

A quick guide to

Finding a Graduate Job



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Looking for a graduate job is time-consuming and can seem quite overwhelming. Planning and being well prepared will improve your chances of finding the right role.

This guide will help you to understand your options and where and how to apply.

Any questions?

www.worc.ac.uk/careers

Send us a message on
myCareer

Top tip:

Save copies of all your applications to keep track of what you have said and what you have done.

Types of roles

Depending on the type of work you are interested in and your experience, here are your main options.

Graduate entry jobs

These are jobs that require a degree, or relevant skills and experience.

They might be in the public sector (e.g. education and health) or with smaller organisations.

This is the most frequent choice for University of Worcester graduates.

Common areas of work could include marketing, finance, teaching, nursing, family support and sport.

On the job training is more usual than structured programmes.

If it is a smaller organisation, there are often opportunities to gain broader experience and greater autonomy.

Applications are generally made from the middle of semester two onwards for roles beginning in the summer.

Graduate schemes

These are paid structured training programmes that require a degree, often with a grade requirement such as 2:1 or above.

They are typically (but not always) offered by larger employers.

They are highly competitive and only account for a small proportion of graduate jobs.

Usually 1-2 years in length.

Common areas include finance, IT, management, media, retail, & sales.

Rigorous application process, starting in early semester one of final year.

Other options

Graduates who would like to gain more experience often undertake non-graduate roles, work experience, graduate internships or volunteering to boost their employability. This is discussed further on page 7.

Which option do you think sounds more like you? Find out more about all options on www.prospects.ac.uk

Finding advertised & hidden vacancies

Many of you will have already used online job sites such as Indeed or Reed when searching for student jobs. In addition to the above there are also some job sites that are specifically aimed at graduates, as well as the 'hidden job market' where jobs aren't advertised or posted online.

myCareer is the first place for UW students and graduates to look for local & national jobs. Use the filters on the left of the opportunity search page to find roles in your chosen sector and location.

Advertised vacancies

There are many graduate job sites but here are some of those commonly used by employers to advertise graduate schemes and internships:

Bright Network

www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-jobs/

MilkRound

www.milkround.com

Prospects

www.prospects.ac.uk

targetjobs

www.targetjobs.co.uk

Top tip:

Ensure you use the words 'graduate' or 'trainee' in the search fields when using job sites.

A selection of sites for specific sectors:

Art - artshub.co.uk

Charities - charityjob.co.uk

Colleges - fejobs.com

Environment - environmentjob.co.uk

Education - teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk

Health - jobs.nhs.uk

Local government - wmjobs.co.uk

Media - grapevinejobs.co.uk

Public Service - civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk

STEM - <https://www.gradcracker.com/>

Sport - uksport.gov.uk

Universities - jobs.ac.uk

You can also look up job profiles on Prospects to see which sites are suggested for the job that interests you.

How to find hidden vacancies

Some employers recruit through employee recommendations, recruitment agencies, head-hunters, and speculative applications to save time and costs.

Although the market is 'hidden' it is possible for you to find these opportunities via networking rather than traditional job hunting.

Here are seven methods you can use to discover hidden vacancies:

- 1 Network face to face (careers fairs, societies, events, visiting speakers)
- 2 Network online (set up a LinkedIn account to create a professional online brand)
- 3 Contact organisations directly (to see if any jobs or work experience are available)
- 4 Volunteer for organisations (get to know everyone & express an interest in working there)
- 5 Follow organisations on social media (to hear about vacancies and recruitment events)
- 6 Establish if there are any openings with your current employer (discreetly ask someone you trust)
- 7 Register with recruitment agencies (they can help match you to existing opportunities)

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies help employers find suitable candidates to fill their vacancies. Many employers use them and signing up will sometimes give you access to jobs that aren't advertised elsewhere. Different agencies specialise in different professions/areas of work.

To search for agencies specialising in your chosen area of work go to www.agencycentral.co.uk or www.rec.uk.com

Never pay for a recruitment agency's services! Agencies are paid by employers to find candidates, so you should never have to pay to sign up with one.

How to use LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional online social network where you can:

Market yourself to employers

Create a professional online presence so that recruiters can find you and see your skills & portfolio.

Network

Join relevant groups to follow the latest news within your industry and ask for/share advice with professionals.

Job-hunt

Find jobs, internships and business opportunities.

Research

Search for companies, staff & professions you are interested in for statistics, news and vacancies; and to explore career options (e.g. research where graduates from your subject and/or university are now).

Find out more information in our Quick Guide to LinkedIn & Online Networking

How and when to apply

Finding a graduate job can be time consuming and many employers start their application process up to a year in advance of the role beginning. If you are considering graduate schemes, search & apply from September to December and search for other graduate roles from April onwards.

The recruitment process will vary at each organisation., but most jobs will require an online application form or a CV and cover letter.

Applications are usually scored on how well you have evidenced you match the criteria within the advert and 'Person Specification'. This means it is crucial that you take time to tailor each application towards what the employer is looking for.

See our Quick Guide to CVs & Applications for advice on tailoring your applications, as well as sample CVs and cover letters.

In addition to the application form/ CV, you can expect to complete some of the following:

- Psychometric tests
- Games based assessments
- Telephone/video interviews
- Assessment centres
- Face to face interviews

See our Quick Guide to Interviews & Assessment Centres for advice on preparing for the interview and assessment process.

Below is a guide on when you could start researching, deciding, and applying:

Summer before final year

- Research roles that would suit you & decide which ones to apply for
- Find out how to apply and when
- Update your CV & LinkedIn profile
- Gain some work experience
- Talk to a careers adviser if you are unsure what to do or need support

September to December of final year

- Apply for graduate schemes and graduate internships
- Attend careers workshops to help prepare for applications and interviews
- Network with employers at careers fairs and events, as well as on LinkedIn

April onwards of final year

- Apply for jobs with public sector and smaller organisations
- Register with recruitment agencies
- Continue to use Careers & Employability for support

If you have little experience

Many jobs require candidates to evidence skills, abilities, and qualities within their applications. Some students having spent the last few years focusing on studies and other commitments find they have little or no experience to demonstrate these, which can present a barrier to securing a graduate job.

Here are some ways you can gain the skills and experience employers are looking for to boost your applications and confidence:

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to gain experience and skills, explore different areas of work and expand your network of contacts. There may also be opportunities to attend training. It can help demonstrate commitment to a particular area of work or specific causes or groups of people. When choosing a project try to pick something you are passionate about to get the most out of the opportunity.

Find opportunities on:

- www.worcsu.com
- <https://doit.life>
- www.studenteer.co.uk

Other roles

Some graduates will work in roles that do not need a degree in order to gain the required experience for a graduate job or postgrad study. Although a degree may not be essential you will still be applying your skills and knowledge in the workplace whilst building your experience. For example, psychology graduates may work as health care assistants to gain the necessary clinical experience required to get onto psychology doctorates.

Work experience & internships

You may choose to undertake work experience in your local area with smaller organisations where you can tailor it to reflect your interests.

Internships provide a more structured way to gain experience and some opportunities are paid. They are a period of work experience lasting for a fixed period from a week to 3 months, often during the holiday periods.

Opportunities exist in the UK, abroad and online. Find opportunities on Prospects and targetjobs and via networking with local employers.

Further study

Postgraduate study can be a way to increase your knowledge, gain professional qualifications and build upon your skills. Some courses have work placements built into them. See our Quick Guide to Postgraduate Study to explore this further.

Short courses help demonstrate curiosity and personal development to employers as well as helping you learn new skills. Have a look at courses offered by The Skills Toolkit, FutureLearn & LinkedIn.

Things you should know

Working abroad

If you would like to find work overseas targetjobs and Prospects both have country profiles where you can research the job market, vacancies, and visas requirements.

If you are an international student wanting to work in the UK when you graduate you will need to check your visas and employment rights. To find out more about your options visit:

- www.ukcisa.org.uk
- www.targetjobs.co.uk
- www.gov.uk

A zero hours contract is an 'on call' arrangement between an employer and a worker. No particular hours of work are set, so the employer is not obliged to provide work, nor the worker to accept work. This can be attractive as the flexibility means that you can fit your work around other commitments such as volunteering. However, the downside is that you may not have the same employment rights as those who are directly employed. Zero hours contracts exist in many sectors, particularly hospitality, retail, warehousing, catering, and call centres.

Some employers may expect you to become self-employed. This is relatively straight forward to set up, but means you are liable for your own insurance, tax and national insurance.

For more information, visit Enterprising Worcestershire:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/support-businesses

Zero hours contracts and self-employment

Disabled students

Finding a graduate job can present challenges for some disabled students. Take a look at our 'Job Hunting Guide for Disabled Students' to find information on:

- organisations who can provide specialist job hunting support
- advice on making job applications & disclosing a disability
- adjustments in the workplace

Types of employment status

There are three main types of employment status, which will affect your rights at work. Sometimes it is not always clear which status you have, particularly if you are working on zero hours contracts:

- **Worker** - this is where you're employed to do the work yourself but on a more casual basis. This could include casual workers and zero hour contract workers. Workers have rights including be paid national minimum/living wage and paid holidays with some other legal protections
- **Employees** - this is where your employer is in charge of your workload and you are required to work regularly. Employees have all the employment rights that workers do, as well as extra rights and responsibilities such as parental leave, and redundancy pay after 2 years.
- **Self-employed** - this is where you are responsible for how and when you work, and invoice for your services rather than getting a wage. Your employment rights are more limited but would include protection against discrimination.

For more information see

www.acas.org.uk/checking-your-employment-rights

The national minimum wage is the minimum pay per hour that almost all workers are entitled to by law: the rate depends on a worker's age and whether they're an apprentice. Pick up a leaflet in firstpoint or see www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

No matter how small an employer is, they still have to pay the minimum wage. Check if you are being paid the minimum wage at www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage You can also ring the Pay & Work Rights Helpline for advice: 0300 123 1100.

National minimum and living wage

Be careful, don't fall for scam adverts

Some 'opportunities' are devised to get money from you. The following tips might help you to spot a scam:

- If a job advert seems to be too good to be true, it probably is!
- Is the application process professional? Does anything seem unusual? If so, get a second opinion from a friend.
- Don't apply to a company that asks you to pay money upfront, for example, an application fee or for stock or training.
- Be very wary if the contact detail is a non-company email (such as Gmail) or if you are directed to a different company to the one you applied to, including if you are asked to download a third party app.
- Never share personal information online: only give information that would normally appear on your CV. Do not provide bank details, passports or similar identification when you first apply, although you may be asked for these later on.

For more information, visit www.jobsaware.co.uk

The main points

1

Decide which type of graduate job (and application process) best suits your strengths and interests.

2

Search for graduate jobs on **myCareer** and register for daily or weekly email alerts to be notified of vacancies matching your criteria.

3

Apply for graduate schemes and internships in the autumn term of your final year. Search for all other graduate jobs from March onwards during your final year.

4

Give yourself time to make high quality applications – one quality application tailored towards a role is better than five hastily written generic ones.

5

Everyone will experience an unsuccessful application at some point. Don't give up, each one will help you to learn and improve. Book an appointment with a careers adviser via **myCareer** if you would like feedback on an application you have sent or would like to send.

Notes

If you have a question that isn't covered by this booklet or would like to talk through your ideas with a member of the Careers & Employability team, send us a message or book a careers appointment on **myCareer**.



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www.worc.ac.uk/careers