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# Job hunting for graduates

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# Job hunting for graduates

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# Introduction

This booklet aims to help you find your way around graduate employment, including key sources of graduate vacancies and more informal ways of job searching.

## What is a graduate job?

A graduate job can be broadly defined as any job a graduate does. However, many graduate jobs require a degree in a certain subject as an essential entry requirement. Some graduates will apply for graduate schemes upon graduation, whereas other graduates will start work in entry level positions and work their way up an organization, quickly using graduate level skills.

**Graduate schemes** are commonplace amongst the larger 'blue-chip' employers. They are mainly in the corporate sector but there are some in the public sector too.

Many employers offer graduate recruitment schemes aimed at students in their final year of study. Most schemes have application closing dates in the autumn term, months before graduation. To find out details of schemes and deadlines [here](#).

An alternative to working for a blue-chip company is to work for a **small or medium sized enterprise** (often referred to as SMEs) which are defined as employing fewer than 250 people. SMEs represent the fastest growing sector of the economy.

## Researching employers

Researching prospective employers is a vital part of the job application process and is especially important ahead of an interview. Even before that stage, researching companies and contacting them can help you get a head start and help you to decide whether working in that sector would suit you. Here are some suggestions to get you started and many of the resources below can also provide details of vacancy sources.

**Company websites** are a great place to start. Many will have detailed information such as the organisation's mission statement and ethos, major clients, awards, jobs and career opportunities and contact information, including social media.

**Google Alerts** can lead you to national, regional or local newspaper and journal articles about the organisation or sector, giving you an idea of what's going on and what people are talking about. This is useful labour market information.

**Informal networks** can be invaluable too so don't overlook them. If there is anyone in your family or friends' network who works in the sector you're interested in, get in touch and politely ask them whether they can help you.

**Your current employer**, they might be able to help. If you work for a big company and another aspect of the business interests you, consider asking whether you could shadow someone in a relevant department for a day or two.

Other ways to find out more about companies and gain contacts to help you with job hunting can be found below:

[Careers and Enterprise Employer Events](#) organised by the university specifically to give you opportunities to speak to recruiters.

[Professional Bodies](#) contain lots of information specific to your sector, as well as job adverts and careers advice. You may also be able to access lists of their members or simply look at who is advertising and identify some companies to contact about work experience, work shadowing or simply to ask for advice.

[National Careers Fairs and Events](#), there are also national and regional fairs you can attend.

## Graduate job search – speculative approaches

Following your research, you may have identified several organisations that you are interested in working for. Some of these may have vacancies advertised and some may not. If you are unable to find a vacancy for a potential employer, but you feel you would be able to bring something to the organisation and you could be a good match why not submit a speculative application. This means submitting a CV and **tailored** Cover Letter to explain why you are approaching them and what you can bring to the company. Find out more on [Prospects guide](#) to writing a speculative application.

## Graduate job search - online

Many graduate vacancies are now advertised online. You can normally filter searches via sector and location.

- [The Times Top 100](#) lists the top graduate employers.
- [Best Companies](#) lists the best small, medium, and large companies to work for.
- [Milkround](#) advertises graduate jobs, graduate schemes, internships, and work experience.
- [Graduate Prospects](#) is a large information resource for final year students and graduates. The website has specialised sections on different career areas and a list of graduate employers.
- [Targetjobs](#) is a comprehensive web resource, featuring a range of jobs from a wide variety of employment sectors.
- [Indeed](#) is a useful generic jobs website that is often overlooked by students and graduates. You can search jobs by region as well as sector, salary level etc.
- [The Job Crowd](#) lists the top companies graduates work for.
- [Glassdoor](#) is a community where students can delve into company culture and gain recruitment insights.
- [Inside Careers](#) produce career guides for a large range of jobs in the finance sector. The website lists graduate vacancies and provides company profiles and events news.
- [Our Graduates](#) online jobs platform for students and graduates supported by The

Princes Trust.

- [Handshake](#) - Careers and Enterprise now advertise graduate jobs and placements online on Handshake. You must register first to be able to log-in and search.

## Sector specific websites:

- [Gradcracker](#) for Technology and Engineering jobs
- [Jobs.ac.uk](#) for Education jobs
- [Careers in Music](#) – for Music jobs
- [GAAP Web](#) - Finance Jobs
- [Law Jobs](#) - Law jobs

You can find sector specific websites for your chosen industry using the 'Employers' section on the '[Job Profiles](#)' pages on Prospects.

## General websites and job board aggregators:

- [Reed](#)
- [Jobsite](#)
- [Simply Hired](#)

## National newspaper jobs websites:

- [The Guardian](#)
- [The Telegraph](#)
- [The Times](#)
- [The Independent](#)

## Graduate job search – networking

Creative job searching involves networking effectively, which in turn involves gathering information, discussing ideas and in some cases raising your profile within a professional setting. By doing this, you may make useful contacts and find out about opportunities that have not been advertised.

[Alumni Groups](#) can be useful for finding alumni of a particular course or from a particular country of origin. Further information on Salford university alumni can be found here: <https://www.salford.ac.uk/alumni>

**Social Media** such as X (Twitter) and Facebook offer opportunities to link with potential employers or people you would like to work for. Be careful how you present yourself on these social networking sites.

- [Twitter \(X\)](#)
- [Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#) is a professional networking site. You can search for companies and find individuals who work for that organisation. Join any groups that are relevant to your sector of interest, which will give you a good idea of what the important issues are.

More and more employers are putting their opportunities on LinkedIn. It is easy to search for vacancies by sector and within this you can also search by job title, keyword and location.

**TIP:** You can apply for some jobs through LinkedIn. If you see the LinkedIn logo with the words 'Easy Apply' next to it, you can apply directly by clicking on the vacancy. You can add a phone number and then upload your CV and other documents in Word or PDF up to a maximum of 5MB.

To make the most of LinkedIn, there is a dedicated guide you can use – available [here](#).

## **Graduate job search - recruitment agencies**

Recruitment Agencies specialise in certain types of work or sectors and geographical areas. The employer pays the agency to assist them in filling a particular job. It is important to communicate regularly with your recruiter to make sure they are finding the correct jobs for you. A recruiter's aim is to fill a post, so they may suggest jobs that you may not be particularly interested in. Keep your career aims in mind when using a recruitment agency.

You can search for recruitment agencies using agency central here:

<https://www.agencycentral.co.uk/>

## **Graduate job search – placements, internships and work experience**

The best way to showcase your skills and attitude to an employer is to be within a company already or have had some experience within a company. Opportunities to do this can be through work placements during your degree, Graduate Internships when you graduate, or through your own research and speculative requests for work experience or work shadowing.

To help you find opportunities like these, there are staff within the university to help you. All students can meet with their Placement Officer during their degree study to find out about placements. Contact your school office to find out how to get in touch with a Placement Officer.

To find internships that are available for you to apply for, use [Handshake](#) to look for these.