





# TAKE YOUR PLACE

Your student  
survival kit:  
Build your plan B



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# Your student survival kit: Build your plan B

A guide to plan your next move - from late applications to uni, to responding to setbacks, this simple guide offers top tips and advice to help you through the situations that don't always go to plan.

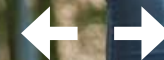
Missed out on your first-choice uni? Worried what to do if you drop a grade this summer? Maybe you didn't apply to uni and now wish you had... Don't panic - you still have lots of options, it's just a case of finding the one that's right for you.

If you no longer want to attend university, have you considered going into employment or applying for an apprenticeship? Whatever you decide to do next, this guide is here to help you build your Plan B.

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# 6 ways to deal with setbacks

While the next few months is an incredibly exciting time - coming to the end of sixth form or college and thinking about your next steps - things may not always go to plan. Whether it is dealing with rejection, helping with indecision, or learning from setbacks - our top tips will help you feel more prepared for whatever the next few months might throw at you.

**Setbacks** can be hard to handle, especially at the beginning of your adult life, but with time you will learn how to handle them better and turn them into something positive. Facing challenges head-on and adapting to what life throws at us is all about being **resilient**.



## Top tips to bounce back from setbacks:

**Focus on the things that you can change** and accept and move on from the things that you can't. Missed a grade by a few marks on one assessment? Don't dwell on it - instead, focus on what you can do to make it up in your next one.

**Change it up!** Start introducing small changes rather than big and overwhelming ones. If you need to revise for an exam, plan out your time, and start by revising for half an hour a day, then an hour, then two hours (with breaks!).

**Be kind to yourself** when you are faced with difficulties like dropped grades or university rejections. Write a list of your strengths to remind yourself of all of the great things about you!

**Identify how you feel in that moment;** it is OK to feel frustrated, disappointed, or like a failure. But only give yourself 10 minutes to feel that way. After that, dust yourself off and think about your next steps.

**What lessons can you learn** from your less-than-perfect grade or exam result? Ask yourself, 'What went well? What didn't go well? And what next?'

**Ask for help** - talking with a friend, tutor or adviser will help you feel listened to and like you are tackling the challenge as a team. They can offer support and strategies that may help you.



# It's not too late to apply to university

Did you know that even after the main UCAS deadline in January to apply to university has passed, many universities still have places available on their courses? This means that you may still be able to make an application.

## How does it work?

You now have until the end of June\* to apply for a place at university. Universities will consider applications on a first come first serve basis, so the earlier you submit, the more likely you will find a place on your chosen course and university.

\*Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry, are not open for late submissions.



## What you need to do



### Search for courses

UCAS should have an up-to-date list of courses that still have places available. If you're not sure, email the university's admissions team directly to check the course is still open.



### Create a UCAS account

If you're applying through your school/college, find out your institutions buzzword to link your account.



### Write your personal statement

Speak to a teacher/tutor about writing a reference for you.



### Submit your application



### What about after June?

You can apply to university via Clearing. See our flowchart on 'Results day - missed your grades' for a full description of how to apply via Clearing.

[click here](#)



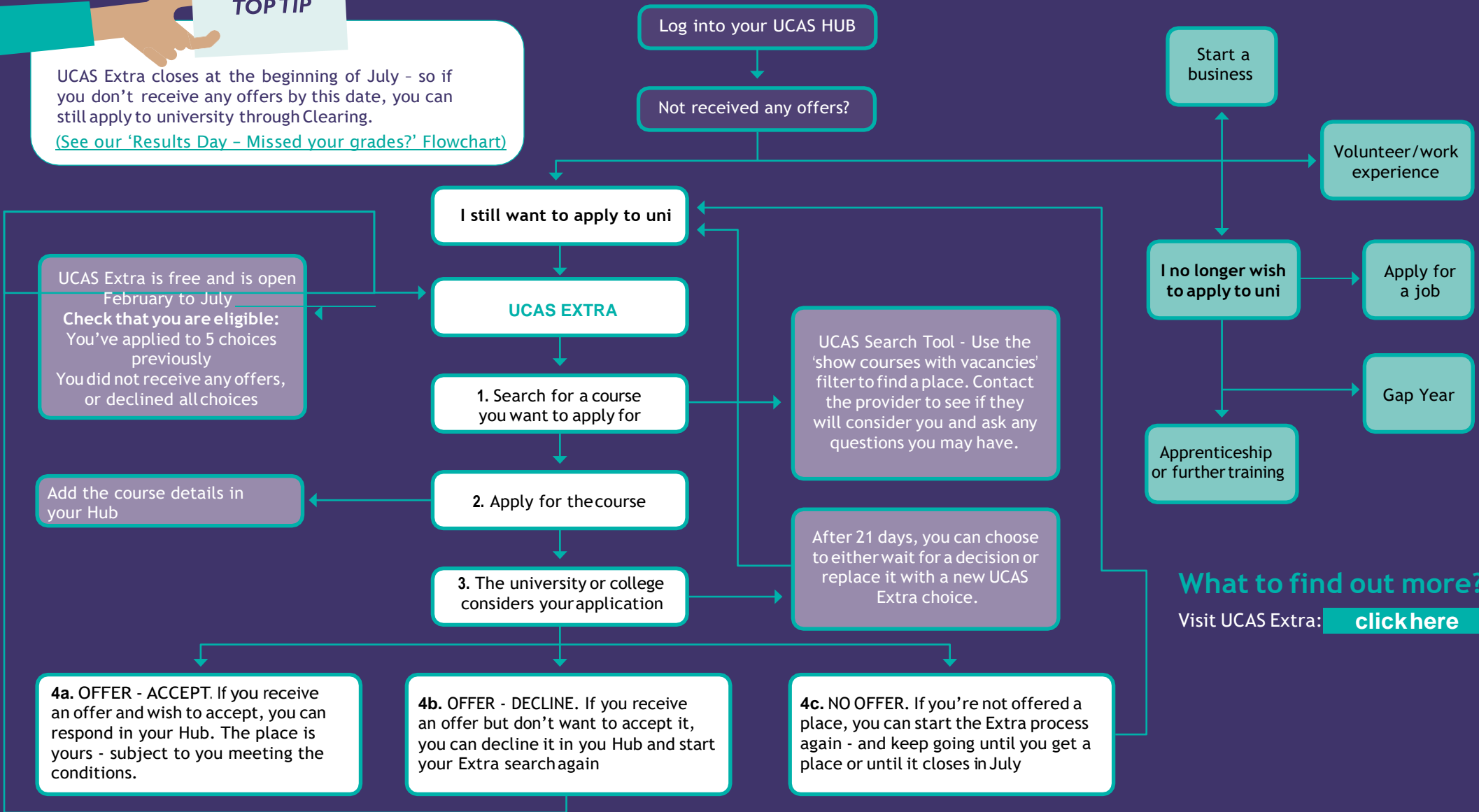
# No offers? No problem

If you haven't received any offers from the universities that you have applied to – don't panic. You can apply to other universities individually through [UCAS Extra](#). We've created this handy step-by-step flow chart which you can follow to find out what you can do next.

**TOP TIP**

UCAS Extra closes at the beginning of July - so if you don't receive any offers by this date, you can still apply to university through Clearing.

[\(See our 'Results Day - Missed your grades?' Flowchart\)](#)



**What to find out more?**

Visit UCAS Extra: [click here](#)

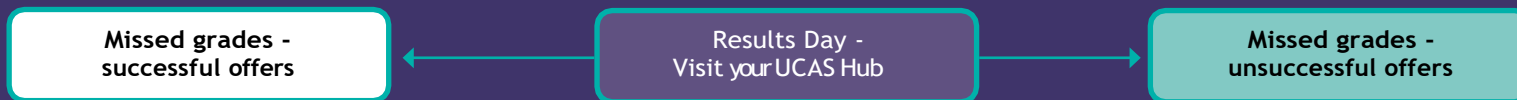


TOP TIP

# Results Day - Missed your grades?

Worried that you might miss your grades? Don't panic. Whatever happens on Results Day, rest assured that there are lots of options available to you. Keep this to hand for when Results Day arrives, so that you can refer to it, if you need.

If you're applying for a new subject (different to your original application) through Clearing, you may wish to send a new personal statement to your chosen university.



**Accepted Firm** - if you miss your grades, your university may still be able to offer you a place, depending on how many places they have left on your chosen course. They will look at each candidate on a case-by-case basis and any remaining places will be offered to those who the admissions team feel are best suited to the course.

**Course change offer** - you may be offered a place on an alternative course in a similar subject area or on a foundation year. It is up to you whether you choose to accept this offer. Take some time to think it through and make sure you chat to a member of staff at the university to get any questions answered.

**Accepted insurance** - Congratulations. You may have missed your offer from your first-choice institution but you've been accepted into your insurance choice. Keep an eye on your emails for information on what to do next.

**Awaiting decision** - If you haven't heard back from the university, it may be that they are missing some information on your application. Check your emails, or get in contact with the university directly to find out what the problem may be.

If you don't get the grades you need for the universities that you've applied to; you may be able to apply via Clearing. Universities will publish the courses that they have available spaces on to their website or via UCAS.

**I still want to go to uni**

**I no longer want to go to uni**

**Defer your place** - If you have decided to take a year out you can get in touch with your university to see if you can defer your place for a year.

- You are eligible if:
- You're applying after the end of June
  - You didn't receive any offers (or none you wanted to accept)
  - You didn't meet the conditions of your offers
  - You've paid the multiple-choice application fee
  - You've declined your firm place
- (Your UCAS Hub status will say 'You are in Clearing' if you are eligible)

Clearing opens in July and closes in October. If you already have your results, but no offers, you can apply from the opening date in July. If not, you can use the Clearing from 15:00 on results day.

**Clearing**

**Clearing Plus**

**Grade appeal**

**Re-sit exams or retake course**

**Withdraw your application** - This can be done by contacting the university directly, or via UCAS track. Make sure you are 100% certain you are happy with this decision. If you change your mind there is no guarantee that your place at that university will still be available.

There are lots of alternative routes that you may wish to take. Here are some examples:

- Gap Year
- Apprenticeship or further training
- Apply for a job
- Volunteer / work experience
- Start your own business

- Clearing Checklist**
- Write down the UCAS course codes that you are interested in
  - Have academic documents ready e.g., GCSE certificates etc.
  - Have your UCAS Personal ID number ready for when you speak to providers
  - Find your Clearing number on the welcome page of UCAS Hub
  - Don't delay! Places get snapped up fast so be ready to act fast on results day
  - Have contact details ready for the universities you're interested in applying to, check when you can contact them and how e.g., phone helplines, webchat and/ or email
  - Remember - universities can only speak to the nominated person (on your behalf) if they are on your UCAS contact form
  - Practise what you're going to say before the call, maybe prepare a script in advance.

1. Check that you are eligible
2. See what courses are available - use the UCAS search tool.
3. Call up unis and colleges that you are interested in.
4. Once you have permission from the provider, add your Clearing choice in your Hub. You can only add one choice at a time.

1. If you're eligible, you will see a button in your hub - 'See Matches'. Click that button to see a full list of your matched courses.
2. If you find a course you like, hit 'interested'. This lets the university or college know that you'd like to be considered for a place. None take your fancy? No problem - you can use the Clearing Search tool, instead.

If you're unhappy with a grade, speak to a member of staff at school/college about applying for a re-mark. If your university place is dependent on this re-mark, make sure you ask for a priority re-mark to ensure your results make it to the university as soon as possible.

You may wish to consider retaking your qualification(s) or re-sit your exams and reapply to university next year. This may mean that you can defer your entry to university. Contact the university's admission team to discuss. It's a big decision to make so make sure you take some time to consider your options. You'll also need to speak with your school/college about whether you can re-sit your exams with them.

**Clearing Plus** - UCAS match your course interests to available courses, to help suggest some options to you. If you express an interest in a course, the university or college can then contact you. Clearing Plus isn't available for everyone. If you're unsuccessful with your application or are applying for the first time for a place in Clearing, you'll be able to 'view your matches'.

The university or college may then contact you if they have available places. Courses in Clearing fill up quickly, and you may not always receive a call. UCAS recommend that you also look for courses in Clearing using the 'Search Tool'.

TOP TIP

If you apply through Clearing and receive an offer, you usually have 24 hours to accept or decline. Remember to take this time to consider what is best for you.

What to find out more? Visit UCAS Clearing: [click here](#)



# How to boost your UCAS points



# How to boost your UCAS points





# Alternative routes to university

The formal higher education routes won't suit everyone or maybe you want to pause your formal learning for now. This section highlights alternative pathways available to you after your studies are complete once you are 18.

It's entirely up to you what option you choose to take but it is important you think about what your next move is going to be. Ask yourself - will the experience be enough to help you forward in your career or future studies?

## Internship

This is work experience to try a new job or industry. There is no set time to start or finish it by and it can, in certain circumstances, be unpaid. You need to be at least 16, but you will not need formal qualifications unless this has been requested by the employer.



An internship can help you to decide what you would like to do after your studies. You can develop new skills and contacts and explore if that job, career, or industry is right for you. It gives you a chance to develop your confidence in the workplace and find out what you are capable of. It really boosts your CV for future applications!

## Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships combine real work with training and study. Being an apprentice isn't the same as being a college or university student. You won't just study and gain new knowledge as an apprentice, you'll be putting what you learn straight into practice while getting paid.



Apprenticeships lead to recognised qualifications from level 2 right up to level 7 which is equivalent to a masters degree.

Apprentices don't have to pay tuition fees either.

Find out more: [Apprenticeship](#)

## Volunteering

Volunteering can be a great way to gain valuable work experience, develop your skillset and establish new professional contacts.



Employers and universities look favourably on signs of volunteering experience found on your CV or in personal statements, but it's not simply a case of any experience will do; some opportunities will be more suited to you than others, and to find the best ones you need to do your research.

**Four key questions you should ask yourself when considering volunteering positions:**

1. Does it fit with my interests and values?
2. How can it help me to develop my career?
3. What's the organisation's reputation?
4. Will I have the time and money to do it?

Find out more: [Volunteering](#)



# Alternative routes to university

## Gap year

A gap year is a year break from studying. You can do what you want with the time, but it is generally accepted that a structured gap year is more beneficial to your long-term goals. There are huge numbers of options available to you during this time, so it is helpful to narrow it down.



### How to make the most of your gap year:

- Learn a new skill - perhaps teaching yourself something online or learning a new language.
- Discover new places and meet new people. Working holidays can be a great way to do this, while earning money. They also help you to develop as a person, gain confidence, and have something to talk about in interviews later.
- Explore new interests and hobbies
- Don't forget to think about what you want to do next. Many people choose to go back into education after a gap year.

### TOP TIP

You can apply for a place at university before leaving college or sixth form and ask the uni to hold the place for a year, so you can take time out. This is called **deferring a year** and you should go through the process of applying to uni along with everyone that is not planning to take a gap year.

Find out more: [UCAS Deferred Entry](#)

be your own boss

## Self-employment

Set up your own business and be your own boss. Sounds great, right? If this is something you are considering, you will need to make sure that you have a good business idea and try to seek professional advice before committing yourself.

You'll need a business plan, a base to work from, and probably some funding. Start by talking to a professional adviser from the Prince's Trust or from UnLtd:

[Prince's Trust](#)

[UnLtd](#)

## Eager to just get on and get a job?

Well that's fine. There is no legal requirement to remain in learning after 18. However, your career journey is likely to benefit from gaining the highest-level qualifications that you can. So, if further recognised qualifications are on offer, at least consider taking them up on it.

Put some careful thought into what job you apply for and how it can help your future career plans.

Read our sections on 'How to apply for jobs' and 'How to Succeed at Interviews' to give you a head start.



# How to apply for jobs

Searching and applying for a job can be tricky, especially when you've not had a job before. We've put together some helpful hints and tips to get you started.

You'll need to get your CV into shape

[See here](#)

## Where can I search online for a job?

The most common place to search for jobs are on **job boards**. These are websites used by employers to advertise their job vacancies. Often you can browse job boards without an account, but some may require you to create an account in order for you to apply for the jobs. The biggest UK job boards include: Guardian Jobs, Glassdoor, WikiJob, gov.uk, cv-library.co.uk, Reed.co.uk, Indeed.co.uk, Monster.co.uk, Totaljobs.com and LinkedIn.com.

With so many **job board websites** available, narrowing down exactly where to focus your attention to get the best results can be tough. Different websites have different features and qualities - look out for those that focus on your area or sector of interest if you have something in mind.

## How do I use job boards?

- **Upload Your CV** - Nearly all job boards give you the opportunity to upload your CV and make it visible to employers. Your uploaded CV can also be attached to an application at the touch of a button, making the process of applying faster and easier.
- **Use Keywords** - Make your CV stand out by including keywords from the ads you are interested in. This increases recruiter searches for employees, as many recruiters use software for shortlisting applicants. You should also update your CV regularly as recruiters searching for CVs will filter their results to the last CVs uploaded.
- **Limit Your Search** - Enter keywords into the search bar; these could be the name of the job you are looking for, but you can also search for skills or industries too. If you are looking for a particular or niche job you should look for job boards dedicated to them.



## Before you apply -

When you find a job you'd like to apply for, don't start filling in the application form straight away. Take some time to prepare, as this will make the task much easier.

- Research about the company and the role itself
- Always read the small print in the advert
- Ask someone else to proofread your application for you before sending it off.

## Watch out for...

Outdated or fake job adverts. Displaying your personal information on your CV publicly invites recruitment agencies to contact you directly. Be smart about your online profile and do not include your personal information. Be smart about online safety.



# How to apply for jobs

## What to include on an application form

Some employers require you to fill in an application form rather than provide them with your CV; some even want both. So how does an application form differ from a CV?

An application form gives the employer the opportunity to ask questions that are relevant to them and the job. This can be a lot less time-consuming for the employer rather than reading CVs where the applicant may have added lots of unnecessary information.

Typical sections of an application form include:

- **Personal details:** give basic details, such as name and email address. This allows the employer to contact you.
- **Education:** includes academic achievements and qualifications - use a reversed chronological order, which may only include your GCSEs right now, but as you start work will include the newest at the top, oldest at the bottom.
- **Work experience:** list your employment history and describe your main responsibilities in each role, closely relating it to the job you're applying for. If you've not yet had a paid job, make sure you include any volunteering or work experience you have undertaken.
- **Hobbies and personal interests:** let the employer know about things that you do in your spare time that are relevant to the job you are applying for.
- **References:** References are the names and contact details of people who know you. They allow the employer to check you've not only worked where you said you did, but that you're also a good employee too. Your reference could be from a member of staff or advisor from school/college if this is your first job application. Make sure you have contacted your references and made sure they are happy to be included. They will usually not be contacted unless you are offered the job.
- **Personal statement:** Most application forms have a section for you to describe yourself; this is where you need to match up your skills to those asked for in the job advert and generally sell yourself.



### TOP TIP

Application forms are usually really time-consuming and may need to be completed in several stages, so leave yourself plenty of time ahead of the deadline to fill it in.

## How do I know if I have the skills required for the role?

Read adverts carefully and pick out the skills required for the role. These will fall into 2 main categories, job-specific skills, and transferable skills.

**Job Specific Skills** - these are things you must know in order to perform the job, such as lesson planning for teachers or colouring techniques for hairdressers. These skills are often called "required skills" or "qualifications". Make sure they are easy to identify within your CV.

**Transferable Skills** - you need these for a wide variety of jobs and include things like: organisation, teamwork, and time management.

**Not all job or work experience opportunities are advertised - to find these hidden roles you'll need to write a speculative application to a company you're interested in working for.**

# How to apply for jobs

## What is a speculative application?

A speculative application means you are contacting a company or organisation to ask for a job even though they are not advertising one. This means that whilst nothing is guaranteed, you could make a good impression with the employer, if they think you will be a good fit for the company.

### How to:

- Make sure you tell the employer why you are contacting them and what outcome you are hoping for.
- Don't forget to tell the employer why you have chosen them and make sure you show that you have done your research
- Address your application to the correct person, that is somebody with hiring authority and ensure to find out what their name is in advance. Good sources of this information are: The company website, LinkedIn and by phoning the company directly
- Once you have sent off a speculative application, make sure that you follow up with a phone call.
- Give the employer about 2 weeks to read your application before making contact. If the employer is unable to offer you anything at this point ask them to keep your details on file and they may contact you next time an opportunity comes up.

## Next Steps

Once you have made an application you will usually be contacted within a couple of weeks either to be invited for an **interview** or told that you have been unsuccessful. If you've been **successful** and invited to interview, why not check out our handy guide on 'How to succeed at interviews' in the next section of this guide.

It is worth noting that many larger companies will not contact unsuccessful applicants, and if you haven't heard after a few weeks, this is likely to mean that your application has been unsuccessful.

Whether the rejection comes at the application form stage or after an interview, it's disheartening and can have an impact on your confidence. We have put together some of our top tips to responding to setbacks such as this - you can find this under the section '[Don't give up - how to deal with setbacks](#)'.

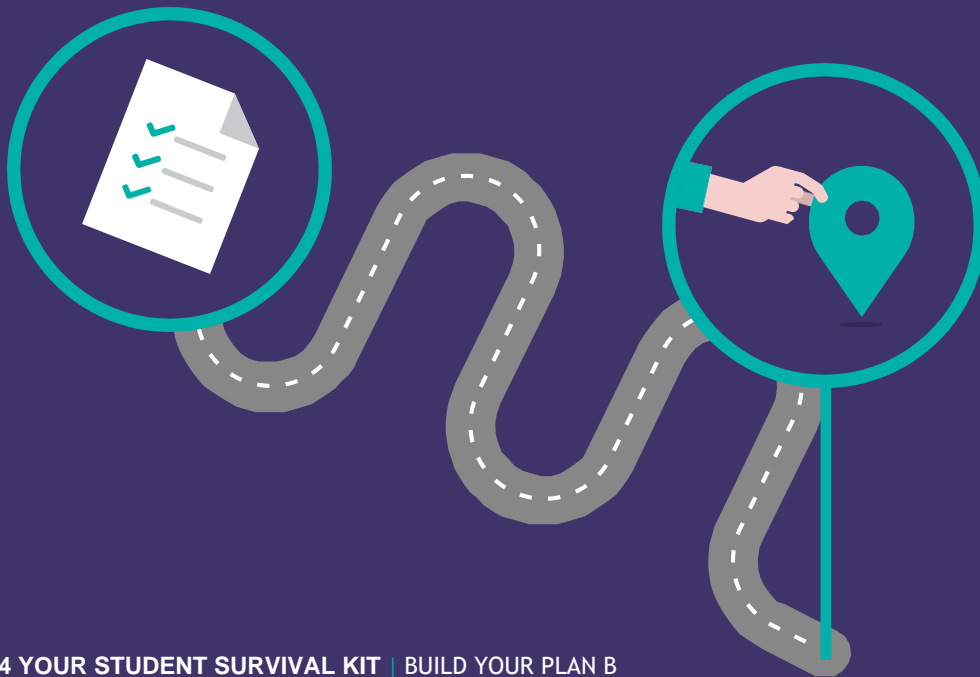


# How to succeed at interviews

So, you've been invited to an interview? Congratulations. Whether this is an interview for a university course, a job, an apprenticeship or you are delivering a presentation - we've put together some of our top tips for success!

## What do before to help you feel prepared - plan, plan, plan!!

- **Plan out what you are going to wear** - something smart such as a nice dress or shirt/blouse and smart trousers and remember smart shoes! Do you need to buy something for this? Do your relatives or friends have something that you can borrow?
- **Plan the route you are going to take**; if the interview is face-to-face. How long is the route? Make sure you know where you're going. It's a good idea to do the route when you have some spare time, especially if it is somewhere new to you.
- **Plan what time you should leave** to ensure you will have plenty of time to get there and not feel rushed



## Video Interview

(not all interviews will be in person, so it's a good idea to plan for potential video interviews)

- What platform is the interview going to be over - Teams, Zoom, Google Meets?
- **Do you know how to use the platform?** When you find out, have a play around with it and make sure that you know how to get onto the meeting. There are lots of guides available online!
- **Do you have good internet connection?** - Do you need to go somewhere that has a stronger connection? A friend/relative's house or a café?
- **Dress for the interview!** Even though it's via video call it's important that you treat it as if it is an interview in person. This will also help you get into the right mindset.
- **Do you have an appropriate background?** Is the background behind you distracting? Having a messy bed visible gives off a bad impression - try to find a plain background. Most platforms allow you to blur the background or set to something plain.



# How to succeed at interviews

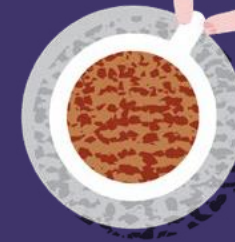
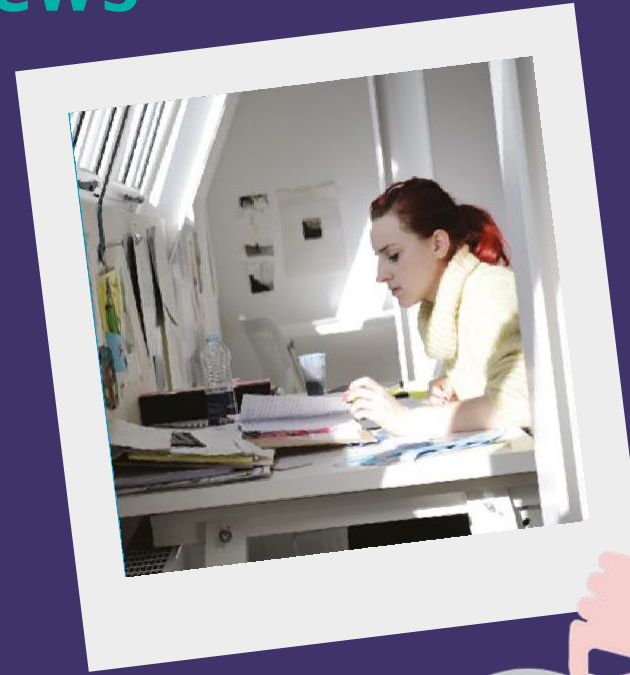
## Methods to stay calm - before

- **Feeling prepared** for your interview is the best way for you to feel calm
- **Read up on your application** - the interviewer may ask you about something you mentioned on your application. Have another read through to remind yourself
- **Practice interview** - ask a friend or family member to go through it with you, or you can always talk to the careers team at your school/college - they will have lots of useful advice

## Methods to stay calm - During

- **Try not to talk too quickly**, it can be difficult to understand when someone is rushing an answer - take your time!
- **Take a breather** - don't feel as though you have to answer straight away, take some time to think of your answer
- **Take a drink of water** - when you become nervous you tend to get a dry mouth. It can also allow a bit of time before you answer a tricky question
- **Try these helpful breathing exercises**

[Click here](#)



Hopefully you have found some helpful tips and ideas for building your plan B.

Chances are you may not even need it, but if you do, you can feel reassured that you have given some thought to a back-up plan that's right for you if things don't go quite to plan in the next few weeks and months.

Remember - whatever you decide your next step is, consider your options and talk it over with family and friends. And most of all, don't panic. There are lots of options out there for you and an exciting journey ahead.

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