

Guide to...

# Finding Graduate Jobs & Opportunities

[bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://bathspa.ac.uk/careers)

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# Introduction

When it comes to graduate job searching, it helps to know what you are looking for. If you're feeling unsure about what sort of role might interest you, or you have some broad ideas but don't know where to start, then it might be advisable to book a careers guidance appointment to discuss this further. We would also recommend that you download the Bath Spa Careers '**Guide to Career Direction**' resource, which has been designed to help you build a personal framework for career choice, using a combination of online assessments and practical exercises.

## What Are My Options?

If you are looking for employment after graduation, there are three main types of opportunities that graduates usually look for. If you are exploring options beyond employment (e.g. further study, going abroad, starting a business), please refer to the **What Are My Options?** resource by Bath Spa Careers.

### 1. Graduate Schemes

Graduate Schemes are a specific type of graduate job. Often based in larger organisations, they generally have a structured training programme and last on average 1-2 years. They have a big emphasis on learning and development; you will usually be assigned a mentor and they can even include additional qualifications which the employer pays for! They tend to offer attractive salaries and benefits, so they will be competitive. The application process is likely to be complex and include many different stages, with a significant number closing for applications before Christmas in your final year.

The great thing about graduate schemes is they are designed specifically for recent graduates, with many being open to graduates from all degree subjects. However, the majority of recruiters will be interested in your academic performance - many set their entrance criteria at a 2:1 degree (and some also have a minimum UCAS tariff) - but it's also your transferable skills, attributes and extracurricular experiences they want to hear about. In fact, some graduate scheme employers are starting to move away from using grades as a measure of shortlisting – so you may find this is so not vital in the future.

Typical areas for Graduate Schemes that recruit graduates from any subject include:

- General Management
- Retail Management
- Business and Consultancy
- Marketing and Communications
- Sales and Customer Service
- Human Resources
- Buying and Merchandising
- Logistics, Operations, Supply Chain, Distribution, Procurement
- Finance and Accountancy

And to a lesser extent:

- Education
- Charity and Not-For-Profit sector
- Social Work

There are also regular graduate scheme options for specific subjects in the fields of:

- Fashion, Design and Textiles
- Food and Nutrition
- Energy, Environment and Sustainability
- IT, Digital and Technology

For further information and advice about graduate schemes, see the Bath Spa Careers '**Guide to Graduate Schemes**'.

## 2. Graduate Jobs

This is harder to define, but as a guide, a job may be considered 'graduate level' if there are opportunities for progression, if it meets certain expectations in terms of salary/level of responsibility, if the job description asks for a graduate or if the word 'graduate' features in the job title e.g. *Graduate Trainee Marketing Assistant*.

## 3. Graduate Internships

An internship is a medium term position with the expectation that the employee will need a certain level of support and training in order to fulfil the requirements of the position. This can be a good way of building up your experience, particularly if you have not had much previously and want to test out a sector/role. Internships can be just as competitive as graduate jobs, so you will need to convince the employer that you can add value to their organisation and effectively undertake the tasks required.

There are also employers who offer unpaid internships and this can be common in certain sectors e.g. the creative sector. Whilst we would not advocate undertaking lengthy unpaid internships (i.e. over 4 weeks), the decision is ultimately yours to make. You should think carefully about the length of the internship, how valuable the experience will be to you and the impact on your finances. If you do decide to accept an unpaid internship, make sure you have all the details of the position in writing, including what is expected of you and what you can expect from the company, as you would for a paid position.

It may also be worth investigating whether you might be eligible for any funding to support you e.g. Bath Spa University's Placements Award: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/students/student-finance/scholarships-and-funding>

Some internships are advertised. Bath Spa University advertises a range of paid internship and placement schemes that are exclusive to BSU students and graduates. For further information, go to [bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://bathspa.ac.uk/careers).

The following websites are a good starting point for finding graduate internships, although do consider other strategies to finding and securing internships too (see the next section for more information):

- <http://www.inspiringinterns.com/interns/internship-offers> - Inspiring Interns
- <http://www.enternships.com/opportunities> - Internships across Europe

## Job search strategy

The process of job hunting can broadly be defined on three levels: advertised positions, targeting organisations and applying speculatively.

### 1) Advertised positions

These are often found by using job listing websites...of which there are thousands! They can be broken down as follows:

#### General Jobsites

Many of these will advertise jobs on behalf of recruitment agencies, and cover everything from Accountant to Zookeeper, which means it can be harder to find what you are looking for. On the other hand, it can be beneficial to start with a broader job search whilst you get an idea of what jobs exist and how frequently they come up e.g.

- <http://www.indeed.co.uk> – keyword and location search, can set up job alerts
- <http://www.reed.co.uk>
- <http://www.totaljobs.com>
- <http://www.monster.co.uk>
- <http://www.adzuna.co.uk>
- <http://www.fish4.co.uk>

- <http://www.jobsite.co.uk>
- <http://www.jobmanji.co.uk>
- <http://www.jobshark.com>
- <http://www.jobstoday.co.uk>
- <http://www.jobserve.com>
- <http://www.allthetopbananas.com>
- <https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk/> - Linked to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- <http://www.glassdoor.co.uk/index.htm> - Includes employer rating information by employees

### Graduate Jobsites

There are also many jobsites aimed just at graduates, so this may eliminate roles that could be regarded as 'non-graduate level' or those which require much more experience than a recent graduate might have:

- [www.gradsouthwest.com](http://www.gradsouthwest.com) – Graduate job board for South West England (from Bristol and Bath to Devon and Cornwall)
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate-jobs>
- <http://www.milkround.com>
- <http://targetjobs.co.uk>
- <https://www.gradtouch.com/jobs> - job listings with video content
- <https://www.thejobcrowd.com/find-a-job/>
- <http://www.allaboutcareers.com/jobs/graduate-jobs>
- <http://www.graduate-jobs.com>
- <http://www.grb.uk.com>
- <http://graduatefog.co.uk/jobs>
- <http://www.giveagradago.com>
- <http://www.gradjobs.co.uk>
- <http://www.gradplus.com>
- <http://grads.co.uk>
- <http://www.graduatelinks.co.uk>
- [www.thebigchoice.com](http://www.thebigchoice.com)
- <https://gradintel.com>
- <http://www.savethegraduate.org/jobsearch> - searches for graduate jobs across lots of job boards.
- [www.totaljobs.com/graduate](http://www.totaljobs.com/graduate)
- [www.reed.co.uk/jobs/graduate](http://www.reed.co.uk/jobs/graduate)
- [www.weareaspire.com/aspire-graduates](http://www.weareaspire.com/aspire-graduates) - Media, digital, corporate industries.
- [www.linkedin.com/studentjobs](http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs) - Search LinkedIn for jobs.
- <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/> - After clicking 'search', select the filter 'Experience Level: Entry-Level' and/or 'Internship' for graduate jobs
- [http://info.ktponline.org.uk/action/search/partnership\\_vac.aspx](http://info.ktponline.org.uk/action/search/partnership_vac.aspx) - Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between employers, universities and the graduate. Up to 2 year paid contracts working on projects and including postgraduate study

### Sector Specific

This is often a more strategic approach to finding advertised positions. Assuming you have an idea of what you are looking for, there will be jobsites **specialising in the sector areas** that interest you. Often these may be online versions of industry specific publications that advertise relevant roles or jobsites aligned with a particular sector. Please see our '**Careers Sector Guide**' resources on [bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://bathspa.ac.uk/careers). These career sector guides cover a range of sectors providing sector specific job websites for you to explore. Other examples of sector websites includes;

- <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/jobs/> - jobs in marketing, advertising, creative and media
- <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/> - charity, fundraising, NGO and not for profit jobs
- <http://www.greenroles.co.uk> - environment, sustainability, conservation jobs – select "graduate/junior/trainee" from the sector drop-down box
- <http://www.bubble-jobs.co.uk> - digital jobs
- <http://www.artsjobs.org.uk> – powered by Arts Council England, jobs at arts organisations

- <http://jobs.economist.com> – the Economist (international news, politics, business, finance etc.)
- <https://jobs.marketingweek.com/> - Marketing Week (marketing, PR, advertising etc.)
- <http://www.insidecareers.co.uk> – pension, insurance, accountancy, IP and actuarial jobs
- <https://www.thestage.co.uk/jobs> - theatre jobs and jobs in the entertainment industry

Rather than spend your time looking at jobsites that are so broad they encompass everything, start with those that are **more specific** to your areas of interest. A good way of researching what these websites might be is to look at the **job profiles** on Prospects or National Careers Service websites e.g.

- Go to Prospects Job Profiles: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles>
- Choose a section to look at e.g. Browse by sector > Marketing, advertising and PR <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-sector/marketing-advertising-and-pr> or choose a job profile to look at e.g. *Marketing executive* - <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/marketing-executive>. Scroll down to the 'Employers' section to see a list of job vacancy sources

## Social Media

Using social media can be a great way to find opportunities. By promoting yourself professionally and building your network not only might organisations seek to connect with you, but many advertised roles will be advertised via social media channels including Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn. LinkedIn especially is increasingly being used to advertise vacancies; some recruiters are using this over more traditional approaches, or even for their entire recruitment.

Make sure that your social media platforms reflect your 'personal brand'. Think about your online professional profile to be equivalent to your offline CV. It is equally important that all your social media platforms are professional or have adequate privacy settings as employers will check your social media platforms when making decisions about hiring.

- <https://uk.linkedin.com/jobs> - LinkedIn Jobs
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/getting-a-job/social-media-and-job-hunting> - Prospects Social Media and Job Hunting
- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/networking/273059-social-networking-and-graduate-recruitment-manage-your-online-reputation> - Target Jobs 'Social Networking and Graduate Recruitment: manage your online reputation'.

## National newspaper job sites

You may find a slight bias towards London-based roles, but jobs in specific regions are also advertised on these websites e.g.

- <http://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/graduate>
- <http://jobs.telegraph.co.uk/jobs/graduate>

## Trade Unions/Professional Bodies/Sector Skills Councils

These types of organisations may also advertise opportunities, either on their own websites or through an associated job portal e.g.

- <https://www.bda.uk.com/> - British Dietetic Association (Trade Union) – advertise through <http://www.dietitiansjobs.co.uk/>
- <https://ccskills.org.uk/careers/jobs> - Creative and Cultural Skills sector skills council
- <http://ieduk.careerwebsite.com/home> – Institute of Economic Development (Professional Association)
- <http://www.lantra.co.uk/careers/job-finder> - LANTRA (Sector Skills Council for Land Management and Production, Animal Health and Welfare and Environmental Industries)

## Regional Job Searching

An important criterion in your job search might be finding an opportunity in a specific region of the UK. Whilst most jobsites will allow you to search by location, there are also some dedicated websites to particular regions e.g.

- <http://www.gradsouthwest.com> - Primarily aimed at graduates in the South West.

- <https://www.fish4.co.uk/> - filter by region.

For more information about top graduate employers and regional labour markets, see TargetJobs: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-location> including careers in Bath <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-location/276137-graduate-careers-in-bath>.

Another strategy you can adopt for regional job searching is using recruitment agencies. See the section at the end of this guide on recruitment agencies for more information and links to local agencies.

## Top Tips for Using Jobsites

1. Make the most of any jobsites by signing up for email alerts based on your preferred sectors/roles.
2. A skilled 'key word' search is the secret to ensuring you are not bombarded with irrelevant opportunities – as well as setting location/salary parameters.
3. Start searching and signing up for alerts early – this will help you to understand of how often jobs come up, what titles those jobs have (they will vary) and key employers to look out for.
4. Download and save copies of job descriptions, particularly for jobs you are applying for so the information is readily available if you get invited to interview.
5. When applying for jobs, give yourself plenty of time to tailor your CV/cover letter and/or application to the role and employer.
6. Keep a record of any applications you make – less is more, only apply for roles that you really want.

## 2) Targeting Organisations

When you are looking for work in a **specific geographical location** and/or **particular job sector/industry/field** then it makes sense to target individual organisations. For example, if you are looking for work in **Bath/Bristol** and you are keen to work for a **charity that deals with mental health issues**, then you have two key criteria to base your job search on.

We would recommend **building up a database** of organisations that fit your criteria. You might already know of a few organisations, or you could use business directory tools such as <https://www.yell.com/> and <http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk> to help in your research.

Also, try talking to people in your personal network (e.g. family, friends, lecturers, employers/volunteer managers, colleagues from your part-time job, customers) or from your wider circle of contacts...you never know who might be able to offer you a really useful snippet of information!

Once you have a database of organisations that interest you, keep a check on their individual recruitment websites/webpages to seek advertised positions. If they do not advertise on their own website then contact them directly to see if they use a particular company to help them recruit. In addition, connect with them via LinkedIn and be sure to regularly check their social media platforms to see if they advertising.

If location is less important to you and you are quite flexible, then you might be interested in researching organisations who regularly recruit graduates each year, a good place to start this research is:

- <https://ise.org.uk/page/EmployerMembersList> - Institute of Student Employers
- <http://targetjobs.co.uk/employer-hubs>
- [www.thejobcrowd.com/employer](http://www.thejobcrowd.com/employer)

You can also find out more about the recruitment practices of large graduate employers through websites such as: <http://www.top100graduateemployers.com> (registration required).

### 3) Applying Speculatively

You are also encouraged to contact potential employers speculatively (this means you are asking about possible openings, rather than roles that have already been advertised), as many graduate opportunities go unadvertised. In fact – rumour has it that only 30% of roles get advertised!

To access these opportunities, you will need to be proactive and approach employers that really interest you. The secret to an effective speculative application is a planned and thoroughly researched approach.

You would normally make contact via telephone or in person to establish a named contact to which you should send a carefully crafted CV and cover letter/email, detailing what you have to offer e.g. your relevant skills, knowledge and experience, and explaining why the organisation appeals to you. Take the time to carefully tailor and target your CV and cover letter to stand out from the crowd. Employers can detect a generic application immediately!

Alternatively, you may prefer to develop your personal and online network first, making contact with individuals who work in particular organisations and building up a professional relationship prior to enquiring about opportunities for graduate jobs and internships.

See the Bath Spa Careers '**Guide to Making Speculative Applications**' for information and advice.

### Recruitment Agencies

In addition to using the techniques above, you may find it helpful to use Recruitment Agencies as part of your job search 'toolkit'.

#### What is a recruitment agency?

- A recruitment agency acts as an intermediary between an organisation that is looking to employ someone, and an individual who is looking for a job.
- A Recruitment Consultant's function is to source the most suitable person for a vacancy they have been asked to fill.
- Usually, the agency will charge a fee to the employer should you secure a position in their company. You **do not** pay anything!

#### What are the advantages to using an agency?

- Using a recruitment agency can be a useful job searching tool – whether you are looking for temporary or permanent work, they can save you time and will sometimes have exclusive access to jobs that would not otherwise be found through an online search.
- Agencies often have in-depth knowledge of employers they work with, which can help you to prepare for an interview.
- Some agencies 'specialise' in recruiting for a particular industry/sector and will have a good knowledge of the market place.
- For temporary roles especially, there may not be an application process as such and you could find yourself working for an organisation whose normal recruitment process is tricky to negotiate and/or involves many different stages.
- Temporary roles can often lead to permanent positions – and even if they don't, positive feedback from one employer will help when you are looking for your next role.

#### How do I register?

- This will vary depending on the agency and could simply be through an online process or telephone or Skype conversation. If they have a local branch they may ask to meet you in person.
- You will usually need to provide identification documents i.e. passport/driving licence, your National Insurance Number and full contact details for at least two referees.



## Do you have any top tips on dealing with recruitment agencies?

- It's worth knowing how to manage the relationship effectively. Remember, they are working on behalf of their client (the employer) so may have a different agenda to you.
- Be prepared to talk positively about the sorts of roles you are looking for and the skills and experience you have - try to build up a good rapport with Recruitment Consultants.
- First impressions count. Ensure all communication with them is professional and if asked to come into the office, dress smartly and be friendly.
- Call the agency regularly (e.g. every week) to express your ongoing availability and to check to see if any new positions have arisen recently.
- Use an agency as **part** of your search rather than depending on them solely to secure a position.

## Are there any downsides?

- They might not be able to give you much notice for interviews or temporary work.
- You may not always know who the employer is until the last minute, which restricts your ability to fully research the company and to prepare adequately for your interview.
- Recruitment Consultants decide which candidates to put forward for jobs.
- They may want to put you forward for roles similar to what you have done in the past, even if you are trying to change direction.
- Some agencies may seem impersonal and not regularly keep in touch with you
- They might amend your CV on your behalf (and make mistakes!).
- The more flexible you are the more likely they are to be interested in you, so if you turn opportunities down they may not be as inclined to offer you anything else.

## Can I sign up with more than one recruitment agency?

- Yes. There is no rule that says you are restricted to signing up with one agency.
- However, don't register with too many – be selective.
- It is wise to make sure your CV is not submitted to the same employer for the same position by more than one agency. This can make you look like you're desperate to get a job rather than appearing selective and professional.
- Always ask your agency representative to tell you if they put forward your CV to any employer and keep a note of the organisation name, and the date your details were submitted.

## Where can I find them?

- You can search by location and sector using <https://www.agencycentral.co.uk/>
- Make sure you sign up to agencies that adhere to a professional code of practice via the REC – check the REC membership directory <https://www.rec.uk.com/membership/member-directory>

Here is a selection of some national and local agencies:

### Nationally:

- <http://www.reed.co.uk>
- <http://www.adecco.co.uk>
- <http://www.office-angels.com>
- <http://www.hays.co.uk>
- <http://www.pareto.co.uk> - Sales
- <http://www.randstad.co.uk>
- <http://www.pertemps.co.uk>
- <http://www.select.co.uk>
- <http://www.michaelpage.co.uk>

### Locally:

- <http://www.lucybristow.com>
- <http://www.appoint.co.uk>
- <http://www.adlib-recruitment.co.uk>
- <http://www.juicerecruitment.com>
- <http://www.specrecruitment.co.uk>
- <http://www.rockingzebra.com> - creative
- <http://www.back-2-front.co.uk> - hospitality
- <http://www.cateringinternational.co.uk>

## Top Tips for Your Job Hunt

If you find yourself caught in the 'vicious circle of job hunting' and are struggling to secure your first graduate job, it will be important to reflect on your experience of job searching so far (i.e. what has gone

well, and what hasn't) and use this to review your ongoing strategy, including whether there are ways to think outside the box in future. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- **Are you being organised in your job hunt?** Track and review your progress: with all job applications, speculative or not, keep a track of who and what you have applied for, what documentation you submitted and when you submitted it.
- **Are you taking a quality approach?** Employers are much more likely to shortlist candidates who have taken the time to research the organisation/role and have a carefully tailored application.
- **Have you made use of your contacts, and contacts of contacts?** Don't just think about who you know already, think about who *they* know too. Don't underestimate the six degrees of separation!
- **If you don't have any relevant contacts already, have you proactively sought to make some?** Networks are invaluable – they may have advice and insights to support your job search, or may let you know about upcoming opportunities. See the Bath Spa Careers '**Guide to Networking**'.
- **Are you just applying for advertised jobs?** Advertising jobs is expensive - some organisations (often small or medium sized enterprises) on tight budgets may not be able to afford this. By just applying for advertised jobs, you could be *hugely* restricting the number of opportunities you find.
- **So be creative!** Seek out ways to meet relevant people, speculatively approach organisations, arrange an informational interview (a conversation with someone about their career) or work experience/shadowing in a relevant area, ask someone to be your mentor, be a 'detective' and see how much information you can find out a company, online, in newspapers/archives, reports, LinkedIn, also follow industry news, and attend events.
- **Have you discussed your approach with Careers?** It might be useful to discuss this in an appointment with an impartial Careers Consultant.
- **Have you contacted your university tutors or considered previous Alumni?** Tutors may have relevant contacts or be able to share insights from previous cohorts with you. Alternatively, find out what previous BSU alumni are doing yourself using tools such as LinkedIn.
- **If you are finding a lack of jobs in your preferred area, are you using the right sources/approach?** Some jobs will only be advertised in certain places, and (as we have already explored) some won't be advertised at all. Make sure you are looking in the right places!
- **Have you considered how many of those jobs exist? Do you need additional experience?** If your chosen job is in a high demand or specific/niche area, you may need to be creative in how you gain entry. If opportunities aren't available right now, what types of experiences could give you the competitive edge when it does come up again? Could a temporary job or voluntary experience give you that 'foot in the door'?
- **Have you followed up your applications or asked for feedback?** If you are not hearing back, have you followed up with a phone call? As long as you are polite and professional, this is likely to demonstrate your proactivity and motivation and also allows you to ask for feedback if you have not been successful which can help you improve for next time.

## Further Support from Bath Spa Careers

If you would like further support from Bath Spa Careers & Employability go to [bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://bathspa.ac.uk/careers) to see the ways in which you can access our service, including workshops and events, appointments and to access our extensive range of resources.

You can also contact Careers Reception on 01225 875525 or at [careers@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:careers@bathspa.ac.uk).

Please note that Bath Spa Careers does not endorse particular organisations.

(This guide was last updated in Summer 2019).

# GET A HEAD START

We're here to help you get a great start to your career. We're open all year round, so come and visit us in the Careers Space, book an appointment, or get in touch.

Careers Space, SL.G04  
Steward's Lodge

careers@bathspa.ac.uk  
01225 875525

[www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers)

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