

Future Me Resource Pack:

Education, Employment and Training

Get started!



Future Me Resource Pack:

How to use the pack



This resource pack PDF works in one of two ways, giving you a couple of options regarding how you'd like to navigate it. As with any PDF file, you can scroll through this document page by page to flick through all of the content in order.

However, there's another way to navigate this resource pack! Active buttons have been added throughout the PDF to allow you to navigate it as if it were a website. Simply hover over a button and click it as you would on the web, and it will take you to the corresponding section of the pack. This should allow you to easily and intuitively navigate this document and all of its content with ease. We've even included 'home' and 'back' buttons to allow you to return to the start of the pack or the previous page if you've not ended up at the right content for you. Check out the key below which illustrates what each of the buttons look like and what they do! **-Ben**

Home button



Forward and back buttons



Main section and experiences buttons



Sub-section button



Future Me Resource Pack:

Education, Employment and Training

This resource pack is all about Education, Employment and Training. We've broken this topic down into nine main sections, under which you can find sub-sections regarding everything you might need to know about Education, Employment and Training! Click one of the section buttons to get started, or learn a little more about us or this pack using the buttons below.

About Future Me

About This Pack

In school/college
right now

What are my
options after
school? (Post-16)

What are my
options after I finish
compulsory education
or training (Post-18)

Finding and
preparing for
a job (Careers)

Training and
apprenticeships

Higher education
(University and
alternatives)

Not in education
employment or
training

Careers advice

I have an EHCP,
what do I need
to know?

About Future Me:

Who are we?



New to Future Me Gloucestershire? First of all, thanks for joining us! Future Me Gloucestershire is funded by Gloucestershire County Council and is made up of a team of Youth Representatives aged 16-25, each bringing our own experiences, stories and skills to share. We've created these resource packs, newsletters and social media profiles using our collective experiences and skills to help support other young people in accessing the information and resources they need on a variety of topics, from health and well-being to education, employment and travel.

We want to be a platform that provides young people in Gloucestershire with not only everything they could need in the transition to adulthood all in one space, but to provide a platform that allows young people to have their voice heard, connect with each other and share their experiences. If you'd like to get involved, follow us on social media, get engaged and get in touch if you've got any experiences of being a young person in Gloucestershire you'd like to share! **-Ben**

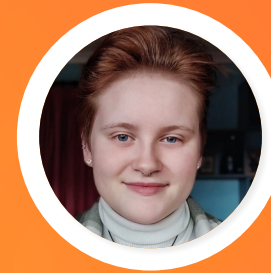


About Future Me:

Our team



Here at Future Me, we have an incredibly diverse and talented team of young people between the ages of 16-25 producing every piece of content you see from Future Me! With our diverse set of skills, talents and experiences, we're able to really make Future Me entirely for young people, by young people. **-Ben**



About this pack:

What's in this pack?



Welcome to the Future Me Gloucestershire resource pack on Education, Employment and Training! Within this interactive PDF pack, you'll find a valuable and accessible suite of information and links to external services on a range of topics surrounding Education, Employment and Training.

Whether you're seeking advice, information or help and support, you can use this pack to guide yourself to the appropriate resources, organisations and services that can help support you. We've designed these packs to be as easy to navigate as possible — simply follow the links through to the subject you're interested in and the information you're looking for.

Alongside these links to external resources, you'll also find written accounts, stories and experiences from young people within Gloucestershire to reassure, encourage and inspire you. We're all in this together and it's important to remember, now more than ever, that everyone experiences challenges within the world of Education, Employment and Training. These challenges may be heightened by the difficult nature of the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect it's had on career prospects and education, but they're challenges we can all tackle together. **-Ben**



About this pack - Young people who have shared personal experiences within this pack:



Our collaborators and team (16-25)



We'd like to thank everyone who contributed a written account of their personal experiences to be featured in this pack, whether they're one of the people featured above, or one of the number of other individuals who submitted anonymous experiences. Thank you all!

About this pack:

Contents

Page 9 - I have an EHCP, what do I need to know?

Page 10 - In school/college right now

P11 - How will I be assessed this year (year 11/13)

P14 - I'm struggling in school/college

P23 - How can I catch up with missed learning?

Page 27 - What are my options after school?

P28 - When can I leave education and training?

P29 - I'd like to stay in school (6th form)

P33 - I'd like to go to college

P42 - Alternative vocational routes

Page 43 - What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training (Post-18)

P44 - I'd like to find a job

P50 - I'd like to take a Gap Year

P53 - I'd like to start my own business or be Self employed

Page 56 - Finding and preparing for a Job

P57 - What are my skills?

P62 - Work Experience

P66 - Part-time work (post-16, still in education)

P70 - Volunteering

P75 - CV writing

P78 - Interviews, including online interviews

P82 - Applying for jobs

P83 - Things to consider when getting a job

P84 - What support do employers offer for my needs or disability?

Page 87 - Training and apprenticeships

P88 - Apprenticeships

P98 - Traineeships

P104 - T Levels

P107 - Supported internships/training

P112 - Work experience

P113 - Volunteering

Page 114 - Higher education – University and alternatives

P115 - Considering study at a higher level

P116 - Course options (types of qualifications)

P120 - Loans, Grants and Bursaries

P124 - Applications and applying to university

P129 - Preparing to live away from home

P133 - Sources of financial support offered by universities (GROWS)

Page 134 - Not in education employment or training

P135 - Kickstart

P138 - Forwards

P141 - GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

P148 - Further support with your mental health

P149 - Job centres

P150 - Youth organisations

P151 - Universal Credit

Page 152 - Careers advice and support

P153 - How do I get careers advice if I'm not in education, employment or training?

P154 - How do I get careers advice in school?

P155 - How do I get careers advice in College?

P156 - How do I get careers advice in Uni?

P159 - Making the most of employer encounters

P160 - SENDIASS



I have an EHCP, what do I need to know?



Standing for 'Education, Health and Care Plan', an EHCP is a legal document. If you have one, you've probably heard your parents, carers or teachers refer to it, but you may not know exactly what it is and how it impacts you.

If you have an EHCP you will have an Annual Review of your plan each year. This is a great opportunity for you to talk about your future options and any support you may need in your own preparation for adulthood.

This section of the pack is here to provide an extra low down on how your EHCP might give you further options as you explore your next steps, and how it might also mean that you are required to complete some additional steps. There is no need to worry. In this section we have cross-referenced areas to pay particular attention to. Pathways such as a Supported Internship are designed with you in mind, but they aren't all the limit of what you can do either! We hope that our pack will give you the tools and information you need to work out the best option for you. We are all individual and have to find the best options for us!

-Martha



Forwards:

Link 1: <https://forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk>

Link 2: https://twitter.com/forwards_glos

Link 3: <https://www.facebook.com/ForwardsGloucestershire/>

GEM:

Link 1: <https://www.glosgem.org>

Link 2: gem@ggtrust.org

Link 3: <https://www.prospect-training.org.uk/gem>

Link 4: <https://artshape.co.uk/pages/gem>

Link 5: <https://www.cscic.org/info/our-projects/the-gem-project/>

Supported Internship:

Link 1: <https://www.sgscol.ac.uk/study/foundation/supported-internships>

Link 1: <https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/aim/>

Link 1: https://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/service.page?id=Oe7WSI_OvPc

In school/college right now



Are you in school or college right now? Now more than ever, school and college can be a challenging period of time. Not only do students have to contend with the usual struggles of school life, such as exam stress and managing your mental health, but now Covid-19 has changed the school and college experience in a huge way. Whether you're wondering how you'll be assessed this year, how to catch up on your work, how to find careers advice or are struggling with your mental health in school or college, we've gathered links to information and resources to help you through school and college. **-Ben**

How will I be assessed this year (year 11/13)

I'm struggling in school/college

How can I catch up with the learning I've missed

Careers advice



In school/college now - Subsection 1:

How will I be assessed this year (year 11/13)



Teachers have been tasked with deciding how their pupils will be graded this year. The government have stated: *“This year’s students will receive grades determined by their teachers, with assessments covering what they were taught and not what they have missed. Teachers have a good understanding of their students’ performance and how they compare to other students this year and from those of previous years.”*

Your teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades, including mock exams, coursework or other work completed as part of your course, such as essays or in-class tests. Exam boards will provide teachers with optional assessment questions for students to answer to also help schools decide which grades to award. But it is understood that teachers will have the flexibility to choose how long students have to complete the task, and where it will be carried out. No algorithm will be used by the regulator to standardise teachers’ grades if they appear too generous. -**Anas**



Government guidance on how A-levels and GCSEs will be assessed in Summer 2021:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

Advice from Childline on worrying due to cancelled exams:

Link: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-results/#Worryingaboutresults>

Round-up of how Summer 2021 exams will be assessed by The Uni Guide:

Link: <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/revision-help/what-s-happening-with-gcse-a-level-and-btec-exams-in-2021>

Real experiences with assessment

In school/college now - Experiences with assessment in 2020/2021:

Real experiences with assessment in 2020/2021



Lily: Assessment in 2020/2021

My experience with catching up with the learning I've missed

Due to the pandemic, I had my GCSEs cancelled. It was incredibly surreal to hear the news at first; the fact that these exams that we had been practicing and waiting for since Year 7 were cancelled did not seem real. I was also overwhelmed with the realization that the end-of-year leavers' celebrations and the school play that I had been working hard on would be cancelled too. The situation was very stressful and made me feel physically and mentally fatigued, but eventually I settled into lockdown life. The stress started to appear again later in the summer when the method of how GCSEs and A-levels were going to be decided was increasingly uncertain and results day was getting ever-closer. In the end, I was fortunate to receive the grades that I needed to progress to college, however that period of uncertainty of was difficult.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I think realising that my grades were out of my control was stressful at first, but over time I became at ease with the idea. Coming to terms with the fact that every student in my year across the country was experiencing the same thing was helpful, as it reinforced the idea that I wasn't alone. I spent my time focusing on hobbies to try and take my mind of the situation and talking to peers in the same situation as me.

My advice/top tips

- » *Acknowledge that however you are feeling because of the cancellation is valid. Whether you're relieved or stressed, your feelings matter.*
- » *Remember that you're not alone and that every student in your year across the country is being faced with a similar situation It's comforting to reinforce the idea that you're not the only one.*
- » *Know that your hard work hasn't gone to waste because the knowledge you have learnt over the years is still so valuable and that grades don't define you.*

I'm struggling in school/college



Whether it's learning, course work or social issues, school or college can be a difficult place for some young people. Struggling during your school years isn't uncommon, in fact many people will be able to voice at least one time where they've felt low, stressed or upset due to school or their education setting. It's important to not feel alone during your struggles and to know that your feelings are valid. It isn't always easy to speak about your struggles at school, but it is important to find at least one adult whom you can confide in. Featured here are a collection of resources that can help you through your difficulties and guide you towards potential solutions. -Lily

Real experiences with school/college struggles

Struggling in school/college case studies



Young Gloucestershire have support schemes in place, including the 'Transitions Chat Programme'. You can self-refer to this support through their referral form:

Link: https://www.youngglos.org.uk/uploads/Referral-Form_qt8eL9v5.pdf

Runaway helpline - advice about getting help if you're not happy in school:

Link: <https://www.runawayhelpline.org.uk/stages-of-running/im-not-happy-in-school/>

Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/hospital-education/>

What to do if you're struggling at school and where to get help:

Link: https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/problems-at-school/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwnqH7BRDdARIsACTSAdvGOdhRSYQIVCM9pHNN1pjd_WYJAXdgi1DQZQqlhxS5uXPitcJUJY8aAgU-EALw_wcB

Support in Gloucestershire during difficult times as a result of school problems:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/support-during-difficult-times/>

Attendance and absence from schools in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/attendance-and-absence-from-school/>

Sorting out school problems:

Link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/education/school-education/sorting-out-school-problems/>

Extra support in school for families with disabled children:

Link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/education/school-education/sorting-out-school-problems/>

Who to talk to if you have special educational needs:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs>

The School Exclusion Project:

Link: <https://schoolexclusionproject.com/>

The Future Me resource pack on mental health and well-being:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/post-16/future-me/>

In school/college now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Real experiences with struggling in school/college

Ben

Beth

Harry



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Ben: Struggling in school

My experience with struggling in school

Personally, I had a really tough time during secondary school. I struggled with my mental health and bullying, and eventually had to leave the school system. I became depressed, anxious and felt like there wasn't much hope for my future. However, in time and with the right support, I moved past my difficulties, left the school system behind and began college, which was an incredibly positive experience for me. It was a difficult journey through the school system for me, but one that worked out in the end.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Finding the right support and talking about what I was experiencing helped greatly. I couldn't confide in my teachers personally, and felt them to be of little help. However, I made sure my parents, friends and broader support network knew of my experiences, and it was through them that the process of moving past my difficulties began. Being open, honest and willing to accept help were all key parts of that process for me.

My advice/top tips

- » *Seek help from your parents, friends or teachers.*
- » *Be open and honest about what you're experiencing, don't bottle it up.*
- » *Don't be afraid to ask for help, there's nothing wrong with admitting you're struggling at school.*
- » *If it's mental health that you're struggling with, there is plenty of information and resources online to help support you.*



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Beth: Struggling in college

My experience with struggling in school

When I made the move from school to college the work load was very different and it took me a while to get used to it. I struggled and because I didn't really know my teachers very well I didn't know how to handle it. The first impression I made with staff was definitely a bad one; a lot of my work was late and I couldn't keep up in class. I didn't know who to talk to and I just thought I was being silly. One of my teachers got concerned and spoke to me. She realised I was really stressed and offered me extra support. She also emailed my other teachers and asked them to give similar support.

What helped and/or didn't help?

It definitely helped having a teacher notice but I should have spoken to someone first and it would have been easier to progress with the work load if I had spoken to a teacher sooner.

My advice/top tips

- » *Talk to someone if you are struggling.*
- » *Talk to your friends and see if they can help or support you when talking to teachers.*
- » *Don't be afraid to admit you have a problem, it doesn't make you weak.*



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Harry: Struggling in college

My experience with struggling in school

I'm in college right now, and have found it at times to be a shocking experience. A part of my course lately was getting involved with work experience, and they didn't let me choose what to do earlier. When given work experience, if college staff visited me while I was on my lunch break, they viewed that negatively even though I'd been told I could by the manager. This affected my confidence as I was working hard during the work experience. However, I did get a work experience position I did enjoy, and found being out and doing work experience in a practical space was more positive for me than sitting in a classroom. I like talking to people face to face, and have a worse experience when having online lessons. I would like to some day teach sports to people with additional needs, and even though my work experience has helped, the situation overall has not helped towards my practical goals and ambitions.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Working from home didn't help and online lessons didn't either, as I found there to be too many distractions. I wasn't taking anything away from the online sessions, so I even stopped showing up. What did help was getting out and about with my practical work experience. I work very practically, so getting out and working in that way helps me to learn more.

My advice/top tips

- » *Still turn up at zoom calls even if it's distracting - you may miss something important.*
- » *Get out and about and be practical - it's good for your mental health.*
- » *If you don't understand or are struggling then ask for help, your teachers are there to help you. learn - if you don't understand or just leave it, you won't take anything away from online learning.*



In school/college now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Struggling in school/college case studies

Tamara

Alex

Emily



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Tamara* : Struggling in college

Transition Chat case study

Tamara's situation was fairly straight forward initially, she was clear in her mind on what she wanted to do and was eager to pursue education at Cinderford College. Anxiety is an issue for Tamara and results day was difficult for her, however when she found out she got the grades to go to college she was thrilled! Unfortunately the journey to and from college was anxiety inducing, soon after starting Tamara found her course less and less interesting and was having difficulty engaging.

'As her youth worker the process with Tamara was mainly about coaching her through how she was feeling. As she became complacent about her studies we talked about other options and she was proactive in applying for a change in course subject as a result of these conversations. The change in course wasn't for her and unfortunately Tamara's mental health deteriorated. I was able to offer support in this difficult time for her and she expressed how she felt the college didn't listen to her needs and weren't understanding. She lost her place at college.'

'Even if the college did still have a place for me, I wasn't interested in finding out because of the way I felt they treated me, they didn't listen and I didn't want to go back.'

Her youth worker was able to get her a place with the Star College Traineeship programme, the same week she left her previous placement; 'I had built a trusting working relationship with the Recruitment Coordinator at Star College, I felt it was the right place for Tamara as the class sizes are small so she would have more one to one interaction with her tutors. It was crucial that I found a placement for Tamara where they would really cater to her individual needs and take her mental health seriously, the staff at Star College really care about the students so I knew it would be a good fit for her.'

'At first starting college was nerve wrecking, but over time I felt more relaxed'

Tamara has enjoyed the days she has had at her placement so far, she likes her tutor and is eager to get the work experience part of things started once lockdown is over.

**this name has been fictionalised*



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Alex* : Struggling in school/college

Transition Chat case study

“I don’t think I would have made it to college without Shannon (Youth Worker) helping me with my applications. I have been kicked out of, like, well yeah, a lot of schools so I didn’t think I’d actually end up going to college.”

At the time of making a referral to Transition Chat programme, Alex’s attitude towards education was negative and questions were surfacing surrounding whether Alex would actively search to secure a college place.

Journey with Transition Chat:

His youth worker expressed, “Initial interaction with Alex was challenging. I feel the turning point was when Alex called me expressing that his home situation was making him stressed and he felt he needed someone to talk to. Alex expressed that he argues with his mum quite a bit and feels she’s really on his case about college and pretty much everything at the moment. He explained that he often gets himself in trouble, with previous schools telling him he will struggle to get a place in college if he continues to follow this same path.”

Alex explained that the courses he had received offers from to date, were actually all selected and applied for by his mum. He went on to express his actual course of interest is carpentry, but he didn’t know where to start when it came to submitting his application.

Alex’s youth worker brought him in to explore courses of interest and supported him in making these applications. Alex is now months into his carpentry course and is getting on well, he has said:

“College is good, I enjoy the practical more than the theory, but my teachers are alright. I didn’t think I would last this long without getting kicked out!”

**this name has been fictionalised*



In school/college right now - Experiences with struggling in school/college:

Emily* : Struggling in school

Transition Chat case study

When Emily first got involved with Young Gloucestershire, her mental health was in a very bad way. She suffers from severe anxiety and Misophonia Syndrome, a hatred of sound that provokes a scary fight or flight response when she hears people eating or drinking. The combination of these conditions meant Emily often couldn't leave the house, or sometimes even go into the garden without her mum, let alone start attending college. Emily regularly felt like a burden to others and in the past these feelings have led to self-harm and suicide attempts.

Youth Worker:

"My communication with Emily has been over Zoom and all the meetings have been with her mum there as well. In the initial calls, Emily couldn't speak with me because of her anxieties, so her mum spoke for her and Emily typed things out on her phone for her mum to read. I was looking forward to getting to know Emily as I also suffer with misophonia to a lesser extent, so knew I could understand more than most about how it's affected her life."

Emily has a passion for birds, and it was quickly realised by her youth worker that she was more capable of opening up if she could talk about them. She found out that Emily's dream would be to work with birds of prey and started researching how this dream could become a reality. A work placement was secured for Emily by her youth worker at The Falconry School, where she would be able to study falconry alongside working there.

Youth Worker:

"Seeing Emily leave the house to go for an initial visit with me at the falconry school was amazing. Considering where Emily was mentally, even a couple of months before this, leaving the house was a big deal let alone going to speak with strangers at a potential work placement! I was super proud of her that day. Since then I've seen her grow in confidence and in our last few conversations on Zoom she has spoken for the majority of the time, chatting away about birds. I'm hopeful that over the next year she will grow in confidence enough to be able to attend college and do an animal handling course in the future. I'm amazed at her progress since transition chat started."

**this name has been fictionalised*



In school/college now - Subsection 3:

How can I catch up with the learning I've missed



When it comes to learning, staying on top of the work is really important. However with the increasing work load in schools, it's really easy to fall behind really quickly. Trying to balance study with home life, hobbies, social time and time to relax can be a challenge in itself! Once behind on academic work, the to-do list can build up really quickly and for most people it is really hard to catch up. There may be many reasons why we fall behind and many of us may not know how to approach getting back on track. Different methods work for different people and it's best to find a method that works for you. These links provide advice as well as pointing towards the support that is available if you find that mental health concerns, a difficult home life or something else entirely is making your work/life balance a real challenge. Don't give yourself a hard time – we all get overwhelmed sometime and you can get yourself back on track! **-Beth**



Attendance and absence from schools in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/attendance-and-absence-from-school/>

Ask Sam an anonymous question about school:

Link: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/ask-sam/school-college-and-work-asksam/sixth-form/>

How to catch up on your studies if you've fallen behind:

Link: <https://chloeburroughs.com/catch-up-on-your-studies/>

The next steps that the government are taking to support students who have missed education because of Covid-19:

Link: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-09-07/debates/6274476F-4F33-417A-B9B6-E21A9179AD66/MissedEducationCovid-19>

Tips on making up for lost time in school:

Link: <https://www.smarttutorreferrals.com/articles/study-skills/lost-time>

Careers Advice Section:

Link: [Click here](#)

Real experiences with catching up with...

In school/college now - Experiences with catching up with the learning I've missed:

Real experiences with catching up on the learning I've missed



In school/college now - Experiences with catching up with the learning I've missed:

Beth: Catching up with the learning I've missed

My experience with catching up with the learning I've missed

Due to my mental health, I got behind in my work in secondary school and it was my exam year so it was really important that I got back on track. I also struggled with a similar build up of work when starting college after a long amount of time off. The work always kept building up and the longer I left it the bigger the job seemed. I then began rushing my work and not completing it to the standard that I should have which affected my understanding.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I shouldn't have let my work pile up and I should have spoken to my teachers about it so that they could support me. When I finally did talk to someone I found that doing my work as soon as I could was the best way forward. I started to organise my time more and this allowed me to put in more effort for the work that I was completing.

My advice/top tips

- » *Do your work as soon as you get it so that your work doesn't pile up.*
- » *If your work is already piled up then talk to someone and let them know you need more time or extra support. Organise your time and allow for times where you may struggle with the work or need more time to complete.*



In school/college now - Experiences with catching up with the learning I've missed:

Harry: Catching up with the learning I've missed

My experience with catching up with the learning I've missed

Last term I fell behind on my learning because there were too many people on my course to offer 1-1 support for me, and I was also poorly at the time. However, I did eventually manage to get a 1-1 tutor that could work with me directly after the normal college hours, which helped a lot. Coronavirus has also caused my work experience to stop, which is where I work my hardest and feel I learn the most. Even though it's stopped, I've kept in touch with the manager so that he can offer me work experience once he's able to.

What helped and/or didn't help?

1-1 support helped a lot, but not being given enough time didn't help. There was a lot of pressure to get things done in a short space of time which didn't help, as I'm better taking my time to do a better piece of work that isn't rushed. Not being able to attend work experience was also really unhelpful for my learning, but keeping in contact with the manager helped me to keep positive about it.

My advice/top tips

- » *Keep in contact with work experience employers, as there may be more opportunities if you show that you're keen.*
- » *Keep an eye out for opportunities.*
- » *Keep talking to your school or college about the support that you need.*



What are my options after school? (Post-16)



When it comes time to leave school, you may be wondering what your next steps can be. There are plenty of options and opportunities out there once you leave school, including A-Levels, college, apprenticeships, traineeships and part time education or training alongside employment. Check out the collection of resources and information that we've gathered for more details on your post-16 options! -**Ben**

When can I leave education and training?

I'd like to stay in school (6th form)

I'd like to go to college

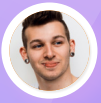
I'd like to train for a job (Apprenticeships)

Alternative vocational routes



What are my options after school
(post-16) - Subsection 1:

When can I leave education and training?



Whether you venture into further education, part-time employment alongside education, training or apprenticeships, it is mandatory to continue onto one of these routes up until the age of 18. There are lots of post-16 options out there, so it's important that you find the right option for you! **-Ben**



Introduction on staying in education/training until 18 by Career Pilot:

Link: <https://careerpilot.org.uk/information/your-choices-at-16/places-to-study-at-16>

The 'What's Next' publication developed and disseminated by Gloucestershire County Council:

Link 1: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/post-16/whats-next-2020-2021/>

Link 2: <https://www.youngglos.org.uk/school-community/transitions/secondary-beyond>

Information from Young Glos:

Link: <https://www.youngglos.org.uk/school-community/transitions/secondary-beyond>

Information on the age in which you can leave school by The Mix:

Link: <https://www.themix.org.uk/work-and-study/your-career-path/when-can-i-leave-school-1161.html>

Government guidelines on the school leaving age:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school>

What are my options after school
(post-16) - Subsection 2:

I'd like to stay in school (6th form)



Deciding to stay in school for sixth form often feels like the most natural progression in your education as it can provide continuity and gives you the opportunity to stay with friends that you have known for years already. The most important factor to note when making this decision is that every sixth form in Gloucestershire offers different opportunities and experiences, so it maybe helpful to read the information and tips we have linked below as well as attending sixth form open days. It is only from researching what your school offers that you can truly make an informed decision but when it comes down to it, deciding where you study is dependent on you and where you think you'll thrive; from researching different schools, you'll know what's best for you and we wish you the best of luck with your future studies. **-Alice**



Information booklet on every 6th form in Gloucestershire (GCC):

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2101475/gloucestershire-schools-sixth-form-admission-arrangements-information-booklet-2021-2022.pdf>

Advice from UCAS:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/choosing-where-study-or-train>

Information from Bitesize on what studying A-levels is like:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zd9ykmn>

How to prepare to make the jump from GCSEs to A-levels:

Link: <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/making-the-jump-from-gcses-to-a-levels>

Real experiences with going to 6th form

What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to 6th form:

Real experiences with going to 6th form



Robyn



James

What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to 6th form:

Robyn: Going to 6th form

My experiences with going to 6th form

When you have some learning difficulties or disabilities your choices at the end of Year 11 are so much more limited than for most of your peers. Having attended a mainstream secondary until Year 9, I was aware of the usual progression routes. I transferred to an outstanding special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties from Year 10. As I was approaching the end of Year 11, the school happened to be setting up a new Post-16 provision and a new centre on the school site, which was due to open just as I reached Year 12. My school knew me so well and went to a lot of trouble to gain me a place in the new provision, as it became more obvious that other college places would NOT suit me at all. We spent the first year of sixth form in a classroom on the main school site, waiting for our building to be ready. When I reached Year 13, our beautiful new Post-16 building was ready; it gave everyone a feeling of having our own place, a sixth form environment while still having the same feeling and links to the main school building. I was also joined by more girls as I was the only girl in Year 12, and many more of us have joined since! There was a strong emphasis on individual learning plans, building confidence, giving lots of work experience and lots of extra-curricular opportunities.

What helped and/or didn't help?

As I was finishing Year 11, the EHCP annual review looked at me 'on paper' and the local authority suggested that I attend a special education course but in a mainstream college setting. As I had left mainstream due to bullying, high anxiety and a knowledge that I didn't fit, just going to the open days made me so miserable. What was really helpful was my current Head Teacher and Transition manager and a couple of really understanding teachers, together with my mum, all worked really hard to get me a place in the Post-16 Sixth form I wanted to attend.

My advice/top tips

- » *Sixth form could be for you if you like the idea of something that isn't as big a step as college would be, but is still a progress from school. It will give you the opportunity to study a range of different and interesting range of academic and practical subjects.*
- » *If your school doesn't offer a sixth form it might be worth looking around to see what other schools have to offer*
- » *If you are approaching the end of school, and your school offers a sixth form or Post-16 provision, and you've decided you don't want to move on to college, discuss this with your Head Teacher to look at options.*
- » *I know it's hard but don't just do what your friends are doing, think about what's right for you!*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to 6th form:

James: Going to 6th form

My experiences with going to 6th form

I had to apply to my school to get a place in sixth form, proving that it was better than me moving to college (this process is a common experience if you have an EHCP). I did lots of research to make sure that there was nowhere else that could offer me the same support and opportunities as my school. I also knew that an extra 3 years to improve and work on my resilience, social and emotional skills and life skills would help enormously in making my next step to college successful for me. You can do both.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I wanted to continue studying for GCSEs and this was not an option at college, I had also made really good progress up to this point academically so it was very likely I could gain more qualifications which would enable me to move to college and study for mainstream level 2 or 3 courses.

My advice/top tips

- » *Do your research.*
- » *Have a clear goal and plan for how to achieve it.*
- » *Be determined and don't feel pressured into trying something that isn't what you want.*
- » *Believe in yourself.*
- » *Be realistic about your abilities and get plenty of advice from your tutors and adults who know you well.*
- » *Make sure you have support behind you; it's not always an easy ride.*



What are my options after school
(post-16) - Subsection 3:

I'd like to go to college



The world of college is an exciting next step and a new chapter in your life. The choice of courses and subjects is huge and colleges provide a great environment to blend different types of qualifications in a setting that is less formal than sixth form. If you are still keen to pursue academic qualifications, but think you will benefit from the opportunity to learn in a less 'school like' setting, then college could well be for you! The opportunities at college are enormous, as are the experiences you will gain, which will help shape your future. Have a look at the resources here for more information. - **James**

Some colleges offer on-site accommodation. This allows students from all over the UK and beyond to attend the college. If living on-campus at a college sounds exciting, either here in Gloucestershire or elsewhere, we have also included useful links in this section to help inform you. This option can incur extra costs for accommodation, but it may be possible to apply for a bursary from your college.

Real experiences with going to college

Video Experiences of College

Information from Bitesize exploring if college is right for you:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z4ywhbk>

Advice from UCAS:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/choosing-where-study-or-train>

Interactive PowerPoint resource developed by Gloucestershire FE colleges to help young people prepare for life at college:

Link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_dFb3fHcyeJ6iEL69staY78-7jAy-mA-?usp=sharing

Advice on mixing A-level and vocational courses from Bitesize:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39>

Information about Cirencester College, which is a 6th form college:

Link: <https://www.cirencester.ac.uk/about-the-college/about-cirencester-college/>

Information about Gloucestershire college, which is a higher/further education college with campuses across the county:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zdfdt39>

Explore the course options available at SGS college:

Link: <https://www.sgscol.ac.uk/study>

Training Section:

Link: [Click here](#)

The Government website provides information about the Residential Bursary Fund and the Residential Support Scheme, both of which offer funding for 16 – 19 year olds attending FE colleges away from home:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/residential-bursary-fund>

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme/residential-support-scheme>

Find out more about accommodation at Hartpury College, including pricing, by reading their mini guide:

Link: [HARTPURY_FE_ACCOMMODATION_GUIDE_2021 \(cld.bz\)](https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/college/facilities/life-at-hartpury/finance/bursaries-loans-and-additional-financial-support/)

Link: <https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/college/facilities/life-at-hartpury/finance/bursaries-loans-and-additional-financial-support/>



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Video experiences of college

Students for Cirencester College shared their experiences of college with us last year:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3LYvsfgo7Ybk>

Students from Berkeley Green UTC shared their experiences of college with us last year:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tefa9dbSkeY>

Students from Gloucestershire College shared their experiences of college with us:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih5sjz4MQb4>

Megan and Noah share their experiences of Animal Management Level 3 at SGS College:

Link: <https://youtu.be/MS7PNsu5uz8>

Matthew and Amir share their experiences of Business Studies courses at SGS College:

Link: <https://youtu.be/FY8fjCEHCg0>

Spike, Ewen and Ramarni share their experiences of Construction courses at SGS College:

Link: <https://youtu.be/jOKeiV8sk2c>

Harry, Amber, Kimberley and Freya share their experiences of the Creative courses at SGS College:

Link: <https://youtu.be/NE1eBiubofg>

Rebecca, Emily, Edie and Molly share their experiences of the Hair and Beauty courses at SGS College:

Link: <https://youtu.be/ZgON1zA1mA8>

Chloe, Benjy, Athena and Chanelle share their experiences of the Health and Social Care courses at SGS College:

Link: https://youtu.be/9s_Hq3Df9UM



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Real experiences with going to college

Beth

James

Antonia

Bethan

Chloe

Eleanor



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Beth: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

I chose college primarily for the fresh start but also found that the courses available to me were the best thing for me. I have found that college is so much more of an adult atmosphere and the way its structured really appealed to me. Cirencester College provided me with a fresh start and a chance to meet a really wide group of friends. The courses I am studying are ones that would not have been offered at a sixth form and looking back on it they were the best options for me. I have found that college is very tuned in to my age group and the support there is fantastic. There is always a place to go and something to do.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I really enjoyed the enrichment programmes offered at college and met some amazing friends through these activities. Although longer to travel to, college was definitely the right choice for me although it wasn't easy to choose. I was very worried about moving to a new place surrounded by new people and I was scared I'd miss my friends too much. With the support of the college I soon settled in and I know now it was the best choice for me. I have really cracked down on my studies and have applied myself to subjects that I never thought I would enjoy. I have discovered new career paths and have gained new opportunities.

My advice/top tips

- » *When choosing your next step, definitely visit the college and talk to the staff and get a feel for the college.*
- » *When applying consider all your options and don't just take the safe and easy route.*
- » *Talk about the option available to you and talk to current students if you are still unsure.*
- » *It's always worth applying. If you change your mind that's okay.*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

James: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

I had to research which college offered the type of course I wanted, checking the entry requirements and finding out how I would get there and back. Next, I had to arrange a visit and interview with the college to find out if they could meet my needs and accept me. Finally, I had to name the college and get them invited to my final school EHCP annual review to ensure I had a support package that would maximize my chances.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Researching the course well and ensuring I could meet the entry requirements was really important. Getting my parents to discuss my position and wishes in depth with the colleges so that they could guide me as to where might be best was also very helpful. Having 1:1 visits rather than attending open days, ensuring the college was quieter but also so I could see life on a typical day at college helped me make my decision. The only unhelpful aspects of this process was how the colleges assumed that, because I had always been in specialist provision, as I have learning disabilities and autism, I would need to try life skills type courses rather than mainstream courses. This was very disheartening at times.

My advice/top tips

- » *Hold on to your dreams and goals.*
- » *Put in time and effort to view more than one college.*
- » *Make several visits to make sure you can visualize yourself there.*
- » *Don't feel pushed in to doing a course that isn't what you want if you believe you can manage more.*
- » *Be realistic.*
- » *Make sure the support you need is firmly in place and agreed.*
- » *Do transitional days before finishing at school.*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Antonia: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

I'm originally from Oxfordshire but spent 10 years in France up until 2018. My experience at Hartpury College (despite the Covid-19 pandemic) has been overwhelmingly positive. A few of my favourite things about life on campus are the college accommodation and the social life; at first I was a bit nervous about having a roommate but it has turned out to be one of the best things about life on campus. Having a roommate really helps get everyone out of their shell and socialise. It's hard to be lonely when you have someone by your side almost all the time to cheer you up. The social side of college life is also something that has really completed my experience. I've met people from all over the UK and the world, in my accommodation, classes and activities – meaning there are endless friends to make. Some of the people I have met at college have become my best friends whom I plan on staying close with for the rest of my life.

What helped and/or didn't help?

For me personally, what really helped transition way from home AND to a different school system was the really helpful support from both the staff and other students on campus. The support network provided by the college from your teachers and tutor, to the wardens to all the various well-being teams are really helpful and supportive. You can go to them with anything and they always try to help you, be it academically or personally. They just really want to make sure all of the students are thriving and achieving as much as possible at College.

My advice/top tips

» *My advice to people who will be starting at college soon is to not be nervous, be yourself and take advantage of as many opportunities as you can. If ever you need help, do not be afraid to reach out to any of the well-being teams, wardens or even tutors, it is their job to help you and they really just want the best for you.*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Bethan: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

My name is Bethan and I am originally from Wareham in Dorset. Whilst being at college, my experience with college accommodation and the sports academies has been really positive. The staff and wardens are very friendly and help to make sure us as students are able to keep the shared common room space clean and tidy. They do this by putting out messages on Microsoft teams. They also make sure that we are in our rooms by curfew to ensure our safety. I have also had amazing experience with the sports academies. I am part of the rowing academy and the space inside both sports halls are perfect for our indoor training sessions as we are able to space out and keep socially distanced. The rowing academy coaches are very supportive and want the best for us as athletes. The A- level students are able to take study time around the training sessions too as the head coach plans the sessions around the set study times.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Being part of the Rowing academy has really helped improve my confidence. This is because when I first joined I did not know any of the Rowers and I was still put into crew boats with them. I also had to learn new things (like carrying single boats on my own). I have spoken to the career advisors about my plans after college. They gave me lots of resources to use to find out about my potential future job role and what courses/ universities I could attend to help me reach my goals.

My advice/top tips

- » *I would advise new students to make a plan for the week or have a diary. This is because, even if you are taking a BTEC, if you have any other commitments like a sport or general socialising work will build up and you may become stressed. If you plan out when you are going to do work, when you are busy with other commitments and stick to the plan college life will be very enjoyable.*
- » *I would also advise for people to get involved in things and push themselves out of their comfort zone because it will help to prepare for the future and students may also be able to add new, interesting things to their CV for job roles.*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Chloe: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

I am from Yate, which is a town near Bristol. Becoming a residential student at Hartpury College has allowed me to volunteer with all of the animals on site alongside my studies in Animal Science (the opportunities and facilities for work experience here really are second-to-none). I am now skilled working with small and large mammals, rodents, exotics, aquatics, reptiles, equines and livestock. Furthermore, volunteering at Hartpury Home Farm has provided me with the opportunity to work alongside veterinary and agricultural professionals during calving and lambing for example. All in all, Hartpury College has been an outstanding springboard for my future career in the veterinary industry and I believe that the skills I have gained here have made me stand out amongst others in my application for university.

What helped and/or didn't help?

At Hartpury College, the staff members are great at helping you to organise work experience placements. Before moving to Hartpury, I did not have much experience with animals, and I believe it has been the best place for me to start! I had never stepped foot on a commercial farm before I came to Hartpury, but the staff at Home Farm have been especially supportive of my passion for animal health and welfare since I started, and it has been great to work alongside my friends too. I have learnt so much since starting my work experience at Home Farm and have witnessed some amazing experiences! Also, the Innovation Careers Enterprise team have been exceptional with assisting me to complete my personal statement as they really helped me to present the skills I have gained by coming to Hartpury College in the best way possible. Also, I am a student ambassador and this has enabled me to work alongside my studies which has built my confidence and given me taste of what it is like to work at a young age.

My advice/top tips

- » *The best advice I could give to students is to get involved with every opportunity that is available, even if it is slightly out of your comfort zone. I followed this advice myself and made use of all of the facilities on site, and I strongly believe that this has made me successful with gaining all of my offers from universities. Also, speak to as many people as possible! I have gained some incredible contacts and I know that I have made friends for life at Hartpury College.*



What are my options after school (post-16) - Experiences with going to college:

Eleanor: Going to college

My experiences with going to college

I am originally from Suffolk, I live in a village called Nedging and our nearest town is Ipswich, approximately 4 hours' drive from Hartbury College. My experience with college accommodation and my Livery course have both been very positive. When I started college I chose to have a shared room as I knew I wouldn't like living on my own, and it made me feel happier about moving away from home knowing that I would instantly know someone else. Livery has been exceptional and I am so pleased that I made the decision to bring my horse to college with me. The facilities are fantastic including 4 indoor and 2 outdoor arenas, which I have really enjoyed using as we don't have anything like this at home.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I go to the CLC (College Learning Centre) for educational support every week; this has helped me with college work - assignments and revision techniques for exams and I have achieved good grades for my work since I've had this extra help. I also see someone from the wellbeing team which has helped me tremendously as I found moving away from home quite difficult but being able to talk to someone has been beneficial.

My advice/top tips

» *A couple of top tips to help you when you are at college is not to shut yourself away in your room, and socialise with others in your corridor and on your course. Also, to keep on top of any college work, revision and assignments because it will put you in a better position and ensure that you won't leave everything until the last minute ensuring that you won't rush your work and you'll do it properly.*



What are my options after school
(post-16) - Subsection 4:

Alternative vocational routes



Vocational is a word that we start to hear more of as we think about our next steps. A vocational course of study means relating to a particular career, rather than being purely academic and college courses such as apprenticeships and BTECs are often described this way. However, it is important to know that you don't have to choose between either studying academically in a school or vocationally in a college – there is a third way, and that is to study with an alternative provider! If the idea of either college or sixth form leaves you cold or anxious, take a look at the links provided. There are lots of inspiring, alternative providers of further education who can work with you and your ways of learning in a more focussed, individual way. Don't be afraid to consider alternative routes – these providers might just be the gems you are looking for! **-Martha**



Betaris Training offer a 'Serious about Work and Training' (SWAT) course for 16 – 18 year olds, which offers a practical, 'non-traditional' way of gaining English and Maths qualifications alongside transferable life skills:

Link: <https://betaristraining.com/swat/>

Leaflet detailing Prospect Training study programs:

Link: https://www.prospect-training.org.uk/documents/112_pts_study_programmes_flyer.pdf

Information on what Prospect Training can provide those aged 16-18:

Link: <https://www.prospect-training.org.uk/study-programmes>

Information about Bridge Training, an alternative training provider:

Link: <https://bridgetrainingltd.co.uk/about/>

Download &/or subscribe to the SPIED Newsletter from the Youth Support Team website:

Link: <https://youthsupportteam.co.uk/>

Artshape offers various employability courses:

Link: <https://artshape.co.uk/pages/employability>

Once you turn 18, you would be eligible to access courses from Adult Education Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/adult-education-in-gloucestershire/course-menu/>

The SPIED Newsletter provides regular opportunities surrounding training options:

Link: https://assets.youthsupportteam.co.uk/uploads/documents/Spied_March_2021.pdf

'I have an EHCP, what are my additional options and consideration?' section:

Link: [Click here](#)

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training? (Post-18)



When it comes time to finish up your post-16 education, training or apprenticeships, the next steps can seem daunting. As with your post-16 options, there are many opportunities and pathways out there for you to take once you leave compulsory education. Whether it's university, a higher apprenticeship, higher education at college, full time work, self-employment, training, internships or a gap year, there's a wealth of opportunity and a whole host of options out there for you in the post-18 world. We have gathered links to resources and information to help you make the right decision for your future when leaving compulsory education. **-Ben**

I'd like to study at a higher level

I'd like to get a job

I'd like to take a gap year

I'd like to train for a job

I'd like to take an alternative route

I'd like to start my own business or be self employed



What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training
- Subsection 1:

I'd like to get a job



Searching for a job can be tricky, from creating your CV, job applications and interviews, to not yet knowing what you're interested in, or even what your strengths are. However, using the input from these sources will help you to identify your skills, abilities and interests as well as help you find your unique career path and take that leap into employment. If you think a lack of experience is holding you back - don't panic! There are a number of employers in Gloucestershire that will hire while offering training and learning in tandem, such as with an apprenticeship or traineeship. Remember, everyone starts somewhere. - **Alice**

Real experiences with finding a job



National Careers Service:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Careers advice in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://directory.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/search/gloucestershire/careers-advice>

Gloucestershire College apprenticeship advice:

Link: <https://www.indeed.co.uk/Career-Advice-jobs-in-Gloucestershire>

Current jobs in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.indeed.co.uk/Career-Advice-jobs-in-Gloucestershire>

Opportunities for young people who are not in education, employment or training:

Link: <https://youthsupportteam.co.uk/services/young-people-not-in-education-employment-or-training>

Work and disabilities:

Link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/work-and-disability/>

Forwards: Gloucestershire's all ages disability employment service

Link: <https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/>

Useful resources for people who are interested in working in the creative industries:

Link: <http://www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/creative-steps>

Part time jobs in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.glosjobs.co.uk/part-time-jobs-in-gloucestershire/>

Find a traineeship:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>

Help to take the first steps into the world of work:

Link: <https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk>

Disability rights:

Link: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help>

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with finding a job:

Real experiences with finding a job

Beth

James

Martha

Robyn



Beth: Finding a job

My experiences with finding a job

When I left sixth form, I'd only had experience working part-time, every Sunday in a department store alongside my A-levels. This was a great experience, and super helpful in terms of beginning to find my financial independence. However, I knew that I wanted to experience full-time work outside of studying before I took my next academic step in University. This is why I chose to take a gap year to work, save, and gain a little perspective on the adult world I had felt pretty ignorant of previously. After a couple of months of searching, I secured a position as a server in a bar in Cheltenham where I have been working full time during my year 'off'. For me, taking this time to experience full-time work has been transformative in terms of my social life, financial security, and preparedness for University. However, getting used to the responsibility of intense labour and working as an adult on par with other adults has not been easy by any means and has taken a fair bit of adjustment.

What helped and/or didn't help?

In terms of securing full-time employment, I felt quite unprepared. My place of education had given us countless assemblies on how to construct a good CV, and sell yourself in an interview to an employer, but had never prepared us for quite how brutal the job market can be. It took me a couple of weeks to learn that the only technique you can use when applying for jobs is to just apply to absolutely everything. Especially when using apps such as 'Indeed', I had to put my name up for hundreds of jobs just to be noticed by a few. I wish I'd known beforehand that the interview isn't actually the hard part because you have control in that situation in terms of presenting your best self. The hard part is waiting weeks for someone you don't know to decide that your piece of paper in their pile of job applications is the one they're willing to take a risk on!

My advice/top tips

- » *If you're using an employment app, apply en masse - to find my full-time job, I mainly used 'Indeed'. This app is great in terms of pooling all the jobs in your area together so they're accessible to you. However, lots of employers use it as a 'last resort' when they don't have enough applications from other sources. This means your best bet with an app or website is to simply apply to every job you see that you could do.*
- » *Once you've got a job, get stuck in! It is important not to underestimate how much of an adjustment taking on full-time work can be for a young person. You are thrown into the adult world and people's expectations of you and longer hours can feel difficult. However, I cannot begin to stress how much easier this is when you properly get into the spirit of your place of employment. Get involved in workplace social opportunities if this appeals, become familiar and comfortable with the people around you, and prove you can work hard and are a personable colleague. Long hours fly by when you feel part of a community and know those around you have your back and want to make your job fun as well as productive.*

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with finding a job:

James: Finding a job

My experiences with finding a job

I have been making sure I take any opportunity to get experience of the workplace and experience in the areas of work I wish to pursue. The more experience I can demonstrate and the larger my work portfolio is, the greater my chances should be for getting into a job.

What helped and/or didn't help?

- » *Volunteering for charitable organisations.*
- » *Getting real life workplace experience*
- » *Being open minded to try different things and areas of work.*
- » *Building a portfolio of work experience*
- » *Schools work experience placements*

My advice/top tips

- » *Give any opportunity a try, you just might enjoy it and at least it will be an experience.*
- » *Be persistent.*
- » *Look for opportunities to volunteer whilst at school and college.*
- » *Ask for feedback from your colleges and take it on board.*
- » *One failure doesn't condemn you to another, stay positive.*



Martha: Searching for a job

My experiences with searching for a job

Looking for part time jobs was a frequent activity in my summer holidays, but to be honest, I didn't feel incredible pressure to find a job until I left university. Being faced with the impending reality that I needed to get to a place of financial independence, searching for a job quickly became a real priority. I had to weigh up the expectation that I would find a good, graduate job with the reality that getting any job is competitive, and I really needed funds and direction. Online searching is now the standard way that both employers and job-seekers fill posts, but simply typing in job titles can feel too massive to navigate. I have got better at understanding job adverts, learning how to spot good opportunities and dismiss misleading or inadequate job adverts. Through trial and error, I've also become much more self-aware, gaining a better sense of what kind of work suits me and what doesn't. This helped narrow down job searching into a more targeted and more rewarding process.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Establishing my own job searching rules was really helpful. Thinking about where I was living and how far I could reasonably travel helped to keep me grounded. From here, having a good think about what kind of work I would be happy to do was important. It didn't necessarily feel good to say to myself, 'I really don't want to go into social care', but it was really important to know that about myself, so I didn't waste time applying for jobs that I'd never pass an interview for. From here, I thought more positively about what I could imagine myself doing, and I came up with a list of key words to search for. From here, regular searching was vital, as were regular breaks, giving myself permission to have fun and relax when I could, and not be consumed by job hunting.

My advice/top tips

- » *Know yourself, but challenge yourself. You will only sabotage your success by being too picky. Adopt an open mind about work opportunities and try taking a punt on applications now and again. You might hear back from the employer and they might surprise you!*
- » *If you don't hear back on an application, try your best to forget it and move on. It can hurt when you've spent a lot of time and energy on an application, only to get complete silence in return. Unfortunately, this happens a lot. It isn't personal, so try your best not to take it to heart.*
- » *Widen your tactics! Don't just look in one place for jobs. Talk to people, talk about your interests. I have been surprised by how many opportunities are shared by word of mouth. Get proactive and do some voluntary work. This often puts you in touch with people and their networks. You never know where something might lead!*

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with finding a job:

Robyn: Considerations when working

My experiences with working

It's funny how, although there is lots of emphasis at school on how to get work, there is less practical teaching around things like setting up a bank account, what tax and national insurance are and how to budget. I was fortunate in that I attended an outstanding Post 16 as part of a Special school. As someone with moderate learning difficulties, there was a good emphasis on the practicalities of life including some learning on budgeting. I also had some travel training.

What helped and/or didn't help?

When you are someone with both physical and learning difficulties as a young adult, there is a balance to find between wanting to control all those aspects of being an adult - like managing money, getting around and so on - and the things that you will always need some support and help with. It's all about working that out with your family and carers. I did lots of volunteering and work experience, but I was 21 before I got my first paid work. (with Future Me!) so I have only had a bank account for six months. The building society was really helpful in helping me to set up online banking and I'm enjoying the experience of getting a monthly wage. I give some to my mum for help with my keep, and save a bit -- then I spend!!! My Post 16 school were really helpful in all the work experience and placements I undertook.

My advice/top tips

- » *Keep your information secure, don't share passwords and don't fall for scams.*
- » *Someone can help you with budgeting when you're starting to earn, don't be shy about asking a parent, older sibling, or a tutor or a trusted teacher, they all had to start budgeting once!*



What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Subsection 2:

I'd like to take a gap year



Not excited to dive straight back into education? Unsure what gap years are and what you can do in one? Gap years are becoming increasingly popular with students who are looking to avoid academic burn out or just to recharge their batteries before taking on the challenge of further study or employment. In fact, a gap year can be seen as the ideal stepping stone between sixth form, college and higher education. Whether it is for volunteering, saving money, working abroad or in the UK, a gap year gives you every opportunity for personal development, expanding your social skills and boosting your career prospects.

If the idea of a year out scares you, the website links here provide further information and opportunities.

-Alice



How does a gap year bridge the gap between education and employment?:

Link: <https://gapforce.org/gb/how-does-gap-year-between-education-employment>

Opportunities to have a year in the industry in which you desire to work:

Link: <http://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry/about-yini>

Find a gap year job:

Link: <https://www.studentjob.co.uk>

UCAS' gap year ideas:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/gap-year/gap-years-ideas-and-things-think-about>

Gap years overseas:

Link: <https://www.gooverseas.com/gap-year>

Gap year travel inspiration and advice:

Link: <http://www.yearoutgroup.org/>

Gap year travel inspiration and advice:

Link: <http://www.yearoutgroup.org/>

Programmes that allow you to volunteer abroad during your gap year:

Link: <https://raleighinternational.org>

A gap year opportunity abroad:

Link: <https://projecttrust.org.uk>

Real experiences with gap years

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with gap years:

Real experiences with gap years



What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with gap years:

Alice: Gap years

My experiences with gap years

Having always been the youngest in my year, I knew taking a gap year would be the best choice for me as it would give me a chance to turn 18 and gain the life experience I needed before university. I have been able to save money and learn how to invest; crucial skills that I will carry through to adulthood and most importantly, I have spent more time with my dog (and family of course). Because of the pandemic, the travel plans I made last year were unable to advance but that does not mean that my gap year has been any less enriching – working both a full time and part time job in different industries has enhanced my work ethic and resilience and I can now take the next steps towards my goals knowing that I can face any challenge head on.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Planning too much before hand didn't help... nothing could have prepared me for how unpredictable this year has been, but it is that which has made it completely brilliant. I have been able to book small trips with my friends the day before we go which only adds to the experience. Therefore, being spontaneous and flexible, both timing-wise and mentally, is key to a successful gap year!

My advice/top tips

- » *Just say yes! A gap year is the perfect opportunity for self-growth and that can only be achieved if you expand and move away from your comfort zone. By saying yes to any opportunity, whether that be socially or professionally, you can truly get the most out of your year.*
- » *Don't compare your year to other peoples'. Everyone will be trying to find and achieve different things! Don't judge the success of your gap year by someone else's standards.*
- » *Don't over analyse...Look for the good in what you have done and what you've gained from it, never what you 'could' have done.*
- » *Ignore stereotypes.... You don't have to travel the world to have a good year. Opportunities for growth are closer to home than you think!*



What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Subsection 2:

I'd like to start my own business or be self-employed



Self-employment is an umbrella term for lots of different types of employment, encompassing being a sole trader, starting a limited company or joining a franchise.

Self-employment can take you in so many directions!

Something that these types of employment have in common is that the person or company is responsible for paying their taxes and National Insurance directly to HMRC (HM Revenue & Customs), rather than having a payroll department to do this for them.

Starting a business or being self-employed allows for flexibility, creativity and ambition. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur or aspiring trades-person, self-employment could be for you! It's important to know the benefits of self-employment over being an employee, but also the drawbacks. Self-employed people will not receive a company pension or holiday and sick pay. They also take on legal and financial responsibilities and should consider things like public liability insurance. Informing yourself of the 'nuts and bolts' of self-employment is important, and these links should be a great place to start. **-Martha**



How to register your business and other things to consider when setting it up:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/set-up-business>

The Prince's Trust - support for starting a business:

Link: <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business>

Is self-employment right for you?

Link: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/self-employment/is-self-employment-right-for-you>

First steps in business:

Link: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/business-economy/starting-up-in-business/first-steps-in-business/>

Shell LiveWIRE Smarter Future awards for new businesses in the UK:

Link: <https://www.investsefton.com/shell-livewire-smarter-future-awards/>

Advice for setting up a business from Skills Portal Glos:

Link: <https://www.skillsportalglos.com/journey/setting-up-your-own-business/>

Real experiences with self empl...

What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with self-employment:

Real experiences with self-employment



What are my options after I finish compulsory education or training - Experiences with self-employment:

Martha: Self-employment

My experiences with self-employment

I registered as self employed 6 years ago. At the time, I simply had an idea that I wanted to use my artistic passion to make myself some pocket money. Working for yourself doesn't necessarily mean that you work alone, or that you own a business. The simplest form of self employment is to be a 'sole trader', which is what I am. I can take on multiple jobs from multiple clients, manage my own time and am responsible for paying my own income tax and National Insurance every year to HMRC. I only pay tax if I make over £12,500 profit in a year. I usually have a second source of income as an employee (where an employer sets me up on a payroll), which has afforded me some financial security and given my freelance career time to mature organically. I now spend about half my time working freelance. One of the biggest challenges of being self employed is maintaining stability with work, as it can often feel like I have either taken on too much at one time, or that I don't have enough work. My income from self employment can vary wildly from month to month.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I was lucky to have friends and family members with experience of self employment. They had lots of advice that gave me the confidence to have a go of it. Having a supportive community of like minded individuals is so valuable. The least helpful thing when establishing self employment is society's expectation that you will have a stable and linear career progression. Self employment doesn't work like that. It can be more challenging to rent or buy a house if you are self employed.

My advice/top tips

- » *Don't wait for anyone to give you permission! It is free to register as a sole trader, so there isn't really anything to loose. Just bear in mind that you will have to complete an online tax return every year, even in you don't earn anything. Remember to pay National Insurance contributions so you don't affect your eligibility to a state pension.*
- » *Get into good habits. Keep a record of your income and expenses. If things go well, you will gradually increase your earnings and having well organised records will save you headaches later on.*
- » *Love what you do! There are lots of obstacles to navigate as a self employed person, but these are outweighed by positives. You can be master of your own time, you have the final say over what work you take on, and you have the chance to experience a more dynamic way of working than the 9-5.*



Finding and preparing for a Job (Careers)



Whether you've already had a job or are looking for your first, the process of employment, careers and finding work can seem like a daunting and complex one, but it's much simpler and easier than you may think! Whether you're looking for full time work, part time work, your first job or are unsure of what career to pursue, we've gathered links to resources and information on everything from work considerations, CV writing and interviews, to types of employment, training and discovering your own skills. **-Ben**

Careers advice

What are my skills?

Work experience

Part time work (post-16, still in education)

Volunteering

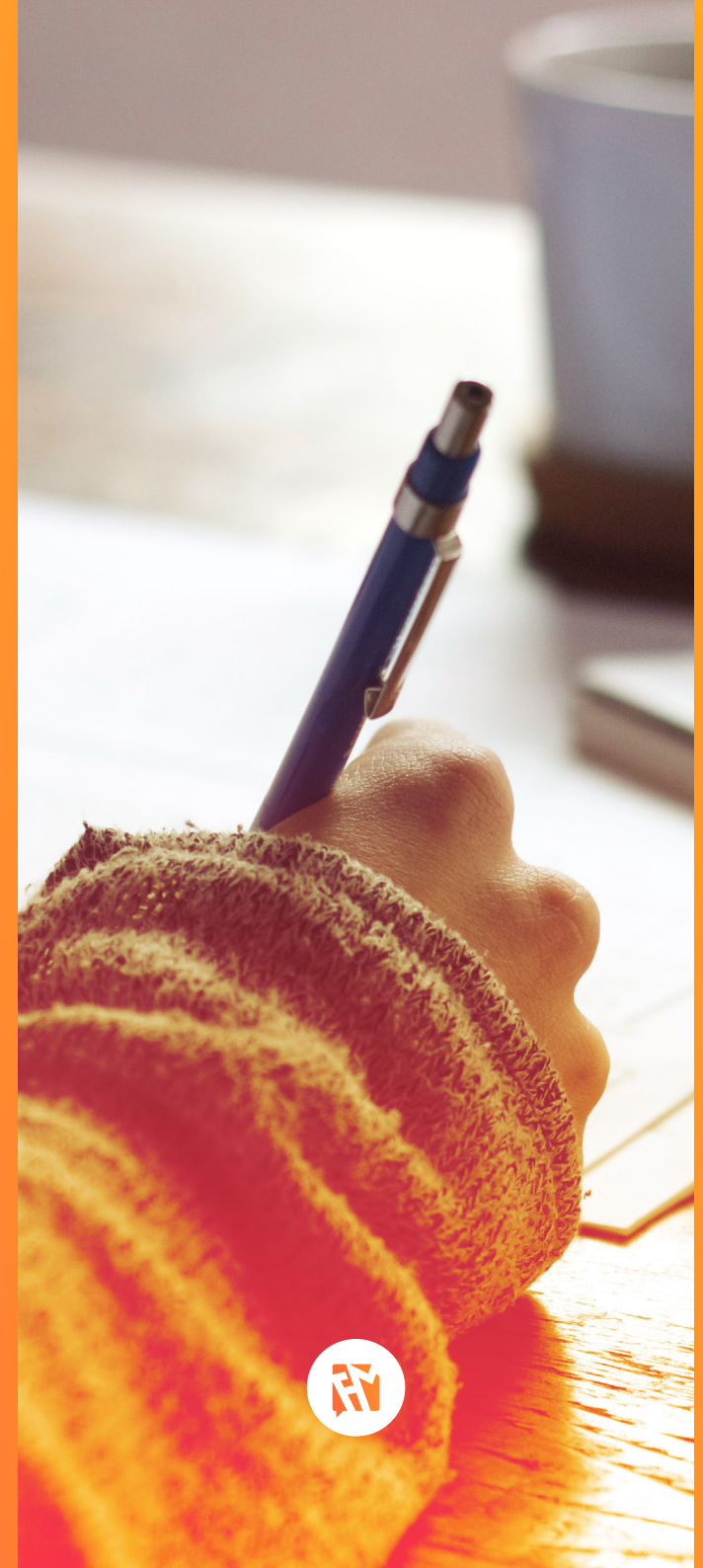
CV writing

Interviews, including online interviews

Applying for jobs, including online

Things to consider when getting a job

What support do employers offer for my needs or disability?



Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 1:

What are my skills?



Your skills are what direct you along the path to employment and are like your passport into work. Chances are that you have lots of skills without realising what they are. Transferable skills are what appeal to employers most of all - these are skills that can be applied to a wide range of jobs. Creativity, time management and communication are examples of transferable skills and can easily be identified by collecting a list of things you have done, from school, college and hobbies to work experience. If you are worried and think you lack skills, we've got you covered - these links can help you take an online skills assessment, as well as give you ideas about where you can volunteer to quickly gain them. The best investment is in yourself and your skill set, so perhaps take some time to establish your strengths and communicate what you can bring to the job. - **Alice**



National careers film library:

Link: <https://www.careersbox.co.uk>

A quiz to help you discover your strengths and explore subject choices and jobs that could suit you:

Link: <https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>

A website that organises over 1000 job types based on your interests and strengths:

Link: <https://www.sortyourfuture.com>

National Careers Service skills assessment:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/skills-assessment>

UCAS' quiz to see which job areas might suit you:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/careers/buzz-quiz>

A Skills Map and Profile builder from Career Pilot

Link: <https://careerpilot.org.uk/skills-profile/?/he-skills-map>

Barclay Life Skills

Link: <https://barclayslifeskills.com/young-people/>

Real experiences with developing skills

Real experiences with developing skills



Angharad



James



Richard

Angharad: Developing skills

My experience with developing skills

Having been a swimmer and part of a local lifesaving group, taking the NPLQ (National Pool Lifeguard Qualification) was a logical step - the NPLQ can be taken by anyone over the age of 16. The course teaches and prepares you for work as a lifeguard and is an internationally recognised qualification that can take you anywhere in the world! Although daunting at first, being a lifeguard has not only taught me lifesaving first aid, but also how to work with the general public and other adults to create a professional and enjoyable environment. My confidence has grown hugely as has my understanding of small businesses, and I've gained invaluable transferable skills.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Being a swimmer and having a background in lifesaving meant I picked things up quickly and understood a lot of the first aid already. Anyone can take the qualification, however, regardless of past experience.

My advice/top tips

- » *Don't be put off if it is completely new. The trainers are brilliant and will support you through your learning at whatever level.*
- » *Trust yourself! A lot of working as a lifeguard calls for common sense. Chances are you are right in your judgement of a situation and you will always be supported by your team.*

James: Developing skills

My experience with developing skills

I have thought long and hard about what my skill set is in preparation for deciding on areas of work that might suit me. I have been realistic and asked others for their opinions too. My skill set is quite varied. I have attention to detail, I am very social, I love talking and sharing my experiences and knowledge. I have a real strength in the area of digital graphic design. I am creative, kind, thoughtful and encouraging. I have great determination; I will put 110% into everything I do. I thrive on challenges and deadlines and am comfortable in anyone's company. Being able to identify these skills – many of which are 'transferable' – has given me confidence and direction.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Sometimes my talking and drifting off can be an issue but I am working on these whilst still at college. I have many strategies in place to cope with my difficulties including an app called 'Brain in Hand', which is tailor made for my issues. Constantly asking for feedback as to how I have performed has helped highlight positives that I have not always been aware of and negatives I hadn't realised were a problem. This has enabled me to improve my skills over time.

My advice/top tips

- » Remember your strengths.
- » Work on your weaknesses.
- » Remember no one is perfect and that you don't need to be.
- » Be positive and upbeat with a 'can do' attitude.
- » Concentrate on what you can do rather than what you can't.
- » Remember changes and skills take time, be patient and persistent.



Finding and preparing for a job - Experiences with developing skills:

Richard: Developing skills

My experience with developing skills

My biggest interest at school was Art and I developed my skills at the University of Gloucestershire Art foundation course, followed by my degree. I gained lots of practical skills here, but not so much in the way of 'employability skills'. I sold my work through galleries, an experience that taught me a great deal about communication, resilience and self-confidence. I wrote to artists and industry professionals that I admired, asking for advice – this was scary, but I learned so much about marketing myself and my work. Simultaneously, I had a part time job in retail. This wasn't what I wanted to be doing, HOWEVER, I did actually find that the skills I was learning here, like customer service, were really helpful in progressing my abilities to sell my artwork; I got much better at talking to people! From working in retail, I was able to transfer to the Visual Merchandising department of that business. It's easier to transition through job roles if the employers already know you, and this new role in turn taught me skills like vinyl letter cutting, a practical skill that has gone on to get me work in the art sector. You never know what skills an opportunity might teach you and what doors that will open.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Staying in a job too long isn't helpful – if you feel like you are stagnating or are bored, this is a sign that it's time to try a new challenge that develops your skill set. Being proactive is helpful – you are key to driving your skills forward, no one else will truly focus on that, it's up to you to apply yourself. When dealing with employers, you have to show them what you can do for them, not the other way around. Once you get into a job role, you will learn skills through doing and working with others.

My advice/top tips

- » *Let your interests and what you are naturally good at drive your choice of industries for finding work. Look for growing industries that are hiring regularly, and see which ones align with your talents or interests.*
- » *Look at job adverts and identify the requirements that keep cropping up – these are usually skills related, often transferable skills, and this tells you which skills are most highly valued by employers. Focus on developing these in yourself.*
- » *Do the scary stuff! When you try something that challenges you, this is when you grow the most. If you are comfortable and stagnant in a workplace, then you probably aren't learning much or progressing.*



Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 2:

Work experience



Work experience is a really helpful opportunity to take advantage of. Not only is it a fantastic addition to your CV and a great topic to reference in interviews when talking to a potential employer, it is also the most practical way you can figure out whether a career that interests you is actually compatible in real life. However, it can be tricky to find the right placements when there is such a high demand from young people who need a similar experience. The resources here should help you figure out the most effective way to approach looking into work experience placements that suit you.

-Beth



Everything you need to know about work experience:

Link: <http://www.allaboutcareers.com/careers-advice/work-experience>

Kickstart your career:

Link: <https://www.studentladder.co.uk>

Prospect Training can help arrange work experience placements:

Link: <https://www.prospect-training.org.uk>

Internships & work experience placements in Gloucester:

Link: <https://www.e4s.co.uk/jobs/3-internships-jobs-in-gloucester.htm>

Student work experience placements with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust:

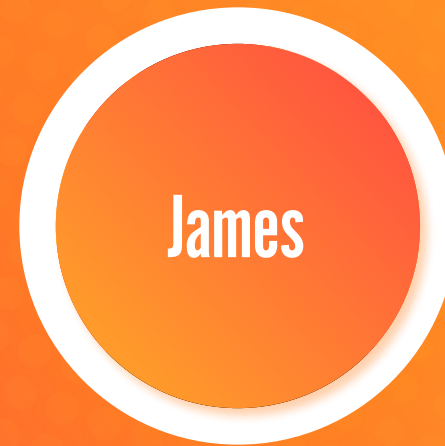
Link: <https://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer/work-experience>

10 ways to get the most out of work experience:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/careers/getting-job/10-ways-get-most-out-work-experience>

Real experiences with work experience

Real experiences with work experience



Ben: Work experience

My experience with work experience

During and after university, I'd attended many work placements, internships and experience weeks. They can be quite a daunting and nerve-racking undertakings, but for me were incredibly valuable and a crucial stepping stone in achieving the career I was after; that being a career in graphic design. Acquiring and completing work experience during university helped contribute towards my course work, and also gave me vital experience, information and knowledge that better prepared me for leaving university - I ended up knowing what to expect from the industry when searching for my first job! When it came to my internships post-uni, they were also incredibly valuable for both experience, knowledge and something to show on my CV, and were crucial stepping stones in finding my first graphic design job.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Making sure I had plenty of research and knowledge on either the experience, placement or internships I was attending really helped - knowing exactly what I was getting myself into before hand helped me prepare for the experience. I made sure to know plenty about the companies and it's employees that I was working with, and went in with an enthusiastic and friendly attitude - this really helped me get easily settled in, and allowed each experience to be a smooth and enjoyable process.

My advice/top tips

- » *Show up with plenty of time! It's better to be early to an interview - being late for your work experience won't help make a good first impression.*
- » *Make sure to get the most out of your experience; get engaged, involved and ask plenty of questions - gather as much information, experience and advice as you can.*
- » *Be friendly, enthusiastic and positive throughout.*
- » *Make sure you have plenty of research and knowledge on either the experience, placement or internships you're attending - knowing what you're going into will not only help you prepare, but will be a key part of making a good first impression.*
- » *Make sure to add your experiences to your CV, it's all valuable information for an employer to see.*
- » *Try not to stress yourself out or over-think the experience - just be yourself, once you get settled in, it will become easier and enjoyable.*



James: Work experience

My experience with work experience

It has been very difficult to convince workplaces to allow me to do work experience due to my disabilities. I have had to be very persistent to be given a chance. Even when at school, because I wanted to work in certain industries, this was very challenging. However, I have managed to do a variety of work experiences which have all given me different insights and direction forward.

What helped and/or didn't help?

It is very unhelpful that so many businesses have a preconceived idea that if you have a disability you will be more trouble than it's worth. It is hard to get the opportunities in the first place as so many obstacles get put in your way. My Mum's contacts have been helpful in finding opportunities for me, I have never given up and have been willing to refuse meaningless work opportunity experiences whilst searching for something meaningful.

My advice/top tips

- » *Search yourself, don't leave it to others.*
- » *Remain upbeat despite the rejections, someone will give you the chance eventually.*
- » *Ask friends and families to help you find something.*
- » *Have reasons for wanting certain work experiences and make sure you share these with the employers.*
- » *Look at charities, they are often more willing to give you the chance to shine.*

Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 3:

Part-time work



Having a part-time job while still in education has several benefits. It improves your time management skills, income, broadens your knowledge of work, gives valuable work experience and looks great on your CV. Consider both your mental and physical well-being and ensure your work will not affect your studies, leisure time or revision time. However, with the right arrangement, flexible hours/days and good organisation, working part time whilst studying can bring big benefits.

Choose your job carefully, be open and honest with your employer and be realistic about how much time you can commit to working. We all need social and down time too. Have a look through the resources here for more information. - **James**



Part time job vacancies specifically for students in Gloucestershire:

Link: <http://www.studentjob.co.uk/>

Find part time & holiday jobs near you:

Link: <http://www.e4s.co.uk/>

Part time work for students in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.glosjobs.co.uk/student-part-time-jobs-in-gloucestershire/>

Balancing studying and part-time work:

Link: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/internships/advice/275089-balancing-study-and-part-time-work>

Types of student jobs and how to apply for them:

Link: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/after-you-start/student-jobs>

Real experiences with part-time work

Real experiences with part-time work



Martha: Part-time work

My experience with part-time work

Having a part time job whilst at university was really helpful for helping me get work in future. Securing that first step into the world of work is really important and, in the eyes of potential employers, paid work usually trumps voluntary work/placements. In honesty, I was driven to getting a part time job because of lack of funds. My maintenance loan was woefully low and I could not survive at university without having an income. Having small monthly payments of funds was the immediate benefit of part time working, but there were other benefits too. I worked as a cleaner at the local hospital and the experience really helped me grow my interpersonal and time-management skills. Gaining these transferable skills was helpful for future job applications and also made me more confident meeting people. I really advocate finding a part-time job to balance whilst studying. It can be difficult to get the balance right, but learning how to juggle these responsibilities and commitments is an important skill to learn. Working part time is also a great way to burst the study 'bubble' and get a broader perspective of the world.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Having a flexible job was key. I worked a zero-hours contract, and although this did mean that I didn't get sick pay or holiday pay, I found this way of working brilliant for the student lifestyle. I really enjoyed the freedom of choosing my hours. Finding the right part time job to fit into your availability can be tricky, and I had a friend whose '12 hour a week' café job would frequently become more like 20 or 30 hours a week because of overtime. This conflicted with the rigours of university study and became stressful. It can be difficult to say no to a manager who might pressure you to take on more hours.

My advice/top tips

- » *Create some ground rules for yourself and stick to them. If you work out that you can only commit to 12 hours a week, make this your limit and don't take on a role with more hours, no matter how tempting. You will regret it when the study-work-life balance gets stressful.*
- » *Communicate. Talk to your managers and co-workers. Let them know that you are student and that you are studying. Don't be afraid to be firm if you are being repeatedly pressured into taking on more hours.*
- » *Take care of your mind and body – having lots of 'sides' of your life can become stressful. Make sure you eat well and establish a good sleep routine. This can make a huge difference to your energy levels.*



James: Part-time work

My experience with part-time work

I have been working for Future Me Gloucestershire as my first paid, part time employment alongside doing a full time college course.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The flexibility that a zero hours contract offer is great, it means I can fit it in as and when I have spare time. Being based from home it is very flexible for the days and times I want to work and having done voluntary work in certain areas of work helped me get the role. The employer made adjustments to shape a 'differentiated interview' to suit my needs, this made a massive positive difference to me. Future Me Gloucestershire were actually looking for young people with a variety of experiences, including individuals with additional needs so this didn't go against me – lots of employers want to be more inclusive, so its always worth applying.

My advice/top tips

- » *Keep looking for opportunities.*
- » *Take on voluntary roles to gain experience.*
- » *Always apply for any possibilities, you never know if you will get it.*

Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 4:

Volunteering



There are many things we enjoy doing in our free time. You may like sports, reading or being around friends, the list is endless! One activity that you might not have thought of, however, is volunteering. Being a volunteer can be an incredibly rewarding experience as it can help you gain new skills, boost your CV, give back to your community and even expand your future job prospects.

Keep an open mind about volunteering! You might be surprised about the range of settings in which you can volunteer. Its worth doing your research to find an opportunity that aligns well with your interests, personality and the time you have to offer. If you are curious about volunteering, have a look at the resources in this section to find out more. *-Lily*



Where to make a difference in your community:

Link: <http://vinspired.com/>

Find volunteering opportunities near you:

Link: <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>

Summer volunteering with NCS:

Link: <https://wearencs.com>

Volunteer with Gloucestershire NHS:

Link: <https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/volunteer/>

Volunteering in the arts and cultural sector in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/everything-volunteering>

Search for local 'from home' volunteering opportunities:

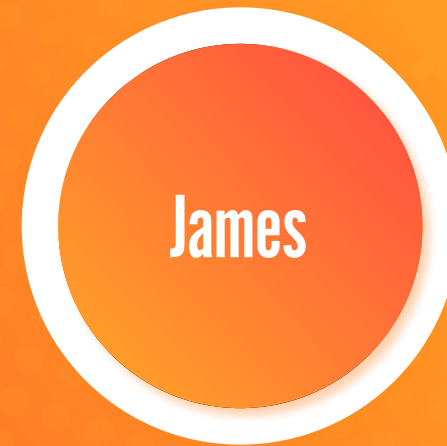
Link: <https://do-it.org/news/volunteering-at-home>

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust volunteering:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer>

Real experiences with volunteering

Real experiences with volunteering



Beth: Volunteering

My experience with volunteering

I have been part of the Scout movement since the age of seven. It completely changed my life. At 14 I trained to be a young leader and started helping out my old group. I volunteered with the 'Cubs' section aged 7-10 and I really enjoyed it. Scouting gave me so many opportunities and it has always been so lovely to give those young people the chances I cherished. Some days it was tough and I had to step up and take charge to avoid arguments. I always love seeing the kids smiling and learning and getting on. I found that I got on with them really well because they saw me as a younger adult but still with the respect of a leader. The act of volunteering just gave me so much fulfilment and I really enjoy my volunteer work. The Scout movement is always looking for volunteers. Whether you have experience or not you can expect a really supportive team and a really good time with fantastic opportunities.

My advice/top tips

- » *Definitely volunteer for something you feel passionate about, it will increase your enjoyment.*
- » *Keep volunteering even if there are a few bad sessions, you will always find that there is something good around the corner.*
- » *Don't be put off by volunteering because others may not approve, volunteering is one of the most fulfilling things and it honestly doesn't matter what others think, you will make difference.*

Beth: Volunteering

My experience with volunteering

Throughout my experience in education, I took part in various volunteering activities and commitments. Some of these were linked to my places of education (such as organising and facilitating a mini United Nations experience focused on the empowerment of women), whereas some of them were more external (such as briefly working in an animal shelter in Ireland and organising a clothes donation for Refugees in the county). I find that incorporating a degree of volunteer work into your weekly or monthly routine can be pretty refreshing and enriching without feeling unproductive or stressful.

What helped and/or didn't help?

What helped me get involved in volunteering in a way I could actually enjoy and sustain was only taking part in the causes or projects that I actually felt passionate about, rather than getting involved in projects that didn't really inspire me just because I felt like I should. This way, I knew that my interest in the volunteer work I did do wouldn't slack in any way because I felt really strongly that it was worthwhile.

My advice/top tips

- » *Don't take on an unattainable amount of work - if you want to get into volunteering, try to only take on one or two commitments that you know are sustainable for your routine. Volunteering should be a positive addition to your life rather than an overwhelming one, and you don't help anyone (especially not yourself) by spreading yourself too thin.*
- » *Volunteer for the right reasons. Sometimes young people only take on volunteer projects for the sake of their CV or personal statement (which of course is a great benefit of volunteering). However, if this is the only reason you are committing to a project you might want to take a step back and think about whether there is a better volunteering alternative that will actually inspire and motivate you to do your best work.*

James: Volunteering

My experience with volunteering

I have done graphic design work for the charity Allsorts Glos, designing posters etc. I have had a weeks' worth of office/IT experience at Kier Construction and a Housing Association and did video tape dismantling and woodwork at the Butterfly Garden, which helped my team working, as well as time at Abbey Tearooms dealing with the general public. I volunteered for IT Schools Africa where I learnt how to program, repair and dismantle a computer. This gave me practice of working in a team.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Volunteering gave me insight into what the working environments of different jobs are like and helped me settle on a career pathway. Volunteering also highlighted things I definitely did not want to pursue. Working on graphic design work has helped build me a portfolio and helped me secure my college placement.

My advice/top tips

- » *Give a variety of roles a try to see what most suits you.*
- » *Volunteering is a great way to give back whilst also benefiting yourself.*
- » *Volunteering looks great on your CV and gives you a real boost in your confidence in getting job.*

Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 5:

CV writing



The CV (Curriculum Vitae, which is Latin for “course of life”) advertises your life, interesting the employer yet leaving them wanting to know more about you. It sells your skills and experience, giving you the opportunity to demonstrate what you can bring to the job, which is a great deal because your individuality in itself is unique.

Making a good impression is vital in today’s competitive job market and the websites here have been carefully selected to help you enhance your CV writing skills and stand out from the crowd. The time and effort you spend building a CV will ensure you have solid foundations when moving into the world of work, so dedicate some time to set out your skills and the best way to showcase them. **-Alice**



The ultimate guide to completing an application form and building a CV:

Link: <https://www.how2become.com/resources/>

Eight mistakes to remove from your CV:

Link: <https://jobs.telegraph.co.uk/article/8-things-to-remove-from-your-cv-right-away/>

Skill Up - My first CV template:

Link: <https://successatschool.org/advice/90/desc/119>

CV explained by the National Careers Service:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>

CV checklist:

Link: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/cvs.html>

CV Advice from Career Pilot:

Link: <https://www.skillsportalglos.com/career-coach/>

Transferable skills to add to your CV:

Link: https://www.livecareer.co.uk/cv?utm_source=livecareer-com&utm_medium=referal&utm_campaign=CTA-UK-MODAL-LC

Real experiences with CV writing

Finding and preparing for a job - CV writing:

Real experiences with CV writing



Finding and preparing for a job - CV writing:

Martha: CV writing

My experience with CV writing

I have always enjoyed writing. I even took a Creative Writing module during my degree. However, I have learned through trial and error that creative writing is NOT required when writing a CV! I have learned that a CV is a technical document. The longer I have been out of education, the better I have understood the mindset of the employer who is reading my CV: they want it to be clear, concise and relevant. There is no point in trying to 'bulk out' a CV with long paragraphs – it sounds brutal, but no one will get as far as reading it. I now know to hammer home the basics really clearly, ALWAYS putting 'Employment History' first, including my job roles, who I worked for and between what dates, putting my most recent employment first. I no longer put a detailed education history: if you have done a degree or similar, a phrase along the lines of '11 GCSE's, A - B grade' is adequate. Space is precious on a CV and you need every square inch to count. I do mention my hobbies/volunteering/interests, but I keep this section brief. I always accompany my CV with a Cover Letter. This is the place to add further information – but again, I try my best to keep this concise. I keep both documents no longer than 1 side of A4 and if I am emailing them to an employer, I save them as a PDF document. This is important as all devices will display the document the same, unlike Word documents which can get altered by different devices.*

What helped and/or didn't help?

Looking at other people's CVs has been helpful. Asking older siblings or friends to see how they structured their CVs was a real eye-opener. I learned a lot about how I could improve my layout by seeing examples. What didn't help was the process of writing my UCAS personal statement – I think I confused them and my early CVs were similar to my personal statement, far too long-winded and self-indulgent!

My advice/top tips

- » *Show your CV to trusted family/friend, and ask to see theirs. It's best to ask people similar in age to yourself, as parents are generally in long-term employment and haven't constructed a CV for years!*
- » *Take seriously the recommendation to keep your CV one A4 side in length. Employers only have time to skim read at the first stage of applications, and they will not have the time or inclination to read a massive document.*
- » *Keep your CV up-to-date.*



Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 6:

Interviews, including online interviews



Getting to the interview stage of your job hunt is a huge achievement - if you have got an interview, there's always a good chance you can get the job! Although the thought of an interview can be scary, it is also an opportunity to showcase your skills and personality, and to check out the opportunity for yourself.

In this section you will find useful links to information along with personal experiences and top tips. It is all about preparation; from researching the organisation and the job, practising answers, through to researching the journey, if there is one, practising interview techniques on-screen with a trusted friend and deciding what to wear. Well done on getting an interview and remember that every experience is helpful, even if you are not successful first time. - **Robyn**

Real experiences with interviews



Interview skills:

Link: <https://www.how2become.com/resources/>

Prepare for interviews with specific companies:

Link: <https://uk.job-applications.com>

Interview cheat sheet and preparation tips:

Link: http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-preparation/interview-cheat-sheet/article.aspx?HPS=4_5C3InterviewCheatSheet?WT.mc_n=SM_PR_Twt_monsterww_advice&sf3264046=1&sf3264183=1

Top 10 interview questions and answers:

Link: <https://successatschool.org/advice/90/desc/137>

Interview advice from the National Careers Service:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/interview-advice>

10 tips to ace your apprenticeship interview from Gloucestershire College:

Link: <https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/02/10-tips-to-ace-your-apprenticeship-interview/>

How to plan your interview answers:

Link: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/interview-questions>

Free online interview training course:

Link: <https://www.how2become.com/resources/>

Your complete guide to succeeding in interviews:

Link: <https://successatschool.org/advice/90/desc/137>

5 tips for acing online interviews:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zxcy6g8>

Practice and preparation for an online job interview:

Link: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/online-job-interviews-2064216>

Online interview practice questions:

Link: <https://www.best-job-interview.com/online-interview-questions.html>

Real experiences with interviews



Robyn: Interviews

My experience with interviews

There is going to be a really harsh environment for young people coming out of this Covid winter. Young people are always more affected by economic downturns, because of the type of jobs we do in Britain; hospitality, creative and care industries for example. It's also trickier finding a job and especially choosing the sort of job you want, if you have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Employers can be wary of 'taking a chance' or worry about support levels. Training and college opportunities are limited before you even get there. My special school Post 16 was so helpful in giving me lots of opportunities for volunteering, work experience and community support projects. I had good and practical experience in time-keeping, following instructions, being part of a team and more. However great these experiences are, it is still a world away from an actual job. A paid job. When the Future Me Gloucestershire opportunity came up I was at a really low place. I was shielding, I was recovering from a difficult surgery and knew that half of my final year at Post-16 was disappearing. I would say that working my way through the application form was okay, I had lots to say, and I could see that I had skills which matched the brief. As soon as I knew I had an interview I swung into action. My disabilities mean that I'm not always great at thinking on my feet – I need time to think things over and for ideas to settle in – so I knew that the interview could be a challenge – and I had never had an interview before!

What helped and/or didn't help?

Researching and practicing all the questions that might be asked. My mum does lots of interviews and she helped me. Lots of questions are the same sort of question whatever the job: What attracted you to the work? What skills would you bring? What experiences do you have? What do you know about the organisation and the job? What might you need support with? Any questions for us?

Ben: Interviews

My experience with interviews

I've experienced many interviews across my education and career, from college and university applications to work experience and job interviews. Interviews are something that you get better at with experience, and your confidence will grow in time. For me, education interviews felt easier, but job interviews were certainly more nerve-racking, though the more I attended, the more my confidence grew. These days, I find interviews a breeze, and that's down to knowing how to act during interviews and experiencing so many over the years.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Making sure I had plenty of research and knowledge on either the course or job I was applying for was key - you'll likely be asked questions regarding what you're applying for, so it's good to be well prepared. I always made a few notes and preparation pieces prior to an interview, but personally felt like meticulously planning what I was going to say during an interview only hindered me - you can never fully anticipate what an interviewer will ask! Going in with a positive, enthusiastic and friendly attitude always helped me.

My advice/top tips

- » *Show up with plenty of time! It's better to be early to an interview than late - being late for an interview won't make a good first impression.*
- » *Be friendly, enthusiastic and positive throughout.*
- » *Prepare questions to ask your interviewers - they will likely ask if you have any questions, and it's always good to show you've come prepared with additional curiosity.*
- » *Make sure to do plenty of research on the course or job position you're applying for - it'll make a good impression if you really know your stuff while attending the interview.*
- » *Make a few notes before hand, but don't meticulously plan what you're going to say - prepare to be asked questions you weren't expecting.*
- » *Try not to stress yourself out or over-think the interview - just be yourself.*



Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 7:

Applying for jobs, including online



We know that it is going to be tough out there, and even finding the motivation and the confidence to get looking for jobs is something to be proud of. This section gives advice on where to look for jobs, deciding what job is for you, identifying your skills and experience and keeping motivated.

Applying for work can be formal or informal, and ranges from big application forms to a conversation. All applications are a chance for you to show your best self. Remember that you have lots of transferable skills, even if you don't have much actual work experience, think about all that great stuff you do and are good at that you can bring into employment. Each application you make gives you more skills, even if it takes time to succeed. This pack offers a great start.

-Robyn



Top tips for acing online interviews from Bitesize:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zxcy6g8>

Application and interview tips from Bitesize:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zjjrqp3>

CV tips tool from Barclays Life Skills:

Link: <https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-help-applying-for-jobs/left-education/cv-tips/>

Advice from the Carers Trust on applying for a job as a young carer:

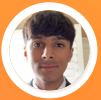
Link: https://carers.org/finding-paid-work/a-guide-to-getting-into-work-for-young-adult-carers?fbclid=IwAR3a2vOSOS5tzkFG_yJOdNVjr7rv1xwDXJiUA46FLWero4CKa9nrCS4m6F0

Information on applying for jobs online from Youth Employment:

Link: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/get-job-ready/get-interview-ready/how-to-apply-for-jobs-online/>

Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 8:

Things to consider when getting a job



There's nothing quite like the feeling of being offered a job. For a few brief moments when that outstretched hand reaches toward you, you feel invincible, important, and untouchable. However, when getting a new job, it is important to be aware of a few factors, and the links provided here cover important considerations such as tax, National Insurance, pension schemes and payslips. As you experience working life, you will become more familiar with these terms and what they mean to you and your pay packet.

Did you know that income tax will be deducted from your monthly salary if you earn more than £12,570 a year? Also, that you must provide your National Insurance number so that you can be paid? You may be asked for your passport and a proof of address for identification purposes. If you have more questions about any of these areas, these links provide some further clarity.

-Anas



Payslips explained by Barclays Life Skills:

Link: <https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-to-get-to-grips-with-money-and-my-payslip/school/understanding-your-payslip/>

Information on how to choose the right bank account:

Link: <https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/how-to-choose-the-right-bank-account>

Government information on national insurance:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance>

Information from Words for Life geared towards young people receiving pay:

Link: <https://wordsforlife.org.uk/zone-in/activities/receiving-your-pay/#:~:text=Gross%20pay%20%E2%80%93%20the%20full%20amount,income%20or%20National%20Insurance%20Contributions.>

Finding and preparing for
a job - Subsection 8:

What support do employers offer for my needs or disability?



The adjustments you make as you go about your life might be daily requirements for you: we all have specific needs and ways of doing things. If you have to navigate additional needs, you might worry more than most about your route into employment. It's important to remember that employers have a duty to make adjustments as well, so that an employee with disabilities is enabled to do a job as well as someone without a disability. The Equality Act 2010 calls these 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable adjustments can be changes to policies, working practices, physical layouts or the provision of extra equipment or support. What's 'reasonable' for your employer to do depends on your situation and theirs - like the size of their organisation. Your employer should pay for any adjustments, they shouldn't ask you to pay. These links should help answer more of your questions and direct you to further sources of information. -*Martha & Harry*



Information about 'Disability Confident' Employers:

Link: <https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/disability-friendly-employers/>

Disability rights:

Link: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help>

Work and disabilities:

Link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/money-work-and-benefits/work-and-disability/>

Access to Work, the Government scheme to support those facing barriers to work due to a disability:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Also look at Forwards: Gloucestershire's all ages disability employment service:

Link: <https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/>

Useful information on the subject from the Money Advice Service:

Link: <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/help-to-find-work-if-youre-disabled>

Real experiences with apprenticeships

Finding and preparing for a job - What support do employers offer for my needs or disability?:

Real experiences with employer support



Finding and preparing for a job - What support do employers offer for my needs or disability?:

Harry: Employer/College Support

My experience with employer and college support when preparing for a job

I was offered additional support when finding and applying for a job by not only my family, but both my college and potential employer too. My college helped me to write a CV for my job application for Future Me, and Future Me helped by listening and understanding what my additional needs were. GCC and Future Me did a good job of understanding my needs regarding my dyslexia by being patient and giving me extra time during the application and interview process. When I got the job with Future Me, I was offered lots of support, such as 1-1 catch up sessions to allow me to speak more confidently and take in information easier, and having team members there to go to if I needed something.

What helped and/or didn't help?

College and my mum helping me with my CV writing really helped me during the process. Future Me being prepared to make reasonable adjustments during my interview helped me during this stage and in further supporting me while working for them. Having 1-1 contact has been really helpful!

My advice/top tips

- » *Never be afraid to ask questions.*
- » *Research your job.*
- » *Practice what you're going to say during an interview.*
- » *Be aware of your pacing when in the interview.*
- » *Discuss any reasonable adjustments that can be made prior to your interview.*



Training and apprenticeships



Training and apprenticeships are options both post-16 and post-18 and can be an important gateway into a new career, passion and/or skill set. If you're thinking about your next steps in training or an apprenticeship, we've gathered links to resources and information on everything from Supported Internships, traineeships and apprenticeships, to volunteering and work experience to help you make the right decision for your future. **-Ben**

Apprenticeships

Traineeships

T-Levels

Supported Internships/training

Work experience

Volunteering



Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships are a great way to achieve new qualifications, gain valuable hands-on experience and earn money as you learn. Apprenticeships today aren't only for trade jobs such as plumbing, carpentry and construction. There are hundreds of apprenticeship pathways to choose from for a wide variety of career paths including cyber, marketing, hairdressing and management. For those who prefer hands-on learning, apprenticeships offer an ideal alternative to university or full-time study. Apprentices spend the majority of their time with an employer, learning by working alongside seasoned industry professionals with a wealth of knowledge to share. Some apprentices will also spend some time in college. Did you know that a Level 6 Apprenticeship is equivalent in rigour to a University degree? These higher apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with studying for a degree-level qualification, with no student debt and a salary! Take a look at these links to find out more about apprenticeships and how to find one. **-Becky**



Information provided by the Government about the basics of apprenticeships:

Link: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/becoming-apprentice>

Information provided by Bitesize about whether apprenticeships are the right for you:

Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z6jf92p>

Real stories from apprentices:

Link: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/real-stories>

Find an apprenticeship near you with the Government website:

Link: <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

Apprenticeships in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://uk.indeed.com/Apprenticeship-jobs-in-Gloucestershire>

Information from the National Apprenticeship Service:

Link: <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/about-ask/>

Apprenticeships in Healthcare to be found at:

Link 1: <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>

Link 1: <https://www.healthjobsuk.com/>

Real experiences with apprenticeships

Real experiences with apprenticeships

Taylor

Ella

Gary

Poppy

Rowan

Shannon

Tom

Anonymous

Taylor: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I knew I wanted to go down the apprenticeship route, instead of A Levels and university, because I felt ready for the world of work. After I completed my Level 3 apprenticeship with a merit, I wanted to do the Level 6 Cyber Security Degree Apprenticeship to further my knowledge and education. I was already working for Cyber Security Associates when they told me about the Gloucestershire College apprenticeship and said they'd be happy to sponsor me through it after I completed my GCSEs. I work as a cyber security analyst investigating situations that arise on users' networks and verifying whether they're a threat or not. I also research current trends in the field and report to my team in the form of 'threat-hunting', so we stay ahead of the game for active protection of company networks. So far I've learnt how to monitor computer networks and spot malware from common trends, how to build networks and servers, as well as soft skills such as communication.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Gloucestershire College and my employer have supported me by giving me all of the resources I need in order to progress and work on myself. We've been working remotely since November 2019, so the transition during the current pandemic was simple. I've still maintained the same contact with the college, meaning I've been able to keep up with my work and even progress up to a higher-level apprenticeship during it.

My advice/top tips

» *If you're a student who feels ready to work, or someone who wants to learn more than you can at school, I would definitely recommend an apprenticeship; I can only praise how quickly it's enabled me to evolve as a person and in my career.*

Ella: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

In my job role as a Business Administration Apprentice I am on front reception at Tewkesbury School. I welcome visitors into the school and answer phone calls from parents. I also support the administration functions by doing students' timetable changes, photocopying for teachers and sending out main school communications such as trip letters. I also trained to be a first aider so I am now on the school rota for any first aid requests. I was really proud to be a finalist in the Gloucestershire Apprenticeship Awards 2020.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I enjoy everything about my apprenticeship. I am really interested in my job role and there is never a day that's the same. What has been a bonus for me is that I have been accepted by every staff member in the school and I am not "just the apprentice" as some people have the perception of us being. We all work together and I am not afraid to ask for help even if it seems a silly question to ask! I know I can go to anyone in the office and they will help.

My advice/top tips

» *I found the apprenticeship advertised on the government website and applied for it straight away. I was really impressed with the application process. I applied for the job and a few days later I had already heard back from the employer and Gloucestershire College arranging to invite me for an interview. I would 100% recommend an apprenticeship! I am really glad I chose to apply. It is an amazing opportunity and gives you so many transferable skills.*

Gary: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I had several offers from universities to study engineering, however, I recognised that sitting in a lecture hall all day was not my way of learning. I knew I was more hands on and, by completing an apprenticeship at GE Aviation, I knew I would have the best of both worlds: I would earn my degree and have the chance to apply my learning in a real environment.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The experience I gained meant getting a job at the end of my apprenticeship was much easier, even in the current climate. The skills I learned and network I built has made me the engineer I am today. I'm still young and have five years' practical industry experience, which is a huge benefit and addition to my CV – it really sets me apart.

My advice/top tips

» *A career in engineering is full of opportunity. There are so many different engineering sectors and types of engineer; just because you start your career as one type, it doesn't mean you have to spend your whole career in the same role or industry. The skills you learn are transferable and there will always be a need for engineers. An apprenticeship allows you to earn while you learn, with no student debt, which is a massive advantage, as is the invaluable industry experience.*

Poppy: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I choose to do an apprenticeship because I had a passion for hair and I wanted to gain more experience within a salon alongside training. Laura Leigh Hair & Beauty had so much to offer and a long line of awards, plus a successful business reputation. The apprenticeship application process was very efficient and positive. I had my interview and trial day in the space of one week, and started full time that Saturday! I achieved a distinction award for my apprenticeship with Gloucestershire College putting me in the top 1% of apprentices in the country.

What helped and/or didn't help?

My favourite parts of my apprenticeship included working with our big team at Laura Leigh, working at weddings and different events with the salon, being trained to such a high standard by staff and how rewarding working for the salon is. I was given lots of amazing opportunities throughout my apprenticeship. My apprenticeship has prepared me for the future by providing me with the skills to be a successful hairdresser, not only with the skill to do hair, but also to work in a positive environment and how to have the best customer service and people skills. My future goals are to complete my Level 3 qualification, to complete a hair extension course and continue with wedding hair to grow that side of my hairdressing.

My advice/top tips

» *I would recommend an apprenticeship because there is no better way to learn than on the job alongside the people who know how to do it best! As an apprentice, you are also getting paid to learn and gain the most possible experience when you are on the job. It also offers you lots of different opportunities and opens up many other doors for you to learn new skills.*

Rowan: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I applied for an engineering degree apprenticeship, alongside some university choices. I had to send my cover letter/CV and answer some questions for the first stage, and then I was invited to a pre-recorded online interview. Then the final stage of the application was a full day virtual assessment centre. We had to complete lots of different activities like team building, presentations, maths assessments, logic tests and a 40 minute interview.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Doing work experience prior to the assessment day was very helpful, this was because I had already met the people interviewing me and all the apprentices running the day. I was also familiar with the sort of questions they might ask from when I had an interview with them for work experience.

My advice/top tips

- » *Spend enough time practicing logic and maths tests before the day.*
- » *Practice interviews with family members.*
- » *Get as many people as possible to proofread your CV.*

Shannon: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I would 100% recommend anyone doing an apprenticeship as a way of getting into the workplace. I spent six months being unemployed following the completion of my A Levels. I had multiple interviews and was stuck in the catch-22 of being told someone else had more experience than me, yet no one would give me a chance. I then went down the apprenticeship route with Gloucestershire College and started my Level 2 in Business Administration in 2014. I will now have been in my job at CCP for 7 years this April, and have since completed a further three apprenticeships. I've found an apprenticeship to be the easiest way to learn as I'm getting experience on the job whilst also completing a qualification. Before I started my HR Level 3 Apprenticeship, we only had one HR Manager within CCP so my manager suggested the apprenticeship programme would be beneficial. Within the past year of me studying, our workplace has grown to 250+ employees so the need for extra HR support was definitely there! I passed my apprenticeship's End Point Assessment in November.

What helped and/or didn't help?

My favourite thing about this apprenticeship was that it included a day release to college so it meant I had the support of the students on my course which was really nice as we could share ideas with one another. Now that I am qualified as an Associate Member of the CIPD I hope that my role will change from Assistant HR Advisor to HR Advisor and I can get a better understanding of all areas of HR within the organisation. Once my knowledge develops, I may consider completing the Level 5 HR Apprenticeship qualification.

Tom: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

I saw an AAT (the Association of Accounting Technicians) apprenticeship with the NHS at Gloucestershire College advertised and thought that accountancy could be interesting as I've always been good with numbers/Excel. When I was at school, apprenticeships were always viewed as an option behind university, but they are so beneficial. Apprenticeships give you equal years in work experience to your study period, so you are far more likely to be eligible for employment due to being fully qualified and having years of workplace experience.

What helped and/or didn't help?

I have become far more confident in every aspect of my life. My job satisfaction is very high due to the engaging nature of my work and I feel as though this opportunity has developed my personality as a whole. My technical ability is tested frequently in this role and that makes me happy as I love challenging myself. I believe that a healthy level of challenge is crucial to long term happiness, so I'm glad I was able to kick-start that by finding this apprenticeship.

Anonymous: Apprenticeships

My experiences with apprenticeships

So far, I have found out that it is quite difficult to get apprenticeships or jobs when you have disabilities. According to my teachers I am extremely academically able but after spending many months now trying, I still cannot get past the initial stages, despite having 3 Grade A A-levels and a Grade B A-level, all in high value subjects. No one seems willing to give me a fair chance once I have declared my disabilities and they have not made enough reasonable adjustments to enable me to cope at the interview stage. One bit of advice I have been given is that some employers do have a 'disability confident employer' status and maybe this will make it easier if you stick with these.

What helped and/or didn't help?

- » *Accepting it will be a long hard task.*
- » *People's ignorance around disabilities.*

My advice/top tips

- » *Start applying really early.*
- » *Be realistic.*
- » *Look for the disability confident employers.*
- » *Try and gain as much work experience as you can.*

Traineeships



On the job training can be one of the best ways to learn. Traineeships offer adaptable, work-focussed and inclusive environments in which to gain skills on the job, whilst being supported by a training provider. Traineeships are unpaid and often only last 6 months – but they do offer a real pathway into an apprenticeship or job after this point, which would be paid. If you are aged 16 -24 (or 25 with an EHCP) and would like a supported introduction into the world of work, a traineeship could be an ideal stepping-stone. Local providers of traineeships include National Star College, Hitz, Gloucestershire College and Prospect Training. The links to the right offer some good information to help inform you further. The link to download the ‘SPIED’ bulletin from the Youth Support Team comes highly recommended as a place to regularly discover traineeship opportunities in Gloucestershire. *-Martha*



Download and subscribe to the SPIED Newsletter from the Youth Support Team website:

Link: https://assets.youthsupportteam.co.uk/uploads/documents/Spied_March_2021.pdf

Traineeship information and opportunities on the SGS college website:

Link: <https://www.sgscol.ac.uk/apprenticeships/traineeships>

Use the Government website to find a traineeship:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>

Information via Youth Employment UK on whether a traineeship is right for you:

Link: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/traineeships-right-for-me/#:~:text=If%20you%20are%20motivated%20but,be%20a%20good%20first%20step.>

Information from Prospects Training:

Link: <http://www.prospect-training.org.uk/traineeships>

Further information about traineeships via the National Apprenticeship Scheme:

Link: <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/traineeships/>

Traineeship case studies

Real experiences with traineeships

Training and apprenticeships - Traineeships:

Real experiences with traineeships



Harry: Supported internships/traineeships

My experiences with Supported Internships/traineeships

I had a Supported Internship that was to help me prepare for adulthood, such as living away from home. I found that the Supported Internship I was offered was too simple. I felt like I was chucked into it, and didn't enjoy being constantly in the classroom setting. I felt like I was with people who needed more support than I did, and found the questions far too simple. I wanted to be out doing a more practical internships like other people I knew, and found that the particular Supported Internship I was on wasn't for me.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Having such simple tasks to do didn't help, and making it more challenging would have helped a lot. Being taught something I already knew wasn't helpful, and I would have rather learned how to work in a workplace on something more practical than being stuck in a classroom learning very simple tasks. It would have helped a lot to be offered more options regarding internships and traineeships, as I didn't take much away from my own experience.

My advice/top tips

- » *Ask your teachers/tutors to make it more challenging if you are finding things too easy and simple.*
- » *Ask for help to learn something new.*
- » *Tell your teachers if it's too easy or hard.*
- » *Think carefully about whether a Supported Internship is right for you before attending.*

Traineeship case studies



Armani: Traineeships

Impress case study: Tom's experience with traineeships

Armani came to PTS to take on a Traineeship as she wanted to get some career direction as well as practical hands-on work experience. Before this, she was using brilliant initiative and getting into a consistent routine by conducting home schooling. Due to COVID, most of Armani's work placement involved working from home virtually with constant supervision. She is working towards creative projects and adapting to the current climate of remote and digital workshops.

While undertaking classes at PTS, Armani found the classes small but with students who were kind to her and likeminded. During her time at PTS, Armani has stated that her consistency levels have improved. Armani also found her manager of the work placement extremely supportive and encouraging while supporting her with creative and technical tasks which she'd never completed before. "Ruth Ward is by far the best boss anyone could ask for," Armani commented. "She is extremely empathetic and sympathetic and wants the best from you."

Armani is now working at an art shop while spending the rest of her time working on tasks at home as part of her work placement. Armani commented that PTS was very keen and eager to help her improve wherever possible. If she needed support in any way, all they had to do was ask. "PTS allows people to have a fresh start and the fact that you can learn while you are working is brilliant."

Armani would like to gain an apprenticeship within the creative industry in the long term and PTS are supporting her and her placement to transition from work placement into an apprenticeship.

Nick: Traineeships

Impress case study: Tom's experience with traineeships

After attending school at Tewksbury Comprehensive, Nick contacted PTS where he had an interview for PTS' traineeship programme. Nick was keen to gain work experience within the motor vehicle industry and therefore PTS found an excellent placement for him at Natton Garage.

Alongside his work placement, Nick has also achieved his English qualification and has made lots of new friends. Nick is continuing his placement at Natton Garage, learning how to fix cars and operate equipment safely. Nick said that he would recommend PTS to others as he has always felt comfortable and found the course fun. He also commented that PTS "help to get you to where you want to be."

Nick has worked hard throughout the lockdown and provided extra support protecting the garage from flooding before Christmas. Natton Garage are very pleased with the dedication of Nick and have offered him an Apprenticeship in Motor Vehicle Maintenance.

T-Levels



T-levels are a new, industry-focussed qualification that you can take as an alternative to A-levels, a BTEC or Level 3 apprenticeship. The 'T' stands for 'technical' and a T-level course will be equivalent in academic rigour and UCAS points to an A-level. T-Level students spend 80% of their course in the classroom and 20% in an industry placement. What T-levels offer is the opportunity to leapfrog into highly skilled work upon completion. So if you are confident about the type of industry you would like to enter after year 13, and enjoy work that has a vocational focus rather than a purely academic one, T-levels could be a fantastic option. You can also go onto study a higher level apprenticeship or attend university after gaining T-levels: if you have a particular degree in mind, make sure you check that the course will accept your T-levels in their entry requirements. Find out more about T-levels using these links. **-Martha**



Information provided by the Government on the introduction of T-levels:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>

Further information and T-level opportunities at Cirencester College:

Link: https://www.cirencester.ac.uk/courses/course-directory/t-levels/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw0oCDBhCPARIsAII3C_EM9gwjlRTILhD119DWrRoQkVc_OsXkFnBgshdq1KY3RG6s-rpKGtYaAnBzEALw_wcB

T-level opportunities available at Gloucestershire College:

Link: <https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/campaigns/t-levels/>

Advice and information on how T-Level compare to A-Levels from GROWS:

Link: <https://www.grows.ac.uk/resources/education-options/t-levels>

A further T-Levels page on the Government's website:

Link: <https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/>

Resources about T-Levels, geared towards teachers, but a useful hub to help discover more about this new qualification:

Link: https://amazingapprenticeships.com/tlevels/teachers/?utm_source=AA%20Mailchimp&utm_medium=teachers%20landing%20pg&utm_campaign=T%20Levels

Watch our YouTube video discussing T-Levels with staff and students from Cirencester:

Link: https://amazingapprenticeships.com/tlevels/teachers/?utm_source=AA%20Mailchimp&utm_medium=teachers%20landing%20pg&utm_campaign=T%20Levels

Real experiences with T-Levels

Training and apprenticeships - T-Levels:

Real experiences with T-Levels



Max: T-Levels

My experiences with T-Levels

In September 2020 I joined the Childcare and Education T-Level course at Cirencester College. When I first applied for this course, I was excited because the course seemed to fit my way of learning and I have always been interested in working in childcare. However, I also had doubts as this was a new course and our year was the tester year for T-Levels. I also had concerns about only taking one course, and whether I'd get qualifications good enough to get into university. Since being on this course for the past 6 months, my doubts have been eased. I'm really enjoying the course and all the topics we learn. I was quickly reassured that this course is equivalent to 3 A-Levels, and that the experience from this course would prepare me for both further education and employment. Taking a T-Level has been a great decision for me as it allows me to gain both in class knowledge, and experience with how to apply this knowledge to job situations through my work placement as we have 2 days in placement and 3 in college per week. One of the main perks about taking a T-Level is how much the teachers/course leaders appreciate the class input and are willing to be flexible to our preferences, giving us a voice and control over our learning. The Childcare and Education T-Level is very interesting and gives room for engaging activities and enjoyable experiences that help me and the rest of my class to stay focused. For example, we have been given opportunities to go to 'Forest Schools' and do hands-on learning in different environments (as much as possible during COVID-19).

What helped and/or didn't help?

Having an opportunity for work experience has really helped me to apply my knowledge and understand how to use it in future jobs, and in my current placement. The T-Level has given me an opportunity to see what working in childcare and education is like, and whether I enjoy working in this field. The work placements give me opportunity to see what jobs in that area I feel most suited for, and if I want to pursue a career within this sector. Having the opportunity to shape my own education on this course helped me feel more in control and supported, as my course leaders value my class' input and cater to our needs, both individually and as a group.

My advice/top tips

- » *If you learn better with hands on education, I highly recommend looking into T-Levels.*
- » *If you're worried about not having work experience when applying for jobs, T-Levels are a good way to get experience and knowledge.*
- » *If you are unsure about what career you want to pursue but are interested in a particular industry, subject or sector of employment, I think the T-Levels would give you the opportunity for varied experiences and understanding of the different roles within employment settings.*

Supported Internships/training



For those of us with physical or learning difficulties, or who face any additional challenges, one of the main concerns we may have when contemplating work is that, although we may feel ready, we might still need some support. We need to be sure that potential employers will 'get us' and be able to see our skills. A lack of confidence in communicating and/or a lack of academic qualifications can also feel like barriers.

This section will give you information on Supported Internships and training opportunities across Gloucestershire. These are structured programmes that can support you with unpaid work placements with disability aware employers, alongside a study programme attached to a local college. You should have your sights set on eventual paid employment. You will need to have an EHCP to apply for a Supported Internship, so if sounds like you, then give this section a look. **-Robyn**



Information and opportunities regarding supported internships by SGS college:

Link: <https://www.sgscol.ac.uk/study/foundation/supported-internships>

Information from Forwards Gloucestershire about the AIM Assisted Internship Model:

Link: <https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/aim/>

List of colleges and schools that provide supported internships in Gloucestershire:

Link: https://www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamilies/service.page?id=Oe7WSI_OvPc

Supported Internship case studies

Real experiences with Supported Internships

Training and apprenticeships - Supported internships:

Real experiences with supported internships



Training and apprenticeships - Supported internship case studies:

Supported Internship case studies



Tom: Supported Internships

Star College case study: Tom's experience with Supported Internships

Tom is 19 year old student from National Star College in Cheltenham. Tom has been completing an AIM Supported Internship at BP Motors, in Cheltenham since he started his placement. On top of his college work and other placements, Tom has been at his placement at BP two days a week, throughout the year.

Tom explained his Internship involves lots of different tasks. Tom gets involved in scotching, polishing, cleaning the cars, preparing the vehicles before painting or restoration work and other car body work done at BP Motors. Tom also gets involved with other duties cleaning, brushing and keeping the work environment tidy.

Tom appears to have really valued his time at BP. When we spoke with Tom he told us "I enjoy working on the old cars we get in, I think I've learned quite a lot in this job". Tom's ambitious however and is thinking about his next steps. "Now I've finished my Internship, I'd like to get an apprenticeship or paid work in this industry" Tom shared.

Tom's certainly made an impression with BP Motors, and on finishing his Internship he has been offered 2 days a week paid work with them. Tom's really happy with this, but he sees it as one step in the right direction and is working with National Star College towards his ultimate goal of a Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship.

Aimee: Supported Internships

Star College case study: Aimee's experience with Supported Internships

Aimee is a 17 year old student at SGS College who's accessed an AIM Supported Internship over the last year. Aimee was really keen to work with children at the start of her Internship, and following input from her Job Coaches at SGS College, Aimee started a placement at Charfield Pre-School. Aimee has had great feedback since starting her Supported Internship, something which Debra Arthur - Pre School Manager, was keen to share:

"I was approached by Stroud College to take on an Intern, this was something we had never done before but felt we would like to offer Aimee the support in our preschool." Debra explained.

Debra shared her impressions on Aimee's placement - "Since coming Aimee has grown in confidence, she undertakes various duties at preschool and interacts brilliantly with the children, for us she has definitely been a asset to preschool and we feel that with our support she has gained skills she wouldn't have had if she wasn't in a work environment."

Debra also appeared impressed about how Supported Internships worked, explaining that "We have weekly support from the Job Coach if Aimee or we need it. An Internship would be something I would recommend to other employers to make a difference to a young person needing this."

Since completing her Supported Internship Aimee has gone onto gain paid employment with Charfield Pre-School, working there 4 to 12 hours a week, with feedback remaining positive following the end of her Supported Internship.

Work experience



Work experience is a really helpful opportunity to take advantage of. Not only is it a fantastic addition to your CV and a great topic to reference in interviews when talking to a potential employer, it is also the most practical way you can figure out whether a career that interests you is actually compatible in real life. However, it can be tricky to find the right placements when there is such a high demand from young people who need a similar experience. The resources here should help you figure out the most effective way to approach looking into work experience placements that suit you.

-Beth



Everything you need to know about work experience:

Link: <http://www.allaboutcareers.com/careers-advice/work-experience>

Kickstart your career:

Link: <https://www.studentladder.co.uk>

Prospect Training can help arrange work experience placements:

Link: <https://www.prospect-training.org.uk>

Internships & work experience placements in Gloucester:

Link: <https://www.e4s.co.uk/jobs/3-internships-jobs-in-gloucester.htm>

Student work experience placements with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer/work-experience>

10 ways to get the most out of work experience:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/careers/getting-job/10-ways-get-most-out-work-experience>

Real experiences with work experience

Volunteering



There are many things we enjoy doing in our free time. You may like sports, reading or being around friends, the list is endless! One activity that you might not have thought of, however, is volunteering. Being a volunteer can be an incredibly rewarding experience as it can help you gain new skills, boost your CV, give back to your community and even expand your future job prospects.

Keep an open mind about volunteering! You might be surprised about the range of settings in which you can volunteer. Its worth doing your research to find an opportunity that aligns well with your interests, personality and the time you have to offer. If you are curious about volunteering, have a look at the resources in this section to find out more. *-Lily*



Where to make a difference in your community:

Link: <http://vinspired.com/>

Find volunteering opportunities near you:

Link: <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>

Summer volunteering with NCS:

Link: <https://wearencs.com>

Volunteer with Gloucestershire NHS:

Link: <https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/volunteer/>

Volunteering in the arts and cultural sector in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/everything-volunteering>

Search for local 'from home' volunteering opportunities:

Link: <https://do-it.org/news/volunteering-at-home>

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust volunteering:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/get-involved/volunteer>

Higher education



If you think higher education may be the next step for you, then you may be unaware that there are many types of qualification to pursue! The process of higher education, such as university, can be a daunting one but it doesn't need to be. It may seem that there's a lot to think about, such as applying for courses, preparing to move away from home, loans, additional considerations and next steps, but it's actually much easier than you may think! Check out the resources and information we've gathered for help and advice on your journey into higher education. **-Ben**

Considering study at a higher level

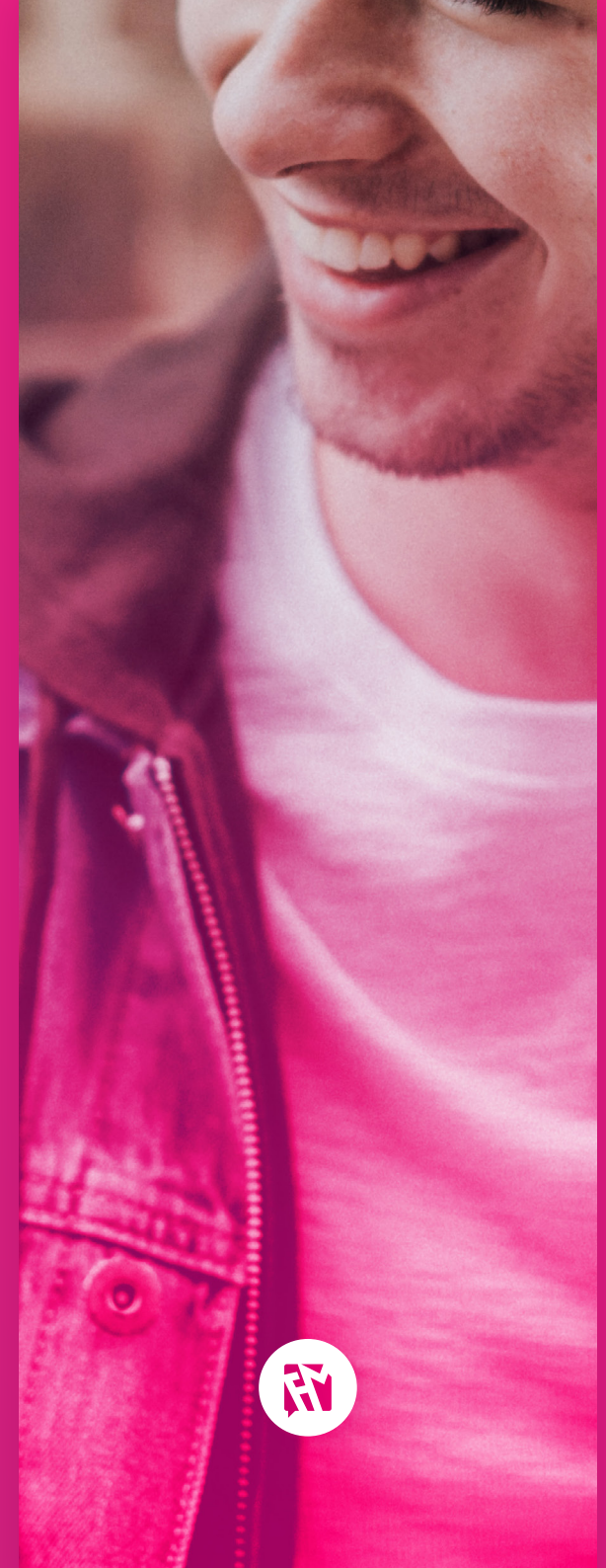
Course options (types of qualifications)

Loans, grants and bursaries

Applications and applying to university

Preparing to live away from home for the first time

Sources of financial support offered by universities



Higher education - Subsection 1:

Considering study at a higher level



During school, college, and sixth form, many young people struggle to find impartial advice when trying to figure out whether they want to study at a higher level such as university.

It can be tricky to take a step back and consider your own wants and needs when everyone has their own opinion about why their preference is right for you. Higher education is often times a fantastic experience for many young people and very important for certain career paths. However, it is not right for everyone and it is easy to take that route simply because it is the path most expected of you and publicised around you.

The resources in this section should shed some light on whether higher education is right for you, and if so, what you can do to take the next steps towards it. -**Beth**



Local network raising aspirations to study at a higher level:

Link: <https://www.grows.ac.uk/student>

Opportunities for Year 13s to get experience of university life and employment:

Link: <http://purepotential.org/events-opportunities/>

Apprenticeships, jobs and sponsored degrees:

Link: <https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk>

Current apprenticeship and school leaver programmes:

Link: <https://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk>

The official site where you can search and apply for your degree:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com>

Life at university:

Link: <https://www.push.co.uk>

Find out when you can visit universities:

Link: <https://www.opendays.com>

Events and opportunities for year 13s to get experience of university life:

Link: <http://purepotential.org/events-opportunities/>

Find a university event:

Link: <https://stage2.mystudentevents.com>

The university and college open day directory:

Link: <http://www.opendays.com/>

Course information and expert advice:

Link: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk>

How to apply to a conservatoire:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/conservatoires>

Students at university with caring responsibilities:

Link: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/students-caring-responsibilities?fbclid=IwAR2C8WlJS0iD4Sj-teJoJJRp4vZbfc5VpxUksui2R1R_NbpiJwYfM_TmkPo

Course options



The massive variation of courses and qualifications available to young people these days can be very overwhelming and confusing when figuring out what would suit you best. The range of options is fantastic in terms of ensuring you have an education tailored to your needs and interests, but these options are useless if you are unaware of what is actually out there and how each option is unique from the others.

These resources should help you to distinguish the pros and cons of different courses and qualifications to make this preparation easier. -**Beth**



Qualification types in the UK:

Link: <https://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/qualification-types-in-the-uk.html>

The difference between different qualifications:

Link: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/applying-for-university/choosing-a-course/guide-to-qualifications>

UCAS' information about course types:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/post-16-qualifications-you-can-take>

Vocational qualifications guide:

Link: <https://www.studential.com/further-education/vocational-qualifications>

Introductions to every university course:

Link: <https://www.applytouni.com>

Study suggestions based on your strengths, interests and personality:

Link: <http://www.ukcoursefinder.com/>

Real experiences with course options



Freya: Course options

My experiences with course options

I studied psychology for my undergraduate since I really enjoyed it in A level, and I could see my future self conducting the kind of research that we would always look at in class. Since graduating with a 2:1 in psychology I have realised that being part of scientific research takes much more than just an undergraduate degree! I found out that if I wanted to be even a small part of a research team as a research assistant, I would be expected to have a Master's degree and if I wanted to lead my own research then I would need to do a whole PhD!

What helped and/or didn't help?

Doing my research helped the most, I googled the sorts of jobs I was interested in and investigated them further to find out which postgraduate qualifications I would need to get. Visiting career advisors at school and university helped too as they have good knowledge on what sort of qualifications and experience you need for certain kinds of job roles. What I think was unhelpful for me was being told by my teachers that having an undergraduate degree would help me a lot when it comes to finding a good job that I enjoy. When I was taking my A levels, I wasn't fully aware of the world of work and how truly competitive it is and so I truly believed that 3 years at uni would land me an amazing job and my student debt would be worth it, which is not necessarily the case at all and I think this fact should have been made clearer to me as an A level student. I didn't even know what a Master's degree was when I was in A level so I think schools should be educating A level students on post graduate qualifications and their importance for certain careers.

My advice/top tips

- » *Visit a careers advisor.*
- » *Google your dream jobs to see which qualifications you really need and it may be more than just an undergraduate!*

Leda: Course options

My experiences with course options

When I finished my A levels, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do for a career. I'd had a couple of weeks work experience volunteering in a school and really enjoyed it, so, at 18 years old I thought this must be the only route for me. I applied for primary education degrees, passed the interview stage and was offered a place - a three-year course that would qualify me to be a primary school teacher at the age of 21. I then realised that I didn't have enough experience to know if this was the right course for me to begin at the age of 18. It all felt so final. I then decided to take a gap year, work to get my savings up and begin thinking about what would be the right direction for me. During my A levels I really enjoyed Psychology. I loved how broad a subject it was, from criminology to child development to neuroscience. I decided that it would be an excellent subject to study at degree level, and that whilst it was not a vocational degree - like primary teaching was - it may help me to discover what career path I should follow. After my gap year, I then began a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. I absolutely loved it! The modules were so broad and I quickly found where my interest lay within Psychology - child development and education! I was able to get a job in a primary school for the following September after I graduated. Fast forward to today and I now have nearly 3 years' experience of working in both a mainstream and special needs school setting. I have adored my time working with children in education and am now sure I am ready to take the next step in my career. I am due to start my PGCE School's Direct teacher training this September. As I already have an undergraduate degree, this training will only take me 10 months and is 'schools direct' which means I will be mainly based in a school.

What helped and/or didn't help?

At sixth form, I was not made aware of my options! I felt pushed to apply for universities and for a course that I just wasn't sure was right for me. I simply wasn't ready to make such a big decision at that stage of my life. The lack of careers advice and guidance for those who were unsure was certainly not helpful. Advice online was useful and helpful (although it was limited!), as was advice from teachers, my parents and friends.

My advice/top tips

- » *If you're not sure about the course you're applying for, stop! Take a step back and evaluate your options.*
- » *Get careers advice.*
- » *Don't be afraid to take a gap year, or 2! It's okay not be sure about what you want to do yet.*
- » *It doesn't matter what age you are, it's never too late to change career paths. So don't put too much pressure on yourself to have it all sorted by the time you leave school.*



Loans, grants and bursaries



Sometimes people use the three terms 'loans', 'grants' and 'bursaries' interchangeably without ever actually explaining the difference between each of them.

Depending on your personal and household financial situation, loans might be the only one available to you, but on the other hand, you may be able to take advantage of all three! It is important to understand where your money comes from as this allows you to create a budget structure that makes sense to you. The resources below will shed some light on the differences between loans, grants and bursaries, how they work, and which ones you personally should look into.

-Beth



GROWS impartial advice about student finance:

Link: <https://www.grows.ac.uk/resources/all-about-student-finance>

Make a student finance account:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>

Student Cash Point:

Link: <http://www.studentcashpoint.co.uk/default.aspx>

Uni money matters:

Link: <https://www.push.co.uk/money.html>

Student finance calculator:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator>

Additional funding:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/finance/additional-funding>

Real experiences with loans, grants and bursaries



Ben: Loans, grants and bursaries

My experiences with loans, grants and bursaries

When I was applying for university, the idea of a student loan seemed quite daunting, and I had a lot of concerns surrounding the idea of debt. However, after conversations with my college tutors, other uni students and looking further into the process, I realised that it wasn't as daunting or scary as it seemed. From my experience, it seems that people can be put off of uni when they think of the debt, but in fact, it's really not an issue! I came to realise that not only did I not have to pay back a penny after university until I was earning a certain salary, but that even then it was a minuscule amount in the grand scheme of things, and debt is eventually wiped away later in life if it's not paid back in full. I applied for university and a student loan with the help of my college lecturers and family, and all in all, the process ended up being a relatively simple, stress free process.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Looking into the process properly and having discussions with college tutors and other people I knew at uni definitely helped. It dispelled any misconceptions I had regarding student loans that were worrying me. In terms of actually applying, again, advice from tutors and others helped, but all in all it was a relatively simple process to crack on with once I got moving with it.

My advice/top tips

- » *Properly research and inform yourself of the process.*
- » *Don't think of student loans and debt as a hindrance, you'll be surprised to find out just how little student debt affects you in the long run.*
- » *Seek advice from your college or school tutors, or friends and family who have attended university.*
- » *Make sure you're applying with plenty of time to spare, don't leave it until the last minute!*
- » *Make sure you are completely sure of the course you want to attend before applying for a student loan - it'll make the whole process easier, and will avoid complications further down the road!*

Martha: Loans, grants and bursaries

My experiences with loans, grants and bursaries

I studied an undergraduate degree at a UK university between 2013 and 2016. My tuition fees were £9000 per year. I was daunted by the idea of having £27,000 of debt after graduating; however, I came to terms with the idea of my student loan being a pragmatic necessity to fulfil my ambitions and I was comforted by the fact that a student loan operates in a different, far less punishing way than any other form of debt. However, what I wasn't prepared for was the cost of living. I was someone whose parents' joint earnings precluded me from any form of grant or bursary (money that you don't have to pay back), so I had no choice but to also get a maintenance loan from Student Finance, who 'means tested' my parents in order to determine how much of a loan I 'deserved'. I got about £5000 a year (paid in 3 instalments), which, when you consider my halls of residence cost £400 a month (£4000 for a 10 month tenancy), meant I had a massive shortfall. I arrived at University without enough money for a term's worth of food – my parents are not high earners, we never went on foreign holidays and we always had to budget – and therefore I had assumed that the means testing would provide me with enough money to live. I had no choice but to find a part time job to make ends meet and finding a job in this stressful situation, in a new city and worried, was horrible.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The opacity of Student Finance was a real hindrance. Applying for a loan was a long and arduous process for me and my parents, after which there was a long period of uncertainty, just waiting to see how much of a maintenance loan their algorithm decided I deserved. Only finding out that I had a maintenance shortfall a couple of weeks before moving-in day was certainly NOT helpful.

My advice/top tips

- » *I would strongly advise seeing Student Finance as just one 'string to your bow' when it comes to financing your time at University. Do not assume that they will lend you all the costs that you will need. Rather, think about your other income streams – are you happy to have a part time job, or a seasonal job? Maybe having a Gap Year to save up before hand could be your tactic. Rely on yourself more than Student Finance.*
- » *Look at the cost of living in different University cities. I went to a very expensive city, something that I didn't think about that much when choosing a university. A practical choice to go somewhere cheaper could actually give you a better University experience, as you might avoid the need to work so much, meaning you have more time for study and a social life. Don't underestimate the cost of living on your happiness!*

Applications and applying to university



The prospect of university and the process of applying for a place is incredibly exciting, however, making sure you sell yourself effectively in the personal statement of the application process can be daunting. Balancing how you show your individuality personality with academic achievements is tricky without guidance.

If you are in school you should be able to find support from your teachers, but one-to-one attention is not always available. Moreover, if you have decided to apply to university after leaving education, it is important to find information that will help you feel less alone in the process. The resources in this section will provide some guidance as to how to use and show your strengths when completing a university application if that is the route you want to explore. **-Beth**



Myth-busting the admissions processes:

Link: https://advancingaccess.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/uploads/fileupload/file_upload/138/AA_S3_InfoSheet3_Myth-busting.pdf

Sources of university information and how to use them:

Link: https://advancingaccess.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/uploads/fileupload/file_upload/41/strand1_AA_S1_InfoSheet_Sources_Published_1_.pdf

How to understand a university league table:

Link: https://advancingaccess.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/uploads/fileupload/file_upload/43/AA_S1_InfoSheet_League_tables_Published.pdf

University personal statement examples:

Link: <https://www.studential.com/personal-statement-examples>

How and when to apply to university:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

UCAS key dates:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/type/key-date>

Real experiences with applying for university



Martha



Amy



Angharad

Martha: Choosing a university course

My experiences with choosing a university course

The process of choosing what study and at what university felt like casting a net into an ocean of conflicting information. I found myself googling subject areas and then filtering through heavy written material. Each university prospectus is written with persuasive language and emphasises what that institution is good at, whilst glossing over any shortcomings. I found attending Open Days was helpful. I noticed what the journey from home to the university was like. Some felt too far away and others too close. The university that I chose was actually one that I visited alone and outside of a staged Open Day. This gave me a more genuine look at the campus and departments, when the hype and marketing that was overwhelming me was actually missing. I connected more with the environment and feeling of the city and campus, and this helped me make my choice.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Prospectuses were only helpful for making me aware of the courses on offer. They were not helpful when it came to narrowing down options, as each prospectus is highly biased. Writing a list of potential courses was helpful, and from here I could disqualify universities on different grounds, such as entry requirements, lack of certain facilities, or because the location didn't appeal. The remaining courses became my short-list for visiting in person. Open Days or private visits were really helpful. I found that talking to my teachers wasn't very helpful, as they simply encouraged me to choose the university with the highest entry grades, regardless of other important factors like location, atmosphere on campus, the accommodation on offer and the cost of living in that city/region.

My advice/top tips

- » *The University course and location are of equal importance. You have to be happy with both aspects, and I would advice collecting a list of courses that you like the sound of, but then let the location, atmosphere and general feeling of the university drive your final choice. It's so important to be happy in the environment – you are going to spend 3-4 years of your life in this city!*
- » *Be cautious of university marketing materials. These are written by a different department to the teaching staff and are highly edited to sound and look great. Take the sceptical approach and wait to see what you experience yourself when you attend a site visit.*
- » *If you feel sure about the subject you'd like to study, don't let the opinions of others sway you. No matter how lovely or reputable a university is, if it doesn't offer the course you want to study, it won't be right. Don't feel pressured into choosing a different course just so you can go to a flashy university or one of your parents' choosing.*

Amy: Choosing a university course

My experiences with choosing a university course

My last two years at school have had a focus on post 18 opportunities. Personally, I always knew I wanted to continue to higher education, so the process of choosing between uni and work was easy. Throughout the whole application process I worked with my head of year and tutors. I applied on Ucas.com. I had to write a personal statement, complete entrance exams and get predicted grades.

What helped and/or didn't help?

It was really useful speaking with people who have been through the process, such as my brother. As the process of applying to medical schools is slightly different, I watched various videos about the process and made sure to ask the relevant teachers.

My advice/top tips

- » *Ask teachers for help, especially those relevant to the course you're applying to.*
- » *Speak to people who have applied recently.*
- » *Watch YouTube videos by people who have applied for your course.*
- » *Check on the UCAS website if your course requires extra steps like entrance exams.*

Angharad: Studying at university

My experience with studying at university

I studied English at Liverpool John Moores University, graduating in 2020. This was after I took a year out after finishing 6th Form. My enjoyment of university was a slow burner. Looking back at it I had a brilliant time but it wasn't all amazing all at once. Moving into halls in my first year was good fun, but I didn't form a strong friendship with my flatmates straight away. Instead I was closer to my friends from my course who lived in other apartment blocks. It took until my third year of Uni to be able to live with the people I really loved, but when I finally got there I loved every second (despite the stress of third year). Going through the motions like that, however, taught me so much about myself and how I handle situations and what I enjoy and what I don't, meaning when I did get to live with my friends I could really enjoy it. My course was definitely what I thought it would be and, in fact, better for me than the course offered at my first choice uni. It also taught me more about how I work and what environments suit me, so while I don't have much actual experience of the industry I want to go into (thanks Coronavirus), I know what works well in terms of working environment. All in all, I learnt so much about myself by being at Uni and really enjoyed my time there.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Having a job before Uni and during the summer - that way, along with a student overdraft, you can worry a little less about money and focus more on enjoying yourself. Talking to older friends and relatives that had been to uni recently about what to take and how to approach things. Their experience can help guide you!

My advice/top tips

- » *If you think you want to give Uni a go, just go for it. You can't decide if its not for you if you haven't given it a go.*
- » *Jump into every opportunity given to you. Uni is probably the last time you'll get an opportunity easily. So join a society, meet new people, take that work experience opportunity or course. It's scary at first but saying yes will be the best thing you do.*
- » *Don't ever be afraid to ask for help! This is important. Uni is a huge deal. Don't expect it to go as smoothly as your friends' experience did because your life isn't theirs. If you are struggling, feeling lonely or miss home, always reach out to the people you trust! Don't suffer in silence.*
- » *Enjoy it! (cliche I know) If you let it, University will be an incredibly valuable experience looking back at it. Have as much fun as you possibly can.*

Preparing to live away from home for the first time



Despite the fact that many young people spend years craving to move out of the place they grew up in, the reality of taking this step is no small feat and must be taken very seriously. This does not mean to say that you can't have fun throughout the process, but there are many practical and emotional factors that must be considered.

The freedom of living with increased independence comes with taking responsibility for your own well-being, physical and otherwise. To find some guidance on making this progression, have a look at the links and personal experiences in this section. -**Beth**



The students' guide to living away from home:

Link: <https://www.unbiased.co.uk/news/students/students-living-away-from-home>

UCAS' top tips whilst living away from home:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/tip-top-tips-whilst-living-away-home>

Expert chat: moving out to university:

Link: <https://www.themix.org.uk/housing/student-housing/expert-chat-moving-out-to-university-12322.html>

Worried about moving to uni accommodation?:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/worried-about-moving-uni-accommodation-student-minds-has-some-advice>



Higher education - Preparing to live away from home for the first time:

Real experiences with preparing to live away from home

Martha

Leda

Higher education - Preparing to live away from home for the first time:

Martha: Preparing to live away from home

My experiences with preparing to live away from home

Like so many people, moving to university was also my first time living away from home. I grew up in Cheltenham and lived in the same house from 0 – 18 years, so I had never even experienced moving house with my parents. Moving into university halls was a big leap. I lived on campus in my first year and then subsequently in a privately rented house share in the city of Bath for my second and third years. It was a big shock to realise just how much stuff I needed – my own bed sheets, kitchen utensils, iron, the list went on! Although my halls did provide the basics, the interiors of halls was far from homely! The carpets were industrial, as were the furniture and fixings. I brought some more individual possessions, like my own ‘mood lighting’ and curtains and cushions and these went some way to making my room less austere. I also found I had to bring a brave face – it was emotional saying goodbye to my parents and meeting my new flat mates for the first time. Although I was tempted to visit my parents at the weekends, I decided that this would sabotage my attempts to embed with my peers and make new friends. I am really pleased that I persevered through the first term, making my first visit home only in the Christmas holidays. It was important to accept that I was now living away, and couldn’t go running home every week. Before long I felt settled.

What helped and/or didn’t help?

The utilitarian feel of university halls was not particularly helpful when I first moved in. It was such a contrast from home! Taking some time to make my room more comfortable and individual helped me feel happier in halls. Talking to others about their families and sharing something about my own was helpful – everyone was dealing with the same emotions and it brought us together, whether we were homesick or not.

My advice/top tips

- » *Don’t worry too much if you don’t instantly feel ‘at home’. I never felt truly at home whilst living in my university city, but that’s ok. Making efforts to make your environment more familiar and relaxing will help.*
- » *Focus on forming friendships. Everyone is in the same position and one of the most alien things about moving away is the changing faces. Your housemates and course mates become like your ‘university family’, with as many ups, downs and dysfunctions of a real family! Finding the right crowd for you will work wonders to make you feel more at home.*



Higher education - Preparing to live away from home for the first time:

Leda: Preparing to live away from home

My experiences with preparing to live away from home

For me, I have 2 experiences of moving out of home. The first time being when I went away to university. This was scary as not only was I moving out of the family home but I was moving to a different city too. The second time was a year after I graduated. While at university, I still had my bedroom at my family house and had to move back in when I finished, so this time I was moving out for good. Moving out of your family home can be really emotional and a bit scary but also exciting as it's an opportunity for you to grow your independence. I really enjoyed this aspect of moving out. I loved the smaller things like being able to decorate rooms the way I wanted and living life to my own schedule without worrying about interfering with my family's schedules.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The biggest help for me was setting aside time to prepare and plan. It may seem boring at the time but it really pays off in the long run. I made sure I was going for the best utilities and energy providers to ensure I was getting a good deal and could save money. I found that making sure I knew what shops and facilities would be near me helped ease any anxiety of the unknown about moving to a new area. I checked certain supermarkets online to see roughly how much a weekly shop would cost me so I knew how I needed to budget. This all helped me to feel more in control of my money. At times we may struggle to accept that we may need some help when we first move away from home. I remember wanting to feel in control and like I was mature enough to handle 'adult life'. However, in the beginning I really struggled with missing my family but felt like I didn't want to burden them with that. This way of thinking really didn't do me any favours. Reaching out when you're struggling shows strength. Moving away from home for the first time is a big step and you'll need to make the most of your support bubble of family and friends.

My advice/top tips

- » *Prepare and research. Research energy providers and Wifi providers etc. Get a rough idea of how much you will be spending per month on bills and food shopping. This will help you budget and prevent overspending.*
- » *Reach out if you need help! Everyone will need some help in one way or another when moving out for the first time. It's a totally new experience. Don't be afraid to lean on friends and family for support.*



Sources of financial support offered by universities



When considering applying to university, finance is as important to think through as finding the right course and location to study. All universities offer financial support based on your personal situation, so it should never be the issue that stops you from making the journey you want to make. For example, GROWS is an online resource that provides lots of information regarding the different types of support universities provide and which ones you specifically would be eligible for. Your family's economic status will not stop you from accessing the higher education you are entitled to. **-Beth**



Discover your options:

Link: <https://www.grows.ac.uk>

Undergraduate student financial support:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-student-support/undergraduate-student-support>

Extra funding, bursaries and scholarships for university:

Link: <https://www.which.co.uk/money/university-and-student-finance/student-finance/extra-funding-bursaries-and-scholarships-for-university-amrvt3j7t958>

Check eligibility for bursaries and scholarship schemes:

Link: <https://www.savethestudent.org/student-finance/student-grants-bursaries-scholarships.html#bursaries>

Not in education employment or training



There are many reasons you may not be in education, employment or training, whether that's down to your mental health, personal life, difficulty in finding your next steps or something else entirely. Regardless of your situation, it's important to remember that there are plenty of opportunities out there for you, whether you're seeking support, struggling with other aspects of your life or are looking for employment, further education or training. We've gathered links to resources and information that should be able to provide you with the help and support you need if you find yourself not in education, employment or training. **-Ben**

[Kickstart](#)

[Forwards](#)

[GEM \(Going the Extra Mile\)](#)

[Further support with your mental health and well-being](#)

[Job centres](#)

[Youth organisations](#)

[Universal Credit](#)



Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 1:

Kickstart



This is a new government sponsored scheme which has been set up in response to Covid-19. It is open to young people aged between 16-24 who are receiving Universal Credit or are, in the scheme's words, 'at risk of long-term unemployment'. If you are facing these barriers, then this could apply to you. Employers providing the scheme will give you a minimum of 25 hours a week of paid employment for six months, and the scheme has recently been extended so that you can start those six months up to the end of December 2021. Explore the links on this page or approach your job centre work coach to find out more. **-Robyn**



The Government's Kickstart page:

Link: <https://kickstart.campaign.gov.uk/>

A short video introducing the Kickstart Scheme:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pm6fwhWhLVQ>

Create Gloucestershire is a 'Gateway Organization' for many creative employers offering Kickstart placements in the county:

Link: <https://www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/kickstarter-scheme>

Forwards is a 'Gateway Organization' for Kickstart, to support those with disabilities to access the scheme:

Link: <https://www.forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk/>

Find the address and contact number for your nearest Job Centre (where you can access a Work coach to help you towards a Kickstart job):

Link: <https://jobcentreplusoffices.co.uk/jobcentre-plus-offices>

Not in education employment or training - Kickstart:

Real experiences with Kickstart



Liam: Kickstart

My experience with Kickstart

I will shortly be starting a job through the Kickstart scheme. I worked with Dan from Forwards, who coached me through the process. Kickstart has been very convenient, as it's been really hard to get a job. Kickstart seemed like a new challenge, my interview went well for the position I applied for, staff were friendly and it was more relaxed than other interviews I've had. The whole process was really straightforward and it wasn't scary. I'm feeling positive, I was looking for a chance and Kickstart gave me that chance.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The bureaucracy of how the process works hasn't helped, and it's taken a bit of time to get forms sorted. I know I've got the job, it's just a bit frustrating having to wait to start.

My advice/top tips

- » *Go for it – you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.*
- » *Don't be nervous.*
- » *It's a chance, so take it.*
- » *Do some research and look into the programme and the Kickstart opportunities out there.*
- » *Organisations like Forwards and the GEM Project can help you look for a Kickstart opportunity.*

Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 2:

Forwards



Forwards is the 'go-to' place for all things employment and training for young people with disabilities, learning disabilities and who face other challenges and health conditions. Most of the other schemes featured in this section are covered by Forwards. They are a great first step for you if you have questions or need some support.

They can give advice and support including Post-16 advice for job seeking and those looking for voluntary work or community involvement. They are also a 'gateway organisation' for the Kickstart scheme. Forwards work with employers to increase disability confidence and have some great myth-busters and facts about Disability. They are positive and focused on what is possible and amazing about everyone, not on what you can't do! -**Robyn**



Forwards Employment Service is an all age all disability employment Service:

Link 1: <https://forwardsgloucestershire.co.uk>

Link 2: https://twitter.com/forwards_glos

Link 3: <https://www.facebook.com/ForwardsGloucestershire/>

Not in education employment or training - Forwards:

Real experiences with Forwards



Not in education employment or training - Forwards:

Robyn: Forwards

My experience with Forwards

I was introduced to Forwards via my Transition manager at my Post-16 sixth form. At the time, I had no prospect of paid work or a college path and wasn't sure about my future journey, and Forwards had started a new programme designed to help young adults with special needs with community placements and volunteering opportunities. At the time, I was really set on working with animals, and I had managed to organise my own volunteering placement at Cheltenham Animal Shelter, supported by a one-to-one TA. I had done the usual 2-week work experience placements with school, which to be honest, had not been amazing so I was a little reluctant, but the guy I worked with was great. I felt he really listened to me and thought about my skills and aspirations. He set up a placement at the local library as I love books and reading. Although the admin placement wasn't really my thing, I really made an effort to connect with colleagues and do my best and the staff at the library were really welcoming and friendly and soon offered me extra things to do such as helping to set up and encourage a young mother and toddler rhymes and story session, and also helping with summer reading challenges, where I was working directly with people creatively. It was great and I'm still there doing the club! Forwards also helped me to make an application to Star College for one of their Skills to Work courses. In the end I decided not to take it up, but the work with Forwards certainly gave me confidence and experiences in the workplace.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The Forwards offer was really tailored to my personality and my aspirations. The placement led to other experiences. I think that I was quite active in making my own opportunities anyway, but Forwards certainly gave me a helping hand.

My advice/top tips

- » *Try to be open to what an opportunity might lead onto.*
- » *If one thing isn't for you or doesn't work, maybe see what else they can offer?*
- » *I could be really stubborn and a bit 'closed' to suggestion when I first met Forwards, but I think their friendly and knowledgeable persistence and the fact that I felt they treated me as an individual not a school kid did really change things for me – maybe they could for you too!*



Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 3:

GEM (Going the Extra Mile)



GEM is a service funded through the European Social Fund in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council. GEM could be for you if you have barriers to gaining or returning to paid employment. This can cover social problems, addiction, mental health issues as well as physical and learning difficulties.

GEM supports you through a range of activities and advice to get into paid work. You cannot be in paid work at the time you apply to GEM. Their own website page is the most accessible in terms of a youth friendly approach to the service. 'Going the Extra Mile' really gives you a sense of how they will work with each particular individual on a programme which suits them. **-Robyn**



GEM's Official Website explains the service in depth:

Link: <https://www.gloggem.org>

An email contact for GEM:

Link: gem@ggtrust.org

Prospects Training run the GEM scheme:

Link: <https://www.prospect-training.org.uk/gem>

Artshape run the GEM scheme:

Link: <https://artshape.co.uk/pages/gem>

Creative Sustainability in Stroud run the GEM scheme:

Link: <https://www.cscic.org/info/our-projects/the-gem-project/>

Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Real experiences GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

Robyn

Albert

Megan

Maddie

Bekah



Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Robyn: GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

My experience with GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

I was introduced to GEM by a link at the National Star College in Cheltenham. I had been accepted for a place on their Skills to Work course due to start in September 2020. It would have been one day per week of work placement (which was the only element I was really set on) and 3 days of experience in the college, a mix of academic and enterprise skills. I had already achieved most of the academic levels they were offering, and although I had an uncomfortable assessment day I did accept the place. Then everything changed. Just as Covid was looming in early March, I had a minor operation which had complications and I was really unwell for a couple of months both physically and mentally. Because I am clinically vulnerable, I could not attend my final six months at sixth form, and the thought of the Star College course was gnawing away at me. I knew I didn't want to go. In the end I had an honest but great talk with my mum, and we let Star College know I had changed my mind. They were amazing and stayed in touch to ask me if I would like to talk to someone at GEM who they worked with to arrange on-the-job placements. Joe from GEM was great. It was all remote, but again, he talked through my hopes and objectives, and we set up some initial sessions and ideas around a job placement at my local pet shop. I approached the shop who were positive and GEM were going to set up a talk with a potential job coach. Then I applied for the Future Me Gloucestershire Youth Representative post. GEM supported me through some interview preparation, giving me tips and advice, and I got the job!

What helped and/or didn't help?

The extra bit of help and confidence from GEM really helped me, alongside me setting up Zoom 'mock interviews' with family and ex-teachers. Because GEM saw my dreams as possible, I started to see possibilities as well. If I had gained a job and had to travel and get there, it would have been great to have had some coaching and travel support as well.

My advice/top tips

» *It's worth really doing a bit of research to find out what schemes are out there to help you if you have barriers but really want to get into work. Look into if you are eligible for a scheme, and find out how to reach out.*



Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Albert: GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

My experience with GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

I moved to the UK in 2019 with my parents from Romania. I was diagnosed with Asperger's and severe anxiety and had not attended school for a few years due to my anxiety and hadn't been outside for as many years. A college advised that I could either do a pre ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course with them or call the GEM project. As my anxiety was so bad, we called the number given to us for the GEM project. An appointment was quickly made, and a GEM worker came to meet me. After lots of discussions of future ideas I decided, I would like to join the GEM project. I was very anxious and terrified, but I knew things had to change or I would end up never leaving my home again. The GEM worker who came to see me became my navigator developer, Samantha. On her third visit she suggested a very short walk to a coffee shop, it was so close I could almost see it from my window, but it felt like miles away. I was shaking so much but Sam kept me safe. We sat and had a hot chocolate and my anxiety lessened slightly. We did this many times until I felt confident. She then introduced me to another GEM participant who lived near by who joined us at times when we went out. Once confident, things happened at a reasonable pace, Sam supported me to join a gym, she also got me a support worker from travel training, and I learned how to access public transport to Cheltenham and Gloucester. I then joined the Princes Trust with Young Gloucestershire which taught me some invaluable lessons on team work, independence and confidence. Even during the pandemic Sam supported me via video call to complete my BKS (Basic Key Skills) English and Maths level 2. Once some restrictions were lifted, I visited the college several times and enrolled for the ESOL level 1 course. In just one short year Sam supported me to achieve goals I would never thought were possible. I always vowed I would never return to education. I am almost at the end on my ESOL course and have enrolled for Computers level 1 for this coming September.

What helped and/or didn't help?

In my experience, everything that Sam offered me helped me, I learned so much from Phil my travel trainer about things that we didn't have in Romania. Chris from the Prince's Trust course with Young Gloucestershire taught me how to be confident and a life lesson I will never forget, he told me that life starts out of my comfort zone and he certainly wasn't wrong!

My advice/top tips

» *My advice to anyone who is hesitant on joining the GEM project is that you will be in good hands, what have you got to lose? Nothing is as bad as what you think it is and don't be ashamed to ask for help!*



Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Megan: GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

My experience with GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

I was lucky enough to already know my GEM worker, Sam, personally due to her ongoing friendship with my mother. This meant that I already trusted Sam and was open and happy to join the GEM project, knowing that it was the right time and the right programme for me. I knew that Sam had my best interest in mind and understood what I needed to get back on my feet and work through a range of issues to allow me to be ready to work. Sam introduced me to different activities which looked at the different areas of my life, uncovering my strengths and weaknesses and identifying what I should focus on. We looked at a range of career options that I could explore alongside work experience and GEM online workshops, such as art classes and interview skills, which I found very interesting. I then began a Princes Trust program - this ran for 12 weeks and I learnt a lot about being part of a team and was able to take part in a range of challenges such as a community project at a centre where I was painting. I learnt to be more confident and speak out. When this programme was completed I worked with Sam to get enrolled on an SIA (Security Industry Authority) course which I completed and am now waiting for my Door Supervisor License to work in the security industry - which GEM financed. I am now enrolled on a CCTV course and have had an informal interview with a security company to gain more insight into the industry.

What helped and/or didn't help?

Sam's commitment, encouragement and belief in me helped me to stick with the programme and explore the options she was able to find for me. The GEM project helped me understand my mental health through looking at strategies to manage my anxiety and keep me focused. I always had something to do when on this programme as a variety of opportunities were arranged for me, this ranged from the Princes Trust programme to online courses and informal interviews to gain more information and advice in my chosen career options. GEM was able to fund my place on the SIA course alongside paying for my Door Supervisor License which has been a huge help due to my financial difficulties. The current Covid-19 pandemic did not help with my time in the GEM project as restrictions meant some opportunities were cancelled such as work experience at a massage facility and I was not able to do many face to face meetings. GEM however has allowed me to be more confident, pushing me to challenge myself.

My advice/top tips

- » *Make sure you are open and prepared for what is expected of you within programmes like this, checking your eligibility and level of commitment alongside making sure you are comfortable with your GEM worker. Having the right worker helps you progress further. Know your boundaries/limits and don't be afraid.*



Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Maddie: GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

My experience with GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

I was referred to GEM by the Youth Support Team after I finished education and training and was struggling to find work due to mental health issues. On the GEM Project I worked with Tanya who really helped me to feel supported and confident in myself and my abilities. Tanya always asked if there was anything I needed help with, helped me job-search and arranged mock interviews for me which I found particularly useful. Following this, after my most recent interview I got a job I love. I am really grateful for this experience as a whole and would really recommend the GEM project as the support they are offering for young people is amazing.

What helped and/or didn't help?

The help and support from GEM always helped to raise my mood and boost confidence. The things I particularly found useful were mock interviews, online courses, one-on-ones and job-searching together over Zoom. Frequent check-ins also made me feel less alone during lockdown. GEM's flexibility has also been perfect for me when I've had job interviews etc.

My advice/top tips

» *You'll know when you find something you enjoy or something that is for you. Different experiences are useful but don't settle for something that isn't for you!*



Not in education employment or training - GEM (Going the Extra Mile):

Bekah: GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

My experience with GEM (Going the Extra Mile)

I was introduced to the GEM project by Sarah who runs the CCP (Caring for Communities and People) Pantry after expressing to her my recent issues with unemployment. Within a week I was in contact with Sam who fortunately I met before in different circumstances. In my first session with Sam he was very friendly and easy to talk to. I explained my situation to him that I only needed a job for the next couple of months as I had plans to head to university. Sam also offered me some great advice on the process of applying for a place and student finance. Once we had established my hobbies and interests, Sam suggested I applied for a job through the government's new 'Kickstart' programme. He was able to offer me some insight into available jobs via the programme and really helped me weigh up the pros and cons of each job role. In our one-to-one sessions, he taught me how to write a good cover letter and how to adapt my CV for specific job roles. Sam also put me in touch with Gloucestershire College to do an online course in business and administration to help me prepare for job roles to come. I am still studying this course and am so far enjoying it. Moving forward I secured an interview which Sam also helped me prep for and secured a job as a Property Services Assistant at Gloucester City Homes.

What helped and/or didn't help?

One to one sessions with Sam were very beneficial for me, he was very encouraging and supportive of my ambitions. Sam really taught me the importance of believing in myself and appearing confident even if very nervous and scared.

My advice/top tips

- » *When writing a CV and/or cover letter, have a template you can always refer back to when applying for other jobs. This makes things easier for you when applying for lots of different roles and you can quickly edit and add stuff in without the need to create a whole new CV and/or cover letter from scratch.*



Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 4:

Further support with your mental health and well-being



Finding employment and becoming a more independent individual can often come with feelings of anxiety and/or depressive moods when a situation seems hopeless or overwhelming. It is important to remember during these times that you are not as alone as you may feel, and there are provisions you can take advantage of to help you process the experience and the feelings you have. In our 'Mental Health and Well-being' Resource pack, you can find tonnes of information that can help you to understand and deal with these difficult feelings. **-Beth**



The Future Me resource pack on mental health and well-being:

Link: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/post-16/future-me/>

Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 5:

Job centres



Job-centres are an incredibly important resource to utilise if you are struggling to find suitable employment post-education. They can help advise you on a career path that suits your strengths, making you aware of vacancies you might not know about, and working to effectively administer Universal Credit and any other benefits you may be entitled to.

If you are struggling with a lack of structure after leaving education, the check-ups provided by the job-centre may be helpful in terms of improving your motivation. For more information on job-centres and what they can do for you, check out the links in this section. -**Beth**



How to contact your nearest JobCentre Plus:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>

Cheltenham JobCentre Plus:

Link: <https://www.jobcentreguide.co.uk/cheltenham-jobcentre>

The effects of Covid-19 on Job centres:

Link: <https://www.jobcentreguide.co.uk/jobcentres-corona>

How can JobCentre Plus:

Link: <https://www.yourcircle.org.uk/Services/11059/Jobcentre-Plus-Glou>

Preparing for your job centre interview:

Link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/help-if-on-a-low-income/jobseekers-allowance-jsa/help-with-your-claim/preparing-for-your-claim-interview/>

Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 6:

Youth organisations



There are lots of youth organisations in Gloucestershire that provide support and information to young people across the county. These may be specifically tailored to certain groups of young people (such as Gloucestershire Young Carers), or they may be accessible to a wider demographic (such as Young Gloucestershire). It is important to take advantage of these services if you need them and to be aware of what's actually out there that you can use. In this section, you will find lots of resources to help you figure out what youth organisations are available in the county to make your journey into adulthood smoother. **-Beth**



Support offered by the Youth Support Team:

Link: <https://youthsupportteam.co.uk/services/opportunities-in-employment-and-education>

Young Glos offer training programmes as well as support in other areas:

Link: <https://www.youngglos.org.uk/young-people/training>

Not in education employment
or training - Subsection 7:

Universal Credit



Finding employment and stepping into life as an adult is rarely an overnight process. In lots of cases, it can take weeks or months to secure a job and settle with a dependable income. The Universal Credit system is there to tide you over financially until it is no longer necessary.

There can be a lot of misunderstanding and stigma around utilising a benefits system that may prevent you from thinking about Universal Credit, but hopefully, the resources in this section can provide some clarity on the nature of Universal Credit and whether it might be applicable to your current circumstances. Being on Universal Credit can open doors to new opportunities like the Kickstart scheme. -**Beth**



How to claim Universal Credit: step by step:

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

Universal Credit explained:

Link: <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/universal-credit-an-introduction>

Before you apply for Universal Credit:

Link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/>

Universal Credit in Gloucestershire:

Link: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/benefits/universal-credit/>

South Gloucestershire Universal Credit:

Link: <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/benefits/universalcredit/universal-credit/>

I have an EHCP, what are my additional options and considerations?

Link: [Click here](#)

Careers advice



Finding the right career for you can seem like a challenging process, but it doesn't have to be! Whether you're in school, college, university, training or not currently in education, training or employment, there's always somewhere you can find careers advice. We've gathered resources and information on not only where to find careers advice, but how to make the most out of encounters with new employers and more! -*Ben*

How do I get careers advice if I'm not in education, employment or training?

How do I get careers advice in school?

How do I get careers advice in college?

How do I get careers advice in university?

Making the most of employer encounters

SENDIASS



How do I get careers advice if I'm not in education, employment or training?



There are a multitude of opportunities for young people who are not in education, employment or training. In fact, there are a number of projects that are specifically for helping you work toward defined goals and find a path that inspires you.

The websites in this section can direct you towards online tutorials and skills maps to name a few, that ultimately allow you to explore pathways from vocational qualifications to apprenticeships and full time jobs. It is never too late to get back into education, employment or training. Start from the beginning and identify your strengths and interests - you may even find a new passion or desire to start your own business – the possibilities are endless! We understand that it can feel hard to get started, however, by looking at the support and opportunities available, you can find the path that is right for you. **-Alice**



If you are experiencing barriers trying to get into work, you can approach GEM:

Link 1: gem@ggtrust.org

Link 2: <https://www.glogem.org>

You can also contact the Youth Support Team (Prospects):

Link 1: <https://youthsupportteam.co.uk/services/young-people-not-in-education-employment-or-training>

Link 2: info.glos@prospects.co.uk

Visit the National Careers service website:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Useful collection of employment resources from the Prince's Trust:

Link: <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/who-else/employment/careers-advice>

How do I get careers advice in school?



Everyone should have access to high quality advice when identifying and developing their unique potential. Every school in Gloucestershire has a dedicated careers department to ensure you are fully informed and prepared for the world of work. It may be that you didn't even realise your school has this department and if this is the case, it is worth asking your tutor or a teacher. If you are unsure as to how to approach them, or what to ask, the information below can be used as inspiration, giving you a springboard of ideas to get the conversation rolling.

The school programmes are mainly focused on developing skills and awareness in lower years, but as you get closer to making post-16 and eventually post-18 decisions, you will have the opportunity to talk to potential employers and universities as well as receive personal advice on developing your CV. In the ever-changing landscape of opportunities, your school should provide careers information, stability and reassurance about whichever path you choose. **-Alice**



Information from UCAS that explains what careers advice you're entitled to:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-finance-and-support/careers-information-and-guidance-schools>

Career Pilot is a free website hosting info on both post-14 & post-16 careers advice:

Link: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

Post-16 careers guidance provided by the National Careers Service:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-16>

How do I get careers advice in college?



Feeling uncertain about the possibilities for your future career is natural, however, the colleges in Gloucestershire are committed to improving the life chances of all their students. The best way to make the most of this service is to attend any of the drop-in sessions or events you see advertised around college, or even just even asking someone you feel comfortable with where to find the dedicated careers department.

Every college offers enrichment activities and clubs that can help you gain the skills needed to impress employers, gain confidence and transferable skills that transform any application. Don't panic if you feel overwhelmed at any point, a college education opens doors to your future and by utilising their careers advice, you will be ready for those opportunities.

-Alice



Information from UCAS that explains what careers advice you're entitled to:

Link: <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-finance-and-support/careers-information-and-guidance-schools>

Career Pilot is a free website where you can seek post-18 careers advice:

Link: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

Post-18 careers guidance provided by the National Careers Service:

Link: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/career-choices-at-18>

How do I get careers advice in university?



Everyone should get careers advice at school, however for many this can take a back seat as we prioritise our academic development and our journey to university. It's worth asking yourself what your long term goal is. What are you hoping to do after university? It can be daunting to realise that upon graduation, it is the world of work that awaits us.

Despite the pressures of university assignments, it's important to put some thought into your career aspirations when you are still an undergraduate, as your university will be able to offer some support; once you graduate, you lose that support system, so make use of it while you can. Each university will have their own careers service or department. Your subject tutors will be able to direct you to this service, as well as offering lots of anecdotal advice. Try to take advantage of work experience and placement opportunities when you are studying, as these can give a good idea of the types of employment that your qualification could lead to. -**Martha**



University of Gloucestershire careers department:

Link: <https://www.glos.ac.uk/your-future-plan/>

The top careers services in the UK:

Link: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/news/top-20-university-careers-services-uk>

Career resources:

Link: <https://careerresources.org.uk>

8 ways to boost your career prospects while at university:

Link: <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice/8-ways-boost-your-career-prospects-while-university>

Careers advice from top universities:

Link: <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice>

Real experiences with finding careers...



Careers advice - How do i get careers advice at university?:

Real experiences finding careers advice at university



Martha



Martha: Finding careers advice at university

My experiences with finding careers advice at university

I attended Bath Spa University from 2013 – 2016, finishing with a 1st class BA (Hons) in Creative Arts. I really enjoyed my time at university, the chance to be creative and the time to develop artistically and personally. Whilst I was really proud of my high marks on my course, that celebration was marred slightly by the big question of what I would do next, and what I saw my 'career' looking like – I hadn't a clue! Although my University offered a 'Careers Hub' I never went to it – it was on a different campus to the Art courses, and didn't seem that accessible. I wish I had taken more advantage of that service. I did seek more informal careers advice from my course tutors. University lecturers are very knowledgeable about their particular field, and therefore have lots of anecdotal information about what sort of industries I could go into with my very broad Arts degree behind me. We then had a whole day of careers-focused lectures, the most useful of which were led by previous students who had been graduated for 5 – 10 years. It was so helpful to hear their stories.

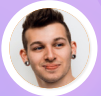
What helped and/or didn't help?

What wasn't so helpful (and it felt like a barrier) was how distant the careers department felt at university – careers advice wasn't compulsory like at school, and in hindsight I should have been more proactive in seeking out the Careers Advice Department. What was helpful was the chance to speak to alumni of my university course, and also my tutors, to get realistic yet aspirational advice about my chosen industry.

My advice/top tips

- » *Get proactive about getting careers advice – it's your life and livelihood, and it's up to you to seek out the right people and access their anecdotes and tips!*
- » *Find out what people who are 5 – 10 years out of your course are doing now. Ask your tutors to put you in touch with ex-students and pick their brains about the realities of forging a career out of university!*

Making the most of employer encounters



It can be a daunting process meeting a new potential employer for the first time, or even discussing career opportunities. You may feel nervous, but there's plenty you can do to make the most of employer encounters, workplace visits, career talks and interviews! Check out the links provided for information and resources on interacting with potential employers and professionals. -**Ben**



Job fairs: what you need to know:

Link: <https://successatschool.org/advisedetails/968/careers-job-fair-2018>

Virtual careers fairs and how to stand out to employers online:

Link: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/networking/1047746-virtual-careers-fairs-how-to-stand-out-to-employers-online>

5 ways to make the most of careers fairs:

Link: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/getting-a-job/5-ways-to-make-the-most-of-careers-fairs>

Job fairs in Cheltenham and Gloucester:

Link: <https://www.thejobfairs.co.uk/network/cheltenham-and-gloucester/>

SENDIASS



SENDIASS is a support service for young people and children who have additional needs and/or disabilities. Crucially, SENDIASS is free, impartial and confidential, meaning that you can approach them with confidence and trust them to help you. If you are aged 25 or under and have additional needs and seek advice on anything from school choices to careers advice, your EHCP Annual Review to school admissions appeals, then SENDIASS could help. You can trust SENDIASS to support you in whatever ways suit you best. We've linked to the main website for SENDIASS Gloucestershire, and also to their online leaflets, which can help with specific areas. SENDIASS provide expert advice to young people and their families about SEN support, starting or changing schools, attendance, bullying, home to school transport and exclusions, the list goes on. Have a further look into how they could support you. -**Martha**



SENDIASS Gloucestershire Homepage:

Link: <https://sendiassglos.org.uk/>

SENDIASS has a number of information brochures on specific areas, such as EHCPs:

Link: <https://sendiassglos.org.uk/leaflets-brochures-factsheets/>

Real experiences with SENDIASS

Real experiences with SENDIASS (Personal experiences)



Anonymous 1: SENDIASS

My experiences with SENDIASS

'I am a year 12 student at a big comprehensive school in the Forest of Dean. I have a physical disability and this also impacts on my learning. The school have been really helpful in supporting me and I am lucky that I have many friends. However, I contacted SENDIASS because I wanted to go to university and I didn't know what was available to me. I have to get good A level results, but I am a bit worried about moving away from home.'

I enjoyed chatting with Isobel from SENDIASS, as I could ask her any questions without feeling silly. She talked about my EHCP Annual Review and told me I could invite the student coordinator from the university I really want to go to. I was also shown links to a few websites which help people with learning disabilities and how they can access university. I found out quite a few things I didn't know. I was scared about losing my EHCP but SENDIASS reassured me that there is lots of support out there.'

Anonymous 2: SENDIASS

My experiences with SENDIASS

I am in year 11 and I am worried about moving to the local college soon. I am a carer for my mum who gets some support but sometimes she has bad days and needs me to help her. I don't have a good relationship with my dad so it's left to me. Because I am autistic I worry a lot and I don't like talking about my feelings. My teacher told me to contact SENDIASS.

I had never heard of them. I sent them a text and really liked that I could do that. Isobel from SENDIASS listened to all my worries and then said, 'let's put them into smaller chunks and then we can manage them.' I liked that. The support I got helped me to tell people what I wanted for next year when I go to college. I heard about apprenticeships (which I like the sound of) and how I can contact people about caring for my mum. I also liked that SENDIASS helped me to find out about some clubs. I didn't know SENDIASS was there, but it really helped me - I would recommend it!

We need you!



Do you have any of your own experiences with any of the topics covered in this resource pack? If so, we need you! We'll be updating these packs every so often with new resources and personal experiences from anyone who's willing to share them. Sharing our experiences and learning from other people's experiences can be incredibly empowering. If you'd like to share one of your experiences, or have any feedback regarding our resource packs and the links to other organisations we've shared, get in touch with us via one of our social media channels below, or via email. We can't wait to hear from you! **-Ben**

futureme@gloucestershire.gov.uk



