

Powder Byrne Ski GAP Season 'Piste to Profession' Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I choose the Powder Byrne winter Gap season experience?

There are plenty of organisations offering opportunities for Gap year students... at Powder Byrne we believe that to make the most out of your experience you should learn from the best. As leaders in the ski industry the Powder Byrne team are trained to the highest standards possible. You will benefit from this training and will gain valuable transferable skills that can be used in all areas of life.

This course takes the winter ski Gap season to the next level, providing a comprehensive view of the ski industry. You will assist with International Ski and Snowboard Events, shadow piste patrol, run children's ski programmes, understand ski hire systems, watch ice hockey matches, gain avalanche awareness, learn how to deliver professional ski lessons and have fun in the process!

How much skiing should I expect to get?

As far as the skiing goes we have partnered with the Weisse Arena Group to enable you to gain a wide range of snow related experiences with a company that has high professional standards. By the end of the season you will not only have completed a ski instructor's course, but your skiing will have benefited from Race Coaching, Freestyle Courses and Backcountry touring. There will also be ample time for free skiing between all the courses, work experience, ski classes and social events.

What standard of skier do I need to be?

You should be able to ski any piste in control and with good technique. No instructing experience is necessary, however a good knowledge of skiing and a positive attitude are essential. As a benchmark you will have had 10-15 weeks ski experience.

Can I complete the course on a Snowboard?

No, as all lessons are targeted at skiing, however there will be plenty of time to board during the season if you wish.

What ski equipment do I need to bring?

As part of the package you will be given ski and boot hire (although if you would like to bring your own that is not a problem), you will also be issued with a ski instructor's jacket and salopettes. In addition you will be issued with Powder Byrne ski kit when you join the resort team during busy weeks. There will be plenty of time for free skiing so it is recommended that you bring your own ski jacket and salopettes, as well as the usual goggles / gloves / helmet etc.

What money will I need during the season?

The package is very comprehensive in terms of the work and ski experience, the only things you will really need money for is food and drink. As you will be part of the Swiss Ski School you will receive a ski instructor's food pass that will give you discounted meals on the mountain. The accommodation has an equipped kitchen so preparing your own food in the evenings and breakfast is the most efficient option.

Is there a minimum age for the course?

Yes, 18 years.

Do I need a work permit?

Yes, although all you need to provide is a UK passport, as Powder Byrne take care of the rest including covering the associated costs.

Is there a deadline for applying?

There is no official deadline for applications, although spaces are limited so the earlier the better. Once spaces are full you can ask about putting your name down for the following season.

What should I expect from the interview?

Anyone who wants to be accepted for the course will have to attend an interview at the Powder Byrne head office in London. Interviews will last approximately 1 hour where we are looking for candidates who show a passion to make the most out of the course and learn the necessary skills required to excel in the ski industry.

As part of the course you will have work experience as part of both the Powder Byrne and Ski school teams, therefore you will be expected to show the same level of professionalism as the full time team members.

Are there job opportunities for subsequent ski seasons?

Powder Byrne and ski school prefer to recruit people who have previously proved themselves in resort, and are always looking for outstanding candidates to join their resort teams. If you successfully complete the ski instructor's courses then you will be qualified to work in Laax-Flims ski school as an instructor for the following season. If you prove yourself within the Powder Byrne team there are various opportunities to work as Ski guides, Yeti staff or even Resort Managers in future seasons.

Competition for positions at Powder Byrne and Ski School are fierce, successfully completing the PB Gap Season will give you valuable transferable skills to compete against the best!

What future opportunities are there for me if I am going back to university?

If you cannot commit to the full winter season due to university or work commitments then there are numerous opportunities to work for shorter periods during the busy periods! Powder Byrne also have an extensive summer programme with luxury beach programmes worldwide.

Is insurance provided?

Yes. You will be provided with travel insurance which covers you for emergency medical treatment, including your time on the slopes. This is not a replacement for private medical insurance, but intended as a stabilising treatment in respect of injuries sustained during the period of travel.

How do I get to resort?

You need to get to the airport in the UK, all return flights and transfers to resort will be taken care of.

What is the accommodation like?

You will share an apartment in Laax with the other candidates. The apartment has twin rooms, communal lounge, bathrooms and kitchen facilities. It is walking distance to the Laax lift station and is very close to the bus stop for Flims (10min drive). It is within walking distance to shops and nightlife.