

Managing your career after you leave university

Life after university can be exciting but can also feel quite daunting. You may already have a clear idea about what you want to do, even if you have not yet secured a place, or you may not know where to start. Concerns about this are common, so take a look at the below to take those first steps.

Careers unfold in different ways

No one way is 'right'. Some students will move directly into graduate schemes, and others will be following professional paths in sectors such as education or health or finance. At the same time, many new graduates will be working in a variety of job roles while studying or volunteering to build experience and gain skills. Whichever route you take, remember that many paths can lead to the same place.

You're in the driving seat

How you progress from this point on will depend on you and your interests and ambitions. Take control of your own development by focussing on your job role, asking for professional development, or offering to take on tasks outside your immediate remit. Sometimes you may need to consider what training or volunteering you could do outside work to gain the skills you need, and other times you may just have to move on to a new job role to keep advancing.

Your first job may not be your 'perfect job'

Or your second, or maybe even your third! Each job, course, or experience we have gives us skills and knowledge, and deepens our understanding of the workplace. At the same time, they help us understand our own strengths and interests, so with each job change we are able to move closer towards the position that most suits us.



Imperfect action is better than inaction

Sometimes we can be paralysed by the range of opportunities open to us, by concern about whether we are doing the right thing, or worry that we are not qualified for the jobs advertised. Of course, you should think through your options carefully and make careful applications, but sometimes taking that first step is the hardest! Don't delay too long: get out there and make your applications! Sometimes it is worth taking a chance on a job, even if you don't think you will get it.

There are no dead ends. Except inertia

Even if you take a job that doesn't suit you, you will still have learned and developed skills that will be useful for the future. If you are returning to a job you have done as a student, this experience will still be invaluable. But it is important not to get stuck in a rut for too long. Think about whether you are moving forward. If not, take action to change.

You may not use all of your subject knowledge, and that's okay

Unless you have studied a vocational subject, you may find that much of the subject knowledge from your degree is not applied to your job. But that's okay and quite common. Gaining a degree shows learning agility and the ability to learn new skills, and can be used in numerous career areas and workplaces.

Adapt to your new environment

A day in the workplace can be very different to a day at university, with its more structured hours of work, lunchbreaks, communication etiquette, etc. You should be offered an induction as you start work and you can use this to find out more about the culture of each workplace. You can also usefully observe others to learn about the hidden rules of workplace dress, behaviour and patterns of communication.

Keep an eye on your progress and direction

Once you are in work, regularly reflect upon your progress and whether your career is going in the direction you want. Ask for feedback from your line manager and others, and be honest with yourself. If you need any help in deciding your next steps, you can speak to a Careers Adviser at the university, no matter when you graduated.

Useful things to know

- Leavers Toolkit. See www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/toolkit.html for all information relating to leaving the University of Worcester
- Graduation. See www.worcester.ac.uk/life/alumni/graduation/ for dates and arrangements. You will be sent further information in May/June. Please make sure that your contact details are up to date!
- Replacement certificates and transcripts <https://webengine-01.worc.ac.uk/redoc/>
- Graduate Outcomes survey. This is sent to all leavers and asks about what you are doing 15 months after you leave. Please fill this out as quickly as you can, as it helps us to understand the labour market and to support other students in the future. More information is at www.graduateoutcomes.ac.uk/
- All UW leavers become automatic members of the Alumni Association. The benefits of this include continued membership of the library, discount at the sports centre, and life membership of the Students' Union. More information can be found at www.worc.ac.uk/community/alumni.html.

Further Help and Support

Careers and Employability can offer you support for as long as you need it. See the Graduates Careers pages at: www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/graduates.html.

All bookings and job vacancies are still through myCareer, you just have to re-register yourself as a graduate first.

See also the following Careers and Employability leaflets:

- Adapting to life after university
- Dealing with employability anxiety
- Moving home after university

If you would like to book a careers appointment to discuss your options, please visit: <https://worchester.targetconnect.net>

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