



Not sure what to do after your A-Levels?

A guide to taking a gap year by the
Oxford Media & Business School



OMBS
Oxford Media & Business School

Taking a gap year is a fantastic opportunity



Thinking about a gap year? It's one of the best decisions you can make after A-levels. Stepping out of your comfort zone helps build your confidence, independence, and a whole range of skills that'll make you stand out; whether you're heading to uni, starting work, or still figuring things out.

The gap year options in this guide offer something for everyone, and each one will help you grow in different ways. You can expect to:

- Hone your teamwork skills ready for starting your career.
- Become a more independent individual, making decisions for yourself and living away from home.
- Get new and additional practical skills that future employers will value.
- Develop soft skills like planning and communication skills.
- Broaden your horizons in experiencing different cultures and cities, particularly if you've been in the same education setting for many years.
- Make meaningful impact in other countries and build lifelong friendships, all whilst making memories and having a lot of fun!

Step confidently into a business career by studying for the Professional Business Diploma

In just one intensive year, you'll:

- Master essential workplace skills, becoming confident with tools like Microsoft Office 365 and Google Workspace, desired by employers.
- Get a clear understanding of how business really works, including the basics of financial investing to give you an edge.
- Gain real-world experience with a week's work placement in a business area you're interested in.
- Build a standout CV and nail your interview skills, so you're ready to impress future employers.
- All this, combined with the soft skills you'll develop with us — like teamwork, communication, and problem-solving — will make you confident, highly employable, and a valuable asset to any team.



Our one-year intensive course in Oxford is the perfect opportunity for you to get the skills you need to fast-track into a role in any business sector.

What to expect when you study for the Professional Business Diploma

When you sign up for the Professional Business Diploma, you'll spend over 20 hours a week learning in a small, friendly business school right in the heart of beautiful Oxford.

You'll get expert tutored lessons, personalised 1-1 support from your tutors, and if you need it, comfortable accommodation close by in well-maintained houses. Classes are kept small to make sure you get the attention you deserve, and instead of stressful final exams, you'll be assessed continuously throughout the year.

Plus, because it's such an intense and interactive course, you'll build strong friendships with your peers as you work together on group projects, presentations, and assignments — making the year as social as it is educational.



Our five core modules; Advanced IT, Business, Digital Marketing, Event Management, and Personal Development Planning — are designed to build both your practical skills and the all-important soft skills employers are looking for.

After completing the course, graduates go on to work in a wide range of exciting business sectors — from marketing and events, to travel, finance, property, interior design, and much more. Where you take your career really depends on what interests you and which business sector sparks your passion.

Want to see where past students ended up? [Read our graduate career stories here.](#)

Throughout the course, you'll work on your own personalised job search plan to kickstart your career in business. You'll sharpen your interview skills, meet industry experts and get connected with specialist recruiters who'll support you as you begin your job hunt after graduation.

Or, if you're thinking of a different path, you might choose to explore travel or volunteering opportunities mentioned in this guide — or even head off to university. The choice is yours!





Travel is part of the gap year dream – but what if you could make it count?

Backpacking through Southeast Asia, inter-railing across Europe, or chilling on a beach in Bali? Gap year travel is almost expected these days – and rightly so. It's a time for freedom, adventure, and exploration, and our friends at The Leap challenge you to go one step further...

Specialists in purposeful gap year travel that goes beyond the ordinary, their programmes combine adventure with contribution, enhancing soft skills, teaching safe and responsible travel, and even giving you an academic edge.

This isn't just travel – it's growth, grit, and global awareness all rolled into one.

So, why choose The Leap?



First and foremost, you'll be making an impact with intention – from marine conservation and wildlife protection to community empowerment and sustainable farming, you'll actively contribute to global challenges – not just observe them.

- You'll develop real-world skills in learning to travel safely, responsibly, and independently while building confidence, cultural awareness, and problem-solving abilities that employers value.
- You'll also get expert support – The Leap team has over 25 years' experience and will guide you through every step of your journey.
- Finally, you'll get academic recognition – Choose Kenya and come home with 16 UCAS points, backed by their International Volunteering Award, plus the chance to tick off your D of E Gold Residential in the process.

Wondering where you could go with The Leap?

The options are so exciting.
Choose from destinations such as:

Colombia - Go beyond the tourist trail as you hike the Lost City, explore lush jungles, and immerse yourself in grassroots community projects.

Kenya - Make a real impact with Oceans Alive Trust as you get hands-on with coral regeneration, marine surveys, mangrove planting, permaculture farming, and more.

Peru - Hike the ancient Inca trail to Machu Picchu, support educational and environmental initiatives, and explore the vibrant culture of the Sacred Valley.

Costa Rica - Protect turtles, live sustainably, and immerse yourself in one of the world's most biodiverse regions.



From rainforest treks to community conservation, this programme blends action, nature, and adventure.

Cambodia - Discover a country full of heart and heritage. Volunteer in social enterprise and education, visit ancient temples, and experience life in a country rising with resilience and hope.

Wherever you choose, every Leap programme delivers that powerful blend of purpose and adventure – helping you make a difference while discovering who you really are.



Learn to cook like a pro at the famous Orchards Cookery School

Want to do something fun and practical in your gap year? Orchards Cookery offers intensive courses that teach you real cookery skills – perfect if you're aiming to earn money during your travels.

Their expert training prepares you to work as a chalet cook in ski resorts, or cook for families in luxury lodges, villas, and even on yachts. They also run “Off To University” courses – ideal if you want to eat better than beans on toast and impress your flatmates with your kitchen skills. Whether you’re heading abroad, to uni, or just want to learn a skill for life, Orchards Cookery has you covered.

Their courses are intensive, fun, and designed to prepare you for a ski season being a chalet cook or other cooking related jobs. They will show you how to master the art of being a fantastic cook, helping you to get the most out of your job and enjoy the mountains (or the infinity pool) at the same time..

The award-winning cookery school has a new approach to cookery and tuition. Courses are hands on and lots of fun, each day ending with a relaxed dinner party so you'll get loads of practice and have fun along the way.

Classes are small with just 8 students in each kitchen alongside a tutor and assistant, but with 6 separate kitchens there can be as many as 48 of you on courses at any one time, meaning there's a great social buzz!

This, combined with their many onsite facilities including a bar, dancefloor, gym and astroturf, makes learning cookery skills at Orchards a lot of fun!

Whether you're a total beginner or already confident in the kitchen, these courses are designed to suit all levels. You'll learn tips and time-saving tricks, how to handle kitchen disasters like a pro — and even how to deal with the weird things that can happen when cooking at altitude (yes, exploding cakes are a real thing!).



A skill for life, and a headstart on earning...

You'll work through three-week, five-course menu plans that include options for vegetarians and children— so you're ready to cook for all kinds of guests. You'll also get expert help with CV writing and access to interview training videos from ski companies, plus support to get your CV seen by the right people in the industry.

And if you want to take things further, there are optional extras like a fun wine-tasting session (cheese board included!) and the chance to earn a Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering.

You'll learn a valuable life skill (after all, we all eat!) that can help you start earning straight away. Plus, you'll meet like-minded friends and build a network that lasts long after the course ends.



Have we inspired you to take a gap year? We hope so.

To find out more about each of these exciting gap year options here's what you need to do -

Learn more about the [Professional Business Diploma](#) here or view the [full curriculum here](#). To find out more about our friends at [the Orchards Cookery School](#) head here, and find [The Leap](#) here.

Finally, don't forget to come on over and find us on our socials [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#)! You'll find out what studying at Oxford Media & Business School is really like and see what our students and graduates get up to.



After your gap year, the choice is yours. You might head to university, explore more of the world, or jump straight into a job. Most importantly, your gap year gives you the time and space to figure out what feels right for you and your future...