

POST-18 BOOKLET

POST- 18 OPTIONS

Life after A-Levels can seem daunting for many students. Depending on examination results, personality, skills, hobbies and interests, there are several options students could consider. Gordon's Sixth Form has provided a strong foundation for students to build on and has equipped them with the necessary skills to be independent and self-motivated which will enable them to be successful in a wide range of Post -18 options and pathways.



Each Post-18 option has advantages and disadvantages and this booklet outlines details of some of those options in order to guide students in the important next steps they are taking.



APPRENTICESHIPS

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are offered by organisations who see this as an excellent opportunity to fill a vacancy by training a suitable candidate and teaching them relevant industry specific skills. During the practical on the job training they also fund the individual's education so he/she achieves relevant qualifications required for the job.

How does an apprenticeship work?

Apprenticeships vary in their delivery. Some have periods where the apprentice is placed in the industry, followed by a period of classroom teaching where the person attends a college for a period of time. Others embed the practical aspect with a day release to a college once per week. Apprentices are paid, so this option offers the opportunity to learn while bringing in a wage. Young people have the chance to work alongside experienced staff and gain skills unique to the workplace, as well as an increasingly well-respected qualification, over a period of one to four years. There are many levels of apprenticeships to suit individuals with varying qualifications.

Higher Apprenticeships

Higher apprenticeships exist at levels 4,5,6 and 7 and are equivalent to a foundation degree and above. They lead to the following nationally recognised qualifications:

- Level 4 and 5 – equivalent to a higher education certificate, higher education diploma or a foundation degree

or

- Level 6 – equivalent to a bachelor degree

Degree Apprenticeships

Gain a full bachelor's or master's degree with a Degree Apprenticeship at levels 6 and 7!

Degree Apprenticeships are designed by industry to bring together the very best in higher and vocational education. Apprentices achieve a full Bachelor's or Master's degree as a core component of the apprenticeship. On a Degree Apprenticeship, individuals are tested on their academic learning, as well as wider skills and ability to do a job. They will be assessed either using a fully-integrated degree co-designed by employers and higher education institutions, or using a degree plus a separate end-test of their professional competence.

This is a credible alternative to university and is an option increasingly in demand. Students opting for an Apprenticeship should apply directly to the organisation advertising a vacancy for an apprentice in an industry or a career they wish to pursue. It is therefore important that applicants have an effective and up to date CV.

Higher Apprenticeships are currently available in the following sectors:

- Business & IT
- Construction
- Creative, media & the arts
- Customer service & retail
- Energy, engineering & electrical
- Finance, health & care
- Hospitality & travel
- Manufacturing, processing & logistics
- Public services
- Vehicles & transport

For more information, please visit <http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/>

EMPLOYMENT

How do A-Levels prepare individuals for employment?

For individuals who do not wish to progress into Higher Education, employment is a logical and appealing alternative. A-Level studies are a good preparation for employment as they teach individuals a wide range of transferable skills which are relevant for employment.

Good A-Level grades indicate to an employer that the individual is a good learner, self-motivated, hardworking, and takes the job of being a student seriously. In addition, many A-Level students who have engaged in work experience and a wide range of extra-curricular activities can demonstrate characteristics and traits that are valued by employers. For example, an individual who can evidence their commitment to a regular part-time volunteering position or work placement suggests that they are responsible, reliable and know the importance of punctuality and customer service.

Any individual who is considering employment after their A-Levels should have an updated CV, where they outline their profile in terms of education and work experience, as well as extra-curricular engagements.

For more information, please make an appointment with the careers advisor at Gordon's Sixth Form. See below for more information on effective CV's.

<https://www.cv-library.co.uk/career-advice/cv/how-to-write-a-cv-tips-for-2017/>

<http://www.jobsite.co.uk/worklife/write-a-cv-that-works-10159/>



GAP YEAR

Why consider a gap year?

Many students choose to take a gap year before starting their next phase in life. The purpose of a gap year might be to take time out to consider future goals or simply to undertake an activity that the individual feels they will not have time to do later after commencing university.

It is important that the gap year is planned and well-researched in order to use it effectively and to benefit from the experience. An effective gap year experience is something that has relevance to the individual's considered career option, or an experience which demonstrates certain traits and characteristics in an individual which universities and employers would see as beneficial and useful.

Many students choose to volunteer abroad for an organisation which demonstrates characteristics such as maturity and commitment which many employers would seek in an employee. It would, for example, be useful for an individual who is considering a teaching career to perhaps volunteer as a teacher or teaching assistant in a school, in the UK or abroad, during a gap year in order to gain experience and be better informed. Many gap year jobs abroad are paid.



There are many companies who offer more information and often help with organising a gap year abroad. See some examples below.

www.gapyear.com

www.realgap.co.uk

UNIVERSITY

University is the most popular choice for students who have completed their A - Levels. It is a great preparation for employment as it can offer a vocational pathway to a career within a specific field, such as teaching, medicine, veterinary sciences or law. It can also offer a more general foundation for employment as it teaches individuals a full set of transferable skills such as managing projects, undertaking research, and meeting deadlines, all of which are highly valued by employers. Many job opportunities are only open to graduates as employers use university degrees as a sifting and sorting mechanism.



There are many types of degrees and it is important that candidates are fully informed.

- **Bachelor's degree** – a three or four year course which can be taken in undergraduate higher education after A Levels – also known as an 'undergraduate degree'. Most courses are either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science.
- **Honours degree** – most undergraduate degrees in higher education can come with 'honours'. It's not a grade as such – it just means it's possible to get a degree 'with honours' (bachelor's with honours), which would be an extra indication of quality. Check with each university what is needed to get honours – it might be getting a certain grade average, studying extra modules or submitting a good dissertation.
- **MA** – the abbreviation for Master of Arts, which can mean two different things. Often it stands for a Master's degree in a Master of Arts, a postgraduate level qualification. But it can also be an undergraduate degree studied at one of the UK's ancient universities such as the universities of St. Andrews, Oxford and Cambridge.
- **Postgraduate degree** - a degree for graduates who have already completed an undergraduate course.
- **Sandwich degrees/course** – a degree which includes a year of work placement in industry/ in a profession being studied for.

How are students assessed at university?

Most courses assess students using a range of tools such as coursework, exams, presentations and projects. The first year's assessments do not contribute towards the final grade but students have to pass this year in order to progress to the second year, which does contribute towards the final grade.

How does the degree classification work at university?

Most UK universities and colleges use a degree classification system.

- **First class honours** - is the highest level, the highest grade a student can get awarded based on total amount of marks accumulated across the course. Often this is 70% and above. Sometimes universities stipulate that the dissertation (the final year project) has to be a certain grade for the student to be able to reach a First class honour.
- **Second class honours** – The second highest level of marks. Second class honours is broken down into two further classifications – upper division (or 2:1) and lower division (2:2). A 2:1 or
- **Upper second class honours** - This classification is often required for entry into many postgraduate courses in the UK.
- **Third class honours** – Most UK universities and colleges use a degree classification system. Third class honours is typically the lowest degree classification awarded by UK universities and colleges.

UNIVERSITY

For more information on key terms and types of degrees, please visit:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/international-and-eu-students/ucas-terms-explained>

Paying for university

Many students are worried about getting into debt at a young age. While it is wise to worry about debt, student finance can be a solution.

The main types of student finance are **tuition fee and maintenance loans** (which have to be paid back), and **grants and bursaries** which do not have to be paid back.

Students can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan of up to £9,250 to cover tuition fees while Maintenance Loans and bursaries help towards living costs such as rent and bills. The amount of Maintenance Loan that students will be eligible for may depend on their household income, the type of course they are studying and where they live. The costs of living varies across universities depending on their geographical location, with London based universities often costing slightly more. There are several types of grants, bursaries and scholarships that students can apply for so it is worth researching it.

Repayment*

Repayment of student loans is based on paying 9% of the income above a set minimum level of earnings. In April 2017, the minimum level of earnings threshold was frozen at £21,000 until 2021 for those who studied in the UK. This means that individuals who earn less than this amount after graduation do not have to repay their student loan until their earnings meet this threshold.

For example, if an individual was earning £30,000 per year: 1. £30,000 – £21,000 before tax = £9,000 2. 9% of 9,000 = £810 3. £810 / 12 months = £67.5 4. Round down

The monthly student loan repayment would be **£67 per month on that level of salary until the loan is paid off**. Currently in England and Wales, the student loan is cancelled 30 years after individuals become eligible to repay.

For more information about student finance, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

*Correct at time of print July 2017

STUDYING ABROAD

Ever thought about studying abroad?

Studying a year or a full degree abroad can have great benefits. It can be cheaper. Research suggest that studying in Germany is half the cost of a degree in the UK, with France a close second (UCAS, 2017). It can show employers that an individual is flexible, confident, as well as socially and culturally mobile. Studying abroad would also make an individual stand out from others and show employers that they possess characteristics such as maturity and independence - traits valued by employers.



Studying abroad will suit individuals who wish to immerse themselves in the practical experience of applying what they study in a book to a real life scenario. Examples could be to study fashion in Paris, art in Barcelona, or a business degree in New York.

Studying in America

For students interested in studying in America, **The Fullbrook Commission**, which is part of the EducationUSA network, are the official source of information on applying to American universities for the United Kingdom.

Visit their website for a step-by-step guide to applying for US study or to attend one of their US study events, including their annual USA College Day fair.

Studying in Europe

For students interested in studying in Europe, there are many options available. One example is the Netherlands which is an attractive option for many, due to its closeness to the UK and lower cost degrees. Examples of universities in the Netherlands can be seen below:

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;

- is listed among the world's top universities in various rankings
- offers 98 English taught programmes at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level. Ten faculties share one campus and cover a wide spectrum of business, law, science, arts, and medicine studies.
- is located in the vibrant city of Amsterdam, one of the most multicultural cities in the world, with the largest concentration of students in the Netherlands and where English is the second language.
- is surrounded by one of the most dynamic and fast-growing business districts in the Netherlands, hosting over 700 companies.

To find out more about Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam go to: www.vu.nl

Maastricht University

Established in 1976, Maastricht University (UM) is the youngest research university in the Netherlands. UM stands out for its strong international orientation.

- it offers a wide range of English-taught bachelor's programmes and master's programmes.
- almost half of the student population and a third of the academic staff are non-Dutch.
- UM ranks 6th in both the Times Higher Education 100 under 50 ranking and the QS 'top 50 under 50' ranking.

Another popular option for studying in Europe is Spain. An example of a university in Spain can be seen below.

STUDYING ABROAD

IE University, Spain

IE University is an institution that thrives on change. With an innovative vision, entrepreneurial spirit, and a focus on humanities and academic rigour, IE University is committed to educating professionals and experts who will make a difference in society.

100 nationalities are represented on the campuses in Segovia and Madrid, with over 65% of students coming from outside of Spain.

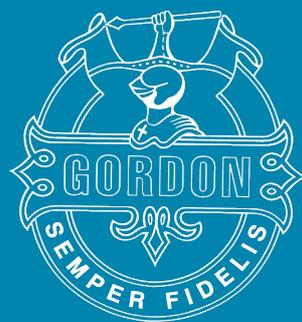
IEU ranks 1st university in Spain, 8th in Europe, and 25th worldwide on employability (Times Higher Education, 2016).

For more information on studying abroad and the options available in various countries, please visit;

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/alternatives-higher-education/studying-overseas>

<http://www.studyabroad.com/>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/study-abroad>



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