

Survival Pack

All the information you need to know about your options after exams...

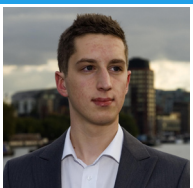




Jim Knight MP

Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform

“Finishing your A-levels is a major life event but the big decisions about what to do next can be daunting. This is why the Government is putting major resources and energy into creating thousands of jobs, training, volunteering and work experience opportunities for young people. The UK business community is committed to working with Government to make the most of young people’s talents and skills to build a stronger future for Britain.”



Tom Mursell

19-Year-Old Founder of notgoingtouni.co.uk

“We wanted to put this pack together because we believe that leaving school can be a real challenge. Unless you’ve got the right information to support you, then it can end up with panic and the possibility of making the wrong decisions about your future. We wish all students leaving school the very best, whether you’re wondering about taking further qualifications, taking some time out of education, or starting work you can be sure that there are resources here to help you.”



The Rest Of Your Life Starts Here...

You might not have realised it but (depending on how fast you read) you are currently about ten seconds into a new life. Your exams are over and the moment that you've been dreading is finally here: results day. As you probably realise, what you discover when you look at the grades next to your name will make a massive difference to the path your life takes. No pressure, then.

But before all the cheering or crying begins we wanted to be the first to welcome you to the rest of your life. We also wanted to tell you that, regardless of your results, you have a range of exciting opportunities ahead of you – all of which can lead to very successful careers and an enjoyable life.

For instance, it's worth remembering that more than 50% of young people don't go to university and that around 7% drop out by the end of their first year. So although getting a degree is one of the most popular options for school leavers, it's by no means the only path.

So whether you're staring at a line of straight As and you're off to your first choice uni, or you're looking at way too many Ds and feeling like this is the end rather than the beginning, the golden rule is: **DON'T PANIC**. Have a read of this guide and learn about some of the directions you can take.

Don't forget, even if you know where you're heading it's worth keeping a copy of this guide in a safe place, just in case you ever need a quick and friendly reminder of some the options in this new life of yours.

- **Going To Uni - page 4**
What you need to do if you've got your grades, or you got better results than you were expecting. We've also got the full run-down of emergency options if you didn't get the right results and managed to explain clearing in ten easy steps.
- **Different Paths To A Degree - page 7**
There's more than one way to get a degree and some of them are even free! We look at the options for distance learning, debt-free degrees and sponsored courses.
- **Getting An Apprenticeship - page 9**
If you fancy something a bit more hands-on then you might be interested in the learn-while-you-earn option that apprenticeships offer. Don't be fooled into thinking apprenticeships are just for plumbers either – these days apprentices are everywhere.
- **Taking A Gap Year - page 12**
Tired? Emotional? Feel like you need to get away from it all? Or maybe you're just not sure exactly what you want to do in life and need some time to think? These days gap years aren't just about travelling either.
- **Finding A Job - page 15**
It could be that you're ready for the world of work. If this is your first experience of job-hunting it can be quite daunting, especially when you don't know where to find the opportunities that interest you, we round up some places to start.

Going To University

The idea of going to university appeals for many different reasons. For some students it's the idea of three years pursuing the complex academic questions that intrigue them most. For others it's the chance to develop their employability and industry-specific skills in a supportive, knowledge-friendly environment. For many though it was the thought of cheap drinks and good bands at the Student Union.

Whatever it was that sold the uni life to you, there is convincing evidence that getting a degree does very good things for you. Over the course of a career graduates earn up to £160,000 more than those without qualifications and they also have less chance of facing unemployment. So if you've chosen a degree as your next step then finding out your results is hopefully the key to opening up the door to university.

Congratulations! You Got The Right Grades!

Providing you've met the grades requested by your offer (or it was unconditional), then there's really very little that you have to do. UCAS will automatically inform your university, and the official letter telling you what to do next should arrive in the post shortly. All that remains is to start texting your friends and family to let them know your results. Not to be too pessimistic about things but 7% of students drop out in their first year, so keep a copy of this guide handy in case you need to refresh yourself on your other options.

You Did Better Than Expected? Consider Adjustment.

If you did better than you thought and you've met and exceeded the conditions of your firm choice you have the option to look for an alternative course while still holding your original place. This process is called Adjustment, and it is entirely optional. You get a short period of time (around five days) to look for a different course, which means you'll have to go back to Track at the UCAS website and follow the information on your profile. Bear in mind:

- You'll not miss out on your original firm offer and it could see you going even higher.
- You are not eligible if you have a confirmed place on a changed course offer; or your original offer was unconditional.
- You cannot adjust your insurance choice.
- Full details are available at www.ucas.com

Five tips for a less stressful results day

1. Plan ahead. Discuss with your parents, teacher, or someone you trust what your options are depending on your grades. Planning your response for a best and worst case scenario enables you to respond more quickly and with much less stress.
2. Get a contact number for your university department for both your firm offer and your insurance uni. If you narrowly miss out on grades you might need to call them.
3. See if you can arrange to have someone next to a computer in case you need to check clearing websites or the UCAS site in a rush.
4. Top up your mobile – whether you get the results you wanted or not you'll either be spending a long time celebrating or commiserating and that means credit.
5. For optimum results champagne should be served between 8 and 10°C.

Going To University

Aaaaargghhh! You didn't get the Right Grades!

Don't panic. There are several steps you can take and none of them need to be stressful.



The first option is to use the phone numbers that you handily stored in case of such an event. Your firm offer university department might still be willing to accept you if you've only narrowly missed your grades. If you've made your insurance offer then that's where you'll be heading in September.

Another option if you and your teachers are baffled by your low marks is to consider a re-mark. You can't apply to the exam board

directly though so you'll need to have your school make the application for you. You should also expect a lengthy wait (of around 18 days for priority cases) and a charge of around £40 for a full re-mark. Don't forget: grades can go down as well as up.

One final fallback option is to re-sit your exams and try and improve your grades. This does mean that you probably won't be heading to uni for another year, however if you plan travelling and work experience into the year (see the information on gap years on page 12) it can actually be a very positive step. If you got Ds and you need As you might want to assess whether it's a realistic leap to change it around for January (the first chance to re-sit exams) or if the June re-sit is more likely.

Once you've contemplated those options, you can think about entering clearing. It's not as complicated as the rumours suggest, in fact, the whole thing can be neatly explained in ten simple steps as we explain on the next page.

Where can I find out more?

National Exam Results Helpline
0808 100 8000.

Staffed by trained advisors, the helpline should be able to assist with any immediate enquiries.

www.ucas.com

Has all the details you need to know about your application and what to do if you need to make changes.

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

The UK's largest student community with forums full of soon-to-be students.

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

A site featuring all the alternatives to uni such as apprenticeships, diplomas and jobs.

Going to uni in numbers

- Over the course of a career graduates earn up to £160,000 more than those without qualifications and they also have less chance of facing unemployment.
- 7% of students drop out in their first year.
- It can cost up to £40 for a full re-mark of a paper and take 18 days to find out the results.

Clearing Neatly Explained in 10 Simple Steps

- 1 Confirm you're eligible for clearing – check Track on the UCAS site and on the “Choices” screen it should have the option to “Add Clearing Choice”. Here you should see your clearing number, make a note of it.
- 2 Although it can be tempting to look for a quick fix, don't jump into the nearest course that looks like it might be OK. Clearing officially goes on until the 21st September – use that time wisely.
- 3 Remember - you don't have to apply for the same course as before. You can pick an entirely new university and subject if you wish.
- 4 You can find official clearing vacancy lists on the UCAS website and in The Independent. The Belfast Telegraph will also publish regional clearing vacancy lists on 21 August.
- 5 Do your research. Pick a longlist of courses and whittle them down to a shortlist that you'd like to apply for.
- 6 Research the course and the uni and come up with some reasons why they should take you. Put a positive spin on your results (did you get one particularly good grade? Do you have some relevant experience in this area?) Speak to the uni and tell them why you're interested. This may be done over the phone or over the web for some courses. Often if you meet their criteria they will make you an informal offer of a place. You may be informally offered several places, but ultimately you will need to decide on which one course you want to accept.
- 7 You want to make sure you'll enjoy the uni as well as the course, so a visit might be in order. Many departments will help arrange a visit so you can talk to tutors and see the facilities.
- 8 Make your choice. Enter the details for the course you've chosen on your Track page. Don't forget the university need to have offered you a provisional place, don't just enter the number of a course you like the sound of. If you enter a clearing choice without discussing it with the university or college, this may delay the progress of your application.
- 9 Wait for confirmation. If the university accepts you, the acceptance will show in Track and UCAS will write to you to let you know that you have been accepted onto the course. If the university does not accept you, your “ADD CLEARING CHOICE” button will be reactivated so you can apply for another course through clearing.
- 10 Confirm with your new university that you'll have access to accommodation and do some catch-up celebrating.

Different Paths To A Degree

One of the biggest concerns that school leavers have with university is the rather sizeable issue of debt. With the introduction of tuition fees – which now stand at £3,225 per year - one survey suggests the average debt faced by new students will be around £17,500.

That's enough of a sum to make many would-be students reconsider, or contemplate extreme measures like living at home. Infact, more than a third of students now choose their uni on financial grounds. It's not all bad news though, there are other ways of getting a degree for less money, for free and even degrees that can see you earning serious money.

What is distance learning?

Distance learning means studying for a qualification away from a college or university. Most often this means that you study at home and the course comes to you in the form of books, DVDs, online lectures and with the support of virtual communities. Distance learning is often thought of as a path more suited to mature students, but it can also provide a cheap and flexible solution for young people too.

Studying for a degree without being at university might sound strange, especially for some subjects like chemistry where complex experiments are required, but often the courses include residential programmes. Although the Open University is the big name in distance learning, there are other providers like ICS Learn (see case study).

What about a debt-free degree?

The Open University offer an incredible deal where if you live at home and earn less than £16,500 per year then you won't have to pay anything towards the cost of your course. They don't even take into account your parents' income. The flexibility of studying when you can means that, like 70% of OU students, you can work and study for a degree at the same time. With 580 courses in 14 subject areas it's an offer worth considering if debts are putting you off a degree.

What are employer-sponsored courses?

Increasingly, companies are looking at how they can work with universities to produce graduates who know more about their work. One way of doing this is by offering students work experience throughout their degree and sponsoring a student to do a degree is an extension of this. With sponsored courses the arrangement is typically that you would work with the company during holidays or for part of the week and study at university for a degree related to your job for the rest of the time. It's much the same way that apprenticeships work but instead of an NVQ you end up with a degree.

The massive advantage of employer-sponsored degrees is that you not only get a salary like any other company employee, you also get three years of building-up incredibly valuable experience. That means you're likely to finish your degree without any debt and be able to walk into a job, potentially with the company you were sponsored by. The flipside of that is that on some sponsorship programmes you are contracted to work for the company after you graduate, so make sure you're happy with the terms of any deal before you sign on the dotted line.



Different Paths To A Degree

Case Study

Miss Sobeen Akhtar

Studying LLB (Hons) Law with ICS Graduate



"I have always had an interest in Law since studying it as an A-Level. I had applied to university and had been accepted to study Law as a degree. However, at the last minute I changed my mind and chose to study science, which I later realised was the biggest mistake I could have made. I left things to the last minute again and did not secure a place to study Law for the following year, which is when I came across ICS.

I read through the degree programme and I was impressed about the flexibility and support provided through distance learning. I loved the idea of not going to university, but that instead I could do all the work from home at my own pace with no stress. There was plenty of support available when I needed it the most and things such as assessments could be submitted online and research resources were accessed easily online too. With notes and books sent home, you had all the information you could refer to. I have enjoyed my first year and I hope to continue and complete Law as a degree."

Employer's View

Kevin Gorman

Director of Communities and Practices



"Logica offer a sponsored-degree programme in association with the University of Winchester, which offers students the chance to study for free but also pays them a starting salary of £13,000 while studying for a BA (Hons) in Business Management. On top of that you get your course materials paid for, a laptop to work on and all the benefits of being a Logica employee, such as our home purchase plan, which is designed to help staff get on to the property ladder. Best of all you get three years of high-level experience working with one of the world's leading IT and business services companies.

Students chosen for the course work with us four days a week and attend university on the other day, so they still get a taste of university life. For us it's a great deal because we end up with a graduate who is highly-trained and knows our company in-depth. For the student it's a great deal because by the time you graduate your salary is higher than a typical graduate's salary and you have no debt! So there are a range of benefits on both sides when it comes to employer-sponsored degrees."

Where can I find out more?

www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk
0800 100 900.

Government-funded information source. Has a list of distance learning courses and provides information on potential funding.

www.odlqc.org.uk/buyers1.htm
The Buyers Guide To Distance Learning

www.open.ac.uk
Information about the courses on offer at the Open University

www.icslearn.co.uk
Details about the courses that ICS Learn offer.

www.everythingyouwantedtoknow.com
In-depth information about employer-sponsored degrees.

www.threeyears.co.uk
More information about the Logica scheme.

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
Site featuring all the alternatives to uni such as apprenticeships, diplomas and jobs.

Getting An Apprenticeship

In the current climate, apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds.

“In the current climate Apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds; giving employers access to a pool of talent that can be shaped to improve business performance and providing people with a great start in their chosen career.”

Simon Waugh, Chief Executive of the National Apprenticeship Service.

We can put your mind at rest on one thing – the vast majority of apprenticeships have nothing to do with being shouted at by Sir Alan Sugar. Last year there were over 200,000 apprentices working in more than 80 different industries and by 2020, it's predicted that one in five young people will serve an apprenticeship in the company of their choice.

The government have spent big money to launch the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to try and explain to students the benefits of doing an apprenticeship and encourage them to think about taking one themselves. The bottom line is that if you think apprenticeships are just for plumbers then it's time to think again.

What Are Apprenticeships?

Simply put, apprenticeships are a way of combining working with studying, think of it as a job with an in-built training programme. During a typical apprenticeship a student would work for a company but also go to college to study a related subject. As well as this you would normally be supported by an experienced member of staff who would teach you the hands-on skills you need.

Over a period of between one and three years apprenticeships allow you to combine earning and learning – and you would finish the course with an NVQ (or a BTEC or City & Guilds). Normal Apprenticeships would result in a level 2 NVQ (roughly the same as doing 5 GCSEs) and an Advanced Apprenticeship results in a Level 3 (about the same as 2 A-Levels).

What Can I Do An Apprenticeship In?

There's a stereotype that apprenticeships are only available in manual trades like brick-laying or hairdressing, but you can actually find apprenticeships in almost every career – from marketing to floristry, games testers to engineers. Money is being invested all the time to encourage even more employers to offer apprenticeships, so more roles are coming on-board every day in careers you wouldn't typically think of being an apprentice, such as accounting.

What Do Apprentices Get Paid?

From August 2009 all apprentices will be paid at least £95 a week, but one survey showed that it was often a lot more, with apprentices getting an average of £170 per week. For some in the electro-technical sector that went even higher to £210 per week. You also get at least 20 days holiday a year, along with bank holidays. Long-term the benefit of getting the training is obvious – over their careers apprentices will earn over £100,000 more than those without training.

How Do You Get An Apprenticeship?

A whole range of employers work with local training providers to establish apprenticeship schemes. You'll find them advertised at your local college but also on the web at www.notgoingtouni.co.uk and on www.apprenticeships.org.uk. Once you've found an apprenticeship you like the look of you'll have to apply for it in the same as you would do for any other job, so brush up your CV and interview skills.

What Are Apprenticeships Good For?

Apprenticeships allow you to build your skills, earn a good wage and ultimately get a qualification. They also build your employment skills as you will be working in a company throughout your apprenticeship. This means that if you can make a good impression on your employer it can lead to an offer of a full-time job after you complete your course. Alternatively, if you find you enjoy studying, you can carry on taking more qualifications and even progress your training to a degree.

Getting An Apprenticeship

Case Study

David Gough, 19

Senior Investments Officer, Metropolitan Police



“I had been interested in finance since I was at secondary school and the AAT accounting qualification seemed exactly what I was looking for. I wanted to study accountancy, work for a big organisation and begin to live and earn money independently.

I started on the Metropolitan Police AAT apprenticeship scheme at the age of sixteen. I have now qualified with the AAT and am working as a Senior Investments Officer. This means I invest any extra funds that the Met has securely in the money markets and also try and achieve the highest return. It is extremely exciting to be working with large amounts of money and seeing how much you’ve made for the organisation each day.

In addition, I recently bought my own flat in London and am enjoying living independently – although I still pop home for the occasional cooked meal! I feel like I’ve achieved a lot for someone of my age and don’t regret my decision at all. The AAT has given me so much self-confidence and belief that even though I didn’t go to college or university, I feel I can still achieve my aspiration of working in the City as a stockbroker.”

Where can I find out more?

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Has a massive range of apprenticeships for you to search available in all industries and areas.

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

For more information about the types of apprenticeships on offer and to learn more about the different careers.

www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

0800 100 900

tells you where your local college is and gives more advice about the apprenticeships on offer.

www.kaplanfinancial.co.uk/aat

0845 873 6312 (quote AAT/RG/NGTU)

More than 25,000 students have completed the AAT with Kaplan over the last 10 years, more than any other provider. They also offer apprenticeships in Customer Service and Business Administration.

Getting An Apprenticeship

Case Study

Alix Potts, 22

Trainee Restaurant Manager, McDonalds



With 10,000 staff apprenticeships on offer in 2010, McDonalds is one of the largest apprenticeship providers in the UK. After working at McDonald's part time for five years, Alix Potts made the decision to become a full-time employee and take advantage of the opportunities for learning and progression at the company. Consequently, Alix became one of the first McDonald's Apprentices.

"I now see working at McDonald's as a career rather than a job. I can't wait to continue to develop within the company. Flexible working and the support of my managers and team-mates really motivated me to complete the Apprenticeship and I'm now really keen to encourage other people to do the same. The skills I've gained as a result will help me throughout my life and the fact that my Apprenticeship is equivalent to 5 A-C GCSEs means I've now got better qualifications than I left school with!"*

Apprentices In numbers

- 89% of apprentices would recommend an apprenticeship to other people in similar circumstances to themselves
- Over 9 out of 10 apprentices are in work or education on completing their apprenticeship
- More than three-quarters of apprentices say that without their apprenticeship they wouldn't be earning their current salary

Taking A Gap Year

If you want to see the world & help out, volunteering might be good for you.

There has been some suggestion in the past that the gap year should more accurately be known as the Gap Yah, as it's only the well-at-heel who can afford to go waltzing off around the world, safe in the knowledge that they have Daddy's credit card should anything go wrong.

Happily, this stereotype is almost completely wrong and of the 230,000 18-24 year-olds who take a gap year, only a small percentage come from a wealthy background. So what could you do on your year off?

You Could See The World!

The part of a gap year most students are excited by is the chance to travel. There are many different types of travel experience though and the costs vary wildly. The average gap year costs between £3,000 and £4,000, but that's not to say that they'll all be so expensive, some could even see you earning money. Have a look at www.gapyear.com for a full range of travel options but here's a sample of different ways you could end up broadening your horizons.

1) Volunteering

If you not only want to see the world but to help out too, then a period of volunteering – or voluntourism as it's also known - could be for you. There are many organisations around the world that desperately need the help of young people to help with things like community infrastructure projects, medical aid programmes or work with endangered animals.



Organisations like Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) or Raleigh International run schemes around the world where they place you in a particular project. There are also environmental expeditions, like jungle conservation, run by organisations like Frontier and Trekforce Expeditions.



Bear in mind that even if you're helping out, you'll still be expected to raise money to pay for your expedition, but there are many sources of funding available (such as grants from local business organisations). You'd be in good company too, this year 13% of Raleigh International's summer expedition members were school leavers.

2) Summer Camps

These holiday activity camps for children are particularly popular in the US, where they are often located in beautiful park lands and themed around a particular subject (such as religion, arts, sports, even weight!) Most of the jobs involve working as a camp counsellor, who is responsible for the welfare of a group of campers.

You might expect to get a small wage (approximately £350 per month) and work for three months over a summer. You get a lot of the admin side of your travel taken care of as companies often provide the visa, insurance, return flights, food and accommodation. When your work is done you can travel across the US and see the country with loads of new mates.

Taking A Gap Year

3) TEFL

TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Language but it's also sometimes referred to as TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or even ELT (English Language Teaching)! They all refer to much the same thing though - helping groups of foreign students to get to grips with English.



You might think that you'd need a degree to go abroad and teach students how to speak English, but for many positions all they ask for is some teaching experience (which you can get by taking a TEFL course) and a good standard of spoken English. As the language of the internet there is high demand for TEFL teachers across the world and providers like Cactus www.cactustefl.com can get you trained and ready to go with a recognised international qualification in under four weeks.

4) Just Travel

Although it's great if you can use your year off to do something worthwhile there really is nothing wrong with just letting off some steam after nearly two decades in education. It's an ideal chance to see things you've always wanted to see, meet new people and have the holiday of a lifetime. Just don't drive your mates insane with a Facebook status that talks about swimming in waterfalls while they're packing boxes in Tesco.

One recent development is that many students – perhaps mindful of not running up too big a debt – have taken shorter periods of travelling, interspersed with periods of working to build up the funds to go abroad. Don't think that you've got to work in the UK though, there are plenty of seasonal jobs abroad (e.g. fruit picking in Australia, or working as a chalet maid in ski resorts) that can help you earn your passage around the world.

A Quick Quiz from Tom Griffiths founder of Gapyear.com

Q 1: What are the three fastest growing gap years?

Q 2: What percentage of those who take gap years are rich kids?

Q 3: What do employers and university admissions think of gap years?

Ready for the answers?

A 1: The three fastest growing gap years are (1) Earning money for university (2) Doing work experience relevant to a degree or a career and (3) Doing something close to home, such as setting up a business, helping out at a local charity, you know the sort of stuff.

A 2: Less than 20% is the answer to the percentage of rich kids who do this stuff.

A 3: University admissions tutors and employers BOTH value constructive gap year activities, as they make you stand out from thousands of bland 'same same' other candidates.

If you are not 100% sure of what you want to do then don't commit to a university course that is going to put you in debt. A gap year can help you focus and work out what you want to do in life. If you're now intrigued by this I'd suggest a ten minute quiet 'sit and think' because a gap year might be the right option for you.

Taking A Gap Year

5) You Could Go To Work!



Sounds strange that you could take a year out and go to work, but then a growing proportion of pre-uni gap years have some connection to work. One of the big operators in this field is the Year in Industry placements (YINI) who have seen a 10% increase in applications this year. YINI place young people with one of over 300 UK science, engineering or technology firms for nine or 12 month placements. Workers get paid a salary of around £12,000 and build up a wealth of essential experience. Aside from YINI there's nothing to stop you arranging your own work placements to try on a few different careers. Equally, you could just work on a casual basis, which could get you some skills and earn you the cash you need to take you travelling.

If you are not 100% sure of what you want to do in life then don't commit to a University course that is going to put you in debt. A gap year can help you focus and work out what you want to do in life. If you're now intrigued by this I'd suggest a ten minute quiet 'sit and think' because a gap year might be the right option for you.

Where can I find out more?

www.gapyear.com

The largest gap year advice site and social network on the web.

www.gogapyear.com

The official site from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to help young travellers, who are statistically the least well-prepared.

www.cactustefl.com

Details of TEFL courses available from Cactus.

www.ccusa.com

One of the biggest companies recruiting students for summer camps in the US.

www.bunac.org

BUNAC is a not-for-profit organisation who provide information about the range of working opportunities abroad.

www.gapforce.org

A gap year provider with a real variety from trekking and conservation to sport.

Finding A Job

“We will not stand by and let young people get left behind in this recession. We are investing around £1 billion in getting young people and the long term unemployed jobs and opportunities to make the most of their talents and skills.”



Yvette Cooper
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

It may not have escaped your attention, what with the recession, banks in crisis and major companies making thousands redundant, that you're leaving school slap bang in the middle of one of the toughest job markets in recent memory. Sorry about that. Some of the stats make for worrying reading - a survey from the Prince's Trust showed that there are over 45,000 people under the age of 25 claiming jobseeker's allowance and in the last 12 months the numbers claiming unemployment benefits has risen by 75%.

There's really no need to panic though. On the positive side of things, another survey said that one in five companies are planning to employ school leavers in the next few months - so the jobs are out there if you can find them and with research and planning that's precisely what you can do. If you need help getting your application together then speak to a Careers Advice or Connexions adviser for free advice on CVs and interviews. But before you get that far, there's the more complex task of finding the right position for you. So where do you start looking for the perfect job?

Jobcentre Plus

The government have a few different ways of helping you in your search for gainful employment. You might have the idea that Jobcentre Plus is mainly for older

people who have been made redundant, but its services are designed to help school leavers just as much as more mature workers. It's also worth speaking to the excellent Connexions service who are there specifically for young people.

To access help through the Jobcentre Plus you would need to be registered to receive Jobseekers Allowance (known as JSA, which works out as around £50 per week for young people). To register for JSA call the hotline on 0800 0556688. Once you're registered you would be assigned an appointment with an adviser through your nearest Jobcentre Plus. Don't forget though that anyone can access the Jobcentre Plus database of jobs (which happens to be the largest in the UK) and apply for them online by visiting www.direct.gov.uk/whatsnext.

Recruitment Agencies

There are thousands of recruitment agencies across the UK who can help find you work. Always remember that agencies get paid by taking a percentage of your wage, so it's in their interest to get you into work. In some cases though, this means they're not always interested in finding the right job for you. To find the best agency have a look at the Recruitment and Employment Confederation website and use their consultancy finder, which should give you a number of agencies who specialise in the type of work you'd like to find, who you can then register with.

Registering consists of going in to see a recruitment consultant and telling them what work you're looking for. Research the sort of vacancies that the agency has before you see them to save wasting anyone's time - and in many cases you might be able to register online. Don't try applying to several agencies all at once as you'll probably end up with a quantity of offers, rather than the quality ones. Once you are registered keep in regular (polite!) contact with your consultant so you become one of the first people they think of when a good job comes up.

Finding A Job

Papers and websites

There are hundreds of websites and publications that carry job adverts. Although the national papers often carry positions that are for employees with more experience, you can still find entry level positions advertised. Papers advertise jobs for different industries on specific days – to get an idea of when your favoured industry is featured have a look at <http://www.open.ac.uk/careers/advertised-jobs.php>.

Your local paper will also be a great starting-point for jobs and it's highly likely that the paper will have at least some of the jobs that it features on its website. Other websites such as www.fish4jobs.co.uk and www.totaljobs.com carry thousands of jobs and allow you to search by area as well position.

What About Starting Your Own Business?

If you've always had a dream of being your own boss, then you could be the sort of person who could start their own business. See our case study on the right for one young person who has done just that. You might think you're too young to become an entrepreneur but there are lots of resources to help if you think this route is for you. The Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire are just two organisations who help young people and can even provide you with grants and start-up investment if you can show how your business plan could succeed.

School-Leaver Training Schemes

Many of the larger companies have recruitment schemes where they look for the brightest school leavers to train up on their own internal training schemes (see over for Maddy's story).

This wouldn't necessarily result in a qualification, but you would get a full wage and you would also be fast-tracked for promotion within the company and supported through all your training. If you're interested in working for a particular company, then have a look at their website and see if they run a school-leaver scheme, or send a polite email to their HR department asking what options they have.



Tom Mursell, 19
Founder of notgoingtouni.co.uk

“Strangely, it was because I didn't want to go to uni that I ended up running my own business. I looked around and didn't think that there was anything like enough information for people my age who wanted to know what the alternatives to getting a degree were. I started Not Going To Uni and we're now the leading company for providing information and opportunities to young people leaving school. It's my company that's behind this publication you're reading! I'd say that if you want to start your own business – go for it, if you've got a good idea then you'll find there's loads of help out there for young entrepreneurs and all you need is a good idea, something you believe in passionately and a willingness to work very hard.”

Finding A Job

Case Study

Maddy Beale, 20

Section Manager at John Lewis



“I applied to universities and got offers but there was always something at the back of my head saying that it’s not really for me. I didn’t fancy getting into a load of debt and there wasn’t a course that I was that passionate about. At the time I worked at Waitrose and I noticed that they offered section manager trainee courses, which I think they recruit for about four times a year, and I was lucky enough to get an interview.

I had to go through different rounds of assessments but eventually I got the position. There is so much freedom within the scheme for you to develop at your own pace. Some people going into the scheme already have lots of experience but for me, I had no management experience whatsoever when I started, I just had a brief understanding of the way John Lewis works, but the course teaches you vital aspects about the business. In total it took me 364 days to be promoted and I’m now a section manager looking after 16 brands within the fashion department.

My advice would be don’t take it that university is the only option. I know it can seem like that when you are at school but I know lots of people who feel that uni isn’t necessarily for them but have ended up going because they didn’t think there was an alternative and there are loads!”

Where can I find out more?

www.connexions-direct.com
0800 800 13 2 19. Government-funded information service for young people wondering about career options.

www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk
0800 100 900. Information provided on a range of career issues, including details of what many different types of jobs are like and information on salaries, etc. <http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/helpwithyourcareer/jobprofiles/>

www.direct.gov.uk/whatsnext
Easy access to information on career options and Jobcentre Plus job search – the largest jobs database.

www.rec.uk.com - Recruitment and Employment Confederation website. Use their consultancy finder to pinpoint the best recruitment agency for you to join.

www.waitrosejobs.com/trainingSchemes/johnLewis/managementTraining.htm
Information about the management training schemes at John Lewis.

www.princes-trust.org.uk
Prince’s Trust website with information about setting up your own business and grants and loans.

www.shell-livewire.org. Shell LiveWIRE information and support if you want help starting a business.

www.businesslink.gov.uk
Government-backed portal providing brilliant resources for anyone setting up their own business.

notgoingtouni.co.uk

Image credits

- www.burton-college.ac.uk
- www.sstg.org
- www.zenos.com

