

# Dealing with Employability Anxiety

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Many of us struggle with anxieties from time to time, and it is no surprise that employability anxiety has increased given the uncertain life we have all been living these last few years. And now, as you look to a future after leaving university, there will be more changes on the horizon, and it can be stressful when you don't know what that looks like.

## **Worry is normal**

Don't forget that stress is our natural response to feeling under pressure and it can often be helpful. "Healthy stress" in small doses can motivate us, give us an energy boost, and get things done. Feeling anxious about getting a job might be the only thing that makes us complete that job application before the deadline rather than lying in bed on a Saturday morning!

## **When stress gets in the way**

Sometimes anxiety can feel overwhelming, and this can get in the way. Some people find themselves frozen into inaction or develop delaying or denial tactics. These are normal reactions which are resolved naturally in due course, but for some, the anxieties go beyond normal worries. If you're feeling anxious in a way that is stopping you from doing the things that you normally do, or if it is for more than just a few weeks, you might want to talk to someone about this.



# **Six tips for dealing with your employability anxieties**

## **1. Small steps**

Taking small practical steps to begin with can really help. These could include updating your CV, researching a company, or asking for a mock interview. You can then build up to other activities such as arranging some work experience or applying for jobs. Make a list of some of the things you need to do and tick them off as you go.

## **2. Face your fears**

Sometimes anxieties can be caused by a vague, ill-defined view of the future, which can look a lot worse than the actual reality. It might be helpful to have a cool objective look at the worst that can happen such as being unemployed. These are all situations many new graduates have faced and have dealt with. And importantly, it doesn't have to be forever. You will find ways to cope and you will also move on.

## **3. Speed isn't the same as success**

It's easy to feel as though you have missed the boat if you don't have a job sorted when you graduate. There always seems to be someone who seems to have the perfect job lined up! But the speed at which you get going is really no indicator of your future success. Be patient, keep making your applications, and in no time at all you will be looking back over your successful career!

## **4. Prepare for change**

So, there will be some changes in your life, many of these quite major. Apart from practical changes such as where you live and what you do day to day, there may well be changes to your self-identity. Remember that you have made changes before and have coped with them in the past. Focus on the benefits of change – the chance for a new start, what you have learned about yourself so far, and how you want to build on this for the future.

## **5. Stay connected**

We all deal with worries in different ways but for many isolation can increase anxiety. Keep in touch with close friends, you may well find that other people are going through the same feelings as you and you can support each other. But beware of others showing the glossiest versions of themselves on social media! Don't compare yourself to others, and if you really can't help it – then just unfollow them

## **6. Handle your anxiety**

You will keep your stress at a lower level if you have a routine that allows for regular meals and a regular sleeping pattern. Develop a successful 'winding down' routine before going to bed. Put your electronic devices away and relax quietly.

If you begin to feel panicky, concentrate on breathing slowly and deeply; put your hand on your diaphragm and breathe so that you feel it expanding and contracting slowly.

Picture yourself positively; maybe at a job interview but doing so competently and successfully. Imagine how good it will be when you've started your first job, and what it feels like to be happy and positive at work.

## **And finally.....**

If you are suffering from anxiety about your future employment, it can be helpful to talk it over with someone else to unpick your thinking and get a sense of perspective. Book an appointment with a Careers Adviser or talk to your Personal Academic Tutor.

If you feel that your anxieties are becoming more of a problem, if you feel some conflict about leaving university, or if endings have been difficult for you in the past, this is an opportunity to do things differently and perhaps on your own terms. Talking this through with the Student Support & Wellbeing Team may be helpful, or you could contact the Counselling and Mental health service for an individual appointment.

## **Further information**

Careers and Employability can offer you support for as long as you need it. See the Graduates Careers pages at: [www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/graduates.html](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/graduates.html)

All bookings and job vacancies are still through myCareer, you just have to re-register yourself as a graduate first.

### **Career planning**

[www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG\\_careerplanning.pdf](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG_careerplanning.pdf)

### **Job hunting**

[www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG\\_graduatejob.pdf](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG_graduatejob.pdf)

### **Job Applications & Interviews**

[www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG\\_CVs.pdf](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/QG_CVs.pdf)

### **Preparing to leave University**

[www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/toolkit.html](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/toolkit.html)

### **Coping with Anxiety**

[www.worc.ac.uk/counselling/self-help-information.html](http://www.worc.ac.uk/counselling/self-help-information.html)

[www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

See also the following Careers and Employability leaflets:

- Adapting to life after university
- Managing your career after you leave university
- Moving home after university

If you would like to book a careers appointment, please visit:

<https://worcester.targetconnect.net>

**myCareer**