

# Finding Graduate Jobs

## Graduate schemes

Many large national and international companies offer graduate training schemes. Graduate schemes are advertised in directories and through online sources such as Prospects, Target Jobs and The Times Top 100 resources. Companies also advertise graduate schemes on their own websites, the University of Reading Careers resource [MyJobsOnline](https://reading.targetconnect.net/home.html), and at our careers fairs on campus.

These are usually permanent jobs, but for the first year or two you’ll be undergoing a structured development programme that may include rotating around different departments, attending additional training courses, studying for professional exams and being allocated a mentor.

These can be great for your learning and profile, setting you up for an excellent career, but may be too rigid and constraining for some, and come with high expectations of your future performance, which can be overwhelming if you are less ambitious or confident.

## Thinking outside graduate schemes

You may be surprised to hear that the vast majority of graduates don’t join graduate schemes. They join organisations directly in a job. That can be in large organisations, but very many work for small or medium-sized employers (SMEs) which recruit very few recent graduates every year or so. These organisations tend to use mass market job boards such as Indeed or LinkedIn, or may prefer more cost-effective recruitment through their local university, social media and networking events. Speculative applications and word-of-mouth recommendations are also regular sources of recruits.

## Using professional bodies and professional journals

Some employers will advertise via their industry-relevant professional body and/or journal, e.g. the Chartered Institute of Marketing for jobs in marketing. See if there is a related professional body for the career area you’d like to get into and find out where and how companies in this sector advertise their vacancies.

## Using recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies operate as middle-men between the recruiter and the applicant. The recruiter pays them to find them good candidates, so there’s no charge to you as the applicant.

Agencies are really only used for jobs that are difficult to fill – either because the skills required are scarce, or the jobs aren’t particularly attractive. Due to this, they are more used to find people who are very experienced, have very specific skill sets or will take any role to help them pay the bills.

Bear in mind that the agency is there to find candidates for their client (the employer), not to find a job for you or provide you with objective advice.

Many recruitment agencies deal with specific career areas; to find ones relevant to you carry out a search on [rec.uk.com](https://www.rec.uk.com/about-us/for-jobseekers).

## Think creatively

Who do you know already, and how can they help you? For example, many graduates secure their first post-degree job by turning a part-time job, graduate internship or summer job into something longer-term, because the organisation already knows how good you are.

Alternatively apply for an entry level role, even if it doesn’t require a degree - it is quite common for some industries to initially take graduates into jobs that don’t require a degree e.g. marketing assistant, arts administrator and runner (media), as these are great first steps on the career ladders.

Build connections to find jobs that aren’t advertised. It’s easy to build a network with a little work and persistence. LinkedIn was designed for this, but don’t stop there – other social media sites, especially Twitter and Instagram are great for starting conversations. You can also go to events, such as conferences (online or in person) and get talking to people that way. We even know of someone who got their dream job by chatting to someone in a bus queue.

## Speculative applications

This means proactively contacting companies to see if they have any suitable opportunities. Speculative applications have a very, very low success rate, so is advisable as a last resort. To find an employer to approach speculatively, use a business directory such as [yell.com](https://www.yell.com/). Identify companies that you might like to work for, research them, and then write to or email them with a CV asking for a meeting to discuss possible employment opportunities.

**Two good tips:**

1. Try to find the name of a person to write to (phone if necessary).
2. Follow up with a phone call two weeks after you have sent your CV. Other options are to network or use work experience to create opportunities. LinkedIn can provide useful contacts and is a good source of local, national and global vacancies.

## When should I start looking and applying for jobs?

**It’s never too early to start researching and finding out about careers.**

* **Autumn term of your final year:** apply for graduate schemes. Be aware many closing dates have passed by the end of September, so start your research at the end of your penultimate year. Most large companies have closing dates between December and the end of February. Some large organisations (such as Deloitte) will put you through the whole recruitment process within two months of applying, which means you could have a job offer in hand before Christmas. In other cases, you may not know where you stand until the end of the Easter vacation.  
  You can also start the process of building connections and doing research.
* **3 months before your course ends:** once you have less that 3 months left in your degree you can start to apply for direct entry (normal) jobs, and any graduate schemes that are still open. A great place to start your job search for these roles is [MyJobsOnline](https://reading.targetconnect.net/), the university’s own student job site. Come and talk to a Careers Consultant to pin this down.
* **After graduation:** don’t panic as you now have the added advantage of being immediately available to work, and you can still apply for all the types of vacancy described in the paragraph above.

## Key Resources

### **General graduate recruitment**

* MyJobsOnline - [reading.ac.uk/careers/myjobsonline](https://reading.targetconnect.net/home.html)
* Target Jobs – [targetjobs.co.uk/](https://targetjobs.co.uk/)
* Gradcracker – [gradcracker.com/](https://www.gradcracker.com/)
* Milkround - [milkround.com/](https://www.milkround.com/)
* Prospects - [prospects.ac.uk/graduate-jobs](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate-jobs)
* The Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) - [rec.uk.com/about-us/for-jobseekers](https://www.rec.uk.com/about-us/for-jobseekers)
* Graduate Recruitment Bureau (GRB) – [grb.uk.com/](https://www.grb.uk.com/)

### **Employment in Berkshire**

* Berkshire Opportunities - [berkshireopportunities.co.uk/find-my-job/](https://www.berkshireopportunities.co.uk/find-my-job/)
* The Reading Chronicle - [readingchronicle.co.uk/jobs/](https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/jobs/)
* West Berkshire Council – [westberks.gov.uk/](https://westberks.gov.uk/)

### **General job websites**

* Linkedin - [linkedin.com/jobs/](https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/)
* Indeed - [indeed.co.uk/](https://www.indeed.co.uk/)
* CV Library - [www.cv-library.co.uk/](https://www.cv-library.co.uk/)
* Total Jobs - [totaljobs.co.uk/](https://www.totaljobs.com/)