



Student Wellbeing Service

Student Leavers Guide (Autism/Asperger's)

Session 2017-18

Congratulations on being at the end of your university experience. You may be wondering where the time has gone and excited for what the future holds. Whilst there may be a few more exams and some coursework left to complete, it's now time to begin thinking about life after university and to be aware of the practical responsibilities that need to be tackled before graduation. This guide was created to provide you with guidance upon leaving university and how to access services you may need in the future.

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Graduation

Even though graduation seems a long way off, you must register your interest in graduating either in person or in absentia before the deadline. Absentia means that you do not physically attend the ceremony but will still receive your certificate by post. Below is a list of steps you must take to graduate.

1. You must register your desire to graduate either in person or in absentia:
 - Even if you do not wish to attend the ceremony you must pay the graduation fee to receive your certificate.
 - Do not wait to see if you have passed your modules first, you must complete registration before the deadline. To see this year's registration deadline, [click here](#).

2. You must clear any debt to the university before graduating, this includes:
 - Making sure tuition fees are fully paid.
 - All library books are returned and any fines paid off. To check your library account and make sure you have no outstanding books or fines, [click here](#).

3. Order your academic gown and hood from [Ede & Ravenscroft](#). To find out this year's gown hire deadline, [click here](#).
 - For general dress code guidelines, [click here](#).

4. You must pass all modules and have your award results confirmed by an Assessment Board before you can graduate for either the Summer or Winter ceremonies. To see the deadlines for the assessment boards, [click here](#).

If you have any questions regarding graduation, you can email graduation@gcu.ac.uk who will be able to provide you with more information and guidance.

Moving out of your accommodation

If you have been living in the halls of residency or elsewhere during term-time, you will need to be aware of when your tenancy runs out, and what date you need to move out by.

Moving out can be stressful and you should give yourself plenty of time to make sure you have packed everything you need, organised for someone to come and pick you up and finally, made sure you have enough time to clean as you may lose your deposit if you leave things unclean or broken.

Moving out to-do list:

1. Give yourself plenty of time to organise the items you want to take with you and items you want to throw away.
2. Remember to redirect your mail to your new address.
3. Organise someone to come and collect you and your things in advance.
4. Remember to hand your keys back.

If you are unsure about anything regarding moving out, you can contact the Accommodations Office who will be happy to assist you on: Tel: 0141 331 3980 or Email them on: accommodation@gcu.ac.uk. If you are renting privately, you should check your tenancy agreement or contact your landlord directly for advice.

Planning for the future

Graduating university is a big step, you have done all the hard work and now you are probably wondering what to do and where to go next. The first step is to focus on what you want to do with your future - this could be working out possible career options based on your interests. Planning for the future can be something you do with a family member or friend. You can also see a careers adviser who will help piece together what you would like to do for work or even future study.

The National Autistic Society (NAS) has a guide on planning for the future after graduating which has some tips on the transition from further education into work. You can access the guide by clicking [here](#).

Although you do not have to have a clear idea of what you want to do after university to make an appointment with the careers service, some students find the Prospects website a useful starting point in discovering what they can do with their degree. To access the Prospects website, [click here](#). Remember, you can take anything you discover along with you when you see a careers adviser. If you are on campus, stop-by the Campus Life Lounge and browse the careers self-help resources available. You can also check out the careers website for lots of information and online self-help resources by [clicking here](#).

Accessing the University Careers Service

The careers service is a great place to start the process of deciding what you want to do with your future, even when you might not know what the next steps are. Careers advisers often see students who have no idea what they want to do after university. They can help piece together a plan for you based on your interests and qualifications. The career advisers are experienced in working with students with disabilities and can give you practical and realistic advice on questions you have relating to your disability such as; disclosing disabilities in the workplace, and reasonable adjustments - both for the interview stages and when you have started in your new role. The careers service also helps with preparing for interviews, practicing psychometric tests and of course help with writing graduate CV's and application forms.

Q. I have a disability and there's so many questions I have about disclosing it, and about any extra help I can get for interviews and when I start a job. Would the careers service be able to help me with this?

A. Yes. The careers service is knowledgeable about impairment specific questions as well as general advice for interviews. They are happy to give you realistic and practical advice about disclosing your disability ahead of an interview and how to ask for reasonable adjustments for the day of the interview, if you think you would need any.

Q. I've got my first interview coming up and I have no idea what to expect, is there a way to practice in advance?

A. Yes. The Careers service offers practice interview appointments where you can get tips on your interview skills and get insider knowledge of what your interviewer is looking for. To find out more about practice interviews and to book your appointment, [click here](#).

Q. I've got no idea what I want to do after university and I'm graduating soon. What can I do?

A. You don't have to have a plan in your head to see a careers adviser. They can help students figure out what they would like to do with their future based on your interests and qualifications. They are very knowledgeable of each industry and will help you piece together a plan which will start you off on a path to employment or further study, if this is what you wish.

Q. I'm nervous with meeting new people and easily distracted. Can I bring someone with me to the meeting?

A. Yes, you can bring anyone along to the meeting with you. Some students like to bring their disability mentor along to take notes, so you can look back on them at home. Other students may like to bring their peers or parents to the meeting. Just let your career adviser know there's someone coming with you when you book the appointment.

Q. I live quite far away, so travelling to the campus is expensive. Are there any other options available to speak to a careers adviser?

A. Yes. You can request either an email or telephone meeting with the careers adviser when you make the initial appointment. This is great for students who live far away from campus or students who are anxious about meeting with a careers adviser face to face.

In the meantime...

You might decide that some time out is needed before you start applying for jobs or future study. Volunteering is a great option to keep you busy whilst maintaining valuable social and employability skills. Volunteering will not only make your CV look more attractive to future employers, it will help boost your confidence in a work place environment.

Do-it has a wide range of volunteering opportunities to suit many interests. To view what's on offer in your area, click [here](#).

Volunteer Scotland has volunteering opportunities all over Scotland and you can find out what's available in your area by clicking [here](#).

Transitioning to work

The National Autistic Society has the Moving Forward course which helps people gain the confidence they need to get into the workplace. The course includes group sessions and a placement, as well as up to 6 months of support with the transition into work. This course has some requirements you need to meet to be able to apply. To gain a place, you need to be;

- Ages 16-24
- Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Live in an eligible postcode
- You cannot be in employment, training or education

For more information on this course and the requirements to gain a place, [click here](#).

Settling in at work

Whilst the careers service can help with getting jobs and internships, once you are in a job there might be other instances which may cause some confusion. Below are some examples of situations which can arise in a workplace environment and how to deal with them.

Workplace Conversations

It is important to remember that there will be topics which are appropriate and inappropriate for the workplace. Think back to *Socialeyes* and try using the 'WORM' (*Weather, Occupation, Recreation, Media*) guide when having conversations. When your colleagues are busy discussing something work related, try to keep on topic. If everyone is on a lunch break, do not bring up something work related, instead wait until lunch break is over and then ask.

Understanding Workplace 'Banter'

The National Autistic Society (2016) describes workplace banter as 'short bursts of conversation which happen throughout the day' and it is often the type of conversation people have whilst they are still doing other things. Examples of banter include; talking about a recent TV show or the latest movie at the cinema. Examples of inappropriate banter include being insulting to other colleagues and talking about topics which are likely to cause offence and upset.

The 'Unspoken Office Rules'

In most office environments there will be some unspoken office rules. This can change depending on what type of organisation you work for. For example, most offices have a shared kitchenette where you can prepare your lunch. It's important to be considerate of

others by keeping the equipment clean after you use it. Some people have their own tea cups and so you may want to bring in your own so you do not accidentally take someone else's. Other unspoken rules can include:

Making tea or coffee – If your office is small, you could ask if anyone would like a tea or coffee, if you are making one for yourself. Whereas if there are lots of people, for example in a call centre, you would just make a drink for yourself.

Using the shared office fridge – Never take someone else's lunch from the fridge and make sure your lunch is properly labelled and contained in the fridge so it does not spill and make a mess. Remember to not leave any food in the fridge which might go out of date. For example, over the weekend or when you are on holiday.

Using shared milk, tea and coffee – In most workplaces everyone can use the milk, tea and coffee in the fridge. If you are not sure about this, then you can ask your manager about it. Sometimes everyone in the office may take turns in buying the milk and biscuits, so if you are in doubt, just ask.

The National Autistic Society has some great advice on workplace etiquette. To access it, [click here](#).

The National Autistic Society. (2016). Advice about Work. Available: <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/adult-life/work.aspx>. Last accessed 9th May 2018.

General Tips and Advice for Work

Organising the workload

It's always a good idea to keep yourself organised so that your workload does not pile up. Making 'to-do' lists for each day is a good way of sorting out what needs to be done and what tasks you need to prioritise. There may be days where unexpected tasks can arise, therefore a completed 'to do' list will help you structure your working day. 'Smartsheet' have a collection of free downloadable templates you can use to create structure to your working week. They also have bill schedule templates and daily to-do list templates which you might find useful for all aspects of being organised. To access the free templates from Smartsheet, [click here](#).

Bullying in the workplace

Bullying in the workplace is something that will not be tolerated. If you think that you are being bullied or are being made to feel uncomfortable, then speaking to your manager about this is the first step. It is your employer's responsibility to ensure you feel safe in the workplace and so they will listen to your concerns and give you advice on how to resolve any issues. If you feel like you are being bullied then speaking to someone you trust such as a friend or parent is also important so that you have support to deal with the situation. The National Autistic Society has advice on what to do if you are being bullied in the workplace and guidelines on what to do about it. To access this information, [click here](#).

Reasonable Adjustments in the workplace

The Equality Act 2010 states that people with disabilities are entitled to request reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Reasonable adjustments are there to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged or face barriers due to their disability. There are many examples of reasonable adjustments such as; being granted extra time for deadlines and providing extra equipment such as a ramp for wheelchair users etc. If you feel that you would benefit from a reasonable adjustment, you can organise a meeting with your manager where you can discuss the situation with them and the areas you feel your employer could support you with. To see Acas recommendations on reasonable adjustments in the workplace and examples of the different types of adjustments which can be made, [click here](#).

Looking after yourself

Whilst you might be looking forward to graduation and excited for the future, it is common to sometimes feel a little anxious about getting a job and what you are going to do after university. If you are currently receiving help from either our Mental Health Adviser or the Counselling team, now could be a good time to discuss any worries that you might have so you will have a plan in place for when you leave university.

Q. What happens if I feel anxious after I've graduated and I would like to talk to someone?

A. If you are ever worried about the way you are feeling or if you are having troublesome thoughts, making an appointment with your GP is the best way to receive help. Your GP will listen to you and give you non-judgemental advice and support to help you feel better. They can give you advice on possible support services you can access such as seeing a counsellor or a psychologist. They are the ones who will also be able to make a referral for you to see a specialist if it is appropriate.

Q. How do I ask my GP for advice on my mental health?

A. Some people find it helpful to prepare for their GP appointment in advance by writing down everything they would like to discuss. This can be a summary of how you have been feeling lately and the areas which are causing you concern. Some people also like to go into their appointment with a list of questions they would like to ask the GP. A useful guide on preparing for a GP visit can be found [here](#).

[Mind.Org](#) have a great guide which helps people 'find the words' to talk to their GP about their mental health and what to expect at their first appointment. They have a video on how to speak to your GP about your mental health which can be accessed [here](#). They also have an in-depth guide on helping people to prepare for their first appointment which can be found [here](#).

Q. What will I do if I need urgent help?

A. If you feel that you are at crisis point and you are worried, or are having thoughts about harming yourself or others then please call your GP as soon as possible. If your GP surgery is closed then call [NHS 24](#) on 111.

You can also contact:

[The Samaritans](#) on: 08457 90 90 90

[Breathing Space](#) on: 0800 83 85 87

[HOPELineUK](#) on: 0800 068 41 41 or text 07786209697 or email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Self-Help resources

Self-help resources can be a good way to find out information and provide guidance on a problem you may be having. They should not be used instead of seeking professional help, but rather can be used whilst you wait on being referred to a GP or counselling. [Wellbeing Glasgow](#) has a variety of useful guides on many topics such as:

[Anxiety](#)

[Stress](#)

[Panic Attacks](#)

[Trouble Sleeping](#)

[Self-Esteem](#)

MOODJUICE

Moodjuice is a self-help website developed by the Forth Valley NHS. The site allows users to explore many areas which are common for people to have difficulties with such as; Bereavement, Obsessions and compulsions, Assertiveness and Stress. Whilst you can look at each guide offering self-help strategies, there are also useful links to literature and organisations which offer support. To have a look at the Moodjuice website, [click here.](#)

[Living Life to the Full \(LLTTF\)](#)

Living Life is a self-help website which was created by an accredited Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. LLTTF offers a wide range of online courses to help people understand and cope with various difficulties. Signing up is free and you will be able to choose which course you would like to try. There are a wide range of courses to choose from such as; Overcoming stress and low mood, living with long term conditions, coping with dental anxiety and coping with being a new parent. To find out more information about LLTTF and to access the courses, [click here](#).

General Advice

[Citizens Advice](#)

Sometimes there might be situations where you need advice but you are not sure about who to ask. A great source of help can be the Citizens Advice Bureau which are located throughout Scotland. They help people get variety of free advice from benefits and housing advice to workplace rights and health. They will also provide advice on specific things such as jury duty and reasonable adjustments in the workplace. To see the A-Z list of advice which is available, click [here](#).

[The National Autistic Society](#)

The National Autistic Society has lots of advice on transitioning from university. For general advice on leaving university, such as planning for your future and knowing your rights in the workplace, [Click here](#). For advice on work and volunteering, [click here](#).

[Acas \(Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service\)](#)

Acas provides advice and guidance on employment law and workplace relationships. The Acas website has lots of information on a range of areas concerning your rights in the

workplace such as; working hours, discipline and wages. For a list of the most common areas Acas provides guidance on [click here](#). If you are looking for some specific advice about an issue you are having at work, you can contact them via online or by telephone. To access their contact information, [click here](#).

Useful Documents to Keep Safe

Degree Certificates

You will gain your Degree Certificate during your graduation or through the mail if you are graduating in absentia. Your degree certificate should be kept in a safe place as most employers may need a copy of this as evidence of your qualifications. Most people choose to frame their certificate and this is a great option to keep your certificate safe and you will know where it is. It is a good idea to photocopy your certificate and make a scanned copy to store in your computer before you put it in a frame. This way it will be easily accessible to you when applying for jobs or future study. For more information on degree certificates [click here](#).

Q. What happens if I've lost or damaged my Degree Certificate?

A. Requesting a duplicate degree certificate can be done by completing a [Replacement Certificate Application Form](#) which will cost £60.

Academic Transcript

Once your final exam results have been emailed to you, you will also receive a document called an Academic Transcript. This document lists all the modules you have studied and the grades you have received throughout your degree. This is particularly important if you choose to go on to further study. Admissions will often ask for a copy of your degree certificate and your academic transcript as evidence of your qualifications. For students joining chartered memberships upon graduation; for instance, the British Psychological Society (BPS), you may be required to show a copy of your academic transcript, as well as your degree certificate to be awarded membership.

Q. What else is included on the Academic Transcript?

A. The Academic Transcript will include a variety of information on your programme of study, such as your individual module grades and your overall degree classification. For more information, [click here](#).

Q. What can I do if I've lost my transcript?

A. If you have lost your transcript, you need to contact the Examinations Office which is on the 1st floor of the Saltire Centre to request another one.

Useful contact information to store and Requesting an Academic Reference

Sometimes students can lose access to their GCU email account therefore it is useful to keep a note of your dissertation supervisor's email address, as you may wish for them to provide you with a reference for future work or study.

It is common for students to ask their lecturers for an academic reference. You will need to email them in advance and ask for their permission first before putting their name and contact details down in an application form.