

LIFT OFF Lowdown

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ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND CHAT FROM THE WORLD OF LIFT OFF



Hello and welcome to the second issue of the LIFT OFF Lowdown! The Lowdown is packed with lots of need to know information about college and university. It also keeps you up to date with what the LIFT OFF team and our Core Pupils have been involved with. Don't forget to have a look at the LIFT OFF Blog too - Enjoy!

RIGHT BRILLIANT THING!



CATHY BEGLEY VISITS SOME OF LIFT OFF'S CORE PUPILS ON BEHALF OF SCOTLANDS COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT OUR 'RIGHT BRILLIANT THING' EVENT.

It's official! LIFT OFF to Success is a "Right Brilliant Thing"

As if we didn't all know it already!

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People has been asking young people in Scotland to tell him

about things that they think make a really positive impact on their lives.

We were so chuffed when some of our Core Pupils came along to Dudhope Castle in Dundee on the 18th of October, to tell Cathy Begley from the Commissioner's team all about LIFT OFF to Success. Posters and photographs showing just how "right brilliant" LO2S is were on display, and there was even a VLOG created by Darren from Lochgelly.

Cathy was very impressed with the hard work that everyone had put into the event, and we would like to thank all those involved.

If you want to check it out then Search "LIFT OFF to Success VLOG" on YouTube to see it for yourself.

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MY FIRST TERM IN COLLEGE



LIFT OFF INTERVIEWS KIRSTEN WHO WAS A LIFT OFF PUPIL FROM L02S 2007. KIRSTEN STARTED AN NC COURSE (BUSINESS AND LAW) AT ADAM SMITH COLLEGE, KIRKCALDY IN AUGUST 2010

HOW DID YOU FEEL ON YOUR FIRST DAY OF COLLEGE?

The first hour at college I was terrified, but everybody was in the same boat so I realised that everything was fine.

HAS IT BEEN EASY TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT COLLEGE?

Everyone has made new friends quickly and easily at college. It is much easier to make friends than in high school. The lecturers really helped by doing ice breakers on our induction day which relaxed everyone.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE?

It's totally different from high school - nobody has to put their hand up to speak. If you are going to the toilet you don't have to say 'Excuse me sir, can I go to the toilet.' You just get up and go.

It also took me a wee while to adjust to the way of studying at college because it is mainly independent learning but I have managed to adapt now.

Also in school if you have to hand in an essay for a certain date and you don't submit it then they will keep chasing you and chasing you. In college it's your own thing. If you have it in, you have it in. If you don't, it's your fault.

FINALLY - KIRSTEN BELIEVES YOU SHOULD:

Aim high - don't aim low!

TO READ OR LISTEN TO KIRSTEN'S FULL INTERVIEW

GO ONLINE TO [HTTP://LIFT-OFF.ORG.UK/BLOG/](http://lift-off.org.uk/blog/)

KAYLEIGH INTERVIEWS A STUDENT.



IONA IS STUDYING FRENCH AND ITALIAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS AND IS ALSO A LIFT OFF STUDENT VOLUNTEER. KAYLEIGH, WHO IS ONE OF OUR LIFT OFF PUPIL FORUM REPS FROM BALDRAGON ACADEMY, INTERVIEWED IONA TO FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT STUDENT LIFE IS REALLY LIKE.

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST WEEK LIKE AT UNI?

It's good because everyone is new and no one knows each

other so everyone is really open to meeting new people. It's a bit nerve-wracking and some people are shy but then you get used to it. It was really exciting.

WHAT IS FRESHERS' WEEK?

It's the first week of term where you don't have any classes so you go to lots of social events, meetings and get to know the university. You can also join societies and sports clubs at the Freshers Fair. It was good fun!

WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

In first year I stayed in university halls of residence which were catered, meaning we got all of our meals provided and we got our rooms cleaned. We all had our own room but we shared a bathroom (1 between 8 people but it wasn't

LIFT OFF LOWDOWN

CALLING ALL S3 PUPILS



Johnny is one of our student volunteers who studies neuroscience at Dundee University. He volunteered on our summer residential this year called Lift Off to Success or L02S for short. L02S is a brilliant college and university experience for people in S3!

It is a great chance to see for yourself what student life will be like. You get to live like a student by staying in university halls of residence, and act like a student by making new friends and visiting different institutions to see for yourself the variety of courses on offer.

Johnny tells us what he thought of L02S:

"I have to say it's been the most fantastic week I've had all year! The pupils have been amazing. They are the funniest bunch of people I have ever met and I've had an awesome time with them.

I would highly recommend college or university to anyone who wanted to go because it really is a fantastic experience where you get to meet lots of great people and try new things, just like you do on L02S!"

too bad!), dining room, computer rooms and common rooms. There was a lot to do and it was a really good way to get to know people.

HOW ARE LECTURES DIFFERENT TO SCHOOL?

They are very different. Sometimes you can have up to 200 people in lectures!

HAVE YOU GROWN UP SINCE GOING TO UNIVERSITY?

I think I've grown up a lot because I moved away from home and my parents aren't there to look after me. You have to be more independent, so that forces you to grow up. You learn to be more sociable and less shy, so that helps too.

WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW ONLINE -INCLUDING ONE OF IONA'S LECTURE TIPS AT [HTTP://LIFT-OFF.ORG.UK/BLOG/](http://lift-off.org.uk/blog/)

RACHAEL ON STUDYING ABROAD



RACHAEL WAS A LIFT OFF STUDENT VOLUNTEER FROM ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY. SHE MADE THE MOST OF HER DEGREE BY WORKING IN ITALY FOR A YEAR.

As part of my degree in Italian at the University of St Andrews I had the amazing opportunity to go and work for a year in Italy after my second year at university. My job was to teach English to classes of around 15-30 Italian teenagers. It was a bit scary at first, but the pupils were very

friendly and keen to teach me about their own culture as well. Part of this was being noisy all the time, even when the teacher was talking! So, I told them to put their hands up if they wanted to speak. The next thing I knew, they were all still talking, but this time with their hands in the air! I did have to get up at 8am for school, but that meant I finished work at 12 and could then head off for a snooze on the beach. Not too bad, eh?

My year abroad allowed me to combine my passion for Italian culture, fashion and food (especially ice cream!) with my university studies. During my year abroad I made loads of Italian friends, bought loads of new clothes, got a great tan and, perhaps most importantly, became fluent in Italian.

THINKING ABOUT A GAP YEAR?



EVEN WHEN THE FABULOUS CALLUM MOVED ON TO GREATER AND GREENER PASTURES, HE LEFT JUST ENOUGH TIME TO SHARE HIS EXPERIENCES FROM TRAVELLING WITH US.

When I was 17 I decided to take a gap year before uni. I came back from the experience with a lot of stories, a lot more confidence and a pretty shocking t-shirt tan. I was amazed at how much I'd done in such a short time!

I had slept in the Golden Temple, meditated for a week with Buddhist monks, taught English in a school, volunteered in an orphanage, trekked, white water rafted

and bungee jumped in the Himalayas, been blessed by monks in Tibet, climbed to Everest base camp, trekked on elephants, been mugged in China (don't recommend that), bathed (naked!) in thermal springs in Japan, and watched the sun rise over the sea from the top of Mount Fuji.

Going on a gap year was a brilliant thing to do but it was also hard work. I needed to work in a shop for 6 months to earn the money, and then book my flights, arrange volunteering and get a rather nasty



As well as giving me key language skills and vital work experience, living abroad demonstrates to employers the determination and adaptability of a candidate. My year spent in Rome was definitely one of the best years I spent at university and has been an invaluable experience both in terms of my studies and with regards to my career prospects.

If you are considering living or studying abroad, my advice is simple... go for it!

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN STUDY OR TRAVEL ABROAD AS PART OF MANY DEGREES?

EVEN THOSE THAT AREN'T STUDYING LANGUAGE COURSES?

IF YOU THINK THAT STUDYING ABROAD IS FOR YOU THEN CHECK OUT BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG/ERASMUS FOR A LIST OF COURSES IN THE UK THAT TAKE PART.

array of injections at the doctors. Ouch! It was totally worth it though. I went to uni the next year feeling a lot better prepared, and with some amazing stories to tell.

If you're thinking about taking a gap year, the good news is that colleges and universities don't mind them at all, just as long as you can prove you did something worthwhile with your time. But with the whole world to explore, why would you waste your time sitting on the couch?!

Get out there, have a fantastic time. If you need any advice, drop LIFT OFF an email. Otherwise, we'll see you on the other side!

YOU DON'T JUST HAVE TO TRAVEL ON A GAP YEAR. YOU CAN VOLUNTEER AT HOME, GET A JOB HERE, TEACH ENGLISH ABROAD OR EVEN BE A SURF INSTRUCTOR. THE OPTIONS ARE PRETTY ENDLESS. GAPYEAR.COM HAS LOADS OF INSPIRATION!

LIFT OFF STUDENT VOLUNTEER REBECCA ON OPENDAYS



REBECCA IS IN HER THIRD YEAR AT DUNDEE UNIVERSITY STUDYING ZOOLOGY.

The best way to choose the right university for you is to visit it! Open days are an excellent chance to see a university campus, talk to staff and students at the university and meet other pupils thinking of applying.

Dundee University, for example, holds a general open day each September for people thinking of studying any subjects. After the UCAS application deadline in January, Dundee holds Post-Application Visit Days for

specific subjects such as Life Sciences or Law. As well as learning about accommodation, sports facilities, student support services and what to expect in Fresher's week, you will be able to ask both staff and students of your chosen subject any questions that you may have.

Open days generally involve a campus tour – often led by students, showing you the teaching and learning facilities, halls of residence, students union and sport facilities. Also, there will be a few talks from different members of staff and current students, about various aspects of studying and living in halls of residence.

It's a really great way to get a feel for what the university is like and to help persuade you to go. Plus there is usually a free lunch!

CHECK OUT THE LIFT OFF WEBSITE FOR A LIST OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS
WWW.LIFT-OFF.ORG.UK

WHO READS YOUR APPLICATION?



DON'T WORRY - ADMISSIONS TUTORS DON'T REALLY LOOK LIKE HER. THE "PERSONAL STATEMENT" WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?!? LIFT OFF INVESTIGATES BY INTERVIEWING CLAIRE AND GRAHAM - TWO ADMISSIONS TUTORS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU COULD GIVE PUPILS?

Write honestly in your own style. The same statement will be read by all the institutions so make sure it's appropriate.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES MADE?

Layout, spelling and grammar! Let someone else proof read it to make sure you've written what you meant to.

IS IT WORTH LYING TO MAKE YOU SOUND BETTER?

No way! We can tell. Universities are moving over to interview systems, so if you lie you will be found out.

HOW VITAL ARE GRADES TO ADMISSIONS, AND HOW IMPORTANT ARE YOUR HOBBIES/INTERESTS?

These extra pieces of information on your statement can give you the edge over others and can indicate if a course is right for you or not.

WE'VE HEARD YOU CAN BUY PERSONAL STATEMENTS, WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS?

No I would not recommend them, certainly not! There is lots of good advice out there on things to include. In particular university websites often have a section for guidance.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PERSONAL STATEMENTS? VISIT THE LIFT OFF BLOG FOR MORE INFORMATION:
[HTTP://LIFT-OFF.ORG.UK/BLOG/](http://LIFT-OFF.ORG.UK/BLOG/)

LIFT OFF lowdown

ASK AUNTIE CHERYL



Dear Auntie Cheryl

I just got brilliant grades in my Highers (I'm really clever). All I needed to do was a few subjects in S6 to top them up, then off to uni for me. But . . . we had a talk the other day about UCAS, and they told us that this Personal Statement thing really matters!

Surely my great grades will let the uni's know that I'm a total brainiac. Why should I bother putting time and effort into telling them again, when I'm so obviously gifted? Also – I am a modest person and the thought of having to tell total strangers – IN WRITING – how clever I am makes me feel a bit sick. Should I put some real work into this, or will I just let my genius declare itself??

Brain-under-a-bushel, Dunfermline

Dear B-U-A-B,

Let's call you Bob for short! Put the work in Bob. Make the effort.

Your Personal Statement lets you say a little more about yourself, particularly why you are interested in your chosen course/s, and what qualities you could bring. No matter how clever you are (and I know you are very clever) there are always plenty of other clever people out there too. See this as your chance to shine! Never underestimate the power of the Personal Statement, Bob.

Go to the UCAS website for some great advice about writing it: ucas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement/ Good luck with overcoming that crushing modesty, too!

If you've got a burning question for Auntie Cheryl then why not go onto the LIFT OFF Blog at lift-off.org.uk/blog or email it to lift.off@fife.gov.uk