

GET THE MOST FROM A GRADUATE GAP YEAR

With university life behind them and a degree secured, many graduates will be setting off to widen their horizons further with a gap year before embarking on their future careers.

As they pack their bags to head for foreign shores, Lloyds TSB Graduate Banking is offering some advice to guarantee a great gap year.

Michael Huke, head of graduate banking, Lloyds TSB says: “By travelling and working abroad, graduates will be experiencing many things that will add to their formal education. By taking some time to plan properly before they set off, they can ensure that they make the most of all the opportunities that the world has to offer.”

- Plan a careful budget – prepare a list of all the expenses you are likely to incur and work out how much you can allow yourself to spend per week as well as allowing for emergencies.
- Set up internet banking – if you don't already bank online, check whether your bank offers the facility – it will make managing your finances from abroad a lot easier.
- Consider an emergency credit card – if you are a long way from home, it might be useful to have a credit card to hand just in case.
- Set up a worldwide email account that you can access from wherever you are.
- Make sure you're covered – falling ill or having belongings stolen a long way from home is no fun for anyone, so make sure that you shop around for really comprehensive gap year travel insurance.

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- Check out current advice on the destinations to which you are travelling. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's website www.fco.gov.uk is a useful source of information.
- Lock up – invest in some padlocks so that you can lock up your valuables at any time.
- Note down all the useful numbers such as lost and stolen numbers for bank cards and keep to hand at all times.
- Pick up some guides – if you are on a budget, there are some really cheap ways to pick up those all-important guidebooks and tips. Check out the internet and your local library for information.
- Spend time on research - be aware that the countries you are visiting may have different customs to your own. Be respectful of them when you are there and the trip will be even more of an adventure.
- Remember your own personal security – if you are travelling alone, even if only for a day, make sure someone knows where you've gone.
- Ask your bank to allow your parents to access information on your account, just in case you need to get money or information quickly.

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Notes to editors:

- Lloyds TSB has a free Graduate Account which offers an interest-free overdraft of up to £2,000 in the first year after graduation, reducing to £1,500 in the second year and £1,000 in the third, which helps graduates to manage their debts. Also available is the Graduate Gold account which offers additional benefits such as free annual travel insurance, free AA breakdown cover and mobile phone insurance.
- All new customers who open a Lloyds TSB Graduate or Graduate Gold Account will be able to take advantage of Lloyds TSB's offer of a return flight voucher to either Paris, Rome, Barcelona, Prague, Brussels or Amsterdam. Terms and conditions apply.

For more information:

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