



Virtual Higher Education Day: **Taking a Gap Year**

Are you considering a year out before applying to university or a degree apprenticeship next year? Please find a brief overview below of what options are available and the planning you need to be do now.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, many of these options will be more restricted so you may need to review your plans and be more flexible.

Why do you want to take a year out?

- Have a break from study
- Gain new skills and experience
- Earn money
- Spend time deciding what you want to do
- Do a combination of the above

Look at the pros and cons of a year out [here](#).

What are the benefits of a year out?

A gap year offers you the opportunity to gain skills and experiences, while giving you time to reflect and focus on what you want to do next year.

- Develop your skills: a productive year out can be valuable on your CV. Many employers and universities value the experiences students have gained if they've actively managed their time, set goals and stretched themselves.
- Boost your confidence: through working or volunteering everything you learn will boost your confidence.
- Increase your cultural awareness: if you decide to volunteer or travel, your experience will help you learn more about the world and different cultures you'll encounter.
- Develop your independence: learning to rely on yourself makes you more prepared for university or apprenticeships.
- Increase your work experience: this is an opportunity to try new things and build on your experience in the work place.
- Of you decide to apply for university next year, you could tailor your gap year and relate it to the subject area you plan to study.

Gap year ideas, what can you do?

Consider your choices carefully, it's important that you are using this time to do something worthwhile, that will benefit you in the future.



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1. **Volunteering.** There are lots of benefits to volunteering during a gap year. You'll be gaining experience and proving you're committed. There's also a wide variety of organisations where you can volunteer (working for a charity, for example, means you'll also be giving back to your community), so research the different opportunities available on Moodle Careers - Topic 13.
2. **Gap year projects.** These offer a chance to volunteer, enhance your CV skills, travel, and learn new skills. Check out Moodle Careers - Topic 7. Many of these websites offer advice relating to the coronavirus. Please make sure you follow government guidelines when considering travel.
3. **Paid employment.** Working during a gap year can increase your employability, as it shows future employers that you're committed, willing, and motivated. You'll also be earning money which you could put towards funding your life at university if that's your next step. You will need to be flexible on job roles as some sectors will have put a hold on recruitment due to the current impact of COVID-19. Check out Moodle Careers - Topic 12 - Finding full/part time work.
4. **Work experience.** Many employers will have put any placements on hold during COVID-19 however, there are lots of things you can be doing. Check out Moodle Careers - Topic 3 - Work Experience.
5. **Travelling.** You could decide to go travelling independently or as part of a group, which will give you experiences that others might not have. You'll raise your cultural awareness and develop a knowledge of the wider world. (Travel will be limited to many countries following the coronavirus outbreak so check government guidelines).

Do you want to apply to university for entry 2021?

If so, you need to be doing the following preparation and planning now.

- **Research university courses.** Book onto virtual open days / taster days, research courses for 2021 on the UCAS website www.ucas.com
- **Draft a personal statement.** What are you doing with your year out to enhance your statement? Work experience, volunteering, part time/full time jobs, reading around your subjects, keeping up to date with recent news and developments etc.
- **Register on UCAS Apply 2021.** You will need to complete your online application over summer and apply before mid-November 2020. You will be able to get guidelines and the new buzzword to register with college from Careers in June 2020.
- **Contact college about your reference.** Please do this early in September.

Higher Education resources are available on Moodle Careers - Topic 4.



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Things to consider.

- What do you want to do with your gap year? Careful thought and planning is essential.
- How will you fund your travels?
- Will this be a realistic option with the current restrictions on travel due to the current pandemic?
- Are you aware of all of the options? Do some research using Moodle Careers.

If you have any further questions, or would like support from the careers team, please email us using careers@notredamecoll.ac.uk