



## **A Guide to Career Preparation**

### **a step-by-step programme for Years 9 – 13**

Students leaving school should be equipped with the necessary information and self-knowledge to make sensible and informed decisions about their future. Many young people find the decision-making process bewildering and are overwhelmed by the choices before them. HMI now requires schools to ensure students are prepared in good time before they have to face the major “decision points”.

In particular young people need to understand that work is not something to be fearful of or to dread. Indeed, whatever job they end up doing, there is great joy and satisfaction to be had in doing it well. We are designed to work and the role of the adult is to help young people move forward with confidence, taking their place in society and exploring all the opportunities before them. Unfortunately in some parts of the country there is very little to inspire young people, who may not have much positive family employment experience to draw on. It helps if the student can see that they may need to start out at the bottom in order to achieve their long-term goals.

The following programme is designed to help introduce young people to a variety of options and opportunities and give them the right tools to make the best choices for themselves.

#### **Year 9:**

#### **The Joy of Work! Time for inspiration...**

By now most students will have been in senior school for two years and will be familiar with the daily routine. This is the perfect time to start exploring the wider world of work that they will encounter on leaving school. Ideally students should be exposed to a different array of career and job options, which will inspire them to follow a goal path of their own. At this stage it is important that they hear positive stories from those whose function and role has really made a difference. Of course not everyone will achieve extraordinary accomplishments in their working life, but they should be encouraged to believe that the concept of work is a positive one. The more creative and imaginative the options, the more likely they are to hit on something that inspires them to work hard, to enjoy it and to move forward.

## Guest speakers: hearing it from the front line...

Try to get as many guest speakers to come and talk to the students as possible. These talks should be delivered by people who are truly enthusiastic about their role and how they approach it.

Think about some of the more quirky jobs, as well as the mainstream. Generally people love to talk about what they do and employers are often keen to give back and to help young people - after all, they were helped too, at some stage! You could consider keeping a data base of career speakers. Many will be happy to visit you annually, once they have developed a relationship with your school. In due course, this could open up other opportunities by way of work placements and internships.

It is also worth thinking about what is topical and what has been featured in the news recently; for example, there are high profile projects going on locally (such as re-development in your town centre or major new transport infrastructure). Young people are more likely to engage with things that they can relate to, that impact on their daily experience or environment.

### Speaker ideas

- Ask local businesses if they have interesting stories to share with young people [www.britishchambers.org.uk/business/young-chamber-membership.html](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/business/young-chamber-membership.html)
- Ask your local MP if he/she could speak about life in government or arrange a workshop to explain how government works and how young people can get involved [www.psa.ac.uk/psa-communities/specialist-groups/schools/studying-politics-workshops](http://www.psa.ac.uk/psa-communities/specialist-groups/schools/studying-politics-workshops)
- There are a range of professional bodies willing to come to schools, see [www.bussats/assets/careersresources.pdf](http://www.bussats/assets/careersresources.pdf) for relevant websites.
- Try to get speakers who have experience of unusual jobs, like representatives from  
The National Space Centre [www.spacecentre.co.uk](http://www.spacecentre.co.uk)  
Animal Rescue UK [www.bluecross.org.uk](http://www.bluecross.org.uk)  
Party and event planners  
Explorers  
Emergency rescue services  
Writers  
Scientists  
Anthropologists  
Inventors  
Theatrical set designers  
Musicians  
Television or radio presenters  
Workers from homeless or drug rehabilitation centres  
Self-defence experts

The list is endless, but the more varied and exciting, the better!

## **Trips and excursions**

Trips you plan at this stage should have a strategic purpose: they should be designed to inspire students to consider a range of career options, but they should also give them an overview of how people's jobs impact on the lives of us all. You might consider arranging visits to organisations which demonstrate the following:

1. **How complex organisations work:** how do people collaborate to ensure that goods and services are delivered smoothly? For e.g. visits to the railway network, air traffic control, emergency services or supermarket depots.
2. **The future of work:** Technological advances mean that the job market is far more fluid than most people imagine. According to the US Labour Market, 65% of today's students will end up doing jobs that haven't been invented yet. Consider visiting companies using cutting edge technologies, such as factory production lines using robotics or games developers using the latest graphics and virtual effects.
3. **Appreciate the role of the media:** introduce students to the way the media affects the world of work, not only by the way industries are portrayed in the news, but how social media has impacted on the way we do business internationally. Students could not only visit media outlets (television or radio stations), but also visit companies who work and communicate internationally.

## **Year 10:**

### **Recognising your skills and strengths...**

Your students have now had a taste of different jobs and ways of working and should have a wider view of the opportunities available to them once they leave school. They should start to think about the sort of careers they might want to pursue for themselves and learn to recognise what they enjoy, what they are good at and what they want to know about.

**Class project:** The students should begin to do some independent research. Working in groups, ask them to pick a job or career and find out more about it. This could include:

- Web based research
- Direct approach to companies via phone or email
- Trade journal, newspaper or other media articles

For each job they should find out what skill sets are needed, what qualifications are required, what the job entails, what the typical working day is like, working patterns, remuneration etc. The students should share their findings with each other, thereby introducing the class to a number of different working options.

### **One-to-one discussions:**

During the course of Year 10, students should have the chance to discuss their career interests and thoughts with a member of staff.

Staff can help direct them in order to make sure they make appropriate exam choices and begin to think about creating further experiences either in school or during the holidays. Remember that many skills are desirable whatever the work chosen (leadership, tenacity, adaptability, teamwork, communication, research, empathy etc.); these are all transferable.

Experiences at this stage do not need to be directly related to their work goals. They may want to consider:

- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Joining a sports team, getting involved with music or drama groups
- Volunteering at a local charity or youth organisation
- Taking up a Saturday job

### **Career Tests**

Students at this age can undertake a variety of aptitude tests for particular vocational careers (such as the medical profession) or measure the general skills and qualities they need for the work place. See [www.bussats.com](http://www.bussats.com) for more information on advisory career testing and how the tests can help pinpoint the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and improve performance with personal feedback.

### **Be Summer Smart!**

Whilst it is important to take a break over the holidays, students moving from Year 10 to Year 11 should also take time to expand their horizons and try to develop themselves beyond their lives at school. They should try to undertake activities which can go towards building themselves a CV or personal statement. Encourage students to start keeping a journal to record their experiences and thoughts. This could include relevant classwork, but also work placements, holiday job and extracurricular activities.

### **Year 11: Working towards exams...**

This year students should concentrate on getting the best public exam results possible. It is important they realise that the qualifications they gain will almost certainly affect the choices they have available as they move on at 16+.

- Formulate a study programme to ensure they understand not only what to revise, but how to revise, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zw8qpbk>
- Remind students that employers do not look at exam results just to see what you have achieved in each subject. They are also an indication of commitment to study, determination, organisation and so on.

### **Workshops and speakers:**

There are plenty of options available especially after the public exams in the summer. Consider arranging workshops and life skill days, perhaps covering the following topics:

- Leadership <https://www.future-foundations.co.uk/team/jack-butler>
- Entrepreneurialism [www.young-enterprise.org.uk/](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/)
- Business gaming [www.streetstylesurgery.co.uk/workshops/](http://www.streetstylesurgery.co.uk/workshops/)
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme [www.dofechallenge.org/adventure/challenge](http://www.dofechallenge.org/adventure/challenge)

### **Personal development:**

The period after the summer exams, and the summer holidays offer a unique opportunity to explore further career options, work placements, internships etc. For advice on setting these up see [www.bussats.com/assets/workplacements.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/workplacements.pdf) Students at this level may also need to attend formal or informal interviews. For general help with communication skills and teaching resources see [www.bussats.com/assets/communicationskills.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/communicationskills.pdf)

### **Further study decisions:**

At this stage students should begin to realise where their academic strengths lie and what personal qualities they need to work on. They should begin to consider whether they intend to go on to further study and to focus on subject choices. Their decision may be influenced by the GCSE results over the summer, but generally they should be encouraged to study what they love and what they are good at. Obviously there are a few careers (such as medicine) where specific study choices need to be made. For entrance requirements to medical school see [www.bussats.com/assets/universitymedschools.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/universitymedschools.pdf) for general study options see also [www.cityandguilds.com](http://www.cityandguilds.com).  
<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/about-us/qualification-brands/btec>  
[www.ucas.com/ucas/16-18-choices/search-and-apply/qualifications-you-can-take/levels](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/16-18-choices/search-and-apply/qualifications-you-can-take/levels)

### **Year 12:**

#### **Exploring more options...**

Subject choices should be confirmed once the GCSE or equivalent results are announced.

**University and further education open days:** Once students have embarked on their courses, they should begin to look ahead to the options they have once the “sixth form” period of study is complete. If they intend to apply for university they should consider attending open days. Encourage them to be aspirational and to visit high quality institutions even if they are unsure that an application would be appropriate.  
[www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/type/open-day](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/type/open-day)

**Apprenticeships, traineeships and internships:** There are some excellent alternatives to the university option available Further help for post school options include:

<https://www.gov.uk/education/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-internships>

#### **Interview skills:**

All students at this level should begin to prepare for one-to-one interviews. Even if they are going on to university, the chances are they will be interviewed for work placements and internships in due course. See [www.bussats.com/assets/interviewskillse.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/interviewskillse.pdf) for a personal student guide to interviews.

#### **Work placements:**

Although career choices are not necessarily definite at this stage, students should try to set up work placements over the summer holidays which are more directly related to the kind of work they wish to pursue. For more help in setting these up see [www.bussats.com/assets/workplacements.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/workplacements.pdf).

#### **CV and Personal Statements:**

At this stage students should also begin to prepare a CV or collect relevant material for a Personal Statement. Remind students that their online profile is also important. They may wish to consider creating a LinkedIn profile, twitter account or blog. Remember that

employers not only recruit online, but will often check the “footprint” of individuals they wish to employ. Students should make sure that their social media postings are consistent with the kind of image they want to present to the public arena and check that their privacy settings are up to date. [www.bussats.com/assets/personalstatements.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/personalstatements.pdf)

#### **Careers Testing:**

For those who are undecided about career choices or who want to see where their strengths and weakness lie (or how they have improved) there are a variety of advisory career tests available. See [www.bussats.com](http://www.bussats.com)

#### **Life beyond School:**

Employers and university admission tutors will be more impressed by students who have created their own opportunities and undertaken independent study beyond that which has been supplied by school. Students should try to attend public lectures (consider subscribing to professional journals and magazines for more information), careers fairs, professional society events.

#### **Year 13**

##### **The next step...**

The final year at school brings its own challenges with many students facing public exams and university applications. Although the work load is heavy at this stage students should be preparing and finalising their **personal statements/CV** using the experiences gained in previous years, see [www.bussats.com/assets/personalstatements.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/personalstatements.pdf)

They should also continue to attend lectures and other organised events outside school, to further enhance their experiences and study. Remind them to keep up with current affairs, especially taking note of developments in their chosen areas of interest.

**Personal interview technique:** No one should leave school without the ability to give a good account of themselves at interview. For personal and mock interview help, see [www.bussats.com/assets/interviewskills.pdf](http://www.bussats.com/assets/interviewskills.pdf)

#### **Gap year and summer opportunities:**

There are a wealth of opportunities and grants available for students who wish to volunteer or work abroad over the summer, or in a gap year. If students wish to take a year out either before working or university, encourage them to use it wisely to develop new skills and add value to their CV.

[www.bestgapyear.co.uk](http://www.bestgapyear.co.uk)

[www.gapyear.com/](http://www.gapyear.com/)

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/gap-year](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/gap-year)