



SIXTH FORM

FRAMWELLGATE SCHOOL DURHAM

Post 18 Options A Parents' Guide



FrAmbition
Careers at Fram

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Introduction

It's time to start thinking about life after school! There are lots of options depending on whether students want to work, study, travel or do a combination of all three. This booklet will broadly outline the main options available, what to think about when and where to start looking for more information. You may also want to arrange a meeting with the Guidance Manager to discuss your child's own personal action plan for the next year.

This guide should be used alongside www.unifrog.org, www.ucas.com and advice from staff to support students with their decision making and applications. Throughout the process students should be aware of the following responsibilities that they and the school are agreeing to. If at any point something is unclear please see your child's tutor or the Guidance Manager.

Responsibilities

The Student

- Discuss predicted grades with teachers & research options in relation to these grades
- Take ownership of their applications, engage with the support on offer and meet school deadlines
- Produce a CV and/or personal statement and actively seek support and feedback to improve it/them
- If applying through UCAS, once complete, check the form for mistakes and arrange an appointment with the guidance manager to have it double checked
- Inform the school of any other application deadlines that apply

The School

- Give students an honest, professional judgment on their predicted grades
- Provide opportunities to conduct research and support decision making
- Provide access to information, advice and guidance
- Give feedback on CVs, personal statements and application forms
- Provide an honest, professional reference providing ample notice has been given
- Submit final form to UCAS by equal consideration deadline.

Opportunities will also be shared on a regular basis via the careers bulletin and student e-mails.



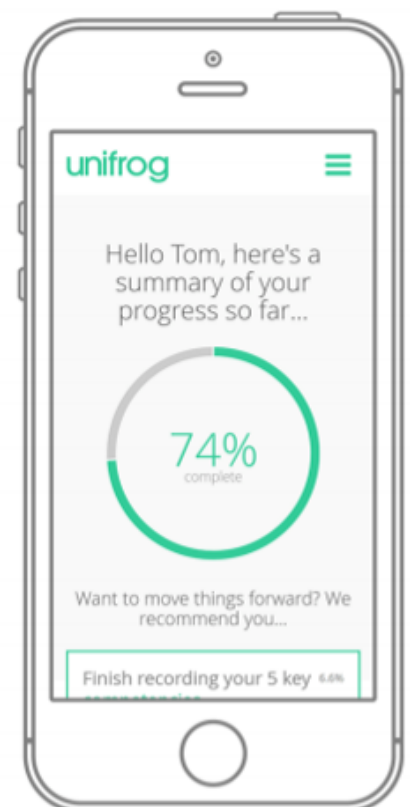
All students have access to Unifrog; an award-winning, online careers platform. Unifrog brings into one place every undergraduate university course, apprenticeship, and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge. This make it easy for students to compare and choose the best university courses, apprenticeships or further education courses for them. They can also explore exciting opportunities further afield by looking at English taught undergraduate programmes available in Europe and the USA.

Additionally, the platform helps students successfully apply for these opportunities by writing their personal statement, applications and CVs and guiding them through the process, allowing teachers to give live feedback.

Students access the tool for the first time using a sign-up code which is unique to their tutor group. They then login using their email address and password and they can do so from any computer, tablet or smartphone. We would encourage you to use the platform with your child so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step.

We have also set up a parent login so that you can use Unifrog as if you were a student yourself, allowing you to truly support your child. For a form code and details of how to sign up please e-mail hammond.c@framdurham.com.

For more information, go to www.unifrog.org.



Introduction to University

University is primarily an opportunity to study a subject in-depth and gain valuable transferable skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, time management, independence and the ability to carry out research. It can also be a “soft” introduction to adult life, with students moving away from home and gaining independence in a supported environment.

Many students also look forward to the “university experience”, and aside from the traditional images this conjures up, it can be another great way for students to build employment skills through participation in clubs and societies, summer internships, years abroad and positions of responsibility.

It is also the case that some careers require a degree, but it’s good to know that the majority of “graduate professions” do not require any specific degree.

There are also many flexible ways to study for a degree, including foundation routes, online courses, courses with industrial placements and degree apprenticeships.

Universities offer a lot of support to potential applicants, particularly those whose families don’t have any prior experience of higher education. Some students may be eligible for supported progression schemes, mentoring or bursaries—see the guidance manager or local university websites for more information.

What do students need to do?

- Choose a course that interests them
- Choose up to five universities that offer their chosen course to apply to
- Apply online through UCAS
- Apply for student finance

Where should I look next?

The UK Universities section of Unifrog

www.ucas.com/parents

www.theuniguide.co.uk

References & Predicted Grades

- All students applying to university will have an academic reference that is written by their tutor with input from subject teachers
- References and predicted grades are based on academic performance throughout Year 12 and at the start of Year 13, as well as student potential
- All forms are checked by the guidance manager and Head of Sixth Form
- You can request a copy of your reference to read in school, but these are not transferable to other applications

University—Competative Routes

All the routes outlined below are competitive in some way and have additional steps in the application process that students and those supporting them need to be aware of. These students should arrange a meeting with the guidance manager in Year 12 to discuss their needs in more details.

Oxford & Cambridge

The main difference between Oxford and Cambridge and other universities is their small group teaching system, known as tutorial or supervisions. It is important that students consider whether they will enjoy learning in this way before applying.

- Extra requirements
- A-Level predictions generally need to be AAA or higher
 - GCSE profile will also be considered
- Key application info:
- Students can apply to Oxford or Cambridge, not both
 - Application deadline is early—1st October internally at school
 - Both universities interview, this can involve an overnight stay
 - Some courses/colleges require additional admissions tests sat either in school in advance or at interview.
 - Some courses require additional written work to be submitted

The best place to get advice on applying to Oxford and Cambridge are the universities own websites, be wary of other sources, particularly those selling preparation materials:

www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science

- Extra requirements
- A-Level predictions generally need to be AAA or higher
 - GCSE profile will also be considered
 - Specific A Levels may be required (such as Chemistry)
 - Work experience of a certain length, meeting certain requirements
- Key application info:
- Application deadline is early—1st October internally at school
 - Only allowed to apply to 4 medical/dentistry/vet science courses. Can apply to a fifth course in something else.
 - Applicants may need to sit an additional entry test (either the UCAT or BMAT)
 - All courses interview

www.medschools.ac.uk

www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk

www.vetschoolscouncil.ac.uk

University—Competative Routes cont.

Law, Teaching and Health Professions

- Extra requirements
- Work experience of a certain length, meeting certain requirements
 - There may be specific GCSE requirements
- Key application info:
- Courses interview (with the exception of some law courses)
 - Some courses require additional admissions tests
 - Courses require a Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) check (with the exception of some law courses)

Get Into Teaching: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk>

NHS Health Careers: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk

Law Aptitude Test: <https://lnat.ac.uk/>

Art, Media and other creative courses

- Extra requirements
- May require a portfolio or audition
- Key application info:
- Some courses have different application deadlines to allow students more time to prepare their portfolio, but not all.

(see section on [Art Foundation](#))

www.ukmusic.org

Conservatoires

Conservatoires provide performance-based higher education, including music, drama, screen and production courses. They have a separate application process to other universities and all audition.

www.conservatoiresuk.ac.uk

www.ucas.com/conservatoires

Study Abroad

Recently, there has been a surge in interest from students in the UK in courses taught in English at international universities. Major considerations include funding and differences in course structure, but this can be an exciting opportunity for some students. Students can also opt to study abroad for one year of their UK university degree at many universities.

Unifrog has a wealth of information on international courses, including a course search facility, in addition the following websites will be of use:

Advice on studying abroad around the world: www.astarfuture.co.uk

America: www.fulbright.org.uk Europe: www.eunicas.com

Erasmus—Years abroad as part of a UK degree: www.erasmusplus.org.uk

UK Council for International Student Affairs www.ukcisa.org.uk

University Application Timeline

From May	Research courses Register on UCAS, begin filling in application form Attend Open Days 1 st draft of personal statement to tutor/guidance manager Those on Competitive Routes should arrange a meeting with the guidance manager
September	Students produce additional drafts of personal statement to be checked by their tutor/guidance manager
30th Sept	Internal Deadline for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science Courses
From October	Enter course choices in UCAS Produce final draft of personal statement Meet with Guidance Manager to submit form
25th November	Internal UCAS Application Deadline*
January	External UCAS Application deadline
March	UCAS Extra opens for students not holding offers
March – May	Make firm and insurance choices, apply for Student Finance
August	Results day and Clearing

* Why do we have an internal deadline?

The internal deadline is set to give the school plenty of time to check student forms and complete references to ensure forms are ready for the external deadline in January.

Researching courses and universities

Choosing a Degree Course

Choosing the right course is important as students will need to have the passion and interest to sustain the level of independent study required to be successful at degree level. Students should consider the following:

- Their predicted grades
- If a particular degree course is required for their chosen career
- What they have enjoyed studying in the sixth form
- Their other interests and skills

The Unifrog Career and Subject Library is a great place to start this research.

Students can also use the Unifrog MOOC search to find online taster courses allowing them to try out their chosen course and see if it is right for them.

Choosing a University

Once students have chosen their course, they can begin to explore the universities that offer it. They can consider the following:

- The facilities and accommodation on offer—Open Days are a good way of exploring this: www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/events-and-open-days
- Practical considerations such as cost and travel
- Key Information Set (KIS) Data collected by the government, allowing students to compare things like student satisfaction and graduate employment rates. This data should be published on university websites and can also be found here: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>
- Be wary of league tables and reputation—check what it is based on (e.g. research output, teaching standard, student satisfaction survey) before making a decision.

UCAS Tariff Table

UCAS Tariff points translate your qualifications and grades into a numerical value. Many qualifications (but not all) have a UCAS Tariff value, which will vary dependent on the qualification size, and the grade you achieved. Some universities, colleges, and conservatoires refer to UCAS Tariff points in their course entry requirements, but this doesn't mean they won't consider qualifications that don't appear on the Tariff -- so make sure you check the course entry requirements carefully!

www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/entry-requirements/ucas-tariff-points

A Level Grade	BTEC Grade	Tariff Points
A*	D*	56
A	D	48
B		40
C	M	32
D		24
E	P	16
Extended Project		HSLA
A*	28	16
A	24	
B	20	
C	16	
D	12	
E	8	

UCAS Process

Getting Started

1. Go to www.ucas.com and sign up for a Hub account
2. From May, students can click on the Apply 2023 tile in their Hub account
3. To link their application to the school they will need to enter the Buzzword **FRAM2023** when registering.
4. Students should save their username, password and UCAS ID Number somewhere where they won't lose them!
5. Students work through each section of the form, checking as they go. Each section has a help video at the start if needed.

Choices

Students can select up to five courses to apply to. At this point, these are not entered in any particular order.

Personal Statement

Students should use Unifrog to write their personal statement, as it allows the school to easily track their progress and give feedback. It also gives them a suggested structure, which many students find helpful. Lots of advice on writing personal statements will be made available in school, and can be found on individual university websites and at: www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement

Submitting

- When students have finished their form they need to make an appointment with the guidance manager for it to be checked.
- Once it has been approved, they need to click "Pay and Send" on their form.
- Payment must be made by credit/debit card online. **The cost is around £28**, if you require financial support with this please see the guidance manager.

After Submitting

- The school will enter the student's predicted grades and reference and submit the form to UCAS
- Universities will give fair consideration to all applications submitted up until mid January.
- After this, applications will be marked as late and may be rejected if the course is full.
- Universities have until March to respond, students then have until May to make their Firm and Insurance choices. More guidance will be given on this in January.

Student Finance

While at university or college, your child will have two main costs – tuition fees and living costs. They can apply for student finance to help with both.

All eligible students can get a:

- Tuition Fee Loan to cover the full cost of the fees charged by their university or college
- Basic rate of Maintenance Loan to help with living costs, such as rent and bills

The basic rate of Maintenance Loan doesn't depend on your household income, but they can apply for more that does. Any loans they borrow have to be paid back, but not until they've finished or left their course, and their income is over the repayment threshold of £2,274 a month (as of 6th April 2021).

There are also grants available for students who have a disability, including a long-term health condition, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty, or students who have children or an adult dependant who depends on them financially. These don't usually have to be paid back.

A student's university or college may also offer bursaries, scholarships, or other kinds of financial help – it's always worth checking with them too.

(Taken from: www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/student-finance-guidance-parents-and-partners)

The school will hold a student finance information talk in the first half term of Year 13.

Students apply online for student finance between February/March and May using the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

Other good sources of advice:

www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents/parents-what-you-need-to-know-about-student-finance

www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/

Alternative Study Routes

Foundation Degree/Higher National Diploma

What is it?

Level: 5

Duration: 2 Years

Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diplomas are the equivalent of two thirds of a full honours degree. They are designed to be fully flexible, allowing for full or part time study to fit around employment, work experience or other commitments.

Both tend to be offered in vocational areas and may also include professional qualifications.

Some courses require students to be employed in a relevant area. These qualifications can also form part of a Higher Apprenticeship (see relevant pages).

Not to be confused with Art Foundation Courses, Foundation entry routes or BTEC National Diplomas.

Funding: Student Finance England—Tuition and Maintenance Loans available
Can also be funded by an employer

Progression: Top-up Degree, Degree Apprenticeship, working in industry

What do students need to do?

- Apply through UCAS and/or directly with providers via their websites from September of Year 13 onwards
- Students may be required to interview
- If part of an apprenticeship, students may be required to attend an assessment centre or complete skills tests (see relevant pages).
- Meet entry requirements (offers usually made in UCAS Points)

Where should I look next?

Foundation Degrees are offered by both universities and colleges. The majority use the UCAS online application system, so a good place to start is the UCAS course search: www.ucas.com and Unifrog UK Universities Search.

Students may also want to look at our local provider websites, prospectuses and Open Events.

Alternative Study Routes

Year 0/Foundation Entry Routes

What is it?

Level: 4

Duration: 1 Year

Foundation entry routes, or a Year 0, are often opportunities for students who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Specific Widening Participation Criteria
- Have achieved well at A-Level but in subjects that are not relevant to the degree (e.g. for students wanting to study medicine who have Arts based A-Levels)
- Have had a break from studying and are returning as mature students.

However, they are becoming more common as a broad based introduction to more specialist subjects, for example in areas of creative media or engineering, in a similar way to the Art Foundation Course.

It is important that students check very carefully whether they are eligible to apply and what the purpose of the course is. Courses are not always transferable between universities, people usually go onto complete their degree at the same place.

Sometimes these courses are offered to students by universities as an alternative to their original choice if they have not met the required entry grades for first year study.

Not to be confused with Art Foundation Courses or Foundation Degrees

Funding: Student Finance England—Tuition and Maintenance Loans available

Progression: Degree, usually at the same university where you have studied the foundation year

What do students need to do?

- Apply through UCAS
- You may be required to interview or take part in preparation activities/summer schools
- Meet entry requirements (offers usually made in UCAS Points)

Where should I look next?

www.ucas.com and individual university websites

Alternative Study Routes

Distance Learning

What is it?

Level: 4-8

Duration: Flexible

Traditionally seen as an option for mature students, distance learning can provide a flexible way to study around other commitments and many providers are expanding the numbers of courses they offer and aiming more at school leavers.

Nowadays distance learning usually involves online learning materials, however there are still some courses that offer learning through blocks of residential courses or study materials sent through the post.

The Open University is the biggest provider of distance learning degrees in the UK, but other universities are worth exploring and courses other than degrees are now also on offer from colleges and other private providers.

This style of study requires motivation and time management, it is worth seeing if it is a suitable option by trying a free online learning courses first, these can be found using Unifrog's MOOC search.

Funding: Varies—some courses are eligible for Student Finance Tuition and Maintenance Loans, some may require private funding

Progression: Graduate professions

What do students need to do?

- Apply directly with the Open University, other universities may use UCAS.
- Meet entry requirements (offers vary)

Where should I look next?

www.open.ac.uk

www.ucas.com—search part time, distance learning options

Alternative Study Routes

Art Foundation Course

What is it?

Level: 3/4

Duration: 1 Year

This broad-based one-year course encourages students to explore their skills and interests so that they can make the right choice for their education and career.

It is very practical and gives wonderful opportunities for experimenting with a wide range of materials and techniques, developing individuality, initiative and confidence.

It enables students to progress to HE with a stronger technical ability and understanding as well as a more self-reliant and disciplined approach to study.

Also called a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design, not to be confused with BTEC courses in Art and other types of Foundation Degree.

Funding: Free for those 19 or under at the start of the course. Privately funded for those 19+

Progression: Usually onto a more specialist art course at university, although also possible to progress into industry.

What do students need to do?

- Prepare a portfolio of work with help from the Art Department
- Apply to individual colleges via their websites from September of Year 13 onwards
- Interview and present their portfolio
- Meet entry requirements (offers usually made in UCAS Points or based on Art grade)

Where should I look next?

As there is no funding for living costs students usually stay at home and study locally whilst completing their Art Foundation. Start with the Unifrog College/Sixth Form tool or course searches on individual provider websites. Some local examples include Durham Sixth Form Centre, Newcastle College, Sunderland University and the Northern School of Art.

Associated Career Websites: <https://discovercreative.careers/> and www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/careers-in-craft

Alternative Study Routes

Access to HE Diploma and other courses at college

What is it?

Level: 3 or 4

Duration: 1 or 2 Years

If, after finishing Level 3 qualifications at school, students find they have changed their mind about what they want to do in the future or haven't done as well as they had hoped, they may choose to study a further Level 3 course at college in a more specialist or vocational subject. If they want to study at university in future, they could consider an Access to HE course (<https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/>), which is designed to prepare students for degree level study. Studying at college could also include studying further A-Levels or completing a 1 or 2 year BTEC course, or studying for a Higher National Certificate (HNC), which is a level 4 qualification, usually in a vocational area.

This can offer the opportunity to gain further UCAS points for university entry or more experience in a certain specialist area for a chosen career.

Funding: Free for those 19 or under at the start of the course. Privately funded for those 19+

Progression: Same choices as at 18

What do students need to do?

- Apply to individual colleges via their websites from September of Year 13 onwards
- Meet entry requirements (offers usually made based on GCSEs for Level 3 courses and vary for Level 4 courses, from 1 A-level grade to a number of UCAS Points)

Where should I look next?

Local college websites, prospectuses and Open Events.

Students should also arrange an appointment with the guidance manager to discuss course choice further as this is a very brief overview and there are more options to consider.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. An apprentice will:

- work alongside experienced staff
- gain job-specific skills
- earn a wage and get holiday pay
- study towards a related qualification

Apprenticeships take 1 to 6 years to complete depending on their level.

Entry requirements vary, but examples of typical requirements are as follows:

Apprenticeship	National Qualification	Typical entry requirements
Intermediate	Level 2	From no formal qualifications to 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above.
Advanced	Level 3	5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above or complete an intermediate apprenticeship.
Higher & Degree	Level 4-6	2 A-Level passes, or at least 32 UCAS Points, or complete an advanced apprenticeship.

Usually a Level 2 qualification (GCSE 4 or above) in English and Maths is also a requirement, if applicants don't have this they will be required to complete Functional Skills qualifications in these areas alongside the apprenticeship.

There are apprenticeships in around 150 different areas of industry, but not all industries offer apprenticeships at every level.

A school leaver at 18 with A-Levels or Level 3 BTECs can apply directly for higher & degree apprenticeships, however, some roles and organisations will expect applicants to have completed an advanced apprenticeship, or have a lot of relevant work experience, first. It is fine to also look at advanced apprenticeships, and this may be the best way to get into a desired career.

It is important to note that, much like applying for any job, the process of applying for an apprenticeship takes time and resilience. Apprenticeships are competitive, and it is likely that students will have to apply for several and may need to go through a multi-step application process for each.

There is no central application system for apprenticeships, but there are several sites (on the next page) that aim to bring local and national vacancies together in one place.

Apprenticeships

What will students need to do?

- Apply for job vacancies through the national apprenticeship website, Unifrog, or directly with organisations.
- You will usually have to complete a role specific application form, but may also need to provide a CV.
- You may have to apply for the training element of your course separately at college or university.
- Attend an interview, and possibly also an assessment centre or further skills tests.

Where should I look next?

All students have been given a copy of the National Apprenticeship Service's Interactive Guide to work through: <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/student-apprenticeship-guide/>. The guide prompts students to seek support from staff as needed at the end of each section.

Unifrog apprenticeship search—allows students to search for and shortlist local and national apprenticeships.

www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide—More information on every aspect of apprenticeships, including minimum wage, and a link to the government search tool.

www.apprenticeships.gov.uk—videos and real life stories from apprentices

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/parents/> — monthly parent information packs

www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/ — a good place to find out which national companies offer apprenticeships

Apprenticeship Timeline

Throughout Year 12	Research options and gain work experience Use Unifrog “competencies” recording tool to record development of key employment skills
From May of Year 12	Start to research companies offering apprenticeships Create a CV and get feedback on it in school Identify any skills in need of development and make a plan with school tutor Interview skills sessions in school
From Sept of Year 13	Begin to apply for higher & degree apprenticeships
From March of Year 13	Begin to apply for advanced apprenticeships

School Leaver Programmes

What is it?

Many leading companies are now realising that there are lots of bright, promising students who are not necessarily wanting to go to university. Instead of waiting to train up graduates they are offering programmes designed around the needs of the company aimed at sixth form students leaving school with top grades. These are often in areas related to business, finance, retail, and management, but new industry areas are becoming available.

These programmes differ from an apprenticeship in that the training offered might not lead to a nationally recognised qualification, but there will still be a training programme in place and there may be an opportunity to undertake professional qualifications as part of the programme (e.g. accounting qualifications). Similar to a graduate training programme, many companies will encourage you to do a placement in several different departments within their business in order to build up a wide range of skills.

More information can be found in the Know How Library on Unifrog—search for School Leaver Programme

What do students need to do?

- Apply directly with the company
- Usually go through an assessment centre or skills/aptitude test
- Interview
- Meet entry requirements at A-Level

Where should I look next?

www.purepotential.org

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

www.studentladder.co.uk

<http://schoolleavers.milkround.com>

Employment and Entrepreneurship

Students may feel ready to just head out into the world and get a job, but there are some things to consider:

- Looking for areas with potential to develop – management schemes, talent schemes, specialist skills development programmes etc.
- What kind of employer – local, national, international...
- What kind of sector – retail, leisure, local government...

There are a number of job search websites where students can register their details, upload their CV, search for jobs and sign up for alerts. Some are specific to certain industries, some are more general, such as Monster, Fish4 and The Guardian Jobs. Students should set some time aside each week to search different sites and apply for any vacancies that interest them. Jobs that are not specifically recruiting school leavers will advertise throughout the year, so students may find they need to look towards the end of their studies. This doesn't mean they can't spend time preparing, however.

Students should get their CV ready by making use of the relevant Unifrog tools and can speak to the guidance manager to arrange application and interview practice.

Could your child be an entrepreneur?

If they have a great idea for starting their own business there is a lot of support available for young people: <http://startups.co.uk/young-entrepreneurs> and www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/support-starting-business.

Universities are recognising the importance of new business ideas for the economy and are introducing degrees and initiatives to develop entrepreneurial skills, for example Newcastle University's START UP scheme: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/startup/ so there is scope to study and develop your business ideas at the same time.

What do students need to do?

- Create a CV and have it checked
- Register on relevant job websites and sign up for e-mail alerts

Where should I look next?

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

Armed Forces

What is it?

The Armed Forces are made up of the Army, Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines) and Royal Air Force, all consist of full time servicemen and women and reservists, who are part time members of the Armed Forces alongside their regular jobs. There are also jobs in the Civil Service and Ministry of Defence.

If students are considering a job in the Armed Forces they will need an awareness of current priority areas for recruitment, as these can change and certain areas may become more competitive.

Entry requirements and recruitment will depend on the branch, role and level they apply for, however, there will always be a minimum level of health and fitness required and usually a minimum level of proficiency in Maths and English.

Apprentice — all branches of the Armed Forces offer apprenticeships in several areas and at different levels. Entry requirements are usually based on GCSE grades, alongside requirements for Basic Training.

Basic Training — completing Basic Training will allow students to enter the forces as a soldier/airman/seaman or marine. This is the minimum amount of training required and generally recruits will then go on to complete more specialist training suited to their role. Entry requirements are usually based on Armed Forces recruitment tests and sometimes GCSE grades.

Officer Training — completing Officer Training will allow students to enter the forces in a leadership role. They will usually go on to complete further training in more specialist areas. Entry requirements are usually based on Degree classification, A-Level grades or UCAS Points, as well as armed forces recruitment tests.

What do students need to do?

- Make an appointment with the Armed Forces Recruitment Office in Newcastle

Where should I look next?

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/recruitment

Gap Year

What is it?

A Gap Year is traditionally a break between studying, so a year out between the end of sixth form and the start of a Degree course, however they can lead directly into employment. A good Gap Year is planned and designed to give experiences beyond what students have encountered previously, “bad” Gap Years are those that students drift into because they didn’t know what else to do and don’t offer any skills development.

To defer or not?

Because Gap Years are generally a break between study students can apply for university in the same year as their peers and ask for “deferred entry”, or they can wait and apply to university in their Gap Year with their final grades. Here are some pros and cons of each:

	Pros	Cons
Applied for deferred entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You already have offer and don’t have to worry about UCAS during Gap Year—particularly useful if travelling.• Having an offer already may be a source of motivation during the Gap Year means students are more likely to progress to university	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers might be slightly higher• Universities don’t have to grant deferred entry.• Universities will generally expect to see that a gap year has been planned, and it details may need to be included in the personal statement.• If students change their mind and decide not to go to university they will need to decline your offer.
Apply in your Gap Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Already having their grades will give students a better idea of which courses they can apply for. And they will be given unconditional offers.• If students change their mind about university, they can just not apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students have to ensure they have internet access if travelling in order to complete their application.• If students are not motivated/organised when it comes to applying they might end up drifting into another gap year by mistake.

The school will support students in their Gap Year with UCAS applications via e-mail and through appointments in school.

Gap Year

Travel

The traditional view of a Gap Year is travelling round the world. Although this is becoming an increasingly expensive option, if students have some money saved up, are eligible for a grant, or plan to work along the way it can still be a great experience. Sometimes students can combine working or volunteering with travelling, if doing so they should make sure they go through a reputable organisation and check visa requirements carefully.

Some useful links for travelling:

www.yearoutgroup.org

www.gap360.com

www.volunteerics.org

www.vsointernational.org

Volunteer

Volunteering can be a great alternative to a work placement when students don't have loads of previous experience, and it looks good on the CV. Students can consider opportunities that are linked to their career aspiration. They may still have to go through recruitment checks such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to ensure that they are suitable for the role.

Some useful links for volunteering:

<https://doit.life/discover>

www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

Year in Industry & Internships

A year gaining practical industry experience in an area of interest before moving onto a degree can offer huge benefits to future employment prospects. One of the best known schemes is the Year in Industry, which is organised by the Engineering Development Trust and places Gap Year students in STEM related industries: www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry.

Other companies are starting to offer similar opportunities, notable examples include international companies IBM and Deloitte. The Unifrog Special Opportunities Search and the website below are starting points for ideas, but it's also worth getting in touch with any companies of particular interest to students and seeing what they offer.

www.studentladder.co.uk/year-13/gap-year-placements/

What students need to do?

- Plenty of research into the different opportunities—use websites, go into travel agents and attend/request school talks.
- Apply for opportunities with providers, sometimes attend interviews or sit entry tests.
- Apply for visas if travelling abroad.
- Create a plan for the year noting down important university application deadlines if necessary.
- Create a budget for the year (probably with parents) to ensure that they can afford their plans.