Ready to explore your future?

Careers Handbook 2021

Your career starts here
Four steps to career success.

What is a graduate job?
You've heard the phrase, but what does it mean?

The perfect job application
How to get hired, from CV to interview.
This handbook was written during the spring and summer of 2020 and published in August. Our service delivery will evolve in response to the COVID-19 situation to ensure that you are in the best possible position to develop and progress your career plans. Please go to our website for the latest on how to access our services.

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Whether you’re short on time or someone who reads the last chapter of a book first, there are plenty of ways to make the most of the Careers Handbook. It’s been designed to take you from the start of your studies to the end – and beyond. So, if you’ve only got 10 minutes to spare, dive in.

Seven ways to use this handbook

1. Clueless about your career?
   Head to four steps to career success to take the first step towards your career. Follow this with connect to a world of expertise and 10 ways to get work experience while studying and you’ll have a clearer idea in no time.

2. CV a bit bare?
   Head to 10 ways to get work experience while studying. You’ll also find CV-boosting advice in start your future with the SU, get the advantage with the Nottingham Advantage Award and kick-start your career with sport.

3. Got a great business idea?
   Head to unlock your business potential to find out how to bring that idea to life.

4. Tired of being asked “what’s next?”
   Head to your Careers team, here for you and get acquainted with all the lovely people who can help you answer this question. Get clued-up on your options and hear from Nottingham students and graduates in section three.

5. Itchy feet?
   Head to stand out from the crowd with international experiences. And check out six inspiring ways to spend time out and where in the world will your degree take you?

6. How much do you want it?
   Head to section four if you’ve found a great job and want to get ahead in the application process. Extra skills can help you stand out, so find out how to get the advantage with the Nottingham Advantage Award.

7. Strapped for cash?
   Head to boost your CV and your wallet if you’re struggling to pay for your weekly food shop. Then explore get employers to take notice of your CV.
Your degree will open up a world of career opportunities. Many professions are open to graduates of any discipline, which is fantastic, but can also be a little daunting. Even careers that require a specific degree usually have various specialisms, so you will still be faced with choices to make about your future.

We want to shed some light on what you’ll need to consider when deciding what to do after your studies. We’ve identified four steps you can take, but there’s no set order in which you should do them.

Get involved: explore what’s on offer at Nottingham
- Discover new interests
- Meet more people
- Develop your skill set
- Gain work experience

Action you can take
1. Get involved with the Students’ Union (page 20)
2. Search for part-time jobs through JobZone (page 8)
3. Explore modules on the Nottingham Advantage Award (page 16)
4. Ask about Study Abroad (page 12)
5. Find out about work experience options (page 10)

Find out more on our website:
nottingham.ac.uk/careers/students
All about you: what makes you tick?

1. Talk to a careers adviser
2. Take our quick and easy online exercises – nottingham.ac.uk/careers/no-ideas
3. Chat to family and friends
4. Build your CV by recording what you’ve been involved in (page 36)

Broaden your horizons: find out what’s out there

1. Chat to recruiters about their vacancies at our fairs
2. Find out more about a sector at Spotlight On events
3. Explore your further study options (page 24)
4. Get career insights from a mentor (page 22)
5. Set up your own business with help from the Ingenuity Lab (page 32)

Achieve your goal: secure a job, PhD, or masters

1. Get advice on the recruitment process (pages 36 to 51)
2. Book a place on our job-hunting workshops
3. Get job-hunting tips from a career mentor (page 22)
4. Talk to recruiters at fairs about what they look for in applicants
Your Careers team, here for you

Whether you know where your future lies or are undecided, our team is committed to helping you on your way to a career you love, and making the most of your time at Nottingham.

Talk to us

It’s your future – talk to us about your ideas and we’ll support you to make decisions about the next step.

- Our staff are based on Jubilee, Sutton Bonington and University Park campuses, and at Queen’s Medical Centre
- We offer regular face-to-face and online advice sessions. Just turn up or go online for a drop-in session or book an appointment to suit you: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/appointments
- If you’ve got a quick question, tweet us or send a private Facebook message: @UoNCareers or CareersUoN
Explore your options
Find your passion – explore jobs and sectors in person and online.
- Talk to people in the know at our Spotlight On events. Hear from professionals about their jobs: what they do on a daily basis, the highs and the lows: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/spotlighton
- Take your research online – watch videos and get advice on our website: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/typesofjobs

Find graduate roles and internships
Discover internships and graduate jobs – talk to companies targeting Nottingham students.
- There are plenty of occasions when you can talk to employers about their opportunities at our online and face-to-face career events nottingham.ac.uk/careers/events
- On MyCareer, you’ll find hundreds of graduate jobs and internships in the UK and overseas mycareer.nottingham.ac.uk/students

Sharpen your skills
Make a successful application – hone your skills and get the course or job offer you want.
- We can help your application stand out during the recruitment process for jobs, internships and postgraduate study. Attend our workshops on application forms, interviews and assessment centres
- Get a head start by going online for top tips from our staff on acing the recruitment process: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/furtherstudy or nottingham.ac.uk/careers/applications

A huge thank you!

“I recently secured an industrial placement with GSK and I wouldn’t have been able to manage this without your help. I found the workshops, drop-ins and meetings really helpful and you were always friendly.”

Dianthi Edirisooriya
BSc Economics

A huge thank you!
Boost your CV and your wallet

Does your bank balance look depleted after the first two weeks of term? Getting a part-time job will give your finances a boost and do wonders for your CV.

The JobZone team advertise part-time, casual and temporary jobs on campus and with local businesses. Created just for you, we advertise vacancies that can fit around your studies and other commitments. Find all the latest vacancies on the Unitemps website.

What can you do?

We advertise vacancies throughout the year, giving you complete flexibility over when you work and what you do. Some roles don’t need any previous experience.

You could get experience in:

- Administration, for example, data entry, reception, and admin support
- Events and hospitality, including working as waiting staff, bar staff and house-keepers
- Specialist roles such as marketing, design, IT, engineering and web design
- Translation and other roles requiring foreign language skills
- Student helper roles for focus groups, photo and video shoots, promotional work, market research...
  ... and many more!

Spruce up your CV first

Book an appointment with the Careers team to have your CV reviewed at a time to suit you: mycareer.nottingham.ac.uk

Your next steps

1. Register at unitemps.com
2. Upload your CV
3. Apply for vacancies that suit your skills, availability, and interests
4. If you get through the initial application stage, we will contact you to find out more about you and tell you about the position
5. After further shortlisting, we will contact you about the next steps

Are you an international student?

Students from outside the European Union are usually permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours a week during term-time and full-time outside term-time. For further questions about eligibility to work in the UK, please contact the Visa and Immigration Team: nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/advisers

You can use your experience through us to complete the part-time jobs module on the Nottingham Advantage Award. See page 16.
"Be open minded! There are always interesting opportunities if you look around a bit.

I recommend looking at jobs with casual or flexible working hours, as these are easiest to fit around lectures and studying. And finally, you don’t lose anything through applying for a job. Doing applications, writing cover letters and going to interviews all provide good experience."

Katy Skillen
MNutr Nutrition and Dietetics

Job roles: casual bar staff and student blogger

"I carried out a number of roles through JobZone as a great way to gain extra income and build up my CV.

I now feel more confident in applying for graduate positions as I know I have a lot of experiences to talk about. It is also much easier to answer competency questions at interviews when you have a wide range of experiences in different sectors to draw examples from."

Victoria Pownall
BSc Mathematics

Job roles: administration and catering staff

"I was able to meet and interact with other international students and had the privilege of discovering new places around campus that I had never been before.

Having a part-time or temporary job while studying always looks great on your CV as it shows your enthusiasm, initiative and hands-on experience. You can also realise strengths and skills you didn’t even know you had."

Abigail Hernandez
PhD Health Studies

Job roles: student ambassador
You’ve heard the word internship a lot. You might have even been told that it’s a CV must-have to get a job.

In some industries this is true – most law and finance firms offer structured schemes, for example – yet often you can substitute internship with ‘work experience,’ ‘placement,’ ‘part-time job,’ and ‘volunteering’.

The real CV must-have is experience.

Don’t you need experience to get experience though? Not at Nottingham! We offer lots of different ways to get experience. Take your pick:

1. **Nottingham Internship Scheme**
   Apply for summer and spring internships with local small to medium-sized companies.

2. **Nottingham Consultancy Challenge**
   A four-week group project helping a local organisation solve a real business problem.

6. **Optional Placement Year**
   Explore a career of interest to you, build professional skills and ease the transition into working life.

7. **Gain a position with the Students’ Union**
   With nearly 300 societies and sports clubs, there are plenty of positions to fill and ask about volunteering too.
A perfect way to build my CV

"As an international student with no prior work experience, I started applying for jobs and realised the importance of work experience to strengthen my job applications. During an appointment with the Careers team, I came across the Nottingham Consultancy Challenge (NCC). As I read up more about the NCC, I realised it was the perfect way to build my CV. My biggest takeaway from the Challenge is the opportunity of working with a real client and getting insights into the world of business.

Apart from working on a real-life project, NCC helped me develop key skills like project management, teamwork and delivering effective presentations. These skills are crucial in any field and career path."

Devashree Vaidya
MSc Work and Organisational Psychology

Your next steps
Explore these opportunities and more on our work experience pages.
nottingham.ac.uk/careers/workexperience

Digital Marketing Academy
The Academy offers you the chance to learn from, and be inspired by, industry professionals

Postgraduate Placements Nottingham
Get a paid, flexible-hours placement with employers from local businesses to multi-nationals

Insight into Healthcare
Observe a healthcare scientist at work to help you decide if this is the career for you

Internship abroad
Find out about the International Work Experience Grant to help with the costs of working overseas

Part-time jobs with JobZone
Take on paid work on campus in the local area to fit around your studies

Work shadowing
Get a flavour of someone’s responsibilities and job activities by spending a few days with them
Do you aspire to be a global graduate? Do you want to enhance your employability while travelling the world? Do you dream of having an international career? If yes, then studying or working abroad during your degree can help you on your way.

Studying or working abroad can make you more employable and give you a competitive advantage when entering the globalised workplace. You will develop increased confidence as you settle into a new culture and make friends, while facing the challenges of studying within a new academic setting and potentially in another language.

Read on for six ways that past students have boosted their employability while abroad.

1. Communicate across cultures

“I studied at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia during my third year. Studying abroad has enabled me to grow in confidence and learn so much more about myself. I was able to test myself in new situations and adapt to a different way of living. It made me more independent which I think has helped greatly on my return to the UK. Spending time abroad required a lot of planning and forward thinking, especially during non-term time when I was travelling. This developed my organisation skills which will help me in my future career.

Studying abroad gave me opportunities to not only grow as a person, but also advance my CV and increase my employability. Working alongside people from all over the world developed my communication skills and has given me an international network of contacts that I think will be very useful later in my career.”

Edward Taylor
MSci Chemistry
Monash University
"My experiences abroad have broadened my horizons and shown me just how much I can achieve."

“I spent a term of my second year studying at Oregon State University. This was something that was initially massively out of my comfort zone. However, it also turned out to be one of the best decisions I’ve ever made; I met amazing people, travelled all over and had experiences I would never have had otherwise.

I also now feel much more confident, having had to rely solely on myself, on the other side of the world and just throw myself into meeting people. Since returning home, I’ve been told how I’ve changed several times. My communication skills have definitely improved, as someone who is usually quite shy, and this will be incredibly useful as I enter the working world. Studying abroad has been an invaluable experience and I would recommend it to anyone!”

Charlotte Smith
BSc Geography
Oregon State University
Adapt to new environments

“My study abroad experience was simply fantastic! I studied at Oregon State University in the USA. I’d say my favourite thing about the whole experience was the content of study. All my classes were extremely insightful, I never missed a class. I met so many wonderful people who really welcomed me into the campus community. My time studying abroad has also helped me to improve my networking and communication skills.

Likewise, it’s presented me with opportunities to problem solve and adapt to new challenges and working environments. Making the decision to study abroad was one I will never forget. I truly feel as though it gave me the opportunity to become more independent and enhance my career skills and prospects.”

Olamide Ajayi
BA Criminology and Sociology
Oregon State University

Showcase your resilience

“I enrolled in the UZH International Summer School programme in Switzerland because I wanted to study something completely left-field from my degree. The summer school allowed me to explore subjects such as sociology, history and economics – normally beyond my reach due to my life sciences background. Studying abroad has demonstrated to employers that I am willing and able to cope with change as well as giving me the opportunity to discover new interests.

I immersed myself in the Swiss way of life: including the many languages and gastronomy. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to share these exciting moments with students from across the globe.”

Cecilia Silva
MSci Biochemistry and Genetics
University of Zurich
The Nottingham Advantage Award runs two modules for Study Abroad participants to help you reflect on your time away. Unsure how to sell your new skills on your CV? This is a must.

Maximise your opportunities

"Due to my love of travel I always knew I wanted to study abroad and so applied for a degree with a mandatory year abroad. While overseas all of my travel took place during the academic year, developing my time management skills considerably. I had to plan around weekends, national holidays, vacation periods and lectures to efficiently optimise my time and visit the maximum number of countries. These skills have proved essential for my third year as I have managed to balance two jobs, society commitments, volunteering and my studies. This may not have been possible without the experience of juggling my obligations and passions during my year abroad.

My decision to study abroad was without a doubt one of the best decisions I have ever made, and I am confident the skills, experiences and friendships I obtained in Malaysia will last a lifetime.”

Emily Doyle
BSc International Management
University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus

Broden your horizons

“Spending six months on the other side of the world seemed like an impossible undertaking for a shy home bird, like myself. However, it was the best experience I have ever had! While at the University of Western Australia, I made so many new friends from all around the world and saw breathtaking landmarks. Before heading out I knew little of what to expect but planning my trips with new found friends made the experience even more exciting.

Starting a fresh at a new university comes with its difficulties. It is wise to be prepared to improve your time management and discipline with completing work during the week to allow time to explore your new country! Completing long hours of work during weekdays saved time on weekends for exploring.

Studying abroad not only gave me fabulous memories, friends and my first experience travelling but improved my confidence tremendously. It allowed me to have new experiences which without the University-wide exchange programme, I would have never been brave enough to organise myself. This experience taught me that I could achieve more than I would have previously thought, and cope well in new situations. This really will make career changes and future challenges easier.”

Mary Burton
BSc Agriculture and Livestock Science
Western Australia

Your next steps

Find out more about Study Abroad: nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad
Get the advantage with the Nottingham Advantage Award

Gaining the skills employers want has been made simple with the Nottingham Advantage Award. The scheme fits around your course, can connect you with employers, and is a great opportunity to meet new friends.

Your Advantage, your choice
The Award recognises and rewards your extracurricular activities, and with more than 130 modules to choose from, you are sure to find something that suits your interests.

To name just a few opportunities, you could develop leadership skills, learn a language, practise mentoring or volunteer in the local community. It’s also accredited by the University, which means your achievements will be printed on your transcript when you graduate.

To achieve the full Award, you need to complete 30 credits, and to ensure your studies come first, you can take only a maximum of 20 credits a year. This means the earlier you register, the better.

#get30

“...allowed me to explore different career paths, helped me narrow down my options and focus in on my goals, to find the career path I want to follow in the future.”
A variety of experiences
As part of my degree, I undertook the Careers and Employability for Economists module in my first year. I also applied to the Nottingham Consultancy Challenge and Capital One’s module, Business Decision Making. Capital One’s module held advanced sessions on using Excel, which I found difficult at first but with practice I improved for the final presentations in front of Capital One leaders.

Developing skills
Capital One’s module allowed me to gain Excel modelling skills alongside learning memo writing, while the Nottingham Consultancy Challenge developed teamwork, communication skills, adaptability to deal with changing client needs and innovation to create new solutions to problems. At the end of each module there was a reflection task, allowing us to highlight areas of self-improvement.

Real world insights
The Award gave me a unique understanding of how businesses operate, and this knowledge will better equip me for my immediate new role as President of Nottingham Entrepreneurs, where my team must negotiate with businesses and industry professionals. I secured a part-time role as a proprietary trader as I demonstrated confidence in handling and managing data from my experience on the Award.

Looking ahead
I am still unsure precisely what I would like to do as a career, but the Award gave me a terrific opportunity to demonstrate a wide array of applicable and desired skills to any employer in interviews.

Sebastian Thomas
BSc Economics

Your next steps
View the full range of modules online and find out how to apply:
nottingham.ac.uk/careers/advantage
Kick-start your career with sport

Sport can produce successful candidates when it comes to the graduate employer market. The skills gained in the sporting environment whether participating or volunteering, are transferable to job applications, interviews and the workplace. Employers are aware of this, we’re aware of this, but are you? Don’t take our word for it, let the research show you...

University of Nottingham Report – ‘Student Involvement in Sports and the Positive Impact on Graduate Outcomes’ (2019-20)

11.8% higher average salaries for males and females involved in sport at university with lower levels of academic achievement

73% of employers stated that a student’s involvement in sports, could make a difference in a hiring decision

5.6% improvement in the graduate prospects of males with involvement in team-based sports

3.5% increase in prospects of female graduates who are sports club members

Teamwork, interpersonal skills and problem-solving came out on top as the three most important skills from the ISE study ‘What Do Employers Want’

Graduates across all faculties involved in sport had an increase in average wages to those graduates without a sports membership
As someone who works in the Careers and Employability Service, I would always recommend having more than just your academic capabilities to talk about at interview. What makes you stand out from the crowd?

Having been involved in the rugby team throughout my time at university, I know the direct impact sport can have when applying to jobs and graduate schemes alike. Playing rugby at university, captaining the first XV in my final year and having the role of social secretary gave me an abundance of specific examples to reference when applying for jobs.

For example, from my experiences with the rugby team I learnt that I enjoyed being involved in projects that worked with lots of people and shared ideas, as opposed to a more individual working environment. Developing my leadership skills as captain and having specific examples of resolving conflict within the team during captaincy enabled me to use these at job interviews.

My top tips:
1. **Be proactive in being reflective** on your experiences. What have you learned? What worked well? How could you use this skill in your future career?
2. **Keep a record of specific examples** throughout your university journey to use in interviews
3. **Don’t wait until it’s too late** to get involved with University of Nottingham Sport. The earlier you start the more advantage you can take of the experiences on offer.

All these tips will help you when game point arrives. Will you use them to smash your first interview and get your career off to a flying start?

**Ash Watts**
Professional Services Projects Officer

In my first year, I joined the Laureus Sport for Good programme where I went into a local primary school once a week for six weeks. We provided fun sports sessions alongside a social action project where we created care packages for homeless people in Nottingham.

I found that delivering sessions to children really boosted my self-confidence and allowed me to practise speaking to and engaging large groups but without the pressure of them being other adults. Working in a team is also an important skill in many careers, so it was helpful to create and deliver the sessions with the help of other volunteers as you need to know when to delegate roles and allow other people to take the lead. I really enjoy volunteering and I have done it for years, so combining my passion for sports with helping others is a perfect way to spend my free time.

I would recommend either joining a sports team or volunteering through the Sports Leadership Academy because it is an easy and fun way to boost your employability by practising important careers skills.

**Mathilde Tighe**
BSc Geography

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**Your next steps**
Find out how you can get involved in sport: nottingham.ac.uk/sport
Start your future with the SU

Your Students’ Union (SU) is here throughout your degree and beyond, with opportunities to discover your passion, excel at it, and make your CV outstanding.

Whether you’re part of our societies, sports clubs and annual Varsity event, or trying your hand at volunteering with one of the many local and national opportunities on offer, your SU has something for you.

Why not consider taking on a representation role such as a course or education rep, Halls of Residence rep, a member of the Democratic Procedures Committee or an officer, to make real positive changes for your fellow students.

Getting involved in your SU can help you:
- work as part of a team
- develop your leadership skills
- manage budgets and test your financial skills
- make a positive impact on people and their communities
- discover your hidden talents

Your next steps
Find out more about the SU:
- su.nottingham.ac.uk
- UofNSU
- @UoNSU

Looking for a society? Try the Activity Matchmaker: uonsu-activities.co.uk
"I can safely say that the Students’ Union has added an incredible amount to my university experience. It has allowed me to interact with so many different kinds of people, from new starters in Welcome Week while being a Welcome Mentor to the elderly community when I took part in the Clicksilver mentoring scheme. I know that I have learnt invaluable interpersonal skills which will help me in the future. Overall, the SU has not only enriched my university career but has allowed me to develop skills I didn’t even know I had which are going to help me in any future employment."

Harriet Swift
BA English

"After getting involved in the Students’ Union, I wanted to do more and found myself on three committees, part of the education network and part of the democratic procedures committee.

I also decided to complete the Nottingham Advantage Award, which included taking the Student Leaders module run by the Students’ Union. The modules gave me a head start in terms of preparing myself for graduate schemes and internships.

Engaging with the various activities the Students’ Union has to offer has really enhanced my employability as well as greatly complementing my social and academic experience at university."

Jessica Vassena
BA History and East European Cultural Studies

"I started working for the Students’ Union at the beginning of my second year and it was the best thing I’ve done at university. Now that I am coming to the end of my degree and sending out job applications, I see how many useful skills I’ve gained through the Students’ Union. My communication, confidence, organisation and interpersonal skills are so much stronger for having worked there. In addition to transferable skills, the nature of the organisation also opens so many doors.

The Union is a charity but also a political body at the University, therefore the charity, local and national government and higher education sectors all see working here as experience. It’s a highly diverse organisation and working there has given me as much as my degree."

Chloe Durack-Robinson
BA History

"I know that I have learnt invaluable interpersonal skills which will help me in the future. Overall, the SU has not only enriched my university career but has allowed me to develop skills I didn’t even know I had which are going to help me in any future employment."

Harriet Swift
BA English
Career Mentoring offers you the opportunity to be mentored by a member of our alumni community for four months. Mentors can share their experiences of life after university, provide professional and personal insights, as well as practical employability advice.

Our career mentors can help you feel confident and prepared to embark on graduate life.
Anisha, mentee

“As my mentor had done a PhD in film and had a film consultation business, it gave me a chance to learn about this area as a potential career path. My mentor was keen on me directing the mentoring process so was happy to discuss or go over any areas that I wanted to learn more about or develop my skills in. He was very encouraging and open to any questions that I had. Overall, the experience was very beneficial.”

Anisha Johal
MA English Literature

Keith, mentor

“I gain fulfilment by helping and inspiring others to achieve their goals and find it incredibly rewarding. The Career Mentoring programme has given me the opportunity to inspire students to overcome personal and professional challenges, break through self-limiting beliefs and achieve their academic and professional goals.”

Keith Bound
Narrative Design and Audience Engagement Consultant

Hong Nhung, mentee

“My mentor prepared carefully to help me on my career progression. He spent time listening to my difficulties, gave me sound advice for my career plan and asked me to work on specific skill and competency areas. In my opinion, mentoring is more than giving advice or conveying knowledge. As a result of taking part in Career Mentoring, I applied and became Student Ambassador of Highered EFMD Shared Career Services. I hope to stay in touch with my mentor in the future.”

Hong Nhung Nguyen
MSc Human Resource Management and Organisation

Your next steps

Find out more about the benefits and how to apply: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/mentoring
Taking your studies to the next level

Whether you are passionate about your subject and want to delve deeper or have a career in mind where a higher level qualification is desired or required, you’ll need the lowdown on postgraduate study.

Your career ambitions
For some career areas, further study is a minimum requirement for entry into a profession, such as teaching and law. A PhD is now essential if you want to pursue an academic career.

In other career areas, such as journalism, and marketing, a masters – although not essential – can be advantageous. The same is true if you’re looking to become a patent attorney: a PhD is not a requirement but it is desirable.

Developing your expertise
You may be motivated to continue your studies because you have a passion for your subject or want to specialise in a particular area.

Depending on your longer-term career direction, a higher level qualification may be attractive to a future employer – for example, within the scientific or engineering fields. A postgraduate diploma in brewing will lead to opportunities within the food and drink industry and a life science PhD will be attractive to employers in the pharmaceutical sector.

Potential financial rewards
Postgraduate study can be an investment in your future. For example:

- the median salary of Nottingham students graduating with a PhD is £32,915
- the median average salary for PhD graduates is 38% higher than for first-degree graduates
- the median salary among those graduating from taught masters courses is £24,289

* Known destinations of all full-time UK and EU leavers in full-time employment in 2016/17

Your next steps
Check out our website for information about applying for a masters or PhD, and funding options: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/furtherstudy
Enhancing my career aspirations

“I decided to apply for a postgraduate course after realising that I wanted to build a career in biotechnology. I took into consideration many other possibilities before settling on a masters degree.

My decision was based on the fact that a masters degree can provide me with not only important theoretical knowledge, but also with practical experience and industrial placement opportunities. Finding a course which offered extensive work experience was a priority, and I think it was crucial for me that I identified what my needs were before embarking on my search.

When I finally narrowed down my course choices, it was time to work on my application, and I started by making an appointment with a career adviser. The Careers team had already helped me when I needed advice on deciding what to do after my degree, and as always, their help was very useful.”

Radu Andro
BSc Biochemistry and Genetics

Fact file

A fantastic opportunity

“Halfway through my fourth year of my MSci degree, I still hadn’t a clue as to what career I wanted, I decided to talk to my supervisor about what PhD options were being offered in the School of Chemistry.

By far the best option was the Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in sustainable chemistry, funded by the EPSRC. This programme differs from the conventional PhD in that the first year is a ‘training year’, allowing you to build up your knowledge and confidence before venturing into the lab. In addition, the programme offers fantastic opportunities to gain and refine skills. The benefits of the course sold me, and - to my complete surprise - my application was successful.

If, like me, you are unsure or have an open mind as to what to do after your studies then the Careers and Employability Service go to great lengths to help you assess your options.”

Luke Francis
PhD Sustainable Chemistry

Finding a PhD

- Use websites such as FindPhD.com
- Opportunities are advertised as Doctoral Training Programmes (DTP or DTC)
- Search university job websites

Applying for a PhD

- There is no central admissions system
- Before making an application, discuss opportunities with a supervisor with experience in the area that interests you
- Complete an application form including an outline of your research proposal. If successful at this stage, you’re likely to be called for an interview. Any offer will be subject to securing funding

Funding a PhD

- The main UK source is the Government through research councils, charities and industry
- There may be specific awards for international students offered by higher education institutions
- Apply for £26,445 Postgraduate Doctoral Loans in England and Wales
- Charities: use the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding – nottingham.ac.uk/careers/funding

Fact file

Finding a course

- Use websites such as FindAMasters.com
- Browse university online prospectuses

Applying for a course

- For most courses, there are no central admissions. Apply directly to individual universities. For popular courses, apply before December but for other courses, applications close when the places are filled
- Courses with central admissions systems include graduate entry into medicine, law and teaching. There will be a specific deadline for applications

Funding a course

- There are postgraduate masters loans available across the UK
- Professional training bursaries
- Employer-funded scholarships and grants from universities or charities
- Professional and Career Development Loans
- Charities – use the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding – nottingham.ac.uk/careers/funding
What exactly is a graduate job?

You hear it a lot. But what does the phrase ‘graduate job’ actually mean? A graduate job can be defined in several ways but here are just two: it can be a job for which a degree is the minimum entry requirement or a job that a graduate does.

**Fact file**

**The direct entry route**

- **What is direct entry?**
  - Often single vacancies with immediate start dates

- **Who offers them?**
  - Companies of any size and sector
  - Small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) recruit significant numbers of graduates. These firms make up 99% of all UK private-sector businesses
  - In some sectors SMEs dominate and so direct entry is the route in. For example, within public relations, digital marketing and the environmental sector

- **When and how to apply?**
  - Apply after the spring vacation so you could start after your exams
  - The recruitment process is likely to involve a CV or application form and an interview

- **Where to find vacancies?**
  - Industry body’s job boards, for example, Institute of Practitioners in Advertising: ipa.co.uk
  - National and specialist press such as the New Scientist: jobs.newscientist.com
  - National job sites, for example, Indeed: indeed.co.uk
  - Recruitment agencies such as Gradcracker: gradcracker.com
  - LinkedIn, the professional network: linkedin.com
  - Book an appointment with a careers adviser to explore specialist vacancy sources: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/appointments

“The direct entry route provided a wider range of local opportunities in comparison to graduate schemes, which often require you to relocate. Looking for employment outside of graduate schemes also helped to identify roles that I didn’t realise were available but matched perfectly with my skills and career goals.

In my job I research police performance and crime data, which aligns with my degree subject and area of interest. It felt empowering to be given responsibility for projects almost immediately. I have had the chance to design and produce bespoke analytical products for senior colleagues that inform wider decision-making.

The most important benefit of the job for me is flexibility. The organisation operates on a flexi-working basis, which allows me to start and finish outside of the ‘9-5’ day depending on my other commitments.

Another important benefit for me is the opportunity for progression. Learning and development is taken seriously, and progression is actively encouraged. It certainly feels like I’m at the start of a career, not just a job.

Sophie Jennings
BA Criminology and Sociology
I chose a graduate scheme primarily because of their focus on supporting both personal and professional development. Lots of graduate schemes offer invaluable opportunities which help to serve as a great foundation for the beginning of your career.

For my cohort the application process involved a first stage online application, a half-day assessment centre consisting of a written task, group work and a presentation, and the process was finalised with an interview.

I have been working in the Adult Social Care (ASC) Department supporting the remodelling of the service, and my responsibilities have included communications to all ASC staff, handling large sets of data, contributing to reports and the setting up of a staff talent programme.

If you are considering applying for a graduate scheme, I would advise researching the organisation, looking into their history, their core values and beliefs, their aims for the future, and of course, what they’re doing in the present. Find out what challenges the organisation is currently facing and consider how you would be valuable in helping to meet these challenges.”

Jessica Tomlinson
BA English

Fact file
Graduate training schemes

What are they?
■ A structured period of training lasting between one and three years
■ There are general management schemes where you move around the business and then specialise
■ There are functional schemes where you specialise from day one, for example HR, IT and supply chain management

Who offers them?
■ Companies across a range of sectors including the public sector, accountancy, engineering, IT and telecommunications, retail and pharmaceuticals

When and how to apply?
■ Half of the UK’s leading employers now recruit graduates all year round
■ For employers with a single deadline, most are either November, December or January
■ The recruitment process is likely to include an application form, psychometric tests, interviews and an assessment centre

Where to find vacancies?
■ Attend our recruitment fairs and talk to recruiters directly: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/events
■ MyCareer, our vacancy job board: mycareer.nottingham.ac.uk
■ Graduate directories such as The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers (available free from our offices)
■ Use the vacancy sources listed under the direct entry route

Next steps
Visit our website at nottingham.ac.uk/careers/graduatejobs
Launch your career with a Knowledge Transfer Partnership

Want to apply your knowledge and create transformative impact in a real-world project?

Do you want to join one of the largest graduate recruiters in the UK?
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) offer you the opportunity to apply your academic knowledge to real-world challenges. They are a three-way partnership between an organisation, a university and a graduate or postgraduate (known as a KTP Associate). Projects are varied, spanning all academic disciplines and organisations of any size and in any industry.

As a KTP Associate you can expect:
- To take ownership of a project that is central to an organisation's strategic growth and development. Acting as the bridge between academia and industry, you'll get a unique insight into both worlds by transferring the latest academic thinking into an organisation.
- Gain real commercial experience by being based in the partner organisation. You'll see first-hand how the business operates and understand the commercial thinking behind your project.
- Full support of an academic team and the organisation to help you deliver your project.
- Access to a substantial training and development package to support your professional and personal development.
- The opportunity to gain further professional qualifications.

A KTP has over 300 project opportunities each year - what are you waiting for?

A bridge between academia and industry

“I am a KTP Associate working on a collaborative project between the University of Nottingham and Fullflow Group Limited (FGL). The project goal is to bring the latest technologies developed in my field to FGL, enabling the business, as innovators, to maintain their position at the forefront of the drainage systems industry.

Have you ever asked yourself if you want to continue in academia or move into industry and build a new career? Well I have many times.

As a KTP Associate, I act as the bridge between both worlds. The majority of my project is spent at the company allowing me to transfer and embed new knowledge while also working closely with an academic team. The KTP scheme is a perfect example of giving Associates the opportunity to experience working in both dimensions, and observing projects from both a commercial and academic perspective.”

Abdelaziz Fadoul
KTP Associate at the University of Nottingham

Next steps
Find out more about KTP and access the latest opportunities: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/ktp
Six inspiring ways ... to spend time out

Taking time out can offer great personal and professional opportunities. You might take anything from a couple of months to over a year – how long isn’t important, it’s how you spend it. Decide what you want to accomplish.

1

The developer

An internship could be the career stepping stone you’ve been looking for. Competitive industries like the media often view these short gigs as a rite of passage. Equally, if you keep hearing “great application, but not enough experience,” figure out what experience employers want. Whether it’s developing soft skills or learning something technical, this is a great way to focus your time.

Try thinking differently. You could cultivate project management ability by planning a trip to Everest Base Camp or develop coding ability with a free Codeacademy course.

2

The linguist

What better way to learn a language than to immerse yourself among native speakers? Travel is one of the most common reasons to take time out – for lots of obvious reasons – just don’t treat it as an extended holiday. Plan your time carefully. If you want to learn a language, why not teach yours while you’re out there too? Teaching English as a Foreign Language is a great way to get to know the locals, contribute to the community, and earn money.
Your next steps

If you’re not sure what you want to do, work experience is a great way to investigate some options. Dip your toe in the office water cooler and find out if it quenches your thirst. If it doesn’t, at least you’ve ruled something out. Set up a series of short-term internships, try out different sectors, and decide what interests you.

The pick-and-mixer

If your response to each suggestion has been yes, yes, and yes, the good news is that you don’t have to just pick one. In fact, by taking a pick and mix approach, you might get more out of your time out than by restricting yourself to just one thing. Think beyond what you want to do. What do you want to achieve? By setting some objectives it could help you decide which ideas to progress with, and in what combination.

The taster

If you’re not sure what you want to do, work experience is a great way to investigate some options. Dip your toe in the office water cooler and find out if it quenches your thirst. If it doesn’t, at least you’ve ruled something out. Set up a series of short-term internships, try out different sectors, and decide what interests you.

Plan made and ready to go?

Keep a time-out travelogue – record your experiences, the skills you’ve developed, and the lessons you’ve learned. This will help you reflect later, ensuring you can talk about it effectively with employers when the time comes.

Your next steps

Find out more about taking time out and how to talk to employers about it: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/students/yearout

The impact-maker

Volunteering is a great way to give back and gain skills. There are lots of organisations that need your support and commitment, so take some time to think about what cause is close to your heart. Volunteering can be as challenging as it is rewarding, so think about what motivates you. Maybe you want to support your local community? Are you hoping to work in the charity sector? Has a news appeal for help piqued your interest?

The adventurer

If you’ve been bitten by the travel bug, backpacking is an exhilarating way to explore the world. You’ll get to put your planning and budgeting skills to work. Consider where you want to go and what you want to learn – think less aimless roamer, more intrepid explorer. Take time to immerse yourself in the local lifestyle and consider picking up some part-time work along the way. If a round-the-world trip isn’t the ticket for you, consider a seasonal job – summer and winter resorts are a way to get experience in a more structured environment.
Unlock your business potential

The Ingenuity Lab offers a friendly and inspiring environment where students and alumni can explore their business ideas and start up their own enterprise. From monthly surgeries and group seminars to designated workstations and an internship scheme, the Lab will provide you with the resources, inspiration and insight to progress your ideas and get your business off the ground.

Our experienced business mentors will provide you with valuable insights on how to kick-start your venture and provide confidential advice in areas such as law, accounting, marketing and brand development.

Membership
The Ingenuity Lab offers three types of membership:

Venture Membership for students and alumni of the University of Nottingham

Academic Membership designed for students enrolled on the Haydn Green Institute’s postgraduate courses

Witty Scholar Membership for students in receipt of a core bursary who have an interest in setting up their own business

Established at the University in 2016, the Ingenuity Programme is a business competition for students or alumni from participating universities.

Ingenuity is a network of over 20 leading universities, corporates, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as public and third sector organisations. We work together to tackle key social and environmental issues.

If you have a great business idea that could change the world we live in, would like to collaborate with innovators across the UK, Ingenuity could be the perfect platform for you.

Find out more at ingenuityimpact.org
The businesses creating impact

Be inspired by businesses that have been supported by the Ingenuity Lab.

James Doherty
TyFy.co
BA Philosophy

James Doherty graduated in 2017 and has been based at the Ingenuity Lab ever since, developing his student peer mentoring app TyFy.co. The app provides a digital solution for pastoral issues and academic anxiety, and already counts a number of British universities among its clients.

“The surgeries and seminar series – providing advice from people who have been there and done that – are great.”

Anika Vassell
Teen-Behaviour.com
PGCE, Society Health and Development

Anika Vassell joined the Ingenuity Lab in 2014 as she wanted to develop a support service for parents who have children aged between nine and 19. Teen-Behaviour.com started out by offering support to local families and is now delivering training courses for companies across the East Midlands to address employee productivity.

“The pathway to entrepreneurship is a precarious one, full of wonderful highs, lows and continual challenge. The facilities and support from the team at the Ingenuity Lab have provided me with guidance, encouragement, care and the stability needed to help with growing my business.”

Asma Iqbal joined the Lab after taking part in the Ingenuity19 competition and has gained valuable support in developing her ideas into a viable business. She runs My Success Story, an interactive online video course provider, providing guidance and life-coaching tools.

“I sought help from the Ingenuity Lab, which immediately offered me support. With access to mentors, surgeries, roundtables and a larger community of budding entrepreneurs, being part of the Lab really boosted my confidence and made my journey real.”

Your next steps

For more information about the Ingenuity Lab and how to become a member: nottingham.ac.uk/ingenuity-lab
Where in the world will your degree take you?

Whether you’re a UK student considering a career abroad, or an international student returning home or seeking a role in a different country, we’ll help you turn your jet-setting ideas into a reality.

Your next steps
Passport Career and other resources can be found on our continent-specific webpages along with links to job sites, agencies and company listings.
nottingham.ac.uk/careers/workingabroad
Use your network

Taking advantage of the network of friends and colleagues you make through university may hold the key to unlocking your overseas work opportunities. This personal approach to job hunting could help you beat the odds.

“Ever since I could remember, I wanted to live and work in another country to gain as much experience of other people and places as I could. Being a research scientist makes this a very accessible option.

My current position of research coordinator involves a lot of lab research but I also manage my own projects, lab equipment and have a role in some of the higher decision-making. My time at the University of Nottingham opened this career path for me.

For students thinking of applying for jobs abroad, having a good network of contacts is invaluable. My advice would be to start early and make sure you do plenty of research. Applying for work permits and visas can sometimes be a slow process, so give yourself plenty of time to get the paperwork in order.”

Danielle Blackwell
Research Coordinator
Calgary, Canada
BSc Animal Science

Take on the unknown

Sometimes a great career opportunity may require you to relocate to a new city or country. See this as an opportunity to push yourself.

“I currently work at a technology hedge fund, investing predominantly in blockchain/crypto assets, such as Bitcoin; one of the co-founders is Spanish; therefore, we have an office in Madrid, which is where I’m based.

My best piece of advice would be to get involved in extracurricular opportunities. Whatever hobbies you decide to pursue, whether it be sports-related or otherwise, ideally aim for a leadership position, to show employers that you have many strings to your bow.

I would encourage you to embrace the opportunity to get to know a new city or country; it’ll be daunting at first, but you’ll be better for it in the long run, having pushed yourself to take on the unknown.”

Colin Go
Investor Relations and Marketing
Madrid, Spain
BSc Physical Geography

Gain some experience

So, you’d like to work in another country? It might be a wise idea to seek out opportunities for temporary work or travel to gain experience. Some knowledge of the area and job market will go a long way when you begin making applications to work in your chosen country.

“I’ve always had the feeling of ‘wanderlust’, the need to explore new places, learn about different cultures and meet people from all over the world. I am currently corporate human resources (HR) assistant for Europe which means I support the HR teams in all the managed Hilton properties on the continent. To combine my passion for hospitality, languages and the soft skills I learnt at university made perfect sense.

If you want to work in a global company and have opportunities to travel, then you need to be mobile and flexible. It is nice to go home in the summer but why not find a hostel in a small village in France and go there, improve your languages and make some new friends.”

Jessica Piercy
Corporate HR Assistant
Frankfurt, Germany
BA German with Dutch

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How Passport Career can help

We’ve subscribed to Passport Career, an online global job-seeking resource, so that you can access it for free. It can help with everything from exploring your options, researching employers, and finding opportunities, to relocating and navigating a new culture.

Monthly webinars on a range of international job-seeking topics
Over one million vacancies in 200 countries, updated daily
80 country profiles including advice on where to find vacancies, top employers, shortage skills, recruitment practices and business etiquette
Relocation advice to ease your transition to a different country, from visa information to cultural norms
Get employers to take notice of your CV

How long do you get to make a first impression? About 30 seconds. In a competitive job market a CV is your prime marketing tool, but busy employers may only scan it for a few seconds before deciding if they want to hear more from you – or not.

Every time you apply for a job, it’s important to return to your CV. One size does not fit all. So, as your experience expands, think about what should make the cut.

Master your copy
Keeping your CV up-to-date is a task ‘future-you’ will thank you for. Whether it’s a short volunteering assignment or online work experience, write up your achievements while they are fresh. Use this document as your master copy CV, which you can expand on or retract from depending on what you are applying for.

Make an impact
Consider how you might approach an essay or assignment. If you are purely descriptive, you are not going to bag the big marks, and the same goes for your CV. Avoid listing duties and responsibilities. Concentrate on highlighting the process and results of your actions. What did you bring to the role that someone else might not have?

“I had a CV consultation with a member of the Careers team, it was fantastic, she was incredibly friendly and has really helped me decide what to include as well as how to organise the information. Even if you think your CV is done it’s definitely worth one of the team looking at it!”

Georgia Donnelly
Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Surgery
## Your CV

### Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are employers looking for?</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A short statement of motivation which establishes a connection between you, the role and the organisation. If you keep writing clichés, leave it out.</td>
<td>A final-year modern languages student, keen to pursue a career in French-speaking human resources. My experience as a HR intern in Paris confirmed my interest in, and familiarity with, the industry, while developing key skills such as written and verbal communication (French and English), time management and attention to detail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Is it under 100 words?
- Is it relevant to the job, the company and the industry?
- Have you highlighted relevant values?

My work experience and volunteering demonstrate my drive to work in the transportation sector, with a focus on upgrading and renewing infrastructure to achieve sustainability. I believe that planning and transport consultancy is a perfect fit for my practical experience, interests and academic skills, evidenced by my masters project on strengthening and refurbishing structures.

### Work experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are employers looking for?</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The skills and experience that make you a great choice for their job opportunity.</td>
<td>Collated data on fluid flow and bank erosion on the River Don to investigate a hypothesised change in seasonal streamflow. Demonstrated strong project management skills and techniques including Gantt charts to ensure work on the project was carried out to agreed timescales. Produced reports which were used by my manager to present to the project task groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Have you used active verbs?
- Have you evidenced your skills?
- Have you included factual details to highlight outcomes or positive verbal feedback – maybe a testimonial from a customer?

Taught English to 30 primary school children in Romania for two months last summer. Demonstrated excellent organisational skills in preparing lessons and extracurricular activities. My manager complimented my ability to inspire confidence in the more reserved members of the class.

Selected to work for the University’s fundraising team. Developed my communication skills and sales technique for conversations with alumni. Subsequently I exceeded my targets by 10%.

### Interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are employers looking for?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To highlight any interests that relate to the job or hobbies that might offer talking points during an interview.</td>
<td>I have a keen interest in theatre, and in my final year co-ordinated promotion and marketing for the University’s student-run theatre for a production of <em>Othello</em>, which led to a four-night sell-out run.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Is it succinct?
- Can you make your answer relevant to the opportunity?
- Is it truthful? (You may be asked about it!)
How to write the perfect covering letter

While your CV lists your achievements, skills and interests, your covering letter provides the opportunity to bring them to life and show how they fit the role you're applying to. If you're feeling daunted by the blank page, read our tips on what to cover.

1. Get off to the right start
   When addressing your letter, use a named contact, if at all possible. If you do not have that information, why not telephone the organisation and ask them for the person's name? – but don't go too familiar with just a first name. If you can't find anyone specific, stick to 'Dear Sir or Madam'.

2. Make your opening pitch
   Include the job title or position you're seeking (if you're writing a speculative application) and where you found the opportunity. Briefly outline your credentials, and motivations for applying for the role. Make it powerful, punchy and concise. You can expand in more detail in following paragraphs.

3. Demonstrate that you understand the role
   Explain how you meet (or exceed) the job criteria, and show that you possess relevant experience and skills based on past experience. Give concrete examples, which echo key words in the job description – the employer will be scanning for these.

4. Bring your CV to life
   Refer to your CV or other application documents to provide back-up evidence. You don't need to say it all, or duplicate your CV, in your covering letter. Your covering letter should animate key points of your experience that are relevant to the job description.

5. State what the employer can offer you
   If the organisation's culture and development opportunities attract you, then say so. This is also your opportunity to demonstrate that you have researched their activities and possess true motivation for the role. Be specific, and link their mission to your own interests.

6. Close on a positive
   Make your closing line constructive, not rambling. If you used a named contact, end with 'Yours sincerely', otherwise use 'Yours faithfully'.

Covering letter checklist:

✓ Be word perfect – a covering letter showcases your writing style and attention to detail, so don’t fall down on spelling or grammar

✓ Keep it short and concise; make your case in three to four paragraphs; and don’t go over a side of A4

✓ Show that you understand the company and role, and make a direct, persuasive case that you fit this

✓ Link your narrative to evidence provided in your CV and any other application documents

Your next steps
For more covering letter tips, head to: nottingham.ac.uk/careerscoveringletters
Example of a great covering letter
This gives you an idea of what to include in your covering letter, but don’t follow this word for word! Your covering letter has to reflect your skills and how they relate to the job or role you are applying for – so that means a tailored covering letter for every job you apply for.

9 Castle Road
Nottingham
NG2 1PP

Jane Stanley
HR Manager
Freedom Now
44 Long Road
Nottinghamshire
NG22 8FP

Dear Jane Stanley

I am writing in response to the role of Human Resources Officer at Freedom Now, as advertised on your website.

I am a final-year history student committed to building a graduate career in the third sector, with work experience of human resources in a charity. Additionally, for the past year I have been a training officer for Night Owls, a student volunteering society for student safety and wellbeing on nights out.

This role would build on my previous experience as a HR administrator at Barnardo’s, where I quickly learned new processes and procedures including adapting to a recently implemented payroll system. My verbal and written communication skills are excellent, from interpreting data for impact reports for the Board of Trustees to training student volunteers.

I am confident in addressing large groups of people, for example when delivering safety awareness talks in lecture theatres during my university’s Welcome Week. Equally, I adapt my communication style to suit individuals, which has been important in my peer-to-peer mentoring for incoming society reps.

As you will see from my CV, I work well within a team both in a professional setting and as a member of my university’s medley swimming team. Equally my degree course also demands the ability to work on my own initiative and complete complex tasks independently, such as researching and writing a 10,000-word dissertation to a non-negotiable deadline.

I understand that Freedom Now is committed to the safety of women in Nottinghamshire, which aligns with my experience around student welfare in the city. I am particularly interested in your current project to promote the safety of women refugees in the area. This opportunity to work at a diverse and progressive charity will build on the experience and skills I have already gained with a national charity and through volunteering.

I hope to be able to demonstrate my suitability for this position further at interview.

Yours sincerely

Jasmine Langley
LinkedIn for beginners

These days your online presence isn’t complete without a LinkedIn profile, and you might have been thinking about it for a while, without knowing where to begin.

Follow our three steps to get started:

1. **Think of LinkedIn as an online CV**
   Use the headline to summarise who you are and your career goals, and then add your education and work history to build a picture of your knowledge, skills and experience. Don’t forget to add a professional photograph to help your profile stand out.

2. **Build your network**
   First of all connect with friends and other students from your course. Add in your lecturers and, if you have a part-time job or volunteer, your manager and colleagues. If you speak to an employer at a careers fair or event, follow up afterwards with a message and request to connect.

3. **Explore your interests**
   Search groups for the sectors you are interested in working in and request to join. You can also search for companies, and follow them. You’ll gain great insight into industry trends and company updates, which is invaluable when working on an application, or preparing for an interview.
Already have a profile? Use these tips to build your LinkedIn presence.

1. **Showcase your achievements**
   by uploading videos or samples of work.

2. **Join in the conversation**
   by liking and adding comments to posts, and by writing posts of your own based on your projects or activities.

3. **Expand your network**
   to people you haven’t met by looking for connections; start by finding University of Nottingham alumni at the companies you are interested in.

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**Find job opportunities**
Try LinkedIn’s Job Search tool to find advertised vacancies, and set up alerts so you don’t miss out on any opportunities. You’ll also see posts from individuals to say their company is hiring, or see vacancies listed in company posts, so use a range of channels to help your search.

Don’t see a vacancy advertised? Contact us to find out more about making a speculative application direct to an employer.

**Check your personal brand**
You might expect an employer to look you up on LinkedIn, but did you know employers may use other social media platforms to ‘vet’ potential candidates too? Review your social media accounts and check that they reinforce the positive messages you want to present to an employer. This doesn’t mean you have to delete all those pictures from first year nights out, but you might want to check your privacy settings and keep those memories for friends only. Be aware that default settings are often set to ‘public’ so if you’ve never checked this, now’s the time.

“My course offers a year in industry and in a competitive job market, I created a LinkedIn profile to showcase examples of my work and stand out as a candidate. I’ve been able to find opportunities companies are offering, often before they are published on other websites.

After setting up my profile, I sent the link to the Careers team, who gave me guidance and suggestions on where I could improve.

Building a network was easier than I anticipated as many of my colleagues and lecturers from my course were already on there, and it’s easy to search companies and hashtags to follow.

I would recommend to anyone thinking about their future employment to get a LinkedIn profile. I follow multiple companies, employers, and colleagues which has given me a great insight into the world of work I am interested in.”

Eloise Stone
MSci Pharmaceutical Sciences

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Your next steps
Find more help on getting your social media up to scratch: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/networking
"The Careers team helped me throughout the process from start to finish and I most definitely could not have done it without them. I wanted to gain advice for the whole application process and the Careers team gave me that."

Bethany Carter
BSc Environmental Science with Industrial Year

It’s all in the application

You’ve read the job description; you have all of the relevant work experience and skills, great! All you have to do is click ‘Apply’ ... only to find out that you also need to complete a 10-page application form. No need to worry, follow our simple tips and we’ll help you perfect that job application.

Read our examples which illustrate how to relate your experience to the role you’re applying for.

Before you start typing...
- Do some reading about the company and job role you’re applying for so you can tailor your answers to meet their requirements
- Brainstorm the experiences you’ve had so you can give different examples to demonstrate the skills they are looking for. Use examples from your work experience, academic work, the clubs and societies you belong to, and any travelling you’ve done
- Look through the whole form to get a feel for it and to avoid putting things in the wrong place or repeating yourself
Here’s an example of a motivational question and why it hits the mark:

**Why have you applied for this role? (100 words)**  
✓ 100 words – no spelling or grammatical errors

Taking part in the University of Nottingham’s Consultancy Challenge ensured I developed key skills such as organisational, negotiation and time planning. Working as part of a team with a local third sector organisation, I took time to understand the challenges they faced as clients and how we could best deliver recommendations for their social media campaign.

✓ Shows understanding of skills and knowledge required for the role.

I gained an internship through the University in a digital agency. Working with clients gave me further insight into the importance of collecting data and ensuring excellent communication throughout the project particularly around legal and contractual operations. This experience has reinforced my desire to work within this field.

✓ Highlights their interest in the sector.

As part of the intramural football team I regularly play matches and help to promote the league in collaboration with the MathSoc Society Sports Secretary. Working as part of a team has been a key element in my extracurricular and work experience.

✓ Uses a good range of examples from work, studies and hobbies that will be of interest to the employer.

Here’s an example of a competency-based question and why it hits the mark:

**Describe a time when you have demonstrated excellent presentation skills. (max 150 words)**  
✓ 123 words – no spelling or grammatical errors

As part of my module on cultural identity I had to research an individual project and present it to my seminar group during a student conference.

✓ Situation

I chose to discuss the power and control of the media and develop an interactive component alongside the presentation.

✓ Task

When devising the session, I was aware that I was presenting to a small group so incorporated an interactive element – a game about headline usage and news topics. I ensured that I used credible sources and citations to evidence points and strengthen discussions within the group. Additionally, I prepared handouts for the participants and assessors and used a clear structure for the presentation.

I was awarded 72% for this module and was complimented on my ability to engage the audience and communicate a complex argument clearly.

✓ Result

For questions that are focused on your skills and competencies, structure your answers using the STAR technique:

- **Situation** – outline the issue or problem you faced
- **Task** – explain your task
- **Action** – explain your actions sequentially. What did you do?
- **Result** – explain the outcome. Use examples of positive outcomes

**Your next steps**

Find more top application tips: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/forms

Attend our application form workshops: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/skillsworkshops

Book an appointment to review your form: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/appointments
Get prepared for psychometric tests

Psychometric tests might sound scary, but knowing what to expect can be half of the battle and will help you to prepare in advance. It helps to see them as an opportunity to stand out from your fellow candidates.

What are psychometric tests?
Psychometric tests are another way for employers to assess candidates alongside the more traditional methods such as CVs, applications forms, and interviews.

In general, they can be split into four areas:

- **Motivation and values**
  These are used to test your personal values and what motivates you. These questions have no right or wrong answers, but should be answered honestly.

- **Situational judgement**
  Used to assess your response to given workplace scenarios, these tests will look at your behaviour and competency in that situation.

- **Aptitude and ability**
  You will usually be presented with a numerical, verbal or diagrammatical reasoning scenario. These are the most widely used types of psychometric tests and have definite right or wrong answers.

- **Personality and interests**
  These tests are used to judge your personality traits and values. The questions have no right or wrong answers, but it’s important to answer honestly rather than what you think the employer wants to hear.
I decided the best thing to do was practise

“Don’t forget, the fact you are now facing psychometric tests means you are closer to a job. Therefore, take time to prepare yourself and do it right. I discovered my favourite place to practise tests was Graduates First – free for Nottingham students and graduates.

It is vital to find a place where you feel comfortable. I usually pick a quiet room with no distractions – try to keep away from your mobile, other people, or background noise, such as the television.

Then, when I feel ready to click the ‘go to test’ button, some anxiety goes through my mind. Even though I have taken many psychometric tests, it never seems to go away. However, I have to stay calm, so I take a deep breath and carefully read the instructions to begin.

It might sound obvious, but the most important thing is to read everything carefully. Find the vital information and answer quickly, but carefully. I always try to follow this process, no matter the type of test.”

Manuela Cabrera, MSc Civil Engineering

Have a go at some practice tests

Through Graduates First you can access:
- numerical, verbal and logical tests
- expert feedback reports
- work personality questionnaires

There are short videos to help you navigate the process of preparing for a psychometric test including tips, step-by-step guides and a jargon buster.

The Top Employer Profiles and Job Assessment Stages section links to information about how each organisation approaches its recruitment process and the kinds of assessments you may face. Over 100 organisations are profiled on the site.

nottingham.ac.uk/careers/psychometrictests
New to the game
Game-based assessment has been developed as a more fun and accessible way for employers to assess your aptitude and personality traits. Essentially, it’s an alternative to traditional psychometric tests. They assess your general mental ability, such as reasoning, problem-solving, verbal, and numerical ability. They are also trying to work out if you have key personality traits essential to the role and organisation.

Six game-based assessment tips

1. Read the instructions carefully before you start
2. If accessing the game via your mobile, remember to set your phone to ‘do not disturb’ to avoid getting a call at a crucial moment
3. Make sure you’re in a quiet place where you can focus on playing the game
4. Make sure your device screen is not cracked
5. If you have a disability, make the recruiter aware as this can be accommodated through the system
6. Don’t try to second-guess what they are looking for; be yourself – it’s meant to be fun!

The rules of the game
The good news is that you don’t need any gaming experience for a game-based assessment.
You’ll be sent a link by an employer, giving you access to the game on your mobile or PC.
Every game is slightly different, so it’s a case of following that particular game’s instructions.
It’s really difficult to prepare yourself for a game-based assessment as they are designed to assess your abilities in lots of different areas.

Your next steps
Sign up free for Graduates First and practise using three games-based assessments: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/games
Your 3-step guide to interview success

Most people dread job interviews. It’s the unknown – what will they ask me? Online you'll find hundreds of questions that an employer might potentially ask. To make it easier, we’ve summarised three key areas that employers assess during the interview process and examples of questions they may ask.

You will need to show that you:

1. WANT the job

Employers will often open an interview with a question to explore your motivation for the job. Having a great answer prepared can be a brilliant way to get off to a good start, leaving your interview nerves behind.

Read through the job description and your application form to remind yourself why this job appeals to you. There can be quite a gap between applying for a role and being invited for an interview, so a quick refresh is always advised. Are there two or three points that neatly outline why this is the job for you?

Common questions include:
- Why have you applied for this role?
- Why do you think you’d be a good fit for this position?

2. can DO the job

Take time to consider your strengths and skills and how you can put them to good use in the role.

Employers often ask questions to establish how well you understand your strengths and how they fit with the organisation’s culture and the role. Check the job advert or person specification for the skills the employer is looking for. Have you got some examples of when you have demonstrated those skills?

Typical questions might be:
- What are your three key strengths?
- Please give an example of when you were a member of a team assigned to a project or task. What was your role? What was the outcome?
- Give an example of a problem you have recently solved. What methods and information did you use?
- What energises you more, starting or finishing a task?

3. will get ON

Employers are looking for people who are keen to work for their company, have similar values and will get on well with colleagues. Find out as much as you can about the company; facts and figures, their customers and competitors and their values. Has the company been in the news recently and why?

Example questions might include:
- Why do you want to work for our organisation?
- What are the main challenges facing the company in the next two to three years?
Your next steps
Find out how to get prepared for interviews: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/interviews

“I cannot recommend using the Careers team enough”
“I booked appointments for online interview and assessment centre preparation. They were really beneficial since they streamlined my focus on what I needed to do to ensure success.

I had the space where I could ask lots of questions, free of judgement, about what these stages would be like and what I could expect.

Luke gave me invaluable guidance on interview answers, and I came away really knowing what employers are after and a lot less nervous than I initially was.”

Brenna Mulholland
BA Politics and Economics

Types of interview

Face-to-face
- There are different types of interview questions: strengths-based, competency-based, behavioural and technical questions
- Do your research about the organisation to find out if they use a specific type of question
- Use your body language and facial expressions to reflect your personality and answer questions fully

Virtual
- Take place via a computer link, for example through Skype or Zoom
- They differ from video interviews as they are ‘live’
- The same types of questions as at a face-to-face interview will be asked
- Look at the camera rather than the screen, dress the part and make sure your technology is fully charged and you won’t be interrupted

Video
- Used by employers as a first sift of candidates
- You will record an answer to a question presented on-screen and are usually given 60 seconds per answer
- It’s a good idea to write down some key points to refer to. They’ll help structure your answer

Telephone
- Generally used as a first sift
- Becoming less common as they are increasingly being replaced with an interview in ‘real time’ using Skype or Zoom
- Tactics such as smiling and not slouching can help inject expression in your voice and make you more confident and assertive
Invited to an assessment centre?

What happens at an assessment centre?
The structure of an assessment centre will vary but here are some of the activities that our students and graduates have encountered. The activities give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the skills required to be successful in the workplace, for example, communication, teamwork, analytical and problem-solving. Remember, you are not competing against other candidates, you are being assessed against the employer’s criteria.

Welcome and introductions
Listen carefully to the structure of the day and the activities taking place to understand the skills and competencies being assessed. Make sure to introduce yourself to the organisers and other candidates.

Group activity
You will be assessed on your ability to work as part of a team. Effective communication, creative thinking and working towards achieving the task will be encouraged.

Psychometric tests
You’ll be asked to complete different types of tests: see pages 44-45.

Interview
You will be assessed on your suitability for the job role: see pages 48-49.

Tour of the offices
Pay attention throughout and show your interest by asking questions.

Case study
You will be required to process and analyse information relevant to the role and professionally present your findings and recommendations.

Lunch
Your ability to interact with others might be assessed during lunchtime. Remember to speak to several people, smile and be positive.

Presentations
You’ll be assessed on analysing the information, tailoring the content and delivering clearly and confidently.

In-tray exercise
Time-restricted simulated business tasks where you need to analyse, prioritise information and make decisions.

If you’re just starting to apply for graduate jobs, chances are you haven’t been to an assessment centre before. At first glance they can be quite daunting, but knowing what to expect is half the battle. Plus, you’ve got this far, you deserve to be there.

You can let employers know about your additional needs.
Time and activity amendments can be arranged to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to show their potential.
My tips for success at an assessment centre

I attended two assessment centres and I was offered a place for one but was unsuccessful with the other. I think this gives me a perspective on the dos and don’ts.

Do

Be confident
In group activities it is very easy to begin to doubt yourself, but you have to remember that you got to this point in the recruitment process because you are capable.

Have a voice
Know when to speak up and when to let other candidates have their say. You want to showcase yourself but not to the detriment of others which could impact you in a negative way.

Ask for feedback
If you are not successful, it’s always good to ask for feedback after the assessment centre via a follow-up email.

Research the company
Knowledge of the company’s values and the job role will showcase you as someone they can work with.

Don’t

Dwell on your mistakes
After the group activity I was asked a question that I completely misunderstood, but I didn’t let it take over the rest of the day. Instead I focused on other tasks that I could improve on which worked as I was still offered the role!

Rush
During the interview or any other discussions on the day, take a deep breath and articulate what it is you are trying to get across.

Jade Brewster-Mahon,
BSc Microbiology with Industrial Year

Your next steps

Find out more about preparing for assessment centres: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/assessmentcentres

Attend an assessment centre workshop: nottingham.ac.uk/careers/skillsworkshops
Nottingham Internship Scheme

Amplify your potential

Gain hands-on experience working for local and national businesses

Find out more
nottingham.ac.uk/careers/uoninternships
Sport and fitness membership

Access our state-of-the-art David Ross Sports Village, Jubilee and Sutton Bonington sports centres.

Your membership includes access to:
• Fully-equipped fitness suites with training workshops
• 25m swimming pool and climbing wall
• A wide variety of group exercise classes every week
• Squash courts and indoor sports hall

Join online at nottingham.ac.uk/sport or visit any sports centre reception

*Price shown for UoN Students only, costs may vary for other groups. Membership valid until 31 July 2021.
A big thanks to

…our team of Careers Handbook case studies. We loved reading your stories, and can't wait to share them with your fellow students. With your input we think this is our best Careers Handbook to date – hope you do too.

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Hong Nhung Nguyen  
Jade Brewster-Mahon  
James Doherty  
Jessica Piercy  
Jessica Tomlinson  
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