



Summer 2019  
EDITION 18

# CAREERS

# NEWSLETTER

## Welcome to the Summer 2019 edition!

**W**elcome to the Summer edition of the Gordon’s School Career Newsletter. Our Year 11 and Sixth Formers have just completed their exams and many are off to pastures new. Whilst most of our Y13s have accepted offers at university, we have some who have been successful in securing a Higher or degree apprenticeship. Congratulations to Tom Robinson who has accepted a place with IBM for their apprenticeship scheme. Archie Matthews will be working towards becoming a Chartered Surveyor and Ellen McCarthy will be an apprentice Journalist at Sky Sports News. We wish them and all of our other leavers all the best in the next stage of their career.

Compared to applying to university, applying for an apprenticeship, especially with a large national company can be quite onerous, with several stages to go through before being offered the job. Indeed, our very own Ellen McCarthy was chosen from over 300 applicants. On page 4 we explore the stages than an applicant may go through to be successful.

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*Students hear about studying in the USA at our Careers Fair in March*



*Mark Anderson*

# 98%

**of apprentices  
would recommend  
their scheme  
to a friend\***



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\*Based on over 4500 reviews submitted on [RateMyApprenticeship.co.uk](https://RateMyApprenticeship.co.uk) between 2017-2018

# Career News Update

## Russell Group scraps preferred A Levels List after art subjects hit

Arts education organisations have welcomed a decision by the Russell Group of research-led universities to scrap its controversial list of preferred [A-Levels](#), after long-running criticism that it has contributed to a devaluation of arts subjects.

The group's list of so-called "[facilitating subjects](#)", including maths, English, sciences, languages, history and geography, was originally drawn up to help pupils choose A-Levels that would open doors to more degrees at the most selective universities.

Critics claim it has resulted in a narrowing of the school curriculum, squeezing out arts and creative subjects in favour of the more traditional, academic subjects included on the list.

Creative subjects are now given greater prominence on a new website, designed to help students choose the right A-Levels depending on their future ambitions: <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

Some may argue that the list of possible subject combinations on the informed choices website is still restricting. There seems to be an assumption that you either choose a STEM combination of subjects or a humanities combination. However, there are a number of examples of a successful blend of A-Levels. Medical admissions teams have said to me that they like the combination of an essay based subject along with Chemistry and Biology, for example.

So be encouraged that you can still become an accountant, vet or doctor with an A-Level in English.

## University Tuition Fees should be cut to £7500

**University tuition fees in England should be cut to £7,500, says a landmark review commissioned by the government.**

This will be balanced by extending repayments from 30 to 40 years - so that people could be paying back student loans into their 60s.

But the review calls for the return of

maintenance grants, which were axed in 2016, for poorer students.

Former Prime Minister Theresa May said scrapping them had been a mistake.

The review proposes:

- Maximum for tuition fees should be reduced from £9,250 to £7,500 per year.
- Any unpaid debts would not be cancelled until 40 years after graduating, rather than 30 years
- Repayments start at a lower point, when graduates earn £23,000 rather than £25,725
- Means-tested, non-repayable maintenance grants of up to £3,000, for both university and higher-level technical courses

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48451474>

## Oxford University promises admissions 'sea change' to take in poorer students

Bright youngsters whose disadvantaged backgrounds would normally rule them out of a prestigious higher education place are being targeted by new schemes at Oxford University.

Following mounting criticism of a lack of diversity among students, the university wants to usher in a "sea change" in how it goes about its annual admissions that will ensure one in four undergraduates come from poorly represented backgrounds by 2023 - up from the current rate of 15%.



*The university has been criticised for the number of undergraduates it takes in from poorer backgrounds*

Last year the university denied rejecting an offer from rapper Stormzy to fund a scholarship scheme for two black students.

The British grime artist claims the university turned down his scholarship idea, which was then taken up by the University of Cambridge.



*Grime artist Stormzy*

To find out how the university plans to make these changes, visit <https://news.sky.com/story/oxford-university-promises-admissions-sea-change-to-take-in-poorer-students-11725113>

## New T Level qualifications are coming soon

**T**(Technical) Levels are new two-year, technical programmes designed with employers to give young people the skills that industry needs.

Starting in September 2020 (available for current Year 10s), they will give students aged 16 to 18 a technical alternative to A Levels and will help them to get a skilled job. T Levels will provide a mixture of:

- Technical knowledge and practical skills specific to their chosen industry or occupation
- An industry placement of at least 45 days in their chosen industry or occupation
- Relevant maths, English and digital skills
- Common workplace skills

Farnborough College of Technology will be one of the first colleges in the country to offer T levels. The college will be offering courses in Education and Childcare and Digital. For further information visit <https://www.farn-ct.ac.uk/school-leavers/introducing-t-levels/>

## Five tips on preparing for the application process:

### Develop commercial awareness

How much do you know about the business and the industry you hope to work within? The more you know, the more likely you are to be successful. So keep up to date with industry news and developments and research the company well. You can do this by following the company on social media and keeping up to date with current business affairs.

### Practice psychometric tests

It can be useful to practice some of the tests mentioned on the right so you've got an idea of what to expect. If it's been a while since you've done any subjects requiring basic mathematics, this is even more vital. You can practice some tests on

<https://www.jobmi.com>

### Practice speaking in front of a camera

Yes, this can be very embarrassing and awkward, but the more you get used to seeing and hearing yourself on video, the less cringey it will be during the real thing.

### Study the person specification

Be absolutely clear about the desired and essential skills for the role. This is what you will be measured against from the initial application form to final interview. Then make sure you can clearly demonstrate, both in writing and verbally, how you meet this criteria, referencing strong examples.

### Ask Questions

If you're fortunate to get as far as a one to one interview, have questions in mind that you would like to ask. This shows that you have really thought about the company and the role and it demonstrates enthusiasm. Please don't start off with 'how much would I get paid?' That said, if you were purely in it for the money, a good recruiter would have sifted you out a long time ago!

## The Apprenticeship Application Process: what you need to know

If you're planning to apply for an apprenticeship rather than go to university, it's worth being aware that there can be several stages to go through before being offered a job. You could argue that it's easier to get into university. So let's take a look at some of these stages and find out what they actually involve.

### The online application form:

It sounds straightforward enough but they can be time consuming and a little complex. Firstly, there could be some jargon that you're not used to. For example, some international companies may use the term zip code, rather than post code. Then there's grown up terms like 'right to work', disability 2 ticks and credit checks. If you don't understand some of the terms found in application forms, don't just gloss over them, but find out what they mean because they could be relevant to your application and possible recruitment.

### The video interview:

This could be live with an interviewer or you could be asked to pre-record your answers on camera to a set of online questions. It can be carried out on anything with a webcam eg phone, tablet or laptop. Don't worry too much about using the most up to date gadget because it's not about picture quality, but your quality. Typically, you will be asked a series of questions with a time limit for you to complete your answer. The questions are not designed to catch you out. It's simply your opportunity to sell yourself. So don't be surprised if you're asked questions such as 'tell me about yourself' or 'what do you do in your spare time?'

### The situational strength tests:

These are tests to find out how you would respond in certain business situations. For this type of test there could be multiple choice answers where you have to rank the statements in order of preference. This might seem easy but there are often no right or wrong answers. Here's a typical example:

*Susie is very busy at work and a colleague makes a request for her time. Does she:*

- A – Ignore them**
- B – Tell them that her work is more important**
- C – Call/Email them to say, 'can we have a quick chat?' to find out what she is needed for**
- D – Complain to her manager**

### The numerical reasoning test:

This tests your ability to interpret numbers/data. You could be asked questions on graphs, charts, tables, ratios.

### The critical reasoning test:

This tests your decision making, critical reasoning and thinking skills. You could face true/false questions where you are expected to judge the strength of arguments, and distinguish between assumptions and fact based on data.

### The assessment centre:

This can be the most daunting stage where you're faced with fellow applicants. You could be forgiven for feeling you're on the TV version of The Apprentice. However, your hosts for the day are likely to be far more supportive than Sir Alan Sugar's minions.

You might be given a business scenario at the start of the day to work on throughout the day. Then you might be given a range of exercises including:

- Written exercise
- Presentation
- Group exercise
- Interview

## Where are they now? Mark Foster-Murray

### What did you do straight after leaving Gordon's?

Straight after Gordon's, I found it difficult to initially adjust to life beyond the school. Before I went to university I decided to travel a little to broaden my horizons and strengthen my confidence to a world without the security of Gordon's.

### Tell us about your business

I founded Bamboo ([wearebamboo.com](http://wearebamboo.com)) in 2013 to be a fresh approach to group adventure travel. We offer experience opportunities across 30+ tours in nine different countries. Bamboo centres its tours around a specific project or initiative either by working with local NGOs or organisations that support and benefit the communities we visit. From working with elephants and turtles to building houses or teaching English. Our tours mix the magic of adventure with the magic of giving back!

### How and when did you get the idea?

After university, I spent a lot of time travelling and recognised a gap in the market where I felt there needed to be more honesty, integrity, and accountability when working on such sensitive projects, but also not escaping the fundamental principle of 'having an amazing adventure' at the same time.

### What has been your biggest challenge?

Working with other organisations to ensure our standards and policies are upheld across varied cultural and global communities.

### What are your aims for your business?

To spread our mission and message across all five continents and create a community of people who not only enjoy their adventure but return home with eyes slightly wider to the world and the issues we encounter.

### To what do you attribute your success?

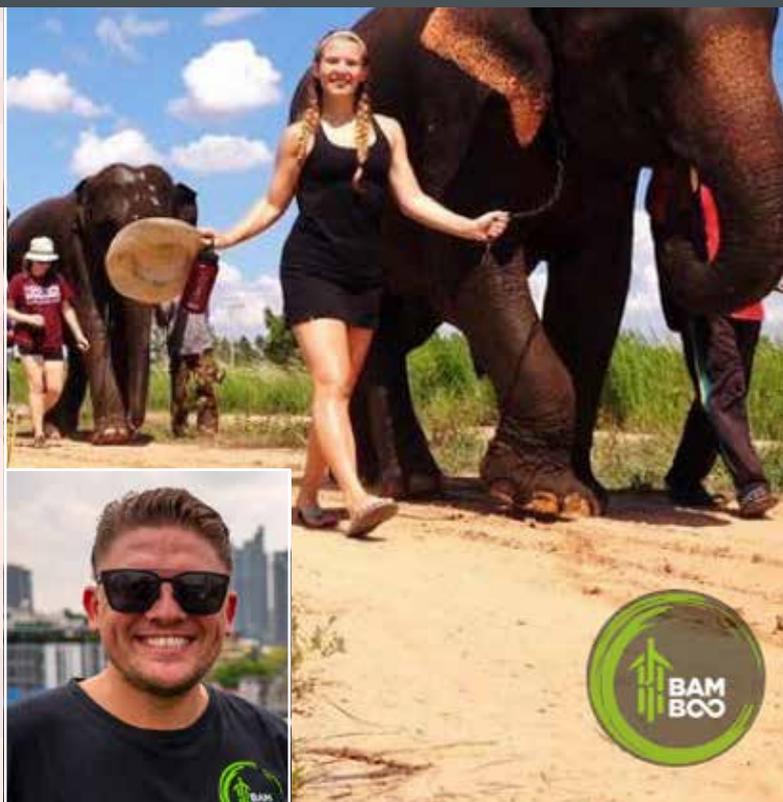
Relentless determination, the gift of the gab, and a bundle of luck but probably most importantly an unwavering belief in what we do.

### Did you always think that you would run your own business?

Yes and no. I always felt I was not destined for a 9-5 experience but never did I ever expect to be where I am today!

### What is the one piece of careers advice you would give to a current student?

I may not be the best person to ask with regards to 'career' advice, as things to me have always fallen into place and I tended to go with the flow. Perhaps I would add that I felt a little overwhelmed when the time came to choose a degree. At 18 it feels like you are asked to make a decision that will essentially carve a path for the rest of your life. I felt if I didn't know exactly where I was going and I would be left behind! Fortunately, I decided to ignore the inner insecure voice and opt for 'you will find your place in the world, lad. Breathe and take your time'. In the end, the 'path less taken' hasn't been so bad!



We are **BAMBOO** and we offer adventure travel that gives back, globally! Our group tours combine the perfect mix of fun and exploration with give-back initiatives such as working with elephants, turtles and communities in need.

Group options for ages 18+ & 50+ in:  
Thailand, India, Nepal, Tahiti, Bali, Vietnam, Uganda & Cambodia

Co-Founded by Gordonian, Mark Foster (9344)  
Bamboo began its journey in the dorms of Balmoral house and is now bringing its fresh approach to travel to thousands each year!

Join us and be a part of something different!

**"WITHOUT GORDON'S SCHOOL  
THERE WOULDN'T BE A BAMBOO"**

Gordonian & Bamboo Co-Founder Mark Foster (9344)  
Follow his journey on insta @markbamboo

**WWW.WEAREBAMBOO.COM**

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Pilot Careers Event Heathrow airport (see opposite) 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2019

## Pilot Careers Event

Heathrow airport 1-2nd November 2019

Training to be a pilot is a unique learning experience, which is character-building, complex, and challenging. The training demands high levels of self-discipline and determination, across a variety of physiological and practical skill-sets. But success will reward those who meet the required high standards, with a well-respected, exciting and fulfilling career.

Ask any professional pilot and they will tell you, despite the early morning starts in the depths of winter, delayed flight schedules and irregular work patterns, they would not change their career for any other.

### Who should attend?

- ✓ Anyone interested in a career in

aviation and aerospace, from aero engineering and flight deck positions to maintenance, airport operations, management, air traffic control or flight ops.

- ✓ Candidates with an ambition to be an airline or military pilot.
- ✓ Anyone interested in commercial helicopter flying operations.
- ✓ Those considering making an exciting career change.
- ✓ School/college career advisors, as this event offers an excellent opportunity to gather reference material and speak with the experts about options within the sector.

You don't need to be an aviation expert to attend as this event will equip you with comprehensive knowledge about every career opportunity and training process, to ensure that you get the best possible independent, professional advice.

## What's On?

### Internal Events:

Y10 & 12 Work Experience Week  
(8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July)

Y9 Enrichment Day  
(9<sup>th</sup> July)

### External Events:

A Career in Wealth Management, St James' Place, London  
(9<sup>th</sup> July)

<https://www.sjp.co.uk/careers/calendar-events>

University and Apprenticeship Fair, Emirates Stadium, London  
(4<sup>th</sup> October)

<https://www.ukuniversitysearch.com/fair-signup/london-autumn-2019>

What Career Live, London  
(11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> October)

<https://www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/london>

Pilot Careers Live, London  
(1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> November)

<https://www.pilotcareernews.com/live/london/>

The Language Show Live, London - Careers event for those who want to use a foreign language in work  
(15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November)

<https://languageshowlive.co.uk/>

A career at Google – Google Academy, London  
(19<sup>th</sup> November)

For further details visit

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/events/at-google>

PWC Office Open Event, London  
(14<sup>th</sup> August)

<http://www.careersschools.pwc.co.uk/Events/ShowEvent/Schools-office-open-event-London/898346>



## Career Insight Days

The most effective way to research a firm is to visit it in person (if possible) and an insight day is the perfect opportunity to do this. An insight day also gives you the opportunity to make a positive impression.

Insight days provide insight for school and college leavers into potential companies, helping narrow down the search for a school leaver programme or sponsored degree. These events usually take place over one or two days, giving attendees enough time to get a proper flavour for a company.

Usually attending company HQ, here are a few of the activities and exercises school leavers can expect from an Insight Day:

### Meet the team

Insight Day attendees often spend time with senior staff members, as well as trainees who have made it past the Insight Day and into the business.

This is a great opportunity to ask questions (and make yourself popular) and chat with more senior staff, but also to get the inside scoop from current trainees: are they happy they applied for the school leaver programme or sponsored degree? What are they enjoying the most about it? And what are they not enjoying so much?

You could also pick up some tips on how to impress on your application form / at interview, if you decide you do want to apply to the company's scheme.

### Interactive exercises

These can take the form of anything from

team simulations to business games, even debating your opinions on topical industry news.

Remember: you are probably being observed (if not formally, as in a job interview), so try to play up to your own strengths without being too loud or pushy: being able to listen is an important part of any job.

One Insight Day attendee reported being asked their opinion on the Kraft takeover of Cadbury; another had to talk about recent British Airways strikes. So, make sure you've read up on the latest business news!

### Learn more about the scheme

CGI, for example, holds open evenings throughout the year for their sponsored degree programme: not only do CGI managers attend, but representatives from the University of Winchester (with whom the company runs its programme) as well as undergraduates on the programme.

This is the perfect opportunity to learn not only about the on-the-job experience but the academic side too.

### Pick up application tips

At all Insight Days you'll benefit from practical advice about what makes a good quality application and pick up hints and tips on application and interview techniques. All of this is invaluable whatever your next steps are, but especially if you apply to that particular company.

### Learn about yourself

Exercises can help you find out if you have the makings of a commercial thinker, and experience how it feels to be part of a client project.

All of this will focus your mind on the kind of personal and business skills that company is looking for, and whether that particular industry is right for you.

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