Taking time out after your degree

At the end of your course you may think about spending some time doing something new or different before going on to further study or starting on a career path. Alternatively, you may need time to build up some experience to help you get onto the career path you have chosen. Or you may find that you have unexpected time between finishing your course and finding a graduate.

Think about why you want to do this. What is your motivation?
For example, it might be that you would like to:
- have a break from study/work
- have time to reflect on what you have already achieved and how to move on
- give some time to others or the environment
- be challenged/gain confidence
- be independent
- fill the time between graduation and starting a graduate position
- gain work experience necessary for a future career
- develop specific skills e.g. a language, IT skills
- pursue an interest.

Reflect on what you anticipate you might achieve
- time and space to consider your future
- better able to make decisions
- expanding networks
- greater confidence
- greater cultural awareness
- new skills, both general and specific
- better able to apply for a particular career
- more work experience
- new friends.

Consider how you could use the time
- work - home/abroad
- voluntary work - home/abroad
- study - home/abroad
- work experience/shadowing
- graduate internships
- travel.

Some ideas: You could stay in the UK to work temporarily, volunteer or do some courses to boost your skills and knowledge for the career area you are targeting. You could organise some work experience/informational interviewing or work shadowing to help you learn more about a specific sector. See our Successful Networking information sheet for help with this.

If you go overseas there are hundreds of options. If you are travelling you might choose to do seasonal work - for example working in ski resorts, fruit picking, cruise ships, crew sailing yachts, au pair work etc. Children’s summer camps/activity centres overseas recruit hundreds of students/graduates each year. There are also many opportunities to volunteer for charities, environmental and development organisations. Teaching English (TEFL) is another very popular option for graduates.

Think through the practical implications
These might include:
- organising your time – how long? when?
- financing your plans
- finding appropriate opportunities
- recruitment cycle/ applications
- language issues (for overseas)
- visas/work permits.
Timing is particularly important if you hope to go onto a course or into graduate level employment immediately after your time out. Think about the timing of recruitment for graduate schemes particularly which tend to recruit in advance. If you are not going to be in the country, how you will be able to research opportunities and make applications? However as many applications are online and many employers do an initial telephone interview of applicants this may still be do-able wherever you are. The key is to plan ahead as much as possible. Sometimes you may be able to negotiate deferred entry to a course or grad scheme. Some employers have starting points throughout the year and most smaller employers recruit as and when they need staff. Different career areas have different recruitment patterns, so giving time to researching possibilities before you leave university will be invaluable to you in the longer term. Read our information sheet “Finding Graduate Vacancies“ which will help you understand who recruits when – download from the Job Hunting tab at www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets

Find out how employers view “time out“
If you are clear about your motivation and are able to reflect on what you have learned or how you have developed during the time, employers are likely to view you very favourably. Employers recognise that an individual may have developed his/her skills, confidence or general maturity; it is up to you to demonstrate and articulate to employers what you have achieved and what effect this has had upon you.

Take some time to stand back, look at yourself and consider your objectives
Is this the right move for you? Think about the issues now, use the information we provide and talk through your plans with one of our advisers. Planning your time in advance will help you to enjoy your time and make it work for you.

If you take time out by taking part in an organised programme overseas (work experience/volunteering/gap year) you should check out the opportunity carefully. You can find useful information and suggestions for questions to ask at: www.yearoutgroup.org. You should also keep up to date with any travel advice given by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
Each year we run a Global Opportunities event with organisations offering opportunities overseas. Check www.york.ac.uk/careers/events

Websites to get you started:

Temporary work – UK
Search for opportunities on Careers Gateway www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway
Information sheet “Finding Temporary and Part time work in the UK – download from www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets "job hunting" tab

Voluntary work
www.csv.org.uk - charity organising UK placements
www.do-it.org.uk - database of opportunities in UK and overseas
www.volunteering.org.uk - volunteering opportunities UK
www.york.ac.uk/careers/volunteering - local York opportunities

Study - UK
- www.hotcourses.com/ - online course search throughout UK
- https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/ search for courses throughout UK
- Local colleges/evening courses – see websites for your local council and individual colleges to see what is on offer
- There are also often brochures/course notices in public libraries.
- MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses): many leading universities around the world offer FREE short courses in thousands of subjects – learn to code, speak a new language, build your presentation skills – whatever you want to do there will be a MOOC available! Search now at www.mooc-list.com

**Working abroad**

We advertise thousands of opportunities in the UK and overseas via Careers Gateway (www.york.ac.uk/careers/gateway)

- www.york.ac.uk/careers/work - check international work section for more links and job search information

Please also see the following *Careers information sheets* for job sites (www.york.ac.uk/careers/infosheets)

- Work Experience….. series
- Working outside the UK – vacancy sites, general information resources and advice
- Considering…. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In *Careers*:

*International work and study reference books for country specific information.*

**Please note:** The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. *Careers* cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.

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