

LEAVING ARMADALE ACADEMY? OPTIONS

- **Are you worried about having to plan your whole life?** This great wee video echoes what I'm always saying - you don't need to be making BIG decisions at this stage. But you should be trying something on for size career-wise (a course, job, work experience, volunteer gig, whatever) or **PROTOTYPING** as the video calls it, to learn more about your SELF and your STRENGTHS and build your NETWORK. Take a chance! www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/the-value-of-not-having-your-life-planned-out/p08dy7tk
- **Watch the CareerJam webinar/s that applies to your particular situation – eg looking for work or going for interviews or going to college or university:** www.myworldofwork.co.uk/careerjam-webinars
- Apply on time - make multiple applications - consider alternative routes - have at least one backup plan.
- Can you link your skills/experiences to the job/course that you are applying for? The Tools and Profile on MyWoW can help you do this. Have you completed work experience/taster? studied a specific subject or Foundation Apprenticeship? Buddied/mentored younger pupils? Been a committee member? Helped at parents' evenings? Library Monitor? Performed in a show? Fundraised? Visited exhibitions? Volunteered to visit care homes/help at the after-school club? Been a MyWOW Ambassador?
- **Don't get stuck in a rut – opportunities are out there. If you need help after leaving school, email louise.russell@sds.co.uk or call 01506 434249 for appointments with West Lothian careers advisers.**

College

- Register with colleges and apply online – keep track of your application on email/MyCollege. Apply to more than one college.
- Be ready to apply by January to start in August. For (very limited) courses starting in January, apply in December.
- Our nearest campuses (reachable from Armadale within 1 hour by public transport) are
 - Livingston (www.west-lothian.ac.uk); Oatridge (www.sruc.ac.uk); Coatbridge (www.nclanarkshire.ac.uk); Sighthill (www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk); Falkirk (www.forthvalley.ac.uk); Glasgow City (www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk); Anniesland (www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk) & Easterhouse (www.glasgowkelvin.ac.uk)
 - You will often be eligible for travel expenses and for EMA or bursary (if below HNC level) or SAAS loan (HNC+) – travel expenses vary from college to college, eg City of Glasgow are the most generous.
- Attend college Open Days (these may be online) to learn more about courses
- Research and understand different levels of course/entry points. (for example: you may leave school to start NC Social Science (SCQF6) and then progress to the HNC Social Sciences (SCQF7) the following year, alternatively, you may apply directly to the HNC level course from school if you achieve 2 relevant Highers). Foundation Apprenticeships usually allow direct entry to HNC.
- Use www.myworldofwork.co.uk and www.planitplus.net to research all your course options and how they fit with job profiles.

What to include in a College Application Statement:	Some Things to Remember:
<p>Colleges are looking for you to answer four simple questions in your supporting statement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why Do You Want to Study this Subject? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here you need to talk about the passion you have for the course subject. • Are you hoping to build a career in the subject area? • Show that you have an interest, using examples from your life. <i>eg If you are applying for vehicle maintenance talk about when you fixed a bike at home and what this experience taught you.</i> • The college do not want you to drop out of the course half-way through, show them that you won't. What Makes You a Good Candidate For The Course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think hard about your strengths and how these suit the course (or the job that your course might lead to). • Show committment to and interest in the subject. What Relevant Experience Do You Have? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss anything you have done that relates to the course topic. • Volunteering, hobbies, school work experience, courses or subjects that are relevant are all good to mention. • This does not need to be paid experience! Why Do You Want to Study at That Particular College? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They don't want to hear that you are only interested because they are the closest college. • Look at the course page on the website: what about it specifically appeals to you? this shows that you have researched the course. • If you have had any good feedback on the college from parents or siblings or friends that has helped form your opinion, mention this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to keep it to 3-6 sentences. • You are trying to impress the college, if it only took you 10 minutes to write, you haven't given it enough thought! • Make sure that you write in full sentences, with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. • Avoid waffling! If you are struggling, structure your answer with the 4 questions (on the left) to keep it focused. • If you aren't confident with paragraphs, try using bullet points to make yourself understood. • Always make sure that somebody else has read your statement before you send it. This will catch any silly mistakes.

University

- The process of applying to university begins early in S6. Use the summer between S5 and S6 to prepare. For example you could: undertake relevant activities (eg work shadow, volunteer, visit companies, work on portfolios etc) which you can then describe in your university application). It's vital to start your online research early - Useful websites include www.prospects.ac.uk www.ucas.com www.opendays.com www.university.which.co.uk www.timeshighereducation.com
- Consider Summer School. Usually a week long and free, this provides a fun insight into studying and life at university (eg Kickstart, Sutton Trust, Medic Insight, Glasgow University Summer School). Attend Open Days for universities you are considering.
- School will provide clear guidelines on what needs to be done and when. Universities will use plagiarism software to spot if you have copied elements of your Personal Statement, so it's crucial that you use your own words and ideas.
- All Armadale Academy students are eligible for extra help from LEAPS (www.leapsonline.org).

Modern Apprenticeship/Employment

- **Look regularly at the SDS Vacancy Bulletins which promote local opportunities and are updated weekly and posted here:** www.armadaleacademy.co.uk/article/34268/Latest-Career-Opportunities
- SDS advertises Scottish job vacancies at www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-a-job – search within 20 miles of your postcode, or 50 if you're ambitious! (this will include Edinburgh & Glasgow)
- JOBCENTREPLUS has a site with a jobsearch function (search by local area eg Bathgate, Livingston, Edinburgh, Glasgow) as well as advice on each stage of applying, eg an article about how to ace competency-based application forms and interview questions jobhelp.dwp.gov.uk/. Another good site for jobsearch in the Edinburgh & SouthEast City Region is www.c19jobs.org/
- **Follow SDS at** www.facebook.com/SDSWestLothian + www.facebook.com/SDSEdinburgh + www.facebook.com/SDSGlasgow + www.facebook.com/SDSForthValley + www.facebook.com/SDSNorthLanarkshire
- Here are some great tips about finding work through social media, but some of them are tricky so email me if you want me to talk you through them www.studentjob.co.uk/application-tips/social-media
- Think about how you want to come across in video interviews - DYW West Lothian and SkyTV have collaborated on this wee film to help you think about good and bad impressions www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI9UykX9JXo&t=5s
- Employers are increasing using Facebook to advertise jobs at all levels – follow employers you are interested in and you will be notified of vacancies. You can also search using the 'Jobs' tool. Create a Linked In profile (see guide).
- MA's are advertised all year round but recruitment peaks around February/March/April.
- It can take several months to secure employment so you need to start your preparation early. For example, if you will leave school in summer, you need to start applying around March.
- Create a professional email address to use (e.g. name.surname@gmail.com)
- Prepare well in advance by creating a personal statement, CV and covering letter using www.myworldofwork.co.uk
- Identify 2 people who know you well (not family) & seek their permission to act as a referee. Add their contact details to your CV.
- Learn about different types of apprenticeship using www.myworldofwork.co.uk
- Search for Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships using www.apprenticeships.scot and www.apprenticeshipsinscotland.com
- Note from www.apprenticeships.scot which training providers recruit for the MA frameworks you are interested in. Complete applications on the training provider websites and they will consider you for suitable MAs.
- Target companies you are interested in and contact them in January to ask if they are planning to take on apprentices.
- Use networks of family/friends etc to discover "hidden" vacancies. If the employer is based in West Lothian, they may qualify to have half of your wages paid by the Council (StepsN2Work) www.positive-destinations.co.uk/article/6101/Wage-Subsidy
- On leaving school, register with recruitment agencies, eg www.nasscotland.com and www.bluearrow.co.uk.

Employability Fund Training

EF Training is a programme funded by SDS and delivered by local training providers (eg Street League, The Larder, Enable) that helps young people to develop the skills needed to secure a job. EF training is focussed on work experience. Trainees are paid a weekly allowance of £55+travel expenses, and families continue to claim child benefit.

- Advertised throughout the year. Some have a set start date and others are rolling programmes - you can be referred by your Careers Adviser at any time after you have reached your statutory school leaving date.
- West Lothian Council run a similar Skills Training Programme with very limited spaces – talk to your Careers Adviser about eligibility.

Volunteering/Work Experience

Volunteering is a great way to improve your longer term career prospects as well as improving your community.

- Many volunteer opportunities are advertised at www.volunteerscotland.net
- The NHS uses volunteering as a 'pipeline' into their apprenticeships. Contact kirsten.law@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk for help.

www.myworldofwork.co.uk

If you would like this information emailed to you, contact me at louise.russell@sds.co.uk



What is it?

A professional social network site for making connections & finding jobs.

“.....it’s like a mashup of Facebook & your CV.....”

10 Top Tips

Why do I need it?

- Up to 94% of employers use social media for finding new employees.* LinkedIn makes it easier for an employer to find you.
- Connects you to people/organisations where you want to work and *puts these connections into action*.
- It’s bigger & more complete than a CV. Gives a clear idea of who you are & what you can do.

* Jobvite.com, mid-2013. 800 employers asked

1. Use a professional looking picture (No mirror selfies!): Profile with a photo is 11 times more likely to be viewed. Head & shoulders only. You should look smart, professional & friendly. (Remember, it’s not a personal dating site!)

2. Use your Profile to convey your own personal brand : Set yourself apart from others who have similar qualifications, interests, strengths & skills. Add hyperlinks to any personal website / blog / YouTube channel / portfolio etc. LinkedIn lets you include volunteering /charity work / experience from tasks/projects so don’t worry if you don’t have paid work experience. Use short, easy-to-digest sentences, or even bullet points (Dense paragraphs of 4 lines or longer are hard to skim. You are writing for the web, not paper). When well done LinkedIn proves the quality of your work & your communication skills more clearly than simply stating “highly motivated, problem solver” etc. In Summary section highlight what you are good at, what you want to work on, what you’ve done. Be enthusiastic!

3. Set account to ‘Public’: Makes your network visible. (For a professional approach customize your LinkedIn’s Profile URL so that when you make a post it shows your name not just a sequence of numbers. Type “Profile URL” into search engine to learn how to do this).

4. Build up contacts: LinkedIn recommends minimum of 50 connections. *Invite* someone to join your network. Start with who you know & trust (neighbours, work experience contacts, studying the same course as you, part-time job, family, hobbies etc). These are 1st degree connections. Ask to be *introduced* to 2nd degree connections (someone you don’t know but linked to 1st degree connections). Use Adv. Search to find people in particular roles/companies or search by location. If approaching someone choose your wording & explain why you’re contacting them. After connecting look at ‘People also viewed’ box & who they have worked for in the past..... Expand the Universe of who you know!

5. Get Recommendations: These offer employers a form of “proof” because someone is willing to publicly confirm that you have a skill or accomplishment that you say you have.

10 Top Tips Continued

6. Join groups: LinkedIn allows you to join up to 50 groups, average number is 7. Demonstrate your potential/suitability through intelligent participation in group discussion. Join groups for the type of job you want, your location, hobbies, anything else that is relevant to you & your career. One of the big advantages of Group membership is that it allows you to send free Inmail messages to people you are not (yet) connected to.

7. Follow the organizations/employer you want to work for: Use LinkedIn to engage with an employer. Don't just jump in & ask for a job. Communicate your knowledge, suitability or passion for a position. Introduce yourself to key individuals, don't harass them. Keep an eye on what they are doing & how they are doing it. If offered an interview use LinkedIn to research who you would be working with, their role & what's important to them.

8. Get noticed for the right reasons: Don't post anything you don't want to share with an employer. Employers use social media as a fast & cheap "background check" before deciding to offer an applicant an interview.

9. It's not a one-off task: Keep adding to your interest & skills; a completed project, something you are proud of, an award, an achievement etc.

10. Write a winning headline: Include current status/job, or job you want, and something about your skills & interests. Include key words that an employer might use when searching. "Individual seeking sales opportunity" is weak but "Persuasive individual, eager to promote products & increase profit" tells the employer what you plan to do. (A previous winning LinkedIn headline was "Office Manager looking for overstressed CEO to make sane")

What do Employers say?

"I use LinkedIn all the time to look for suitable people. You need to keep your profile relevant. Tell an employer what you can do. If you don't have work experience put in your interests, any academic or sporting success and if you don't have that –most people don't, include what it is that you're good at. What do people ask your advice on? You might find something very easy though it might be very difficult for other people. Easy examples – 'I sound great and enthusiastic on the phone; I'm really, really conscientious; People rely on me to get things done'. LinkedIn is powerful. Use it".

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