



GAP YEAR: “FAST TRACK” APPRENTICESHIP



Tom Atkinson worked part time for a swim school as a lifeguard whilst he was at college in Brighton studying for his A-Levels. He developed a plan with Swim UK that meant he could do a fast track apprenticeship at the start of his gap year.

“I was working as a lifeguard in my last year of college. I started assisting in lessons and took my ASA level 1 (as I was under 19 it was free!). I had already decided to take a gap year before university but hadn't decided what to do with it. I knew I enjoyed my work at the pool, but I also wanted to do a bit of travelling.

I originally did my level 1 with Swim UK and they suggested that I might be eligible to do a swimming teaching apprenticeship when I finished my A levels (as long as I was working an average of 16 hours a week at a pool).

I wanted to get my level 2 qualification – I enjoyed swimming and I knew that L2 teachers often earn more than £12 an hour. I also knew that it would help me get a good job when I started at university.

I started planning my apprenticeship with SWIM UK in April. They booked me in to start my L2 in July (very soon after my A levels). I had to be flexible but I completed my programme very quickly.

In all I earned 5 qualifications from my apprenticeship (including my level 2). I left the UK in January and started work at a resort in France. I intend to fund my future travel plans by using the qualifications I gained through SwimUK to teach swimming abroad! I hope to go to Camp America this summer.

I have a place at Oxford Brookes University to start this September. There are lots of pools including a David Lloyd club nearby, and the university itself has a swimming pool. I hope I can carry on teaching when I get there and avoid the stereotype of being a poor student! Swim UK have already been able to identify some employers for me.

Special note: Even if you are not planning a gap year and plan to go straight to University (or you haven't even decided) it's a good idea to speak to SwimUK – they may well be able to help you.

**For more information on how to get involved on the program,
Swim UK can be contacted on:**

01273 414214 www.swimuk.org