

Job Hunting

This first handout of this series 'Exploring Career Ideas' will help you to research your career options and identify areas of interest to you. As you start to narrow down the career areas you would like to focus on, you will need to find out how to source opportunities. This handout is about where to look for those opportunities.

It's worth saying that all organisations advertise opportunities on their own websites and usually their social media too. This means that if you know specific organisations you would like to work for, then you can monitor those websites and their social media for job adverts. However, it's not feasible to do this for every possible employer and is not a good strategy for looking for opportunities in smaller organisations that don't individually recruit in high numbers. So how else can you find out what's being advertised?

UNDERSTANDING THE GRADUATE JOB MARKET

Internships and work experience

Opportunities for work experience range from insight days/ spring weeks, formal internships (usually in the summer), volunteering to paid work. All of these provide opportunities for networking and learning about work and can help you with your career decision making. Most graduate recruiters look for some type of experience outside of studying and so obtaining work experience or an internship can help you make more competitive applications for graduate roles later on.

The deadlines for applying for formal internships or work experience often happen around autumn term, so it's worth starting to plan your summer early. However opportunities can still come up towards the summer. Adverts are found in the same places as graduate jobs so follow the advice below on where to look. Targeted speculative applications and networking can also result in opportunities.

Graduate jobs

Many large organisations that recruit in volume take graduates into 'graduate training schemes'. On these schemes, graduates are trained and may have the experience to rotate through different areas of the organisation. Some may support their graduates through professional qualifications. This is often an excellent way to enter an organisation as the graduates are seen as future leaders and are strongly supported.

Typically the main recruitment into these schemes takes place in the autumn of the year before the graduates start work. Deadlines in some sectors can be as early as October but opportunities continue to open up throughout the year and some places are usually still unfilled in the summer. Ideally you should be ready for the applications right at the start of your final year. However many of the schemes will accept applications from recent graduates as well as finalists so you could also target this job market in the year after graduation.

Not all organisations recruit in high enough numbers or on a predictable enough timescale to warrant having a graduate scheme. Many SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) and start-ups recruit on an ad hoc basis – they advertise roles at any time of year when they have a vacancy to fill. This is common in the media, not for profit and arts sectors, where there are very few graduate schemes.

Social media

When going onto the job market it is worth making sure you are presenting yourself well on social media and that you are making good use of the social media channels used by employers.

If you have a LinkedIn profile, make sure it includes a suitable picture and is up to date and complete. Make sure your profile reflects the type of work you are interested in doing. LinkedIn works on keywords so ensure that you are using keywords on your profile that would be relevant to the type of work you are looking for. You can find out what these are by looking at job adverts and the LinkedIn profiles of people already in the sector.

Many employers now use multiple social media channels to reach potential applicants. Some of the most common include Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Opportunities are often announced on social media and in some cases (for example the BBC) may only be announced on social media. You can also use social media to research employers and sectors.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR JOB ADVERTS

Jobslive

A number of employers target Imperial graduates specifically by uploading their vacancies onto:

- JobsLive, our in-house jobs board
www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobslive



Other university careers services also have jobs boards, some of which are open access. For example the jobs board of the Careers Group, which is the Careers Service for a group of London universities including UCL, is open to all.

Graduate jobs boards

In addition, there are generic graduate job databases that you can search. The best known are:

- Gradcracker – specifically for STEM students
- Prospects.ac.uk
- Targetjobs.co.uk
- Indeed.co.uk

These large jobs boards can be challenging to search because they have so many opportunities of different types. However they do list most of the main graduate schemes and exploring them can throw up options you hadn't considered before.

- GoinGlobal is a resource that Imperial Careers has a subscription to and you can access through our website. It lists internship opportunities and has advice on searching for jobs in different countries - go to www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/goingglobal

Sector-specific jobs boards

Many areas of work have specific jobs boards targeted to that sector, so if you know what type of work you would like to do you can be targeted in your search. For example:

- Charities – CharityJob.co.uk
- Chemistry – ChemistryWorld jobs and New Scientist
- Data science – datasciencejobs.co.uk and Kaggle jobs
- Engineering and Technology – E&Tjobs and The Engineer Jobs
- Environment – environmentjobs.co.uk and ENDS Job Search
- Insidecareers.co.uk specialises in hosting industry-specific job boards in pensions, insurance, actuarial, intellectual property and accountancy.

This is just a sample of the specific jobs boards out there. There are too many to individually list them in this handout. To find out about such boards in your areas of interest, try looking at the Prospects job profiles, looking at the Imperial Careers 'Occupations and jobs sectors' pages online or asking people working in the industry. Note that these jobs boards usually list experienced hire jobs as well as entry-level graduate positions. One strategy for narrowing the search is to use search terms like 'graduate' to see if jobs suitable for your level of experience come up. However, it can be useful to take a look at the experienced hire job adverts so you can learn from them how to make yourself competitive for career progression later.

Professional bodies

Many professions are represented by a professional bodies. Examples of these include the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

and the Operational Research Society. Wikipedia has a handy list of professional bodies. These organisations often have advice for people considering careers in their areas and sometimes host useful jobs boards.

Newspapers

National, regional or local newspapers will regularly carry job adverts. For example the Guardian jobs board is well known for public sector and charity jobs and has sections for science and engineering.

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies specialise in filling vacancies for organisations. Many specialise in particular industry sectors. You should always check that any recruitment agency is a member of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation website (www.rec.uk.com). A recruitment agency should be used to supplement not replace your own job hunting strategies. Bear in mind that they are operating on behalf of the employer rather than the candidate and their priority is to get the vacancy filled rather than find the ideal position for you.

CREATE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITY

You may be surprised to learn that not all jobs are advertised. Sometimes you can create your own opportunity. There are two main ways to do this:

1. **Speculative applications** – this is where you write to an employer directly even though no job is currently being advertised. This strategy only works if the application is highly targeted to that type of work and employer. You need to be straightforward and direct in your email and let them know why you are writing, what you would bring to them and that you understand who they are and have not just sent the same letter to 100 different people. It's best to send the application to whoever you think would likely be your line manager rather than to a central HR contact.
2. **Networking** – if you are on the job market or looking for work experience, it's worth letting people know. This includes your family, friends, former employers, college tutor and supervisors. They may be able to supply you with helpful contacts.

FURTHER SUPPORT

Don't forget that you can continue to use the Imperial Careers Service for up to 3 years after graduation. We can help if you are struggling on the job market. You may want to review your job hunting strategy, your application materials or your interview technique. You can access a lot of useful information on the careers service website and there are one to one appointments with careers consultants available, which are bookable from 07:00 each day on JobsLive.

For information on the disclosure of disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia please see information on the Careers Service website: www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/disclosure