You are going to read an article about doing a degree course from home. For questions **1-6**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

8

Distance learning

Distance learning can give students the chance to work and learn at the same time.

Nineteen-year-old Jamie Henderson hasn't had what you'd call a typical student experience. Despite wanting to read for a degree in Law, Jamie decided against the usual university route and instead opted to study from home.

'With course fees now so high in this country, I was really put off by all the debt I would have when I came out of university,' he says.

Having made this decision, Jamie was able to look into alternatives – which in the end turned out to be a degree validated by a university through a distance learning provider.

'It was a massive weight off my mind and it was a perfect option for me,' Jamie says. 'It has allowed me to stay near my friends and my family and still work part-time.'

Jamie has been able to take on two part-time jobs – alongside his studies – but has also been free to undertake work experience for a law firm, which has led to a full-time job offer before he has even completed his course.

Jonathan Smith, who is studying for a BA in Business, chose to study via a distance learning course when already in full-time employment.

'I'd studied History, Politics and Economics at school but going to university wasn't even a consideration for me,' he explains. 'My friends were at home, I didn't want to be burdened with debt and I wanted to get straight into a career.'

Jonathan completed a Business and Administration Apprenticeship with the local council. While working as a medical administrator, he studied for a diploma and after 12 months had valuable workplace experience.

'I'd done so well at work that they kept me on. But after six months getting settled into my new role, I was financially stable and ready to progress my career with a degree. I didn't want to give up what I'd achieved to go to university, so distance learning was an appealing choice.'

Obviously, one of the downsides to a distance learning course is that students miss out on the experience of attending university, which means missing out on traditional lectures.

'Reading feedback and instructions from a screen isn't quite the same as talking to someone face-to-face,' Jamie says. 'It's also a lot of work to do on your own. I don't have a close circle of friends going through the same thing, so I can't really ask <u>my peers for help and advice. However, I've found the online</u> (*line 46*) student forums helpful and the firm I've been working for have offered advice and guidance when I've needed it.'

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'I haven't met as many new people as I would have, had I moved away,' says Jamie. 'But I have met new people through work instead. It's just a different type of experience, which is just as rewarding and ultimately, in my opinion, makes me more employable.'

For anyone considering a distance learning course, there are several other factors to be considered; perhaps most importantly, motivation.

'Distance learning isn't an easy option,' says Dr Philip Hallam, Chief Executive Officer of a distance and online learning provider. 'It's going to be a substantial commitment, not only financially but also on your time. We need to make sure that people have really thought it through and understand why they want a degree. You will need to dig deep occasionally.'

Jonathan Smith is confident in the choices he's made regarding education, but believes more could be done to make young people aware of the choices they have.

'When I left school with good qualifications, I was shocked at how little advice was available on options other than university. Everyone is different and education should reflect that. I'm glad I took the route I did and I think it is important that more people have the opportunity to study in a way that suits them.'

1 Why did Jamie decide to do his degree from home?
- **A** His friends were also studying by distance learning.
- **B** He had already been offered a full-time job.
- **C** He wanted to avoid owing a lot of money.
- **D** He was unable to obtain a place at university.

2 Jonathan's reason for studying from home was that
- **A** he wanted to remain in his job.
- **B** the job he was doing was badly paid.
- **C** his preferred subject wasn't available at university.
- **D** it was too late for him to apply to university.

3 In line 46, what does 'my peers' mean?
- **A** the university staff
- **B** students who have already graduated
- **C** the management of the f rm
- **D** students of the same age

4 Jamie says that studying from home has enabled him to
- **A** work with people who were also studying at the same time.
- **B** improve his chances of finding work in the future.
- **C** get to know more people than he would have done at university.
- **D** concentrate on studying rather than spend time socializing.

5 Dr Hallam recommends distance learning for students who
- **A** dislike having to work very hard.
- **B** have little time available for study.
- **C** cannot afford to go to university.
- **D** know exactly what it involves.

6 In the last paragraph, Jonathan says that young people should
- **A** be advised not to go to university.
- **B** be made more aware of the choices they have.
- **C** apply for work with employers like his.
- **D** ensure they get high grades at school.

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