

## Holly Chaplin - 2021 Alumni

During my time in 6<sup>th</sup> form, I didn't really know where I wanted to go or what I wanted to do, but I had the mentality that I definitely did not want to go to university. I saw all of my peers go through the process; however, I just couldn't find the right degree for me, and I was set on finding an apprenticeship. I knew I wanted to do something within the film and television industry, but what in particular, I had no idea. I looked at apprenticeships and job opportunities, but with the pandemic there weren't many going around, and most places wanted experience, which I didn't have.

So, I took a gap year. I needed a break from academics and school, to clear my head and focus on myself. By doing this, I was able to think more clearly about all of my different options, without any time limitations or other deadlines.

I started working in an accounts department as a summer job for some work experience, while I was planning what to do with my future. What started out to be a couple of months, has now been 6, and will be finishing in June; a year after I began. While this job was never something I ever thought I'd do, I have gained invaluable experience in a working environment.

With a clearer mindset I started to think about universities again and what different types of entertainment industry degrees there are out there. I then found a film and television studies degree, which in many ways suits my interests. After finally finding this course, I knew then what I was actually looking for, and I started to look at multiple universities and went to their open days. As I kept researching, I gradually started to like the idea of going to university more and more. I particularly liked the University of Lincoln and I wanted to study my desired course there, which shocked a lot of people, considering I was so adamant I was not going before. After making my decision, I applied and was accepted, and therefore I will be studying at the University of Lincoln next September and I am really looking forward to it.

Overall, I just needed time. I was so sure that I did not want to go to university, that I barely even researched into it. After taking a break and having some rest, I was able to decide what it was that I actually wanted to do, and not simply applying for things I wasn't entirely sure on. My advice for anyone is to not worry, and to not put pressure on themselves when there are no definitive deadlines. Taking a gap year is not a bad thing, and for many people it can actually bring a lot of benefits; you have been working hard for 7 years, it is okay to take a break!