

# Find Your First Job - Undergraduates

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## Career Development

### WHAT IS IT

This Guide is designed to help Undergraduates locate and secure the job opportunity and career of their choice.

### WHY USE IT

This Guide has created to provide you with very concise and focused information that in the opinion of the author represents best practice guidelines. As such the Guide will help you

- Make good use of your time
- Recognise the typical pressures on you during your final year of studies
- Help you take a focused approach and look in the right places
- Recognize that for some individuals the first job after graduation is sometimes the most difficult to secure

### BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Ideally you should progress your job search through two key phases:-

1. **Create your Plan & Implement**
2. **Manage your Plan towards Success**

### PHASE 1 – CREATE YOUR PLAN & IMPLEMENT

Key steps in creating and implementing your plan should include the following:-

#### **STEP 1: Focus on Your Preferred Career / Job Search Target (s)**

**Research:** Take time to carefully research the job market into which you want to move:-  
i.e.

- Identify and list potential employers
- Identify and note their graduate recruitment schemes and recruitment arrangements
- Pay specific attention to their application procedures and application deadlines

Make full use of your University Career Service facilities and resources to assist you during this phase.

**Consider:** Take time to consider the key requirements for your future employment such as:-

- key skills
- experience level
- relevant qualifications

- need for additional qualifications / training
- location
- salary and benefit requirements
- career development opportunities
- other individual needs

**Discuss:** Take time to discuss the results of your research with a Professional Coach from Invest In Your Career which provides career and job search advice and guidance.

**Decide:** Make a decision on what type of career you plan to target which could initially include more than one option.

## **STEP 2: Produce a Good Quality CV**

**Marketing Tool not a Historical Record:** The prime purpose of your CV is to market you to a prospective employer by focusing on your qualifications, achievements and suitability for the job or career you are targeting. Your CV should not be a summary of everything you have accomplished to date, so only include information relevant to your targeted job or career path.

View on this web site our Guide for producing your CV / Resume.

## **STEP 3: Decide best route to your Career Goal / Job Target**

Evaluate the most suitable route or combination of routes for your specific job search. Consider the following main options although there may be others aligned to your particular career path:-

### **Option 1: - Direct Approach to Organisations**

**Best Practice:** Large organisations normally have a career web site where you can register your interest in their graduate recruitment process or a certain type of job.

This type of facility enables you to:

- Apply directly to their graduate recruitment scheme
- Automatically be contacted when a vacancy arises
- Upload your CV onto their secure web site

For organisations without a career web-site then telephone their Human Resources department and obtain details.

### **Success rating – Very high**

If you want to work for Organisation 'Y' then contact direct is normally their preferred method of recruitment.

### **Option 2: - Web Search Engines**

**Best Practice:** Using specific web search engines to identify opportunities that meet your requirements can be extremely beneficial. They can automatically send you daily or weekly details of actual jobs that meet the requirements you set within their web site i.e.

- Type of job
  - Rate of pay
  - Location
  - Full details of each opportunity plus application process and timing.
- Typical UK Job Search Engines where you can register your interest in specific jobs and automatically receive 'email job alerts' are as follows:-

<http://www.totaljobs.com/graduate>

<http://www.graduate-jobs.com>

Alternatives to the above UK web sites for options for other countries can be obtained from Invest In Your Career at [enquiry@iivc.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@iivc.co.uk)

#### Success rating – Medium

This is normally quite a targeted approach. The results **will** help you understand and where appropriate re-focus your target for the job you are seeking.

### Option 3: - Job Advertisements

**Best Practice:** Find out where jobs of the types you are seeking are advertised. Sometimes this is obvious but if in doubt then ask your University Careers Service.

- Popular options include company web sites, UK job web sites, national or local newspaper, or professional / trade journals. Many organisations only use one or two of these options so ensure you are aware of these otherwise you may miss out.
- When submitting a job application remember it is the Covering Letter that the employer reads first. They will only look at your CV if they are engaged by the content of your Covering Letter. Obtaining professional help with your Covering Letter will give you a significant advantage over other applicants.

#### Success rating – Medium

Quite a targeted approach. However competition may be quite severe.

### Option 4: - Employment Agencies

**Best Practice:** Use of employment agencies is normally quite an expensive option for employers and therefore care should be taken not to place too much emphasis on this option.

- Employment agencies can be a useful route to the job of your choice, but it can be risky to make them your only route. Through careful research identify those agencies that specialise in the type of career or job you are targeting.

- Try and develop a good relationship with a consultant from each agency and agree how they can best help you, but be aware that in the main consultants are driven by the needs of their clients rather than the needs of candidates.

### Success rating – Medium to Low

The quality of employment agencies varies enormously. Select ones that specialise in the type of carer / job you are seeking.

## PHASE 2 – MANAGE YOUR PLAN TOWARDS SUCCESS

### **STEP 4: Take Full Personal Accountability**

**Best Practice:** You must take full personal accountability for your job search campaign right up to achieving the new job of your choice. Others can provide you with information, assistance and advice but you must be the individual driving everything forwards.

Be prepared to devote as much time as possible to your campaign.

**Assumption** - Final Year University course with an October to June academic period then the following guidelines should help you:-

#### **October & November**

- Send off a minimum of 20 applications preferably in order of interest to you.
- Produce a 'B-list' of target employers ready to approach if no positive results from original 20.

#### **December & January**

- Expect to be invited to at least 5 interviews or assessment centres from target 20
- If not then send off applications to your 'B-list'
- Seek professional advice from your University Career Service
- Or reconsider your career options, including option to try again next year

#### **January onwards**

- Hopefully you will receive at least one offer. Well done

#### **February Onwards**

- Quite often it is now too late as all the best opportunities will have gone. But there can be exceptions so telephone new targets and keep on trying.

If no success then your best option now is to keep in contact with your preferred employers as further opportunities may arise in July when exam results are known and when applicants who originally accepted more than one offer will decide on their final choice of employer and so additional opportunities may be created.

### Success Tip – Choose your Buddy

Ask a friend to act as your

“Job Search Buddy”. Their role is to ask you 3 questions once a week:-

1. How is your plan progressing?
2. Are there any issues that concern you?
3. What are you doing to address these?

## STEP 5: Maintain Comprehensive Records

**Best Practice:** Your job search campaign must be supported throughout with comprehensive records. Anything less can cause confusion and may reduce your chances of obtaining the job of your choice.

### Success Tips – Accurate Records

- Set up a spreadsheet of your contact details
- In each computer file keep a copy of the CV and Covering Letter you sent each employer plus relevant notes
- Maintain a log of all the applications you made with dates, names, and results.

## NEXT STEPS

We trust that this Success Guide will assist your Career development and future success.

You may find some of our other Success Guides of value for your Personal or Career Development. For your convenience we list these below and you can access the index for these via the link below:-

### Related Success Guides

[CLICK HERE](#) to return to the Index for our Success Guides series and to access those of your choice.

## Career Development

### Undergraduates & Graduates

- Assessment Centre Preparation
- Assessment Centre Guide
- Find Your First Job –Graduates
- Find your First Job – Undergraduates
- Graduate CV
- Undergraduate CV
- Summer Internships

### Experienced Individuals

- How to Job Search
- How to Network

## Personal Development

- Benchmarking
- Coaching
- Job Assignment
- Job Shadowing
- Learning Buddy
- Mentoring
- Off the Job Development
- Personal Development
- Personal Development Plan
- Secondment
- Team Development
- Training Programme
- Visit Another Department

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