fees. Although the course fee will include interactive assistance from tutors, students are not obliged to pay a regular tuition fee.

With living costs rising every year, most interested students may have felt discouraged due to multiple factors including high costs of learning. E-learning has helped open many doors to the world of education and careers.

Career advancement:

Online learning provides the opportunity to complete courses and earn accredited certifications while raising your family at the same time. You do not have to juggle impossible commute schedules and desperately hunt for babysitters while you rush to college. The customised learning experience helps ease the burden of handling multiple responsibilities at once. You are able to proactively work towards enhancing your skill set or adding to your knowledge. The comprehensive study course will

help bridge any gaps in your CV or work experience and give you the necessary knowledge to embark on a new career. In addition, the decision to study indicates that you are serious and ambitious about your career. Prospective employers are more likely to perceive you as a suitable candidate.

General improvement in computer skills:

Regardless of the course that you enrol on, you can expect your computer skills to become more proficient. Online study courses typically involve undertaking assignments and tasks, completing tests, watching videos, etc that will help you improve your ability to work on a computer. Learning to navigate the Internet for information helps you acquire real time skills that open up several possibilities in your professional career choices.

Individual attention:

Students opting for online courses often receive individual attention from the tutor or instructor, and they also have the option of receiving assistance by email. It's common to find students reticent to ask questions or clear their doubts in a physical classroom for the fear of appearing ignorant. Learning opportunities online are enhanced because you have the freedom to ask questions in your own time. For example, you may wish to clear some doubts after you have finished studying a module. Unlike conventional study courses, you do not have to remember your doubts or make special time to speak to the tutor. This helps improve the quality of learning.

Online learning inculcates self-discipline:

Online study requires self-motivation and discipline because you are responsible for your progress and performance. As you work on your assignments and study for tests, you learn to

work on schedule, prioritise your goals and minimise procrastination. These habits will invariably stand you in good stead when you go to work or start your own business. You learn the importance of self-responsibility and accountability and this helps improve maturity and diligence. As you progress and complete the course, you learn to become efficient and self-motivated.

Although online education is a popular learning modality in the UK, there are still some common misconceptions and doubts associated with it. We discuss some important myths regarding online education and explain the actual facts.

- **Rigour and quality of assessment:** Online learning is as rigorous and comprehensive as traditional learning courses offered by colleges. Online courses offer content, course materials, practice questions, tests, homework assignments and assessments that are designed to help the student attain his or her learning objectives. Online courses are neither easier nor more difficult than conventional courses.
- **Employer acceptance and recognition:** Several colleges and universities offer online as well as offline courses to students and they make no distinction between the two when conferring certificates or degrees. Similarly, employers now accept online learning and certification and respect students who have chosen to complete online study programmes. Online study courses and certificates are just as credible and authentic as traditional ones.
- **Online learning is here to stay:** As technological advances continue to evolve, online learning will continue to grow and thrive as the outreach improves. A growing number of courses will be offered online and students will enjoy a comprehensive range of options to choose from.
- **Online courses are as effective as traditional ones:** Online courses offer the same quality of learning,

materials and knowledge as conventional courses. The only difference is the medium of delivery. Every course is carefully designed to suit student requirements and is updated as required. Quality control is an ongoing process. In fact, research into study patterns indicate that online courses encourage a higher rate of retention.

- **Online study provides social interaction:** The student can choose the level of interaction with the instructor as well as with other students. Interaction can be facilitated using several methods such as Skype, Google Hangouts and so on. You have the option of interacting at the level that you want.
- **Online courses offer certifications at different levels:** According to popular belief, online courses may confer certification but not full degrees. This, in fact, is a myth and you can actually work towards different levels and obtain a full-fledged degree. Many well-known universities offer fully accredited degrees to online students.
- **Online study involves deadlines and dates:** Yet another common misconception is that online courses tend to be lax with regard to submission of assignments, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a student, you are expected to turn in assignments or assessments in accordance with dates and deadlines. While online courses may offer flexibility with respect to time and pace, they require the same level of dedication and hard work as traditional courses.
- **It's not easier to cheat on your tests or assessments:** Online students answer assessments that are protected by tools and technologies. These tools can prevent cheating on tests and assignments. The opportunities for cheating are comparable to traditional courses – it's very similar. Online students do not have extra opportunities to cheat.
- **Online assistance and guidance is offered by qualified**

instructors and teachers: Teachers and instructors who teach online courses are qualified and experienced and they are subject to the same process of evaluation as traditional face-to-face teachers. Online teachers often spend more time in engaging students.

- **It's not necessary to be technologically savvy in order to study online:** Online courses are designed to meet the needs of students at different levels of technological advancement. If students have problems, there is usually a support number or email that you can use to obtain assistance.

Embarking on a new career as a student or returning to work after having children can be a daunting challenge. It's important to adopt an approach that factors in responsibilities and constraints along with your career objectives. The process of returning to work or starting your own business involves building your confidence, acquiring new skills or upgrading a skill set and rediscovering your career path and personal interests. Online learning helps you develop important life skills, including self-discipline and motivation. In addition to juggling study, work and family life, you get the unique opportunity to learn at your pace in your time.

In a world where the only constant is change, online education helps with the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills. In the thriving British economy, employers are always keen to secure professional talent. If you are not interested in working for an employer, online education can also equip you with the skills required to jumpstart a freelance career. In a competitive and time-strapped work environment, online education and courses provide prospective students with important tools to add value to their current skill set. Moreover, you are able to improve your skill set without being obliged to compromise with time and space constraints.

Studying an up-to-date online course helps you understand and

keep abreast of the latest developments in your chosen field of interest. Past employers and companies may now have different requirements compared to what they were before you took your sabbatical from work. In such cases, you may find that you need to enhance your skill set in order to enjoy flexible options with respect to your job. Online courses provide you with the right support system and build your confidence as you prepare to embark on an exciting and fulfilling career path. The right online learning opportunities coupled with an empowering mindset can go a long way in helping you chart success in the second career innings and realise your dreams.