

**POST-18 OPTIONS GUIDE**  
**for L6th PUPILS**  
**& PARENTS / CARERS**  
**APRIL 2020**



Dear Pupils, Parents/Carers,

I write this introduction to you as I sit here at home at the start of Week 5 of the Coronavirus school closures. At this time we do not have an end date for the closures/a back-to-school date for you, so I thought it would be good to get some information out to you all regarding our Post-18 programme at TWGGS and how this will run this year, given our slightly different circumstances!

Had we been at school then parents/carers would have been invited, alongside our L6th pupils, to our Post-18 Options Evening in late April. As this is obviously cancelled, I aim to give you the starter information here in this booklet and then set some research based tasks for pupils to be getting on with in the coming weeks.

Post-18 Options at TWGGS involve the majority of pupils applying to attend a UK university through UCAS. Other pathways include applying for an apprenticeship, taking a gap year, applying for a university abroad e.g. in the USA or entering the world of work. As part of the careers programme, while in Year 10 the pupils were offered the opportunity to take part in Morrisby Online testing to help them start to plan what their future path might take, and in Year 11 all pupils had a one to one interview with Mrs Elinson, the independent Careers Adviser, as well as an interview with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and a chance to do some work experience. In L6th, the pupils had an introductory PSHE session on Post-18 Options with their Form Tutors in November 2019, so this is not the first time we have asked them to consider this process. Some pupils may be no further on in that process than they were in November, some may have had thoughts about it and started some research into their chosen pathway and some may have considered it but still be totally undecided as to which pathway is right for them - all of these are totally acceptable for this point in the 6th Form!

Whichever pathway pupils choose to pursue it is important for them to remember that while we give a lot of support and guidance in school, the decision is theirs alone and that they must take the main responsibility and initiative with this process.

Parental/carer support is vital to all of this and there are many things you can do at home to get involved in the Post-18 process. Reading the online guides is a good start (website links are included at the end of this booklet) and initiating discussions about options, application deadlines, finance etc. are better done early and bit by bit rather than leaving these to long and intense discussions at home, which can be stressful for all involved.

This booklet is an initial introduction to all Post-18 Options to get you started and as the majority of our pupils will be applying to a UK university through UCAS I will be sending out a specific guide for this soon. If you are looking into the other options and have decided that a UK university application is not for you then there are a number of starter websites listed in the back of this booklet to provide you with more information on the pathway you have chosen.

Best wishes,



Miss B Smith  
Head of Sixth Form

## **UK University Application (More details to follow soon)**

- You apply through UCAS by submitting an application that includes:
  - Your details
  - Up to 5 courses you want to apply for (this is a bit different for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Vet Science and Dentistry - anyone wanting to do this will come to separate meetings about applying for these courses and universities)
  - Your GCSE results and A Level predicted grades
  - Your own personal statement
  - A reference from your form tutor
- We cannot tell you which university to go to or which course/s to apply for, so the earlier you start investigating your options the better!

## **University Application outside of the UK**

Why might this be of interest to you?.....

1. **It can be cheaper (in certain places)** – Since the rise in tuition fees in 2012, and the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for courses starting from September 2017, higher education in the UK is expensive. A recent study conducted by HSBC found that Germany was the least expensive place to study at less than half the annual cost of a degree in the UK, with France coming a close second.
  2. **Stand out from the crowd** – Graduate employment is tough, with thousands of graduates with similar qualifications seeking jobs every year. Make yourself stand out from the crowd by studying abroad – it'll give you more life experience, cultural awareness, and perhaps a different perspective on life to your fellow graduates.
  3. **Study at a top ranking course provider** – According to the QS World University Rankings, six of the top ten universities in the world are abroad, with five of those being in America. Although four of the top ten are UK-based course providers!
  4. **Get international-savvy** – In our global economy, an awareness of the wider world outside your home town (and home country) can go a long way. Just think of all those international businesses looking for clued-up employees, with an understanding of different cultures and how the world works.
  5. **The adventure** – Want to see the world but can't justify an extended holiday? Combine the two and study abroad in a location you can explore as extensively as you like!
- Additionally, there are many courses based at UK universities that offer a "Year Abroad" option so you get the best of both worlds without having to actually go to university in a different country.
  - Each country runs their university application process differently, **but none of them go through UCAS and UK student finance.**
  - If this was something you wanted to do you would need to find out how to apply, when the deadlines are, finance arrangements etc. for your chosen location as you wouldn't be working to the UCAS deadlines that we work to in school.

## **Questions to ask yourself if you do not plan on going to university.....**

- Have I looked carefully at the case **for** going to university?
- Do I want a degree now or in the future?
- Am I ready to start in the working world?
- Do I need time to think about my future?
- If yes, how could I use that time productively? Travel, do an internship, foundation course, volunteer etc.?

## **Non-University Based Post-18 Options:**

### **Apprenticeships**

**1. Earn while you learn - Apprentices will have the same opportunities as employees, earning a weekly wage and working alongside experienced staff.**

The minimum apprenticeship wage is £3.40 per hour, but many apprentices earn significantly more. However, the average weekly wage for an apprentice is now around £170. As an apprentice you will also receive the same benefits as other employees, such as pension contributions and leisure facilities.

**2. No debt** - Those who embark on an apprenticeship won't be weighed down by tuition fees or debt by the time they graduate. In fact, your employer will be paying *you* to gain a qualification instead.

**3. Practical and relevant experience** - You will learn from experienced professionals on the job, and will also be trained externally at a local college or specialist training organisation. You will also be set targets to ensure that you are well supported and that you are progressing at an appropriate speed. The modules you decide to study will provide you with the essential knowledge needed for your future career.

**4. Strengthen your CV** - More than 80% of apprentices said that their career prospects had improved, as you will have gained at least a year in the industry, picking up practical working knowledge and skills that will be attractive to any employer.

**5. Build your contacts** - Apprenticeships typically take between one and four years to complete, depending on the type of apprenticeship and the level. In this time, you will forge relationships and contacts with clients, colleagues, and managers.

**6. Gain a nationally recognised qualification** - You will still finish with a degree level qualification just as you would at university

**7. Progress within a business** - If you impress during your apprenticeship, you could also gain a full time position with the company.

Applying for apprenticeships can seem a daunting task as apprenticeship vacancies are advertised all throughout the year and the deadlines are not all the same, like they are with the UCAS system. **So if this is something you want to do, it is your responsibility to search for apprenticeships and keep up with the application deadlines for them.**

## **Taking a Gap Year**

**A gap year offers you the opportunity to gain skills and experiences, while giving you time to reflect and focus on what you want to do next.**

- A productive gap year can be valuable on your CV – many employers value the experiences students have gained if they've actively managed their time, set themselves goals, and stretched themselves.
- A gap year can also enhance your higher education studies – if you decide to apply for university, you could tailor your gap year to relate it to the subject area you plan to study.
- Admissions tutors know that some students may take a little time to adjust to studying again, but many former gap year students are generally more focused and responsible.

Why do you want to take a year out?

It's really important to set goals to make your time productive, so you need to identify what you want to achieve. You might want to:

- have a break from study
- gain new skills/experiences
- earn money
- spend time deciding what you want to do
- do a combination of the above

A year out isn't an option that suits everyone – for some, it may be advisable not to take a break between studies. *Some people will apply for deferred university entry and do a gap year, some may not apply this year and do a gap year before applying to university at a later time, or not at all.*

## **Entering the World of Work**

- This may appeal to you if you just want to get going with work, can't see yourself studying any more and the job area you want to go into doesn't require any qualifications beyond A Level.
- Entry-level jobs are jobs designed for school leavers without the need for higher education qualifications.
- Some might require certain grades or work experience, while others will just want to see enthusiasm and a good work ethic. Some roles will be full-time permanent, while others might be part-time or temporary.

There's no set way of going about getting an entry-level job – hunt on job sites for openings, use your contacts, join LinkedIn or hand out your CV to local businesses. Once you've got your foot in the door it's all about working your way up!

### **Next Steps:**

Research, research, research! Whichever option appeals most then it will need researching and planning and the sooner you start doing this, the less stressful it will all be. If you are planning on going to university then starting to look at courses and possible universities you could do that course is a good start. There are many search tools available for UK university courses if you do a simple Google Search. I will send out a UCAS application guide soon so you can look at what to do first to prepare yourself for your application process. In the meantime, here are some websites to get you started.....

#### **Useful websites if you are considering an apprenticeship:**

<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

<https://whitehat.org.uk/>

#### **Useful websites if you considering going straight into work after school:**

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/school-leaver-cv-template/>

<https://www.ucas.com/what-are-my-options/employment>

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/>

#### **Useful websites if you are considering a gap year:**

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/gap-year/gap-years-ideas-and-things-think-about>

<https://www.studentuniverse.co.uk/gap-year>

<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/life/travel/gap-year/gap-year-ideas>

**Useful websites if you are considering studying abroad:**

<https://www.astarfuture.co.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/studying-overseas>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/study-abroad/study-in-the-usa>

<https://www.savethestudent.org/study-abroad/america/how-to-apply-for-american-universities.html>

**Useful websites if you are planning to apply for a UK University through UCAS:**

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university>

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-undergraduate-what-study>

<https://www.whatuni.com/>

<https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/>

**Student Finance Resources:**

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

<https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/sfe>

<https://themoneycharity.org.uk/advice-information/students/>

**There are numerous websites designed for parents/carers who are supporting a young person through their Post 18 options. Here is a selection of some of the best ones:**

<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/preparing-to-go/advice-for-parents>

<https://www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk/articles/article/101/post-18-options>

<http://www.parentadviser.co.uk/>

<https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/guides> - You have to pay for these guides but they are relatively cheap and particularly useful if your child is looking at university applications or apprenticeships as there are specific guides for this.