



BEN – 2021 YEAR 13 LEAVER

I originally made the decision in 2018 that I would work towards an athletic and academic career in a US College, with this being my sole target for the next few years. I couldn't have been more excited to commit to a school in Niagara Falls, NY in June 2021. Long story short, this huge dream failed massively and I came back to the UK to start again.

As I had declined offers from all my UK Universities on results day (**don't do this, I was being overconfident**), I chose the Uni of Chester when I came back from the States – most likely, out of panic! I am studying Marine Biology and have set the priority now to gain as much experience as possible to surround my degree. I have been working with Chester Zoo and their conservation projects, and am currently working over the summer with ARCHELON - the sea turtle protection society of Greece - in the Peloponnese region.

Next year I will be travelling to Oslob in the Philippines for a coral reef study opportunity, and later returning with ARCHELON at the Athens Rescue Centre. The big change in my academic journey definitely made me re-evaluate my priorities, and although it's a shame my US journey was cut short, it has given me a lot more opportunities to shape whatever career I'm looking for - I still don't know what that is. I am embracing opportunities to work abroad and learn more about myself. I hope this will inspire others to challenge themselves and figure out what is important to them.