

Alternative Ambitions

Promoting alternatives

to university

uni's not for me
intelligent | articulate | ambitious



May edition, 2015

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Welcome to the second edition of Alternative Ambitions. What a month May has been and since our first edition, the UNFM team has had a jam-packed four weeks.

Last week, Bekah and I went to the ExCel Centre in London's Docklands for The Business Show 2015. One of our Success Stories, Ollie Forsyth, came with us to research a new project we are working on together. (More to be revealed on our new project in the coming months.)

Really exciting news is that we've had confirmed sponsorship for our first debate which will be held in London in September. Keep an eye in the magazine for more information about how to attend.

Earlier in the month, UNFM was also lucky enough to be featured in The Sunday Times, which was a great bit of publicity. It even prompted interest from the founder of lastminute.com! You can read the article [here](#).

Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you for the amazing feedback we've had from so many readers.

We'd also appreciate any other feedback that you'd like to share with us – this resource is meant to be as helpful so it's only by you telling us what is or isn't that we can improve.

On that note, happy reading and if you have any students who would like direct advice, please feel free to drop us a line hello@unisnotforme and one of the team will be more than happy to help.

Hattie Wrixon

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Good Morning,

I just wanted to let you know that we get a lot of information from companies, however this is by far and away the best that we have ever received. You have clearly researched what is required and spent a lot of time making it as relevant as it can be for the students.

Hope you are very successful.

Keep us posted.

Joe Burkmar – LeAF School, Head of Sixth Form, Bournemouth

News Academy calls all aspiring journalists

Last chance...

The News Academy Summer School is a free week-long intensive training programme for students aged 16 to 18 from across the UK and Ireland, running from 23 Aug to 28 Aug.

Based at our headquarters in London Bridge, 20 students will get the opportunity to write, edit and publish their own newspaper, with the help of our best journalists from across our titles.

Students can apply on our [website](#), all they have to do is write 500 words on something they are passionate about. You can also see the video of last year's Summer School [here](#).

Accommodation and food in London is included for the duration of the Summer School.

**Applications close
at midnight on 21 June 2015.**



Revision Top Tips!

With GCSE and A-Level exams in full swing, you're probably starting to lose your motivation to keep revising. It's easy to forget that just because one of your exams is over, it doesn't mean you're finished. So, to keep up your momentum, I've put together my top tips for that end of year revision.

Flash cards are brilliant.

If you haven't already been using flash cards, I thoroughly encourage you to start now. The main reason students are put off using flash - or index - cards is that they take so long to make. What people don't seem to realise is that while you're writing out your facts and exam prep, you're learning it.

Writing down what you need to remember helps you to retain the information. The process of designing and creating the cards sticks in your brain. If you write one topic in a certain colour, you'll be able to clearly remember that section of cards when it comes up in the exam.

Use drawings, colours, diagrams and silly annotations to make it more interesting and to help you learn.

Mind maps - put them everywhere.

This is something that won't necessarily work for everyone. Personally, I found it incredibly helpful to draw mind maps of each topic in a subject and put them up all over the house. I had one on the bathroom door so I could read it in the bath – seriously. I had the periodic table Blutacked to my ceiling over my bed ready for my chemistry exam.

Just having a quick read through of the key points in a topic means you are still revising, even if you aren't sitting at a desk furiously scribbling down notes. You might not feel like this is going into your head at the time, but you'll surprise yourself when you next do a practice paper and you remember more than you thought you would.

Whistle while you work.

I can – hand on heart – tell you every single type of radiation wave on the electromagnetic spectrum right this second and do so to a catchy tune. You may, or may not, need to know this for your exams. But it's a perfect example of how the power of song works in revision. The Electromagnetic Spectrum Song stuck in my head the moment I listened to it. Five years on, I remember it word for word.

I'm not suggesting you write your own song, unless you really want to. The wonder that is YouTube is a very handy tool here. Search for the name of a topic you need to learn and a catchy tune might pop up.

Short bursts are best.

The majority of you will have forced yourself to focus on revision for hours at a time to get everything done. Stop that immediately. I absolutely applaud your determination, but after less than an hour your brain will not only stop absorbing the new information you're giving it, but it'll begin to forget what it already knows.

The recommendation is to work for a solid 40 minutes and have a 20 minute break. This gives your brain time to subconsciously process and store what you've looked at. You can grab a sandwich and watch a quick episode of The Big Bang Theory.

When you go back to revision, you'll be feeling more refreshed and ready for the next topic. If you get too tired to go on, stop. Forcing yourself to keep going will have no benefit – you won't learn anything new when you're too tired to sit up straight.

Short bursts and lots of stretching will get you through a comfortable day of effective revision.

Red bull and mars bars are a myth.

Red Bull is the clichéd revision beverage.. . Lies, lies, lies. Alright, a caffeine and sugar boost might help you power through the final half hour or so. Soon enough though, you're going to crash hard and feel more exhausted and sluggish than you did before.

Instead, plenty of water will keep your brain active and your energy up. Bananas are packed with potassium to help your brain work at the best of its ability, and it'll help you get through more of your revision without having to tape your eyelids open.

Reward yourself with a cheeky choccy from the Celebrations tin when you've finished a topic or subject to help keep up your motivation, but don't rely on sugary sweets and caffeinated drinks to get you through your exam prep. I hope my top tips will help you get through all the revision you need to do before your exams.

Good luck!

Bekah



Kimberly Bolton

Microsoft Apprentice of the Year

Kimberley is 20 years old and currently works at Pythagoras Communications Limited as a Junior IT Support Consultant, working on the support desk to provide support for Pythagoras's many customers.

In June 2014, Kimberley was the first female to win Microsoft Apprentice of The Year enabling her to become an Apprenticeship Ambassador at Microsoft. We spoke to Kimberley to find out why uni wasn't for her, and how she's promoting apprenticeships, encouraging young women in particular to consider alternative routes.

What made you decide that uni wasn't for you?

"Throughout my time at school, I always knew uni wasn't for me. The thought of being the first in my family to go excited me, but the thought of being able to pay my way by myself excited me more. I enjoy being around my family and I'm lucky to have that support. To be in a large amount of debt and give up years of my life at uni, as I saw it, did not interest me."

What support did you have from your school/college in deciding what to do?

"Throughout my school years, I achieved good grades and always had the impression my teachers wanted me to go to university. As I worked at a good rate and was predicted good grades I didn't actually get a chance to speak to a careers advisor.

When speaking to the job centre they actually pushed me into starting work rather than getting an apprenticeship which is something I want to change!"

Did you always know you wanted to do something IT based?

"Career wise, no. Hobby wise, yes. Interestingly I had no idea I wanted to go into a career in IT until I started researching apprenticeships! Once I began researching I was drawn into an ever-changing sector with huge possibilities with well-known companies."

How did you find out about the apprenticeship, and what was the application process like?

"I originally heard about apprenticeships on the radio and found my apprenticeship via the national apprenticeship website.

The application process was simple and quick. I had a phone interview with a recruiter from ITSkillsMan who prepped me for a face-to-face meeting then before I knew it, I had been employed!"

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How long did the apprenticeship last? What qualifications did you get out of it?

My apprenticeship lasted 12 months and I received the below from it:

Advanced Level Apprenticeship in IT, Software, Web and Telecoms

Professionals:

- Level 3 Diploma in ICT Professional Competence
- Level 3 Certificate in ICT Systems and Principles
- MTA: Security Development Fundamentals
- MTA: Networking Fundamentals
- MTA: Windows Server Administration Fundamentals
- Level 2 Award in Functional Skills Information Communications Technology

How has the apprenticeship helped you further your career?

“My apprenticeship gave me a ‘foot in the door’ to a Microsoft Gold Partner, allowing me to build up skills in the IT sector, build connections and learn some amazing skills. I have now been able to continue my role at Pythagoras and believe I have come on leaps and bounds.

After being the first female to win Microsoft Apprentice of the year I was contacted by Microsoft to become an Apprenticeship Ambassador and I am now the Women in Tech Events Lead. Doing this in my free time has meant I have the chance to promote something amazing that is close to my heart, and help people realise their potential.

All this from that one decision to start looking for an apprenticeship!”

Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

“In 10 years' time I hope to have progressed in my full-time career and moved onto become a consultant, heading out to customers, building requirements and systems, and managing accounts.

I would also love to continue my Apprenticeship Ambassador role, hopefully progressing it into something bigger so I can get more involved in driving a change for Women in IT.”

What advice do you have for someone considering an alternative to university?

“I would always say think about what YOU want, not anyone else. If university doesn't feel right, you don't have to go. There are so many options out there today and research is important. From my experience speaking to someone on a programme or job role you're considering going into is always useful. There are many companies and charities out there designed to help people explore their options, so use them!”



A refreshing new approach to preparing young people for work



This month, Uni's not for me got to meet the team behind the Gradbridge Award. May 2015 saw the launch of The Gradbridge Award, based on a unique and innovative concept designed to test and develop young peoples' soft skills and help better prepare them for the work place.

The team behind the award, are vastly experienced in this area having instilled the very same skills and attributes within employees of some of the world's largest companies such as Microsoft, PwC, Barclays, Accenture, Sainsbury's and BG. However, for the first time ever, they have created a unique platform to allow young people to demonstrate to employers that they possess the attributes and qualities that they're looking for.

The Award has been conceived following a general consensus amongst many of the UK's top employers that entry level and graduate employees were struggling to arrive with the necessary skills to contribute effectively from Day 1. Over 3 days and 2 nights participants will test and develop the specific attributes that employers say are missing; the ability to work effectively in a new team, to communicate clearly and concisely, to lead and to perform under pressure.

The format of the Gradbridge Award is definitely intense. Over 3 days and 2 nights, participants will take part in 5 different stages, working with different teams each time. Each stage is designed to test and develop the key skills required in the workplace. There is a physical component to some stages which adds competition and pressure and teams must develop an effective strategy to complete each stage, often with a need to adapt it quickly!

All participants carry an electronic data chip (EDC) which will collect data and benchmark their performance against specific attributes including problem solving, strategy, communication and team work. The impartial data and competitive framework of the event accelerates learning as participants strive to improve with each Stage. They then receive coaching and training after each Stage, analysing what they've learnt, which specific attributes they've utilised and how they can articulate and leverage their experiences when speaking to employers.

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The event is designed to be a challenge and you will learn to bounce back from adversity and embrace new opportunities - just as in your careers. By taking part, you will learn valuable lessons that will stay with you throughout your lives. Every participant who completes the challenge will receive the Gradbridge Award.

Display the Gradbridge® Award on your CV to show employers that you have developed the attributes and qualities that they are looking for

- Draw upon your unique experiences at the Gradbridge® Award in interviews to demonstrate to employers that you are ready to join their team
- Meet employers at the 'Event Networking Evening' and be added to the Gradbridge® Award database used by top businesses to identify future talent

The award offers the opportunity to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate to employers that you possess the necessary skills to be successful in your career. If only I'd been lucky enough to have the chance to have something like this when I left school! You can also check out our competition in partnership with Gradbridge to win a place to their next event!

If you'd like to register your interest, click [here](#), visit the [website](#) or contact the Gradbridge team at info@gradbridge.org.

Please quote UNFM where it asks for university and degree.



Competition time

Are you a school leaver and looking for the chance to improve the necessary skills you'll need for the workplace? Win a place on the Gradbridge Award in September worth £240! All you need to do is tweet **@unisnotforme** telling us why uni is not for you. Make sure to **#UNFMcomp**. The top 5 answers will win a place and the winners will be announced at the end of June, so get tweeting!



Improving your commercial awareness

A question school leavers often ask us when they are considering applying to join us is how they can make sure that they stand out from the crowd.

We take a closer look at commerciality and what it means for you during your application process. There are a number of ways in which you can use your own experiences and help demonstrate this in a way that makes a difference whether you are applying, attending an assessment centre or being interviewed.

So what is commercial awareness? Commercial awareness is simply keeping up to date with developments and happenings in business.

Showing an employer that you that you are clear on the role you are applying for, that you understand the organisation and its role in business or industry on a local and / or global scale can really make the difference. It will widen your perspective and is a basic example of being commercially aware. As well as researching the employer directly, bring yourself up to speed with relevant industry news to help tie together your understanding of business and the role the employer may have within this. Reading titles like the **FT**, **Business Week** and **The Economist** are great places to start and excellent sources of business, finance and industry topics. They all contain sector specific sections so if you want to focus on one business area or improve your general business awareness, these can be really useful sources; our beginners guide to **using the FT to build commercial awareness** will help you navigate the title and use it effectively.

Strengthening your understanding of commercial awareness and how you apply it to your studies, job applications and future role is key, however being appreciative of the long and short-term implications of an action or event is also important for gaining greater perspective and enhancing your commercial awareness and view on events. To create a great impression with any interviewer, be aware of and have an opinion on the bigger picture, as well as a view on an organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

When pulling together your application, in an interview, and throughout your application process, it's worth mentioning any commercial experience you've had, including volunteering jobs, work placements or summer/weekend jobs, even if they aren't directly related to the role you're applying for. To make a deeper impression, demonstrate an understanding of the business or some practical experience where you put your commerciality skills into practice. For instance, when working in a retail, you are likely to have dealt with customers which enhanced your customer service experience and handled cash which was useful when coordinating stock, profit and so on. All together these experiences will add to your skills.

Are you ready to apply your commercial awareness to a real business environment?
Then why not consider joining the
EY School Leaver programme?

Find out more at
ukcareerguide.ey.com/schools





Girl Entrepreneur was founded in 2013 for teenage girls, aged 14 - 19 who have no idea what they want to do with their lives.

We believe that ALL teenage girls deserve to live a life they love, every day. Not just on the weekends. We believe that your job or business should be based on a passion, skill or talent - something you love.

Girl Entrepreneur believes that YOU deserve to live your best life. And we will do everything we can to help you get there.

Girl Entrepreneur is for you if;

- You don't know what you want to do with your life
- You don't want to end up in a job that you hate
- You want to earn your own money, in your own way

Girl Entrepreneur - FREE Workshops

We offer FREE workshops to help you figure out what you love and what you are good at. We all have passions, skills and talents - things we love. Girl Entrepreneur believes that doing something you love is the key to SUCCESS.

Our workshops aim to turn your passions, skills and talents into a business - YOUR business. This is where the girl becomes an entrepreneur!

Next Workshop - **Saturday 27th June, London** (3 hours).

Book your FREE place by e-mailing info@girlentrepreneurlondon.com

Girl Entrepreneur - Online Course

The course begins with a number of fun activities to discover your passions, skills and talents. You will then get an insight into exactly how entrepreneurs like Beyoncé, Richard Branson, Victoria Beckham and Taylor Swift have become so successful. The course concludes with practical support to help you create a successful business. We want you to start small and think BIG!

Girl Entrepreneur will take you through the first steps of your start up, from marketing to finance.

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Whether you have a genius business idea or no idea at all - we will get you to where you want to be.

Our online course can be taken from the comfort of your own home. All you need is a phone, tablet or laptop. The course lasts for four weeks and will take up 4-5 hours per week of your time. Anything you can do to create an awesome life is time well spent! There are no entry requirements, no essays and no exams. Just be prepared to start living your best life.

Please e-mail us at info@girlentrepreneurlondon.com for further details. We can also arrange a Skype chat if you would like to ask us any questions.

Find us online!

Check us out on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn & girlentrepreneurlondon.com.

REMEMBER: Don't let anyone ever make you feel like you don't deserve what you want. You can totally do this.

Good luck!

Girl Entrepreneur



Chris Starling Head of apprenticeships at Virgin Media



How does the traineeship scheme benefit you?

The UK is the world's most internet-based major economy so needs a workforce armed with the skills to maintain and grow the internet infrastructure that will support the country's economic growth. Our traineeship and apprenticeship schemes are an opportunity

for us to invest in the future of our business as well as the communities we serve by offering young people the chance to gain the skills and qualifications to kick-start their careers in a thriving industry.

What do the trainees achieve by the end of the programme?

Traineeships provide a great opportunity for young people who might not be quite ready to enter the world of work to gain insight into a company and role without committing to a fulltime apprenticeship.

During our tailored programmes which last between 8 and 12 weeks, we provide trainees with dedicated training and support, often one-on-one, to enable them to become apprentices.

What advice do you have for employers looking to offer a traineeship?

Virgin Media was one of the first companies to support the Government's traineeship initiative. We offer a scheme tailored to the needs of the individual that typically lasts between eight to 12 weeks before moving onto a full apprenticeship.

Good traineeships should be about enabling young people to learn and find employment. It is not free labour. During the scheme our trainees don't serve our customers or work for the company in any way but do get an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the working environment and what the day-to-day role of an apprentice will entail. This ensures that young people don't miss out on opportunities and potential talent doesn't slip through the net. We also ensure the training comes at no cost to them and we successfully argued that trainees should keep their job seeker's allowance whilst developing their skills.





Trevor Lock

Now an Apprentice Field Technician for Virgin Media, started off on the Virgin Media trainee programme.

What did you do after school?

I went to college and achieved a BTEC Level 3 extended diploma in Network and System security.

Why did you choose to pursue alternative routes into your career?
I chose to go straight into work instead of going to university because the traineeship and subsequent apprenticeship scheme with Virgin Media meant I could gain valuable work experience and qualifications to kick start my career.

How did you find out about this traineeship?

I found out about this specific traineeship through my college, as it was advertised in the careers centre.

How long does your traineeship last?

I was on the Virgin Media traineeship scheme for over a month before moving onto the full apprenticeship programme. Typically though, the traineeships last between 8 and 12 weeks.

What does the traineeship involve?

As a trainee, I shadowed a Virgin Media Service Technician. This was a great introduction to the job and helped me to gain a better understanding of what the role involves on a day to day basis. A typical day would involve multiple customer visits and working through a variety of installs or service faults that a customer may have with their broadband, TV or telephone service.

What is the best part about training with Virgin Media?

The best part is definitely the people I work with. Everyone at Virgin Media is really friendly and supportive and there is always someone there if I ever need help or advice. The onsite training facilities are brilliant, with everything you need to help you get ready to go out in the field.

What advice do you have for people on the fence about traineeships?

Definitely go for it - you won't regret it. Traineeships and apprenticeships are great alternatives to university, you gain first-hand experience of the working world and qualifications that will really set you up for a long term career. I personally think they are a fantastic opportunity that shouldn't be overlooked.



★ RATEMY APPRENTICESHIP

We launched RateMyApprenticeship in September 2013 and since then it has been making waves in the school leaver market. In this time, we've published thousands of student-written reviews, which is continuing to grow every year. Thousands of top company reviews

Each review has a star rating to show how good the programme is overall, plus details about when and where it took place and how much they earned. The reviews go into more detail to give you a good idea about whether or not a programme suits you. These reviews include what they did, what skills they developed, how much support was given, and ultimately, how much they enjoyed it.

Some companies on RateMyApprenticeship have hundreds of reviews online. By reading them, you get a great impression about what it's like to work for the company.

For even more information about a business, you can take a peek at its company profile, which will give you lots of information including:

- how many opportunities there are;
- where programmes are based;
- what industry the company's based in, and;
- types of programmes they offer.

With all those reviews coupled with company profiles, you'll be able to compare employers and make an informed decision about which one is best for you.



Educate, inform, inspire

RateMyApprenticeship exists to help all young people discover which career path is right for them.

From traditional paths like university and apprenticeships, to new kids on the scene like sponsored degree programmes and traineeships, we believe there's a right route for everyone.

Our aim is to educate, inform and inspire you about all the different career paths that exist.

Education: about all the different programme types that you may not have known about.

Information: advice, tips, reviews and news about all the routes and how to succeed.

Inspiration: to go out and make an informed choice about what your next step will be.

To meet these aims, we have plenty of meaty advice pages and useful blog articles on our website. They cover everything you need to know about how to find, apply for and grab the job of your dreams. Why not take a look today?

As well as everything we do online, we also love to get out of the office and sing the praises of school leaver programmes at venues nationwide.

You name it, we've done it. So far, in 2015, we've attended around 25 careers fairs, presented at 80 schools and even taken part in parents' evenings to spread the word about RateMyApprenticeship and how we help school leavers. If you want to find out more about what we do or to see our lovely faces in person, contact jess@rmpenterprise.co.uk.

Fancy a free iPad?

If you choose to register for a free account with us before the end of June, you'll be entered into our prize draw with a chance of winning a free iPad mini. Not to mention all the other benefits of being signed up, including regular personalised emails and newsletters with the latest school leaver news and jobs.

We also want to help you discover who the very best, tiptop employers are, which is why we've put together a Top 30 Employers guide.

You can view our guide, "[A School Leaver's Guide to Career Options 2015](#)", in full online by [clicking here](#) – it's bursting with CV, interview and assessment centre advice, loads of great company profiles and a quiz to help you find out which path you should take.



Teachers, we'd love your help

You can help direct your students towards our review, advice and job-packed pages on RateMyApprenticeship by including a link to relevant sections on your school's website.

Our big goal is to help all young people who face this tricky decision discover which path will help them realise their full potential.

To make it as quick and easy as possible for you to link to the very best page for your students, **we've included all the relevant information on this page** – just copy and paste it onto your website and voila!

If you choose to include a link on your site (or want to know more about how we can work together) please email jess@rmpenterprise.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.



National Schools Employability Challenge 2016



We want to give young people across the country the chance to showcase their employability skills and gain great experience, which is precisely why we created the NSE Challenge alongside PwC. If you want to be involved in our next Challenge (or want your students to represent your school), **why not register your interest today?**



eden project

The Eden Project is best known for its unique architecture and beautiful gardens. The iconic Biomes contain the largest rainforest in captivity and a fragrant, tranquil Mediterranean area. Eden is a huge tourist attraction as well as an educational charity. The Eden Project apprenticeship scheme is growing in popularity every year, but it isn't just about horticulture. With apprenticeships ranging from graphic design to culinary arts, there's bound to be something for you.

We spoke to an Eden apprentice to find out what it's like to work with a tropical rainforest in the depths of Cornwall.



19 year old Bryony Simpson from, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, is doing a graphic design apprenticeship with The Eden Project. Having studied a BTEC in media production at Cornwall College, she tells us about her decision to move onto an apprenticeship.

What made you decide to look into apprenticeships with The Eden Project?

"It was what I interested in, but also Eden's just such a great place to work. You get involved in everything and ,not just stuck in one area. I did a Certificate in graphic design alongside my BTEC so knew a bit about it – but at the time didn't think "I'd pursue it."

What were you doing before?

"I was at college for three years., I did A-Levels for the first year and went on to working at a call centre for two years in between college. Absolutely nothing related to what I'm doing now"

What is an average day like for a graphic design apprenticeship?

"It's mainly doing a lot of signage mostly around catering,.I also create all the signage for the Eden marathon. I designed a leaflet for the Christmas shopping event and I'm currently doing the background for the display that's going to go in the visitor centre. So, I'm doing something in every area really"

Bryony is also studying to Plymouth College of Art as part of the apprenticeship.

What are you hoping to gain from the programme?

"I'd like to be really good at graphic design. I think I'm ok, but I think my skills need to be improved, so I'm hoping to come out with a full skill set."

What plans do you have for yourself after the apprenticeship?

"Future plans... well hopefully I'll become really good at graphic design and then everyone will want me to do their graphics. If I continue working here at Eden that would be great. Maybe even university but I haven't really thought that far ahead. I really enjoy what I'm doing at the moment, I like being able to work as a team. If I don't know something - somebody else will. I've noticed that even experienced designers are still asking people for tips. Working in a group gives me more ways to expand my knowledge."

Seven apprenticeships you probably never knew existed

By Jade O'Donoghue, editor of Training and Courses

www.trainingandcourses.com

Did you know that you can start your career as a lawyer with an apprenticeship? Or become a journalist without a degree? In fact, there's now a huge number and variety of apprenticeships than ever before! Since we're the home to over 4,000 of them offered by hundreds of colleges and employers in the UK, at Training and Courses, we like to think we know a little about what's available. So, we've picked seven of our favourite examples of apprenticeship you probably never even knew existed.

Not being in the spotlight, but behind it

Technical theatre apprenticeship

From rigging lights to creating special effects that wow audiences, a technical theatre apprenticeship is nothing if not varied. Working on live shows, plays, concerts and more, you'll be instrumental in ensuring things go off with a bang.

Becoming the next Vivienne Westwood

Fashion and textiles apprenticeship

On a fashion and textiles apprenticeship you'll learn how to create beautiful garments for different occasions. Not only that but you'll master the sewing machine and learn all about the clothing business in the workplace.

Commenting, liking and tweeting your way to the top

Digital media apprenticeship

Sounds like a dream spending your day surfing social media, right? With new technology becoming increasingly important in the world of business, this really is a job. Often you'll find yourself managing multiple social media accounts and keeping on top of new digital trends.

**Training
COURSES**

Making the pitch perfect for players

Horticulture apprenticeship

It's a job not everyone might initially think of when they hear the word horticulture but becoming a sports turf grounds person is a possibility with this apprenticeship. You'll learn all there is to know about grass and ensuring pitches, courts and greens look their best. You could even have the chance to meet some famous sports people, depending on where your work is based.

Trimming beards and shaving heads

Barbering apprenticeship

Hairdressing is a popular choice for many when it comes to apprenticeships but did you know you could focus on just barbering? With facial hair becoming more and more fashionable, this can be a very lucrative section of the grooming industry to go into.

Making homes look homely

Furniture making apprenticeship

No, we don't mean carpentry, though that is the main component of this particular little known apprenticeship. The main focus is on creating furniture as opposed to other things made of wood and you'll often find yourself working for a professional furniture maker alongside your college work.

Becoming the next big Olympian

Sporting excellence apprenticeship

If you're particularly good at a sport this could be the way you turn it into a career. Whether it's rowing or rugby, there are apprenticeships to cater to all sports fans and they're aimed at turning you professional by the end.

So, whatever you want to do, there's a good chance there will be an apprenticeship out there for you. If you're ready to start looking, check out our designated apprenticeship search page on Training and Courses.





Join a life saving team

Blood donors are part of a life-saving team. A team that are always looking for new members, 200,000 new members every year to be exact!

This is to replace those people who can no longer donate due to reasons such as ill health, pregnancy or travelling abroad.

A common misconception is that people only need blood transfusions after serious accidents. This isn't true. Blood donations are actually used frequently in surgery, for cancer treatment and to care for new mums and babies. Much more than you thought, right?

As blood donations can only be stored for a limited amount of time, a constant supply is crucial to ensure blood is available wherever and whenever it is needed. The good news is if you're over the age of 17 **you can help!**

Each blood donation can help up to three people, and as you can donate up to four times a year, imagine how many people you could help in your lifetime! Signing up to become a blood donor only takes a couple of minutes, and you can even make your first donation appointment on the spot.

It takes around 10 minutes to donate blood, but you need to allow an hour for the whole process from start to finish. So you could be saving lives during your lunch break at work, free periods between classes, or as a break from all the time you spend in the library...

So, we've eliminated the issue of time. Now to address arguably the most common excuse used for not giving blood- the pain!

The pain experienced when giving blood is no more than a needle prick. The trained professionals at the blood centres are there to ensure your experience is pleasant – you even get a drink and biscuit afterwards. I'm sure some of you are reading this thinking, 'no more than a needle prick?!" Many of us are terrified of needles, and yes I say us, as many people feel anxious or scared



when giving blood for the first time or even the tenth. It is perfectly normal to feel nervous. However, it is a momentary discomfort for a greater good. Saving lives!

40% of new blood donors every year already fall into the 17-24 age bracket, so join the movement and give the most precious gift you can – the gift of life.

What's your type?

It's imperative that the right type of blood in the right quantities are collected to meet the demands of hospitals. Your blood group is determined by the genes inherited from your parents, the four main ones being A, B, AB and O, and it doesn't stop there. As you can be either RhD positive or RhD negative this means your blood group can be one of 8 types, plus there are many other rarer types of blood.

Blood groups are identified by proteins on our red cells (antigens) in the blood. Getting blood from the wrong ABO group is life threatening, as if you are blood type A your antibodies will attack group B antigens and vice versa. Group O RhD negative blood does not contain A or B or RhD antigens so is therefore universal and can be used for any other group. As you can imagine demand for this blood type is particularly high. Find out more about blood types [here](#).

We're doing it as a team...

Believe it or not we were all courageous enough to take the nonconventional route of not going to uni to try something different, yet the thought of a moment's discomfort from a needle prick has us all rocking back and forth.

What better way to overcome our fears than to do it as a team! We've decided we want to be part of a life-saving team and become blood donors.

If you'd like to join us on our journey, take the first step as we have and click [here](#) to register to donate blood.

We'll be capturing our journey from registration through to our first donation to share with you. Stay tuned!



Will I miss out on the uni experience if I choose an apprenticeship?

Young people leaning towards an apprenticeship often worry that they will miss out on the university experience and “the best years of their life”.

When you are deciding which path to go down, remember that university isn’t right for everyone. For some, work experience would benefit their career more than a degree. And, for others, a degree would be worthless unless it’s a 1st from a university within the Russell Group.

Many school leavers worry they will miss out on the perks of student life. Most teenagers look forward to fresher’s week, student accommodation, societies and all the other social activities university offers. It’s simply not realistic to say that you will have the same experience as an apprentice. But, having said that, there are many advantages to be had from the alternatives to university.



Earn while you learn

As an apprentice you “earn while you learn”, meaning you are paid for your efforts. You gain a qualification without the worry of racking up thousands of pounds of debt.

Work experience

University students spend three or more years earning a degree before they start an **entry-level job**. In this time, an apprentice, will already have had years of experience. Many students come out of university realising what they studied doesn’t match up to the career they want to pursue. After all that time and money spent on a degree, they may think themselves back at square one.



Social life

In fresher's year, everyone is in the same position. Students have a blank slate with which they can start a fresh and reinvent themselves. It's the perfect time to meet new people and start new relationships.

Let's face it, an apprenticeship doesn't give you the same volume of social opportunities. However, it does force you to go out of your comfort zone and build your own social circle. It will improve your networking skills, which in turn, could build up your professional network. An apprenticeship brings you the opportunity to connect with other apprentices and like-minded people. You will also be surprised at the social life that can come with the working world. Work colleagues are welcoming and are always up for a good time.

If you are going to university simply for the social life, don't do it. It's expensive so you have to make sure you are going for all the smart reasons. You want to spend three years studying something you are passionate about or a subject that will further your career prospects. If nothing appeals to you, don't hesitate to go for an apprenticeship. We promise it won't jeopardise your social life.

Jobs Board

Smith & Williamson

Smith & Williamson - Higher Apprenticeship Programme

If you're looking for an opportunity where you will be doing real work, for real clients with real responsibility from an early stage, look no further.



IBM Apprenticeship

This programme is filled with challenges, that will give you exposure to new skills and a taste of what cutting-edge technology can do.



M&G - Retail Change & Operations Apprentice scheme

RCO provides a unique Apprenticeship programme as it offers a set of rotations through each of the teams within the department, allowing successful candidates to gain experience of a wider business area.



EY - School Leaver Programmes

This scheme has many benefits such as challenging work, study leave, and on-the-job coaching. Starting salary of up to £21,500?

Atos

ATOS

At Atos, people power our progress, so you can be sure we'll give you the knowledge and skills that will really give you an edge in your career.



Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes

Working at one of our Truck, Van or Car retailers you could be part of one of the best apprenticeship training schemes in the UK, training at the state-of-the-art Mercedes-Benz Apprentice Academy.

Mercedes are currently recruiting for the following roles:

Heavy Vehicle Technician Apprentice:

This will be an excellent opportunity for an outgoing, enthusiastic and proactive individual who is looking to start a career in the Motor Trade.

Parts Operation Apprentice:

This position will offer the right candidate the chance to work for one of the world's most prestigious car companies.

Light Vehicle Apprentice Technician:

In this role you will be constantly representing the brand and its values by exceeding our customer's expectations and delivering an unparalleled level of service and quality.

milkround *SCHOOL
LEAVERS*

Alternative Ambitions

Real Gap in partnership with Milkround School Leavers

We offer over 200 trips around the world including experience tours, volunteering, professional internships and paid work.

Real Gap are currently offering the following experiences:

Costa Rica sea turtle conservation - Pacific

Turtles are an increasingly endangered species and Costa Rican communities need volunteers like you to assist them during the nesting season.

Guatemala Spanish language school

Master the local lingo with expert teachers while you get a real taste of Guatemalan culture.

South Africa Experience

You'll take on a Big 5 game reserve, tour the stunning Garden Route, help out with wildlife conservation and visit the incredible Cape Town.

Thailand Experience

Thailand is the perfect backpacker's paradise and the Thailand Experience is THE TRIP you want to start your travelling adventures on!

Costa Rica experience

Experience the best 4 weeks of your life on the Costa Rica Experience; this is a ride you'll never forget!



Live with lion cubs in South Africa

In this role you will be working at an amazing private game reserve based in the heart of the South Africa.

Outbank Ranch

Want to get away from it all and experience life in the Australian outback? Get your Aussie on and learn what it takes to live on a real life cattle farm.

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