

Student Voice



After Graduating from my BA Honours Applied Drama in the Community degree, I decided to take a gap year before continuing with my educational journey. During my third year, I applied for a teacher training programme in Secondary Drama (PGCE) and was accepted.

After my degree I decided I would take a gap year before committing myself to my next degree. The idea of taking a break from education was a bit scary at first because I had not yet taken any breaks between my schooling, Further Education or Higher Education. However, many of my friends had taken time out between their educational journeys to travel, gain work experience, volunteer and learn life skills like learning to drive or living independently. All of these were skills I had not necessarily developed therefore, I decided that after my degree it would be the perfect opportunity for me to go and get as much experience as I could before becoming a teacher.

Planning - *planning a gap year is essential. By planning my activities, work experience and travelling I was able to budget effectively and ensure I could realistically squeeze everything in that I wanted to do. Therefore, when planning a gap year, I would highly recommend getting a wall-planner so that you can see your schedule for the whole year.*

Volunteering and Work Experience - *Originally, I am from Suffolk and moved to Lincoln to study. Throughout my degree I made so many connections with local groups/organisations that I decided I wanted my gap year to be based in the city that I studied in. This allowed me to further explore Lincolnshire and gain some paid/voluntary work experience with some of the connections I made during my degree. For example, I joined the board of directors for Shooting Fish Theatre Company, became an Ambassador for Just-Lincolnshire, LiNCHigher and Bishop Grosseteste University and also a Creative Collective Associate at the Usher Gallery. There are lots of groups/organisations in*

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Lincoln who are looking for student involvement. Great places to find out about these are through the universities/colleges and local news. Being involved with local groups is not only a great way to network but gain further work experience and develop key skills such as, organisation, communication and teamwork - it's also great fun and an opportunity to make friends!

Life skills - *A life skill that I had not yet accomplished was driving. So, after graduating I booked my lessons and got started, finally passing just 6 months later! Learning to drive is an essential skill that I needed before training to teach as I am now able to drive to placement wherever that may be. Scheduling learning to drive within a gap year (if you also haven't learnt) can give you plenty of time to perfect your driving skills and pass with more ease - I am glad I gave myself at least a year to pass rather than cramming it in whilst studying.*

Travel - *A gap year can be a great time to take the opportunity to travel and experience somewhere new. So far within my gap year, I have travelled to New York City. It was absolutely awesome and was somewhere I have always dreamt of going to. There are some great travel deals for students out there, I would recommend looking online for some discounts and ideas.*

Overall, my gap year has been packed full of different activities and memories that I will treasure forever. It has been great fun and a good way for me to recharge before returning to my studies. I would definitely recommend taking a gap year to anyone who may be wanting to experience new things, to explore different places and freshen-up before beginning/returning to their education.

Beth

