

Planning your Gap Year?

Decide what you want to get out of a Gap Year. There should be a purpose to it.

Think how this can be best achieved. Are you going for one, year long, placement or are you going to do two or three things to make your own customised scheme?

If you are hoping to go to university after your Gap Year, check the course is happy about it. Most are.

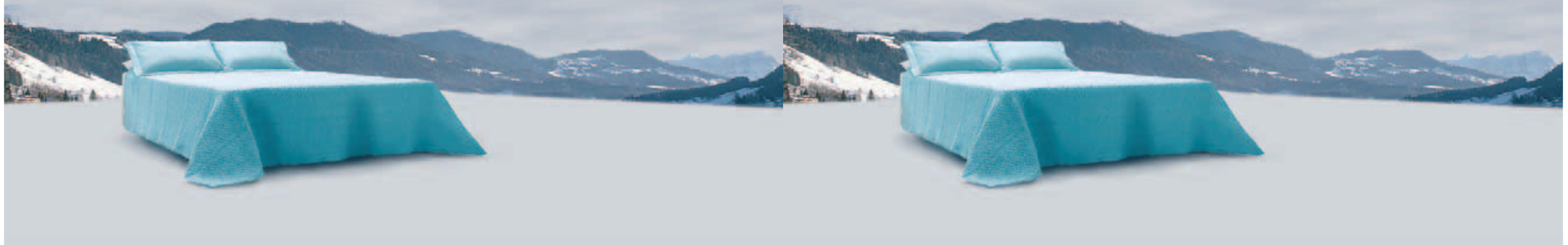
Research the possibilities.

Is there a cost? Work it out and see if you can afford it.

Check when you need to apply.

If you are applying in 2007 for entry to university in 2009 (Deferred Entry), you also need to be thinking about your university applications.

The big chill



Volunteering and making good use of your Gap Year

We would like to thank City College Norwich for their generosity in allowing us to use many of the images found in these leaflets.

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Adding to your application

Whether you are hoping to start work or go to university, the following might improve your chance of getting the job or course you want.

What you can do

- Do voluntary work.
- Do work experience or work shadowing. Ask your school or college to see what you need to do to arrange work experience or work shadowing. For some jobs and courses some form of work experience is a must. Think about doing this before you get into the second year of your course.
- Do part-time work. Every job, no matter how simple it seems to you, makes demands on you and adds to your experience – don't undervalue what you do!
- Take a Gap Year or year out after your current course finishes.
- Remember to keep a note of what you do and the skills you use – when you make your applications use it as evidence to prove you have what it takes.



Volunteer now

Volunteering is win-win. You contribute time and effort and in return you get valuable experience, greater self confidence, learn new skills, have fun and meet new people.

To find out more, look at the national volunteering website, www.do-it.org.uk, or contact one of these organisations.

Norfolk and Norwich Voluntary Services (NVS)

NVS know about voluntary projects in your area – ring on 01603 614474 or visit their website at www.nvs.org.uk.

West Norfolk Council for Voluntary Services

Ask them about volunteering in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Phone on 01553 760568 or look at www.westnorfolkvca.org

Millennium Volunteers (MVs)

Get involved in sports, youth clubs, arts and crafts, running community events, environmental and conservation work – and there's more.

Ring British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) on 01603 767400 or visit their website at www.btcv.org.uk. If you live in the north or west of Norfolk, ring Chris on 01553 815321.



Volunteer now

Norfolk Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

A wide range of opportunities for volunteering. Talk to Mike Tingley on 01603 423995 or email mike@norfolkcvys.org.uk

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Take the challenge, help others and get the D of E award which is valued by employers and universities. You can do D of E at your local youth club or in school or college.

To find out more ask at school or college or ring Alan or Joanna on 01603 744888 or email on alan.alderton@norfolk.gov.uk

Children's Services Youth Panel

Want to get involved and have your say? Volunteering and active citizenship? From peer support to web management! Go to the interactive website for young people www.norfolkblurb.co.uk or call Active Citizenship Team, Norfolk Children's Services on 01603 485999 and speak with Fran Farrar.



A year out

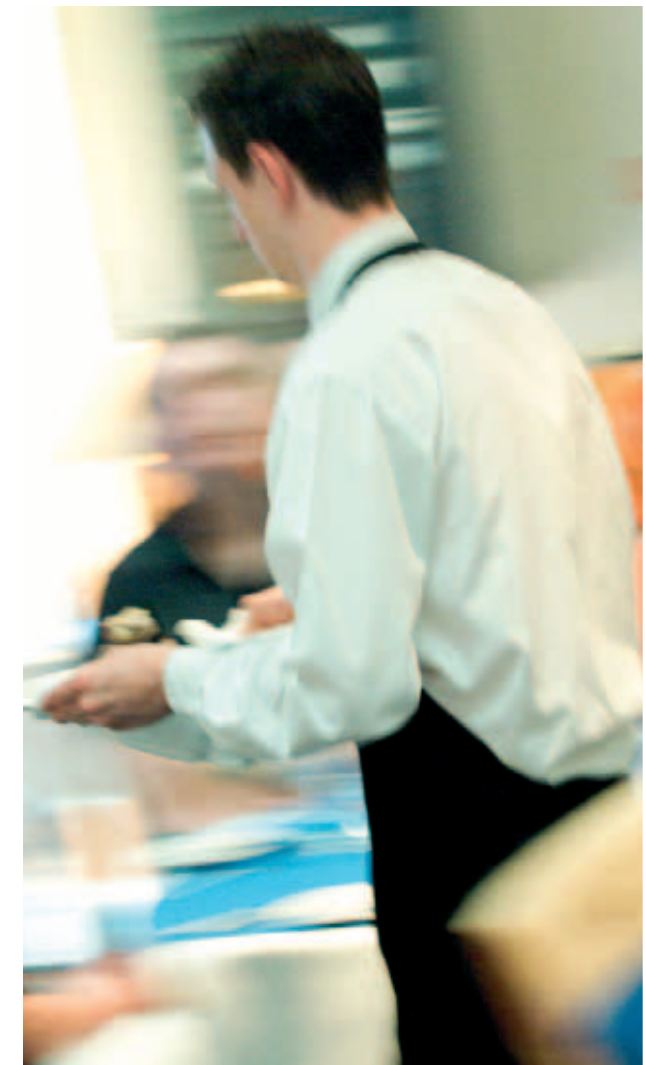
You may want to think about taking a 'Gap Year' between your Sixth Form/college studies and starting Higher Education or work.

People take a year out for a whole variety of reasons: a break from education, to make time to consider further options, to travel, to learn a new language, to increase confidence and independence, to broaden their skills and experiences. Increasingly, people are looking to earn money to help support them when they get to university.

A year out isn't a soft option. It demands as much, if not more, thought than any other option. You still have to make a positive decision, make applications and, maybe, raise money to go on certain schemes.

If you are thinking about applying for university in 2007 to start in 2009, you need to be thinking about your university application and planning your Gap Year at the same time – ideally in the Summer Term this year.

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Advantages & disadvantages of taking a year out

Advantages

- A chance to earn money to support future studies.
- A one-off opportunity to do something totally different.
- Develop skills (e.g. IT skills or a foreign language).
- Gain work experience related to future employment or course.
- Take a break from academic study in order to sort out priorities and come back refreshed.
- Travel more extensively than is possible in ordinary holidays.
- Begin living away from home, develop confidence and maturity.
- Give something back to the community.
- Good for your CV.

Disadvantages

- If the year is not well planned it will produce little benefit.
- A few university departments do not encourage students to take a year out - always check before you finally decide.
- You can lose motivation for academic work and your year out just drifts on into nothing.
- You have to pay to join some schemes. Check the details carefully.
- The year may cost more than you earn.
- A year out takes a year away from future earning potential.

Finding out about a Gap Year

Books

Your school or college is likely to have one or more of these books.

- **A Year Off A Year On** (Lifetime Careers Publishing).
- **Opportunities in the Gap Year** (ISCO).
- **Taking a Gap Year** (Vacation Work).
- **Taking a Year Off** (Trotman).
- **The Gap Year Guidebook** (Gap-Year.Com).

Websites

There are hundreds of websites on individual Gap Year projects. The following are just a few but they include links to other Gap Year sites.

- **www.bunac.org.uk** (Bunac).
- **www.csv.org.uk** (Community Service Volunteers).
- **www.gap.org.uk** (GAP Activity Projects).
- **www.gapyeardirectory.co.uk** (Gap Year Directory).
- **www.gap-year.com** (Gap-Year.Com).
- **www.gapwork.com** (Gap Work).
- **www.yini.org.uk** (Year in Industry).
- **www.yearoutgroup.org** (Year Out Group).

