

GRADUATE CAREER HANDBOOK

**A SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE TO THE
HANDBOOK FOR PROVIDING CAREER
SUPPORT AND EMPLOYABILITY
PROGRAMMES**

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WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

The *Graduate Career Handbook* is designed as a self-study resource for students and their parents.

However, we know that many students don't worry about their careers until it is too late. We also know that most universities recognise this and have developed a range of career and employability support services. This guide is designed for the people who are delivering this support. It will show you how to make use of the *Graduate Career Handbook* as part of your university's employability support service.

We have written this guide for both *academics who are delivering employability modules* within the curriculum and *career and employability professionals* who may be working in the curriculum, delivering services centrally, running skills awards and/or providing workshops and advice and guidance.

In order to get the most out of this guide, you will need to buy a copy of the *Graduate Career Handbook*, available at: www.trotman.co.uk/gradcareerbook.

INTRODUCTION

Universities are increasingly measured on their ability to ensure that their graduates leave higher education with employability skills and move onto a 'good' or 'graduate' job. Statistics from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey¹ are used in the construction of league tables. This means that those universities with employable graduates go up in the tables, while those with less employable graduates go down.

Vice chancellors invariably keep a close eye on the league tables. In many, probably most, universities this has meant that the teaching of employability has become increasingly important. Careers services and central employability units have been set up or have grown, and academics in all subjects have been encouraged to ensure that their modules deliver 'employability skills' or 'transferable skills'. In some cases universities or departments have introduced 'employability modules', which are studied as part of a student's degree and assessed alongside the more traditional subject content.

Students are also keen to enhance their employability. Many students cite 'career development' as a key motivation for studying at university. They often assume that getting a degree will offer them automatic passage to a good job. Unfortunately, the reality is somewhat more complex. While a degree does offer clear advantages in the labour market, ensuring a smooth and successful transition requires proactivity and forethought from the student. It is possible for the university to encourage such proactivity and to provide an environment in which career planning and the active building of employability are the norm.

The way in which universities have incorporated employability into their core aims may raise several legitimate concerns. Should higher education be about vocational preparation? Is there a danger of employability crowding out subject-based curricula? Are we just teaching students to conform to what businesses expect of them? We have provided a reading list at the end of this publication which offers an introduction to the extensive academic debate

¹ See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/destinations> for the results of this survey and for further information.

surrounding this subject. We believe that it is right that higher education professionals should engage with this subject critically and that when teaching employability and providing employability support they should encourage students to think critically about some of these issues as well.

Career and employability learning shouldn't just be about teaching students how to earn as much as possible. It should also be about encouraging them to think about what they want from life, and how this interacts with their friends, families, communities and society in general. It should include a critical consideration of how their subject learning links to their longer-term aspirations and how they will employ the knowledge and skills acquired at university once they are in the workplace. It might even include an examination of how the world of work operates, whether it is fair and equitable and what tools are available to them to challenge the status quo and bring about change.

We wrote the *Graduate Career Handbook* because we wanted to get students to think about these issues. It is a practical guide, designed to be used by students to answer their questions about career development and to give them a framework for thinking about their careers while they are at university and transitioning to postgraduate study or further work. We think that it stands alone and so it can simply be used as a resource to refer students to if they have career questions.

The problem with a stand-alone resource is that it tends to be used by those students who need it least. We want to help the motivated, ambitious and engaged students, but we'd also really like to have an impact on the disengaged, the dreamers and those in denial that university will ever end. That is why we wrote this supplement to the *Graduate Career Handbook* and that is why we are asking for the help of academics and career and employability professionals.

If we are going to help *all* students to think about their career development and begin the process of building their careers, we have to make sure that they encounter these ideas from a variety of angles. We think that it is valuable for careers and employability to be addressed in the curriculum, for universities to provide a high-quality careers service and of course for every university library and bookshop to stock our handbook (and for every student to read it).

This guide is designed to offer an introduction to providing career support and employability learning. We use the *Graduate Career Handbook* as the source material, but the guide shows you how to turn it into advice sessions, workshops and modules.

We hope that you find it useful.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are many ways in which educational professionals can provide career and employability support for the students that they work with. Broadly speaking, it is possible to divide the kinds of support that students are offered into three main categories.

- **Curricular.** Students are encouraged to think about their careers through the formal aspects of their degree. This might include discussion of employability or skills development embedded in modules, dedicated employability modules and integrated placements or 'years in industry'.
- **Co-curricular.** Students are provided with opportunities for career and employability learning which are related to their degree. This might include subject- or sector-based clubs, visits and competitions, e.g. law students engaging in a mooted competition or English students visiting a publishing company.
- **Extra-curricular.** Students are provided with generic opportunities for career and employability learning which are not directly related to their degree. This might include access to careers workshops or advice and guidance as well as opportunities for volunteering, engaging with employers and participating in student representation and associations.

In the *Graduate Careers Handbook* we argue that students should make the most of all of these opportunities. We particularly focus on curricular learning in Chapter 2, on co-curricular experiences in Chapters 3 and 4 and on extra-curricular experiences in Chapters 3, 4 and 8. We hope that the handbook can provide a useful framework for reflection on all of these experiences.

As an academic or careers professional, there are a range of ways in which you are likely to play a role in a student's career development.

- You might have a career conversation with them and talk about a certain aspect of their career development or employability. If you are a career guidance professional this career conversation might take a more structured form as professional advice and guidance. We address this on **page 10** of this guide.

- You might want to support students to reflect on their networking with employers, work experiences or other forms of co- and extra-curricular activity. We address this on **page 12** of this guide.
- You might run a short session or workshop to support students to think about a particular aspect of employability. We address this on **page 14** of this guide.
- Finally, you might want to put together a formal employability module, either as part of a degree programme, or as an extra-curricular award. We address this on **page 57** of this guide.
- **Page 60** provides a detailed bibliography to support your ideas about employability, your students' learning and all of the activities described above.

USING THE HANDBOOK TO SUPPORT CAREER CONVERSATIONS AND CAREER ADVICE

Students will seek help from a variety of sources while at university. They may go to see their personal tutor about their academic results, a counsellor about their emotional well-being and a careers advisor to discuss career options. However it is rare for students to know exactly where to go for different types of expert help. They might feel happiest speaking with a particular individual about personal matters. Furthermore, conversations can easily move from one topic (will I pass this module?) to another (what will I do when I graduate?).

We are not suggesting that all student-facing university staff should be fully equipped to deal with every concern that a student might have about their career. But we hope that by offering the handbook and this supplementary guide, those who find themselves providing career support as part of their role will feel prepared to engage in these conversations, and to signpost students to further sources of help.

Some of the most common queries that students have about their careers include the following.

Student query	We cover this in Chapter(s):
What career options are open to me?	1, 2 and 5
How do I find out about opportunities?	3, 4 and 5
Can I/Should I do a placement year? Or a year abroad?	3
Should I do further study?	6
How do I improve my CV/covering letter/application?	7
Can I practise for my interview?	7

I have to attend an assessment centre ... how can I prepare?	7
What are psychometric tests and how can I prepare for them?	7
I don't have any work experience – what can I do?	3
How do I network with employers?	4
Who do I ask to be my referee?	8 and 11
What can I do if I don't get a 2:1?	2 and 9
I hate my subject now ... will I still be able to get a job?	2 and 9
I'm starting work (or a placement) soon ... what do I need to know?	10
I keep getting rejections from employers – what am I doing wrong?	7 and 11

If you are a careers professional, you will be experienced in dealing with these types of queries (and you can probably add another dozen to the list). This handbook is still a suitable resource for you. We think that you can find uses for the book as part of your one-to-ones, in workshops and presentations. You might:

- use the handbook as further reading before or after your contact with students
- encourage students to reflect by using the activities in each chapter
- help students to explore their career plans through discussion of the case studies and job profiles in each chapter
- signpost students to particular sections of the handbook to provide them with specific guidance.

USING THE HANDBOOK TO SUPPORT STUDENT NETWORKING, PLACEMENTS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

During their studies many students will seek out fun and formative experiences such as networking, alumni mentoring, placements and opportunities to study abroad. These may be formally managed and endorsed by their university or something that the student has organised on their own initiative. Either way, you may find that students come to you with queries about these types of activities.

There is good evidence that networking and taking part in experiential career learning has benefits for students in terms of their employability. This is particularly the case for placements, internships and other forms of extended work experience. Such experiences build social capital, shape career ideas, develop skills and provide strong evidence of work ethic and competence to future employers.

The handbook offers information and advice that is relevant for most, if not all, types of work experience. You can set selected passages or delve into a chapter together to help answer their questions. The evidence suggests that students should prepare for work experience and other forms of experiential activities and reflect on them both during the experience and once they have completed it. The case studies and reflective nature of the activities in the handbook are designed to support you to help students to prepare for, make the most of, and reflect upon such experiences.

Subject	We cover this in Chapter(s):
Finding out about opportunities and deciding what is the best fit for me.	1, 2 and 5
Should I do a year abroad or a year in industry?	3
Preparing for networking	4
Preparing for work (placement, graduate or internship)	10
Making the most of your work experience	3 and 7
Reflecting on yourself, what you have learned and the experiences that you have taken part in	1
Finding and researching potential placements	5
Succeeding in applications and interviews	7
Adjusting to workplace cultures	10

USING THE HANDBOOK TO RUN EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS

You might be involved in designing and delivering extra- or co-curricular employability workshops. The handbook's chapters are divided into different areas that might typically be covered in these types of workshops. There are case studies and activities in each section. These can be read and reflected on by students reading the handbook on their own or can be used as part of workshops in which students work on their own, in partners or in small groups.

We have written a suggested workshop for each of the chapters in the handbook. We introduce the topic with the full introduction from the handbook. Students are expected to read the related handbook chapter in preparation for each workshop.

We identify between three and five Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each section. An outline for the workshop is provided; this includes the topics and activities to be covered, how these link to the ILOs and the page on which the supporting materials can be found in the handbook.

The workshops can take place face-to-face or in a webinar or other online session. We would expect most workshops to be completed in an hour. If you choose to engage in additional group activities, then it may take longer. At the end of each workshop we provide a description of a post-workshop assignment.

You are free to run these workshops as described or to adapt, rework and combine them. The inclusion of ILOs and assessments is designed to support their use within formal modules. In the next section of the guide we describe how these workshops can be put together to form a complete module or other kind of assessed programme such as an employability award.

It is worth mentioning that your university career development service will almost certainly have experience in delivering workshops on these topics and are likely to have expertise in assessing these types of assignments. You may want to work with them in delivering these workshops or longer programmes.

WORKSHOP 1 I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF

Making a decision about what to do with your life isn't easy. Many people find choosing a subject at university difficult enough. Finding a job is even more tricky, as there is so much that you don't know about what different jobs are like and which ones you will be good at.

Thinking deeply about yourself, your likes and dislikes, what you are good and bad at, and so on can be really useful. This chapter will help you to get to know yourself a bit better and then to think about what this might mean for your future career.

This workshop will help you to:

- understand what you are like and why this is important to employers
- think about your values, likes and interests
- consider your strengths and weaknesses
- use these reflections to help you find your career path.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- articulate some of their current strengths, likes and values
- demonstrate their understanding of the role that reflection plays in career development and recruitment
- describe how they will use self-awareness and reflection as part of their career planning.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 1, 'I just don't know what to do with myself' (pages 7–24).
- Complete Activity 1.1, 'Knowing yourself' (page 12).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
What is reflection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection is a critical employability skill. • It is a continuous process. 	Demonstrate their understanding of the role that reflection plays in career development and recruitment.	8–10
Knowing yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be asked to demonstrate reflection in recruitment processes. • Reflection includes gathering information from other people. 		10–12
Testing your personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychologists use the term 'personality' as a way of describing who we are. • There are a range of tests which you can use to gain insights into your personality. • Some of these tests are used by employers. • There is a critical debate about the reliability, value and ethics of these types of tests. 	Articulate some of their current strengths, likes and values.	12–16

<p>Values</p> <p>Likes and interests</p> <p>Strengths and weaknesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your values, likes and strengths are an important part of your personality and will have a strong influence on your life and career. Matching your personality to a job is not a simple task. Try to look beyond your favourite activity to see how you tend to behave and what motivates you. There are four stages to becoming competent (unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence). You will be asked to articulate your values, likes and strengths in recruitment activities such as covering letters, applications and interviews. Greater self-awareness will help you to make effective applications to suitable jobs. Workshop activity. In pairs, work on Activity 1.3, 'Exploring your values'. Discuss Sonam's case study (page 17). What might Sonam have done differently? Why? 	<p>Articulate some of their current strengths, likes and values.</p>	<p>16–21</p>
<p>Finding your path</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-awareness is used to inform the decisions we make about career options (you will already have done this in deciding what to study, in choosing work experience, etc.). Continue to consider your personality as you research career options. Your personality is not static. You will grow, learn and change throughout your life. Workshop activity. Read and discuss the two 'Would you like to ...' sections (Psychologist and Human Resources). 	<p>Describe how they will use self-awareness and reflection as part of their career planning.</p>	<p>21–24</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of workshop. Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. Signpost the next workshop. 	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Submit a short (c. 300 words), written reflection summarising how you feel about the key themes from the workshop. What are your likes, interests, values, and strengths and weaknesses? How has thinking about these influenced your career planning?

WORKSHOP 2 MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DEGREE

Whether you are doing a vocational or non-vocational degree, you still need to think about the relationship between your learning and your career. This chapter will help you to think about the subject you are studying and how this might be useful to you when you graduate.

This chapter will help you to:

- think about your chosen degree subject and how it might relate to a career path
- understand why employers are interested in your studies (and why they are not)
- consider what skills you are developing alongside your degree
- find sources of support to help you succeed in your studies
- get involved in your department and university
- find out what other people have gone on to do from your degree discipline.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of Workshop 2 students will be able to:

- articulate the skills that they are gaining/have gained through their degree
- identify sources of support at their university that can help them succeed in their studies
- identify possible career paths from their discipline.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 2, 'Making the most of your degree' (pages 25–44).
- Complete Activity 2.1, 'Your subject choice' (page 28).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Your subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People choose their academic subjects for different reasons. 	Articulate the skills that they are gaining/have gained through their degree.	27–28
Get connected to your subject/ area of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your university experience can be an important part of who you are. • There are a number of different ways students can deepen their relationship to their subject. • Students might get more involved in their department, a student society, alumni and/or professional associations. • There are a number of opportunities available to develop your career through your subject and the university. 	Identify sources of support at their university that can help them succeed in their studies.	29–31

Use existing sources of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are numerous support services available to assist you in your studies. • Recognising that you need help is a valuable skill. 	Identify sources of support at their university that can help them succeed in their studies.	32
Should I carry on with my subject?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further study is an option to consider. • Students should consider why they want to undertake further study and research the outcomes of Masters level study in their subject (see Chapter 6). 	Identify possible career paths from their discipline.	33–34
Your degree and graduate employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many employers will recruit graduates from any discipline. • A degree has value in terms of future prospects and opportunities. • Some, but not all, graduate recruiters ask for a 2:1 minimum from their candidates. <p>Workshop activity. Read and discuss Susan and Stuart's case study and Versha's case study (pages 35 and 37). What conclusions can we draw from their stories?</p>	Articulate the skills that they are gaining/have gained through their degree.	34–38
What do people do with a degree in _____?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is useful to find out what others have done after your degree. • Using Prospects. • Understanding Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE). • Making use of LinkedIn and accessing alumni networks. • Finding and using company websites. • Remember – many employers recruit from across several disciplines. 	Identify possible career paths from their discipline.	39
What have I <i>really</i> learned in my degree?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will gain subject-specific knowledge and skills in your degree. • You will also develop your transferable skills. • What are transferable skills? • Activity 2.3, 'Evidencing your subject skills'. 	Articulate the skills that they are gaining/have gained through their degree.	40–44
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Research at least two career options which you could pursue following your degree, using one of the research methods covered in the workshop.

Write job outlines for each of the two choices. Your outlines must include the following:

- job title
- role and responsibilities
- examples of organisations that employ this role
- typical career path/route into this role
- salary range
- argument as to why this career option is (or is not) suitable for you
- your next steps based on what you have learned about this job.

WORKSHOP 3 ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Work experience is something that is talked about a lot by employers and candidates. Candidates are often saying they need it and employers are often saying that they need candidates with lots of it. We have the classic catch 22 – how do you get work experience without any work experience in the first place?!

There is no doubt that it is very important for university students to get work experience alongside their degree for lots of different reasons. Happily, university students are actually in a fantastic position to obtain excellent work experience. In fact you may never have so many different opportunities on your doorstep as you do right now.

This chapter will help you to:

- understand why work experience is important
- recognise the experience you already have
- identify new and different opportunities
- make the most of any experience you have.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- identify their existing work experience and demonstrate their understanding of its relevance to career development
- identify new opportunities for work experience
- communicate the relevance of their experiences effectively.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 3, 'Are you experienced?' (pages 45–62).
- Complete Activity 3.1, 'Recognising your skills' (page 52).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Why is work experience so important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience helps us to learn. • Experiential learning is a theory which shows how people learn from experience. • Work experience can offer: a place to experiment your future career; evidence of your passion and interests; connections to relevant people and organisations; effective preparation for applications and interviews. 	Identify their existing work experience and demonstrate their understanding of its relevance to career development.	46–49

I don't have any experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is reasonable for young people to have less work experience. • Work experience includes many things we do not class as 'work'. • Focusing on skills rather than experience can help you to identify what you have gained from previous placements. • Review the outcomes of the pre-workshop activity 3.1, 'Recognising your skills' (page 52). • Workshop activity. Read and discuss Sean and Ash's case studies (pages 48 and 50). 	Identify their existing work experience and demonstrate their understanding of its relevance to career development.	49–52
Finding new things to add to your experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time paid work. • Volunteering. • Students' Union/halls/sports. • Competitions. • Shadowing opportunities. • Working at your university or department. • Side projects. • Include a summary of opportunities currently available through your institution and how students can access this. 	Identify new opportunities for work experience.	53–57
Extended work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended work experience opportunities are valued by employers and students as they offer sustained engagement and learning. • Placement year. • Internships. • Unpaid internships – be wary. • Volunteering and working abroad schemes. 	Identify new opportunities for work experience.	57–59
Making the most of your work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform well in your work experience. • Put it on your CV/LinkedIn profile. • Match job descriptions to your transferable skills. • Reflect on your work experience: what would you do differently next time? 	Communicate the relevance of their experiences effectively.	59–62
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Introduce the idea of SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound). • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Identify a range of potential work experience opportunities as outlined in the workshop.

You should include a minimum of two potential opportunities.

For each opportunity, provide the following information:

- the name of/type of opportunity
- your next step to securing it – your statement should be SMART
- what you would get out of it
- how this would fit in with your life/studies
- what organisations you might approach for this opportunity.

WORKSHOP 4 IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, IT'S WHO YOU KNOW

You've probably heard that having a good network can open up opportunities for you in your career. But lots of people are scared of networking. This chapter will examine the benefits that a good network can offer you and suggest ways in which you can build your networks while you are at university.

This chapter will help you to:

- think about why networking matters and how it can help you to move your career forward
- consider some of the principles that underpin effective networking
- think about what kind of networking you can do as a student
- think about what kind of networking you should do once you start work.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- demonstrate their understanding of the importance of networks to career development
- identify some of the key principles behind effective networking
- articulate plans for building their network.

Pre-workshop activities

Read Chapter 4, 'It's not what you know, it's who you know' (pages 63–77).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Why network?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is a social environment; the relationships you build are relevant to your career development. • Networking is really just meeting people and building different types of relationships. • We network for a number of purposes: to find out information; to learn from others; to get and give support; to raise our profiles; and to have fun. 	Demonstrate their understanding of the importance of networks to career development.	63–66
How to network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking is not about using people for your own gains. • Some key principles of effective networking include: reciprocity; equity; authenticity; strategy; tenacity; and evaluation. 	Identify some of the key principles behind effective networking.	67–68

Overcome your fear of networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost everyone finds the idea and practice of ‘networking’ uncomfortable at first. 	Identify some of the key principles behind effective networking.	69–70
Building your network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a few tips that can help to make networking less scary: start online with people you already know; attend events with friends; research people; and prepare for conversations in advance. • As your network grows, it gets easier and easier to build upon it. • Who do you already know (family; peers; university; the rest of the world)? • Professional associations can be a useful entry point for your network. 	Articulate plans for building their network.	70–74
Networking online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember the key principles we outlined earlier (reciprocity; equity; authenticity; strategy; tenacity; and evaluation). • There are various professional networking tools that you can employ: LinkedIn; Twitter; blogs; YouTube; Instagram; and specialist networking sites. 	Identify some of the key principles behind effective networking.	75–77
Maintaining your network into the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will want to continue to develop your networks when you enter the workplace. • Tips for helping you to build your networks at work include: offer to work in different departments; socialise; find a mentor; attend industry events. • Don’t neglect your existing and university networks – as alumni you could now help students understand your world of work. 	Articulate plans for building their network.	77–78
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/ assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Sign up to LinkedIn (it's free) and build a LinkedIn profile. Your profile should include as a minimum:

- name
- a photo appropriate for your intended audience
- personal profile – a short statement explaining what you are currently doing and what you are seeking in terms of a career
- education details
- work experience details.

Research people, groups and professional associations on LinkedIn.

Request to join at least two groups or professional associations.

- Ask to connect with at least five people that are connected to you or your chosen field in some way.
- Ask to connect with the module leader for this course.

WORKSHOP 5 LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Choosing a career direction is a very personal decision that can affect a lot of different areas of your life. It deserves careful attention and thought. Researching possible jobs, careers and employers will help you to make career decisions and will give you the edge in the graduate job market.

This chapter will help you to:

- understand the importance of research
- highlight key facts that you will want to learn in your research, including what questions to ask
- identify practical and effective research strategies
- deal with information overload
- make an impact in recruitment practices.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- express clear questions about their career which can be answered through research
- demonstrate mastery of a range of approaches to researching career information
- articulate how career information can be used to inform career decisions and career building.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 5, 'Look before you leap' (pages 79–95).
- Identify a job, company or sector that you are interested in and do some initial research on it.

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Why is research so important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research can help us to understand jobs, organisations and sectors in which we might work. • Research helps us to understand our own value and position in the labour market. • Research increases our knowledge and makes us more appealing to employers. 	Articulate how career information can be used to inform career decisions and career building.	80–81

What questions should I ask?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop questions to gain an understanding of the role that you are interested in/applying for. • Develop questions to understand the business of the company that you are thinking of working for. • Develop questions to understand the industry or sector that you are thinking of working in. • Workshop activity. Write an initial PEST analysis (Activity 5.1) of a sector that you are interested in. 	Express clear questions about their career which can be answered through research.	81–85
Research strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching the web. Using the right sites and designing sophisticated searches. • Using alerts to channel information to you. • Using your network to gather career information. 	Demonstrate mastery of a range of approaches to researching career information	85–91
Making the most of your research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using information for career decisions. • Using information to succeed in recruitment. 	Articulate how career information can be used to inform career decisions and career building.	91–92
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Write a research report on a sector that you are interested in. It should include a summary of the major employers within this sector and the key jobs on offer. It should make an assessment of some of the principal opportunities and challenges facing the sector (using a PEST analysis) and conclude with a reflection on how this research has influenced your career ideas and plans.

WORKSHOP 6 SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Many students stay on after their first degree to do more study. But is this really a good idea? This chapter will examine whether postgraduate study will give you the edge and what course to choose.

This chapter will help you to:

- understand what postgraduate study is
- think about what you can get out of postgraduate study
- understand the process of applying for courses and accessing funding
- consider how to fit postgraduate study into your longer-term career aspirations.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- describe the range of postgraduate qualifications
- complete an application for a postgraduate course and associated funding
- articulate the advantages and disadvantages of postgraduate study.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 6, 'Should I stay or should I go?' (pages 97–118).
- Read the case study (pages 98–99) and consider whether you identify most with John, Wendy, Aysia or Leo.

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
What is postgraduate study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining 'postgraduate'. • The difference between postgraduate taught and postgraduate research degrees. • The key postgraduate qualifications, including PG Cert, PG Dip, PGCE, MA, MSc, MPhil, MRes, MBA, PhD and EdD. • The distinction between 'academic' and 'professional' qualifications. 	Describe the range of postgraduate qualifications.	99–106
Why do postgraduate study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not everyone has a postgraduate degree. • Consider the range of professions where postgraduate study is essential. • Will it compensate for a bad degree? • Will it guarantee me a higher salary? 	Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of postgraduate study.	106–109

	Workshop activity. Activity 6.1 (page 109), 'Pros and cons of doing a postgraduate degree'.		
Fitting postgraduate study in your life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the right course. • Deciding which university to study at. • Considering full- or part-time study. 	Complete an application for a postgraduate course and associated funding. Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of postgraduate study.	110–113
Applying for postgraduate study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a course. • Applying for a course. • Gaining funding. 	Complete an application for a postgraduate course and associated funding.	113–116
Keep thinking about your career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that you keep engaging with career development throughout your postgraduate course. 	Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of postgraduate study.	116–118
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/ assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Choose one postgraduate course that you are interested in and work through the 10 questions set out on pages 105–106. Write a short response to each question. Your response should be one to three sentences long for each question.

WORKSHOP 7 SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

This chapter will outline typical recruitment practices used by employers and provide strategies that you can use to come out on top.

This chapter will help you to:

- understand typical recruitment processes
- understand the timing of recruitment processes
- perform effectively at different types of assessment and selection
- avoid common pitfalls
- access other sources of support.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- describe common graduate recruitment processes
- demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews
- articulate what graduate recruiters are seeking through these recruitment processes.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 7, ‘Successful applications and interviews’ (pages 119–148).
- Prepare a CV and bring it to the session.

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
What are employers looking for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate recruitment is a mass exercise. • An example of a graduate recruitment processes (see case study on pages 120–121). • Don't give recruiters an excuse to reject you. 	Articulate what graduate recruiters are seeking through these recruitment processes.	120–121
What does graduate recruitment typically look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stages of the recruitment process (see page 122). • Timings for graduate recruitment. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes.	121–125
Stage 1: CV, cover letter and application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features of a CV. • Sample CV (see pages 128–129) • Cover letters • Application forms • Common errors in CVs, cover letters and applications. <p>Workshop activity. Review students' current CVs and compare with the sample CV.</p>	Describe common graduate recruitment processes. Demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews.	126–133

Stage 2: Online selection testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why recruiters use online tests. • Different types of online tests. • Common errors in online selection testing. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes. Demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews.	134–136
Stage 3: Telephone and video interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why recruiters use telephone and video interviews. • Common errors in telephone and video interviews. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes. Demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews.	136–138
Stage 4: Assessment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an assessment centre? • Why recruiters use assessment centres. • Common errors in assessment centres. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes. Demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews.	138–140
Stage 5: Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why don't organisations go straight to interview? • Typical interview format and length. • Different types of questions that you may be asked. • Common errors in interviews. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes. Demonstrate mastery of key recruitment genres such as CVs and interviews.	141–146
Stage 6: Getting a job offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do when you are offered a job. • Getting help when you get a job offer. 	Describe common graduate recruitment processes.	147–148
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Identify a job that you might apply for.

Submit a CV and covering letter for this job. Take care to tailor your application to the job that you are applying for.

Note to course leaders: If you have the time and/or facilities to do so, a mock interview or even a mock assessment centre can provide a good form of assessment for this aspect of an employability module. Alternatively, students can submit a video recording of themselves completing a 10-minute mock interview using a selection of the questions provided on pages 142–145.

WORKSHOP 8 HELP ME!

We all need help now and then. Ask anyone who is a bit further on in their career and they will no doubt be able to tell you a few stories of people who helped them to get where they are. Sometimes it is easy and natural to get the right help, maybe through family or friends. Other times it might feel as if you are quite alone and you will need to search for someone who can help you.

This chapter will help you to:

- recognise when you might need help
- understand what kind of help is available on campus and beyond
- use the help that is available effectively
- identify web resources that can help.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- identify sources of support available to them
- describe how to make effective use of the help available
- demonstrate that they understand the value of asking for help.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 8, 'Help me!' (pages 149–164).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Recognising that you need help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is common for students to need help of various kinds during their studies. • Employers value candidates who are self-aware and can make effective use of support. • Workshop activity. In pairs, talk about some common signs of someone who might need help. Have you ever needed to ask for support? 	Demonstrate that they understand the value of asking for help.	150
Who can help me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities know that students can experience difficult transitions or challenges and they offer support service to assist with most scenarios. • University careers services offer different types of support. • Workshop activity. Work through the table on pages 151–152. How would your institution be able to help you in these instances? 	Identify sources of support available to them.	151–155

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline other support services available at your institution (e.g. counselling, visa advice, disability support, etc.) • Your department or school may have support that is tailored for you. • Remember to make use of your peers and family. 		
How can I make the most of this help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things you can do to help you use help effectively: connect with services; prepare before your meeting; be clear about your expectations; be persistent when necessary; remain open and flexible; and return the favour when asked. • Workshop activity. Read and discuss Francis and Rachel's case studies (pages 156 and 159). Which principles are these case studies highlighting? 	Describe how to make effective use of the help available.	155–160
What about the world wide web?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The web offers a huge number of sites. • You can use the web for information, career tools and making connections. • Workshop activity. Ask students to identify a website that they have used for information, for career tools and for making connections. Visit the sites and discuss the relevance and usefulness of each one. 	Identify sources of support available to them.	160–162
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/ assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Explore the websites listed on pages 161–162. Identify one that you would use for information, one that you would use for career tools and one for making connections. Review the sites with the following criteria in mind.

- What support does this site offer?
- Would you recommend the site? Why/Why not?
- Will you visit the site in the future? Why/Why not?

WORKSHOP 9 THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAN B

Things don't always work out the way you plan. This is nothing to worry about. Plans inevitably have to change, develop and be reimagined as new events come to pass. This is particularly the case for students and new graduates, who typically face a lot of challenges and lucky and unlucky breaks, and who often don't have too much tying them to their original plan. Dealing with these changes, disappointments and unexpected developments is a key skill, but anticipating them is even better.

This chapter will encourage you to plan for the unexpected and get better at reacting positively to the things that surprise you. It will help you to:

- think about the things that can go wrong and consider what you can do about it
- develop a plan B (and C and maybe even D)
- notice how you are changing and think about how this might impact on your plan A
- respond to changes creatively and positively.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- describe their career plan with reference to areas of potential risk or change
- describe how they might mitigate risks and make alternative plans for themselves.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 9, 'The importance of plan B' (pages 165–79).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Preparing to fail or failing to prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes things don't go as we plan. • It's useful to take some time to consider which elements we can control, and which we can't. • Workshop activity. Read Freda's case study. 	Describe their career plan with reference to areas of potential risk or change.	168–169
Managing the risks in your career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take some time to consider the risk in your career plans. • Consider likelihood, consequence, counter-measures and mitigation. 	Describe their career plan with reference to areas of potential risk or change.	169–171
Setting up some alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the criteria for your career can help you to set up alternatives that might match some of your top criteria. • Your alternatives might be similar or very different, easy to execute or hard to manage. • Plan B (or C or D) might be something that you do while still working on Plan A. 	Describe their career plan with reference to areas of potential risk or change.	172–175

Dealing with failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with failure is an important part of career management. • A positive frame of mind can only help! • Focus on what you <i>can</i> do, rather than what you can't do. • Consider whether you can: carry on with your plan; change anything; learn anything from this situation; and turn the situation to your advantage. 	Describe how they might mitigate risks and make alternative plans for themselves.	175–177
Do you know what failure looks like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop activity. Read Freda's case study notes (pages 167 and 178) and the table of Freda's career risks (page 171). Has Freda failed to manage the start of her career? 	Describe how they might mitigate risks and make alternative plans for themselves.	177–179
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

List your top five criteria for your career.

Work through the table on page 173. Identify four plan options.

Describe to what extent each plan meets your list of criteria.

WORKSHOP 10 STARTING WORK

Congratulations! You've been offered a role and you can now start the next phase of your career! You probably feel relieved and a bit more relaxed than you have done in a little while. The whole 'find a graduate job' process can be quite tiring and relentless. So give yourself a break and celebrate with friends and family. You deserve it.

But don't get too relaxed! Getting a job is only the start of having a successful career, so there will be more to do. In this chapter we will help make the transition to work a bit easier by outlining a number of things you need to consider.

This chapter will help you to:

- consider your work contract
- prepare for your first day in your new role
- make a good impression in the first few days and beyond
- consider how you will continue your career development in work
- think about how you leave your first job.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- describe ways in which they can prepare for work
- identify behaviour that will help them to make a good impression in the workplace
- demonstrate their understanding of continuing professional development and career management.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 10, 'Starting work' (pages 181–198).

Workshop outline

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
Before you start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept the job – but not without full consideration. • Check your contract for key information such as pay, location, holidays and notice period. 	Describe ways in which they can prepare for work.	182–183
Your first day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you make a good first impression on your first day? • Consider how you will travel, how you will dress and what you will need for day one. 	Describe ways in which they can prepare for work.	183–185
Making a good impression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a few key principles to ensure that you make friends at work: be respectful; ask questions; be modest; prepare in advance; be flexible and open; and be organised. • What does professional communication look like? • Stay focused on work while at work. 	Identify behaviour that will help them to make a good impression in the workplace.	185–191

Office politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is a microcosm of the real world so you are likely to find different cultures and experiences among your colleagues. • Make an effort to understand different business processes and targets or motivations. 	Identify behaviour that will help them to make a good impression in the workplace.	191–192
Making friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are probably already pretty good at making friends, but you might feel daunted at the thought of making work friends. • Be yourself, be social and give your time and attention to others. 	Identify behaviour that will help them to make a good impression in the workplace.	193–194
Continuing your career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career management is for life! • Review and reflect on your work performance at regular intervals. • Set your own goals in addition to those set for you. 	Demonstrate their understanding of continuing professional development and career management.	194–196
Leaving your first job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's ok to want to move on. • Be clear with your organisation about what you are looking for. • Giving notice. • Leave on good terms. • Your old job is still a part of your network – treat the organisation and your former colleagues well. 	Demonstrate their understanding of continuing professional development and career management.	196–198
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/ assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	• N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Reflect on a piece of work experience, placement or job that you have had in the past. Consider the topics covered in this chapter and answer the following questions:

- What was the role/situation?
- In what ways did you do your best to make a good impression?
- Would you change any of your behaviour?

On LinkedIn, seek out a former colleague or line manager. Ask them to complete a personal recommendation for you on LinkedIn. These can add impact to your LinkedIn profile, especially when you have left an organisation on good terms.

WORKSHOP 11 IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Sometimes jobs aren't what you expect. Other times, graduates may find themselves in jobs that they never wanted in the first place. In this chapter we discuss how you can make the best of situations that are not everything that you hoped for and use them to your advantage.

This chapter will help you to:

- deal with setbacks
- turn the job that you have into the job that you want
- decide when you should stick with a job and when you should move on
- explain how to make the most of the experience that you are gaining.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this workshop students will be able to:

- articulate how they will deal with setbacks in their career planning
- decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave
- identify sources of support aimed at finalists/graduates.

Pre-workshop activities

- Read Chapter 11, 'If at first you don't succeed...' (pages 199–216).
- Complete Activity 11.1, 'Why are you where you are?' (page 201).

Workshop outline

This workshop is aimed at graduates who are under-employed or unemployed.

Handbook section	Key points to cover in your workshop and suggested activities (use this as the basis for presentation slides).	Intended Learning Outcome	Handbook page numbers
I'm just doing nothing...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we've said earlier, sometimes things don't go to plan. • Why are you where you are? • Are benefits right for you? • Get help: there are sources of help aimed at recent graduates. • Get experience and get networking. • Get a job, any job: a stop-gap job can meet some of your needs now and could turn into something else. 	<p>Articulate how they will deal with setbacks in their career planning.</p> <p>Identify sources of support aimed at finalists/graduates.</p>	200–206

Under-employment and disappointing destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the difference between a graduate job and a non-graduate job? • Job crafting. 	Articulate how they will deal with setbacks in their career planning. Decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave.	206–211
I've got a graduate job, but it isn't what I thought it would be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a graduate role is exciting, but the work may not meet your expectations. • Workshop activity. Work through the table on pages 212–213. Do any of these situations sound familiar? What can you do about it? 	Decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave.	211–213
When is the right time to move?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what your current job is offering you. 	Decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave.	213–214
How do I make the most of my experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's ok to want to move on, but what story will your career tell so far? • Use STAR technique to evidence the skills you've gained. 	Decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave.	214–215
Remember, this is just another stop on your journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the job you want is just one stop on your journey – continue to use your career management skills. 	Decide when it is time to stay in a job and when it is time to leave.	215–216
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of workshop. • Outline post-workshop activity/assessment. • Signpost next workshop. 	N/A	N/A

Post-workshop activity and assessment

Revisit your career plans within the context of the information and guidance provided in this chapter. What do you need to do next to move forward?

Write SMART goals that articulate your plans for the coming week, month and year.

USING THE HANDBOOK TO DESIGN EMPLOYABILITY MODULES AND EXTRA- CURRICULAR AWARDS

Many universities have introduced more formal curriculum-based programmes to help ensure that all students (not just the eager ones that find the careers service) are encouraged to take action on their career planning. Students in any year group will naturally be at different stages of thinking about their career and work experience. It can therefore be challenging to structure and deliver a course that will offer learning and engagement with each student individually. We feel that the handbook serves as a good basis for this type of module as it encourages students to think reflectively about their own choices and experiences, and each of the topics covered will be relevant to all students.

We provide a draft module specification which you can adapt to your institution's format to support you in developing and delivering such a module.

You can use the workshops offered in the previous section to give you the basis of the lesson plans for each of the sessions within your module.

DRAFT MODULE SPECIFICATION: EMPLOYABILITY MODULE/ EMPLOYABILITY AWARD

Aim of the module

This module focuses on career and employability learning. It will provide students with insights into the process of transition from university to work or further study. This will include an understanding of the processes of career choice and career development as well as graduate recruitment processes and the labour market.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module students will:

- be able to articulate their strengths, weaknesses, interests and values and use this self-knowledge to support their career development
- describe how the learning that they have undertaken at university will support their future career and how they can present their skills and knowledge to potential employers
- demonstrate an awareness of common transition routes and recruitment approaches and be able to produce key artefacts that support this transition (CVs, application forms, online profiles, etc.)
- demonstrate knowledge of the labour market and articulate how they might operate within it.

Summary of content

The module will cover the following topics.

- Self-reflection and self-knowledge
- The relevance of higher education to future careers
- The value of work experience
- Understanding networking
- Conducting career research
- The value of postgraduate study
- Managing recruitment processes
- Accessing help with your career
- Career planning and dealing with change
- Starting work
- Resilience and changing direction.

Methods and frequency of teaching

You can choose to organise this module/programme in a variety of ways. We have imagined it as an 11-week programme of workshops that follows the themes of each of the chapters of the book and mirrors the type of engagement, reading and assessment that one might typically find in a 10–20 credit module.

Alternatively, the sessions can be altered to fit within the timetable of an extra-curricular award programme or even a more intense ‘boot camp’ type residential programme.

Summary of assessment methods

There are a range of ways in which this kind of programme could be assessed.

One option would be to view it as a portfolio assessment using the assessment tasks set out in each of the workshops.

Other approaches to assessment could include:

- the production of a career plan, reflective statement, covering letter and CV
- using a mock assessment centre as a way to test the competencies developed through the course
- the production of a research report based around an investigation of a business or sector. Ideally this should require some direct interaction with employers and working people
- a more academic approach, which might involve setting an essay exploring the situation of graduates in the labour market or examining a more abstract question such as ‘What are graduates for’ or ‘Why do employers want graduates (and what do they want them for?)’.

Key reading

Hooley, T. and Grant, K. (2017). *You're Hired! Graduate Career Handbook: Maximise your employability and get a graduate job*. Bath: Trotman.

Also, depending on the focus of the module, it may be useful to provide students with some insights into the academic and policy debates surrounding graduate employability. The following texts offer useful starting points for this.

Artess, J., Hooley, T. and Mellors-Bourne, R. (2017). *Employability: A Review of the Literature 2012–2016*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Rich, J. (2015). *Employability: Degrees of Value*. London: HEPI.

Tomlinson, M. and Holmes, L. (2017). *Graduate Employability in Context: Theory, Research and Debate*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Further reading is given in the bibliography at the end of this guide.

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