

Gap Year & Volunteering



If you need help or advice, please see your Progression+ team at college.

 ccgonline.chichester.ac.uk

 www.chichestercollegelgroup.ac.uk

IS IT FOR ME?

Taking time out from education appeals to many people! It is true that there is much to be gained from visiting new places, getting useful work experience and trying out something different. However, avoid the temptation to allow month after month to pass by without accomplishing anything. Weigh up the pros and cons by writing down a list of your reasons for considering a gap year and a second list of reasons not to take a gap year. Compare the two lists and see which you feel is more important. You could consider the questions below before planning how you will spend your gap year:

- What do you want to do?
- Why do you want to do it?
- How are you going to benefit from the experience?
- What will you gain from this experience?

Universities and employers are very interested and impressed when they come into contact with candidates who have taken a gap year although it does depend on what the individual spent their time doing. It shows a good level of maturity and commitment and could be the factor which influences them to choose you as their applicant over others who could have similar qualifications.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Voluntary work experience enables you to gain invaluable on-the-job experience and develop your existing skills. You will also make contacts that may prove very useful at a later time.

Some work experience opportunities may be very difficult to find; for this reason preparation and planning well in advance is essential. You may want to spend some or all of your gap year working in order to fund university expenses.

You could choose to gain work experience relevant to your course or career plans (maybe looking specifically for employers that offer sponsorship schemes), or to take jobs that allow you to work in other industries or live abroad. Many careers such as medicine and law are very competitive to get into and volunteering can be very useful to make your application stand out from others. It is also an effective way of building up contacts and seeing if the career you are interested in is really for you.

Work experience can help you to mature and give you an insight into the working world. The experiences you have make you more independent and confident in your own abilities.

WORKING AND TRAVELLING ABROAD

Working and travelling abroad gives you the chance to see another country and culture. It may also broaden your outlook and enable you to learn another language.

Many jobs abroad are casual or temporary jobs, picked up at short notice. Travel with a CV and good references and ask around or look on hostel notice boards for job opportunities. If you want regular employment, you will need to plan ahead so you can arrange a job before you go.

The opportunities to volunteer in different countries around the world are simply enormous. You could find yourself helping to teach children English in China, or saving the environment in Malawi!

STUDY OPTIONS

You could use part of a gap year to pick up a new skill through a short course. This might make it easier for you to find a temporary job before and during a university course.

Choose your course carefully as not all will lead to nationally recognised qualifications and be aware that you will probably have to pay fees.

You could choose to study a course that teaches a practical skill such as office skills, languages or childcare. Alternatively you could choose an academic subject such as business or IT that will help you get more lucrative temporary work in the rest of your gap year and later. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) courses, for example, are available in the UK as well as abroad and can last from a weekend to a month.

You could study near to your home, or via distance or e-learning. With some planning, you could organise a course abroad.

See what is available at your local further education or private college.

TRAVEL

Travelling, if planned well, can greatly increase your independence and organisation skills. As you will inevitably encounter some unplanned events, it will also help you to mature and cope with life better. However, remember that travelling is going to cost you, and if you do not market your experiences well on a CV or at interview, the time could appear as frivolous and of no lasting value.

You need to decide whether to go alone or with other people, and whether you want a fairly demanding trip to a non-westernised country such as Thailand, or a place such as Australia that will seem more familiar and accommodates the needs of travellers.

Wherever and however you decide to go, research beforehand is essential. Talk to people who have been to the places you intend to visit, read books on the country, contact student travel specialists and buy the relevant travel guides, for example the Lonely Planet or the Rough Guides. In addition, use the budget sections of websites such as gapyear.com to work out how much your trip is likely to cost.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Where are you going to go and why?
2. Will you stay there for the duration of your gap year or will you travel to different areas?
3. How much is it going to cost and can you afford it? (Think about your accommodation, your food, and your other expenses)
4. Have you researched visas and vaccinations? (If you are going to work abroad will you need a work permit?)
5. Have you got the travel and health insurance you need?

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE'S PERSPECTIVE

WHEN DO I APPLY?

If you want to take a gap year between college and university, you could apply by the UCAS deadline in the Autumn term, and ask for deferred entry. This way, you will get help with choosing courses and filling out your UCAS form from college; you will be able to enjoy your gap year knowing you are prepared. However, if you want to use your gap year to consider what to do next, you can apply to university during the next UCAS cycle. Use/keep the guidance provided from college to draft a personal statement outline and let your student tutor know to request a reference for you ready for your return and application.

WHAT WILL THEY THINK?

On the whole, universities are positive about gap years as students are often more mature and independent, better able to handle their finances and more committed. However, it does depend on what you have done or intend to do in your gap year. If possible, try to include some activities or work experience relevant to your course. With some courses, such as maths or music, universities may worry you will lose your subject-specific skills. In these cases, look for ways you can keep your skills and knowledge up to date. Ask questions to university admissions tutors via the university website or at open days to find out the university's policy on gap years or deferred entry. Ask admissions tutors via the university website or at their open days.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

IMPROVE JOB PROSPECTS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Volunteering offers the opportunity to demonstrate to employers that you have commitment and can work as a part of a team. You will also show that you have good people skills. Through volunteering you will have the opportunity to improve existing abilities, and develop new ones. With some volunteer positions you may also receive practical training that could help you get a job. It is another experience you can include on your CV and/or personal statement.

MEET NEW PEOPLE

There is no set type of person who volunteers. You will have the opportunity to meet all sorts of new people in your community of all ages and from all backgrounds, helping to create a new understanding of a wide range of different individuals.

GAIN CONFIDENCE

Testing yourself in a challenging, exciting situation can really boost your confidence and inspire you to try more in life. It can enrich your life and broaden your perception of the world around you. You may learn to live in a foreign environment as well as deal with unforeseen events and situations you may have otherwise never experienced.

GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Many local organisations are in desperate need of assistance from willing volunteers. By helping them you will not only aid the organisation and their efforts but also improve the lives of those in the local community. It is also a great way of empowering yourself to have a greater awareness of an issue in your community.

HAVE FUN!

Give a little, gain a lot. Whilst you will be wanting to make a positive difference, you can gain a lot out of the experience too and it can be rewarding for everyone involved!


WHERE CAN I FIND VOLUNTARY WORK?

There are vast and varied volunteering opportunities available in the UK and beyond. The following is a rough idea of the areas you could get involved in and contact information for organisations working in these areas.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy supports vulnerable people in society to have their voices heard.

VOICE ABILITY

 voiceability.org/about-us/volunteering-opportunities

Supports people who face disadvantage or discrimination to have a voice that counts and their rights respected.

IMPACT INITIATIVES

 impact-initiatives.org.uk/volunteer

Supports children, families, young people, adults and older people in Sussex to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU

 citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering

Helps people solve legal, consumer and other problems by providing free advice, and by influencing policymakers.

ANIMALS AND WILDLIFE


Many animal welfare charities need volunteers to help look after animals or assist them with admin work, campaigning, and larger projects.

RSPCA

 rscpasussexchichester.org.uk/Pages/Category/volunteer


Works to prevent cruelty and promote kindness to animals. Requires volunteers for campaigning projects as well as helping out in animal care centres.

PDSA

 pdsa.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer

Provides care for sick and injured animals whose owners cannot afford vet fees. It is the UK's leading veterinary charity. Help out at this charity's shop in Bognor Regis, Tel: 01243 824679

MOUNT NODDY ANIMAL REHOMING CENTRE Eartham, West Sussex

 rspca.org.uk/local/sussex-chichester-and-districtbranch


Provides care to abandoned, abused and unwanted cats and dogs in the local area.

CAT AND RABBIT RESCUE CENTRE
Sidlesham, Chichester

 crrc.co.uk/volunteer

Various volunteering opportunities including cleaning, caring for animals, and helping with fund raising in the charity shop at East Wittering.

BRENT LODGE
Selsey, Chichester

 brentlodge.org/get-involved

Animal rescue centre nursing wild birds and animals back to health.

ARTS AND LEISURE


There are many varied opportunities in this field; from inspiring young children to draw to fundraising for your local amateur dramatics society.

CHICHESTER CINEMA @ NEW PARK

 chichestercinema.org

Help out behind the bar or box office. As well as helping out you can see films for free!

PALLANT HOUSE GALLERY

 pallant.org.uk/who-we-are/our-people/volunteer

Get involved as a room steward or become a buddy to someone who has special needs, and loves art but needs help with accessing events.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL

 chichestercathedral.org.uk/get-involved/volunteers/volunteer-vacancies

Various volunteering opportunities such as bell ringers; cleaners; day chaplains; welcomers; flower arrangers; coffee makers; cathedral guides; money counters; stewards; embroidering with the Seffrid Guild; volunteering on the Information Desk and in the Library; and helping the Cathedral Friends and the Learning and Engagement team.

OXMARKET GALLERY

 oxmarket.com/volunteering

Help out by setting up and taking down art exhibitions; assisting at Private Views and functions; publicity, marketing and social media, general administration support, database updates, and fundraising events.

CAMPAIGNING

Almost every not-for-profit organisation needs help campaigning to raise awareness and funds. You could be stuffing envelopes, protesting in the streets, or helping out at events. An example of this type of volunteering work would be the opportunities organised by 'Make Poverty History'.


If there is an issue that concerns you and you want to increase awareness about it, there will undoubtedly be a campaigning group that shares your views. Here are some examples:

ORGANISATION	AIMS
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL 🖱️ amnesty.org.uk/jobs/volunteer	Protects internationally recognised human rights.
THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION 🖱️ fairtrade.org.uk/what-is-fairtrade/work-for-us/volunteering-opportunities	Ensures that farmers in developing countries are getting a fair deal. Monitor labour, health and environmental conditions.
OXFAM 🖱️ oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-with-us	Advocacy and relief agency working globally to end poverty and suffering.
VOLUNTARY SERVICES OVERSEAS 🖱️ vsinternational.org/volunteering	Recruits professional volunteers to work in international development.
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND 🖱️ wwf.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/volunteer	Raises issue of conservation and lobby governments to address global threats to the planet.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE


There are lots of opportunities in this area, which can be great work experience as well as fun. You could help to run youth clubs and supervise activities or help young children learn how to read.

GUIDES AND BROWNIES

 girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/

Help out with a local group on a one-off or regular basis.

FINDITOUT CENTRE


 westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/volunteering/volunteering-with-children-and-young-people/finditout-centre-volunteer/

Volunteer to help provide information, advice and support to young people aged 13-25. There are vacancies available in Bognor Regis, Burgess Hill, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Lancing and Littlehampton.

EMERGENCY AND RESCUE SERVICES


The police, fire service, ambulance and lifeboat services all employ volunteers. These positions can be great for work experience and excitement but they do require a lot of training and commitment, as well as a willingness to be in dangerous situations. If you are looking for something more casual and not so intense this may not be for you.

POLICE

 police.uk/police-forces/sussex-police/areas/careers/jobs/volunteering/

Work as a special constable (part-time volunteer officers who have all the same powers as regular police officers).

AMBULANCE (ST JOHN'S AMBULANCE)

 sja.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/

Volunteers usually work at public events ensuring they are safe.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Working in this area can range from admin work to building projects, clean-up operations, or monitoring the populations of species in a particular region. Raising awareness is also very important in this area of work.

THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

 tcv.org.uk/getinvolved/volunteering

Helping hundreds of thousands of people each year to reclaim local green places.

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

 conservancy.co.uk/page/volunteering


Get involved in projects as diverse as coppicing, reed bed management, archaeology,

SUSSEX WILDLIFE TRUST

 sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved

Leading conservation organisation covering East and West Sussex, which looks after over 3000 acres of woodland, wetland and heath. Work also includes environmental education, working with land owners, companies and local communities to conserve Sussex.

ARUNDEL WILDFOWL AND WETLAND TRUST

 wwt.org.uk/support

A charity that relies on the generosity of volunteers. Offer just a few hours of your time and to help to save wetlands for wildlife in the local area.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE


There are lots of opportunities to make a difference in this area. You could help out in hospitals and hospices, support families of those in care, or help people to counselling, and mentoring services, or organisations like the Samaritans.

ST WILFRID'S HOSPICE

 stwh.co.uk/volunteering

Volunteers play an integral part in the life of the hospice, fulfilling a central role in supporting those with terminal illnesses.

ST RICHARDS HOSPITAL

 strichards.org.uk/volunteering

Volunteer in almost all of the hospital's work to fulfil its goal of providing free care to patients and support to their families.

PORTSMOUTH HOSPITAL

 porthosp.nhs.uk/get_involved/volunteering.htm

From helping the patients navigating our hospital buildings, to delivering information leaflets and helping feed patients, the volunteers are there to assist the customers.

SAMARITANS

 samaritans.org/volunteer-us

Telephone counselling. The Samaritans are always in need of people who can listen to others' problems without passing judgment. You must be over 18 and you will receive training as well as constant support

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING


You could help raise funds for one of the many charities who operate in local area, or help out in drop in drop-in centres supporting with activities such as cooking and serving meals.

TURNING TIDES

 turning-tides.org.uk/how-to-help/volunteering

Volunteer in the Worthing Area at St Clare's Day Centre, working with people with drug and alcohol dependency.

STONEPILLOW

 stonepillow.org.uk/working-at-stonepillow/volunteer

Empowering homeless and vulnerable people to make positive changes in their lives.

SHELTER


 england.shelter.org.uk/support_us/volunteer

Charity that works on housing issues and with the homeless.

THE ELDERLY


To help out in this area you can visit care homes and keep the residents company; just by giving up a few hours of your time you can really make a difference to the elderly's lives by giving them someone to talk to. If you have any special talents, like playing an instrument, you could help entertain them. If you still want to help out but want something a bit less hands-on you could get involved in transporting older people, helping them do their shopping, or fundraising and campaigning for charities.

AGE CONCERN

 ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/

Help with various activities at a sheltered housing scheme or become a befriender and visit an older person on a regular basis.

CONTACT THE ELDERLY

 contact-the-elderly.org.uk/become-a-volunteer

National charity solely dedicated to tackling loneliness and social isolation among older people.

THE ABBEYFIELD SOCIETY

 abbeyfield.com/volunteering/

Provides housing, support and companionship to older people.

MENTORING

As a mentor you act as a role model to someone who needs advice and encouragement to help them achieve their goals. This is usually on a one-to-one basis. The sort of people who benefit from mentoring are those recovering from an illness, a young person in danger of offending, or an asylum seeker new to the country who needs help to settle in with their community.

WEST SUSSEX LEARNING LINKS

 wslearninglinks.org.uk/Volunteering

Helps adults with learning disabilities to access adult education by providing volunteer 'buddies' to accompany them to courses and social activities.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This is a very broad area; the definition of a person with a disability encompasses all ages and can range from hearing impairments to someone who has lost the use of their limbs. As well as fundraising for charities that help the disabled, you could get more involved by helping people in their homes to encourage their independence. If you are willing to give up more time you could volunteer to be a helper on a pre-arranged group holiday. The families of some disabled people need help too, and you can do this by offering respite care for when the families need a break.

PACSO (PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT ORGANISATION)



pacso.org.uk/volunteer

Provides help and encouragement to families who have a child with special educational needs or disabilities

ALDINGBOURNE TRUST



aldingbournetrust.co.uk/get-involved

Volunteers with people with learning disabilities to help them reach their potential and enjoy life.

PRISONERS, EX- OFFENDERS AND CRIME PREVENTION

To make a difference in this area you can campaign for prisoner human rights in the criminal justice service. If you want to get more involved and have more contact with those affected you could help out with prisoner support charities.

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE



westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/volunteering/

Volunteer to help prevent offending in children & young people & support them to achieve positive, fulfilled future. Email: volunteerunit@westsussex.gov.uk

PRISONERS ABROAD



prisonersabroad.org.uk/pages/category/volunteering-opportunities

Helps British people imprisoned abroad. Offers advice, information and support to the prisoners and their families.

PAACT (PRISON ADVICE AND CARE TRUST)



prisonadvice.org.uk/pages/category/volunteer

Gives advice and support to prisoners as well as their family and friends.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL




amnesty.org/en/get-involved/

Sign a petition, volunteer for us, become a member. Whatever you want to do, take action today and be part of a global movement standing together for human rights across the world.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

You could act as a mentor to offer practical and emotional support to people while they adjust to a new culture and country. Another way to help is to volunteer in support centres and give advice from there. This can be done through local organisations or through nationwide ones such as The Refugee Council.

THE REFUGEE COUNCIL

 refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-for-us/volunteer-opportunities

Provide support and help refugees and asylum seekers.

HELP REFUGEES

 helprefugees.org./volunteer

REFUGEE ACTION

 refugee-action.org.uk/support-us/volunteer

There are a range of ways you can help, from making refugees welcome in their new communities to helping in the office.

SANCTUARY IN CHICHESTER

 sanctuaryinchichester.org/volunteer

SPORT


This is a very popular form of volunteering. There are many opportunities to volunteer in something sports related, such as coaching a local youth team or starting up a new one. Experience is not essential, only enthusiasm. You could also help out by fundraising for your local sports club or providing transport.

ACTIVE SUSSEX

 activesussex.org/deliver-sport/volunteer


Active Sussex is a local charity dedicated to increasing opportunities for all to get involved in sport and physical activity.

HEARTSMART WALKS

 walkingforhealth.org.uk/volunteer-with-us

Help lead organised walks around West Sussex to encourage health and fitness.

SPORT ENGLAND

 sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/volunteering-qa/getting-started

Promotes increased community participation in sport and active recreation.

WHERE TO FIND VOLUNTARY WORK

LOCAL DATABASES

VOLUNTARY ACTION ARUN & CHICHESTER

 vaac.org.uk

This is an organisation that promotes and supports voluntary and community groups across Arun and Chichester. Based in Bognor Regis with a network extending across the two districts.

WSSC VOLUNTEERING DATABASE

 westsussex.gov.uk/leisure-recreation-and-community/volunteering/

Skills Share West Sussex is a free initiative designed to provide bite-sized volunteering opportunities of between one and ten days to students, professionals and businesses. The idea is that good volunteering opportunities should be more easily available to those who want to help their community or charity, but can't promise a long commitment or regular hours.


NATIONWIDE DATABASES

TIMEBANK

 timebank.org.uk


A national charity that aims to inspire and connect a new generation of people with volunteering opportunities in their communities, and enabling charitable organisations and businesses to develop innovative and effective volunteer recruitment programmes.

DO-IT-VOLUNTEERING DATABASE

 do-it.org.uk

A free national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK.

NCVO (NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS)

 ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering

An independent voluntary agency committed to supporting, enabling and celebrating volunteering in all its diversity.

VINSPIRED

 vinspired.com

Helps you to find people near you who would value your support. What you do, where you do it and how much time you give is totally up to you. On the database you'll find opportunities in music, arts and education, sport, with children, the environment, childcare, conservation and more.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE CHOSEN ORGANISATION

- 1) What is the aim of the organisation?
- 2) What sort of projects will I be involved with?
- 3) Will I be working by myself or as part of a team?
- 4) Is there any training required for this post?
- 5) Where will I be working? If travel is required, will expenses be covered?
- 6) Will I be required to undertake any police or health checks before I start?
- 7) Will your insurance cover me when I volunteer for you or will I require my own?














THE LAW AND VOLUNTEERING

DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECK

If you are applying for a voluntary position that involves working with young people or vulnerable adults then you could be asked to apply for a DBS check (formally known as Criminal Records Bureau Check). If this is the case, your prospective employer or organisation will provide you with the DBS application form.

VOLUNTEERING ABROAD

There are countless opportunities for volunteering overseas. Not only can you help make a difference, but it is an excellent way to immerse yourself in a new country and its culture. You may also be able to gain a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) qualification. As well as the usual considerations about how much time you can give and what sort of volunteering you want to do, other important considerations include what sort of living conditions you are happy to accept; if you are volunteering in a rural area in a third world country, for example, they could be very basic. Another important thing to think about is medical requirements such as vaccinations for countries you may want to go to. For more information visit the NHS website- www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk. keep up to date with foreign travel advice set up alerts here; [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

-  allhandsandhearts.org Volunteer-powered disaster relief organisation dedicated to rebuilding hope for people impacted by natural disasters all over the world
-  aventure.co.uk Mainly unpaid and teaching work but with opportunities for travel and safari in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe and India
-  basecampgroup.com Become a ski or snowboard instructor
-  bunac.org Voluntary and paid work opportunities around the world
-  changingworlds.co.uk Provides opportunities for those wanting the challenge of living, volunteering and working abroad in their gap year
-  gapwork.com Database to help find a working holiday abroad
-  [Gap Year Travel, Gap Year Programs, Volunteer Work Abroad](http://www.gapyeartravel.com) Responsible travel and gap year specialist
-  i-to-i.com Teaching English abroad opportunities, both voluntary and paid
-  latitude.org.uk Charity specialising in volunteering for 17-25 year olds
-  projects-abroad.org Leading organisation for volunteering abroad with a diverse range of international service projects, plus the opportunity to become part of one of their volunteer communities abroad
-  www.realgap.co.uk Gap year, volunteer programmes and working holiday packages
-  ventureco-worldwide.com Multi-phase travel programmes which incorporate development projects, expeditions and adventure travel in Asia, Africa, South America and Central America
-  world-challenge.co.uk Varied schemes for 16-25 year-olds, with everything from team building exercises to voluntary and paid placements