

Managing your career after you leave university

Life after university can be exciting but can also feel quite daunting. You may already have a clear idea about what you want to do, even if you have not already secured a job or a place on another course, or you may not know where to start. It can be easy to start comparing yourself to your friends and colleagues, especially if they have managed to find a job. Some graduates returning home may find that job opportunities in their hometown are limited, and others may feel isolated once they have left the university and are away from friends and staff. This is all quite normal, and this leaflet aims to help you take those first steps beyond graduation and put yourself in the driving seat!

The first few years....

Some students can have high expectations of graduate employment in the first few years after university. Although some move directly into formal graduate traineeships run by large employers, only a small number of all graduates enter such schemes. This does not mean that all other graduates will be unemployed or in less skilled jobs, but many will be working for smaller employers, or building up experience towards a longer-term career goal. This might involve working in several different jobs or doing some voluntary work or further study.

The first years after graduation can offer great opportunities with the chance to try out different job roles and employers. It can sometimes feel that it takes a while to get started, but this is an opportunity to explore your options and discover your strengths as well as building experience for your next steps.

Further Information

See www.worc.ac.uk/careers/graduates.html for further information including:

- Finding Graduate Work
- Applications and Interviews
- Managing your Career
- When you are in the first year of your graduate job
- What to do if you don't like your graduate job

Planning your next steps

Use this time to plan your next steps. You may need to spend a year or so gaining experiences and skills to help you to reach your goal. Remember that there are many ways of gaining experience, such as voluntary work, travelling and getting involved in the community.

Below is an example of an action plan for a new graduate. Complete yours overleaf.

To find work as an HR Adviser	In order to do this, I need to:	By when:
<i>Find out more about different careers and training in H.R</i>	<i>Look at Prospects and CIPD websites</i>	<i>September 2021</i>
<i>Gain some administrative or office experience</i>	<i>Look for vacancies online, recruitment agencies, and company web pages.</i>	<i>November 2021</i>
<i>Get some work experience or work shadowing in H. R</i>	<i>Contact local companies, local council, universities, and colleges to ask about work shadowing</i>	<i>December 2021</i>
<i>Get to know some people working in H.R, so can find out more about the jobs and when vacancies might come up</i>	<i>Follow up contacts from work shadowing</i> <i>Work on my LinkedIn profile & join relevant groups.</i> <i>Create a CV tailored towards HR</i>	<i>June 2022</i>
<i>Apply for HR Assistant jobs with potential for development and CIPD training</i>	<i>Online vacancy sites, speculative enquiries to recommended companies and contacts</i>	<i>July 2022</i>
<i>Apply and secure HR Adviser jobs</i>	<i>Be at least part of way through CIPD, have gained experience in different HR roles</i>	<i>Summer 2023</i>

Complete your plan here

Career plan	Things to do:	By when:

Plans should be reviewed regularly and may well change as you gain experience.

The first few years: Managing the early stages of your graduate career

For many students, moving into the workplace following graduation can mean having a job for the first time, or working in a new type of role following studying for a career change.

Either way, the first few years tends to involve a steep learning curve which may be vastly different from sitting in lectures and writing assignments. Learning at this stage involves getting used to company procedures, working with people you don't know, and even getting to grips with the work itself.

In the early stages of your graduate career it's not unusual to question whether the role or career you have entered after university, is right for you.

Some useful tips and advice about how to make the transition into the graduate workplace, how to manage your own career in those early years:

- **Workplace and university 'etiquette' is very different:** a day at university is different to a day in the workplace. Employment tends to be more structured, hours of work, meetings with team members and clients, lunchbreaks etc. Most learning in the workplace happens 'on-the-job', and there will be aspects of a role that will require not just learning the job itself. This could involve learning professional email and telephone etiquette.
You can't choose the people you work with, so you will have to get used to learning to work with a range of people.
- **Take advantage of any career/professional development opportunities:** depending on the job or career sector, many roles will usually have training opportunities as part of starting the job e.g. systems, processes, transferable skills training e.g. presentation, communication. Many opportunities may offer graduates the chance to gain a postgraduate or professional qualification aligned with a professional body associated with certain career areas e.g. marketing, HR, accountancy.

If an employer provides training opportunities, as a graduate you are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities as they offer the chance for you to develop new skills which can only enhance your employability. They can also open you up to new opportunities to discover where your future direction may lie.

- **You may not use all of the subject knowledge from your degree and that's ok:** unless you have studied a vocational subject at university e.g. teacher training, nursing or paramedic training etc, you may find that much of the theoretical subject knowledge from your degree may not be applied directly to your job. Gaining a degree demonstrates learning agility and the ability to utilise a range of skills to achieve a qualification. This capability and level of thinking and range of skills developed whilst studying for a degree, can be transferred to numerous career sectors.

Top tips to deal with this next stage of your life

- Enjoy this part of your life! As one stage of your life is changing the rest is just beginning! New people and experiences await you.
- One step at a time: What you do next is not necessarily what you will be doing for the rest of your life. The next few years are your chance to explore and find out different areas.
- Stress and anxieties are perfectly normal but how we respond affects our well-being. Be kind to yourself if things go wrong and focus on realistic goals that provide a sense of achievement.
- It's a marathon not a sprint! You might not step into your ideal job straight away. It takes a while to develop skills and experiences. Keep going and learn from everything you do.
- You are not alone: Keep in touch with friends, course mates and lecturers. They can offer great support and networks. However, try not to compare yourself with others. We all have our own paths to tread and stories to tell.

Useful things to know

- Leavers Toolkit. See <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/toolkit.html> for all information relating to leaving the University of Worcester
- Graduation. See <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/663.htm> for dates and arrangements. You will be sent further information in May/June. Please make sure that your contact details are up to date!
- Replacement certificates and transcripts <http://www.worc.ac.uk/registryservices/981.htm>
- Graduate Outcomes survey. This is sent to all leavers and asks about what you are doing 15 months after you leave. Please fill this out as quickly as you are able to, as it helps us to understand the labour market and to support other students in the future. More information at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/outcomes/students>
- All UW leavers become automatic members of the Alumni Association. The benefits of this include continued membership of the Library, discount at the Sports centre, and life membership of the Students Union. More information can be found at <http://www.worc.ac.uk/community/alumni.html>.

Further Help and Support

University of Worcester graduates can continue to use the Careers and Employability Service for three years and beyond.

Alternatively contact the National Careers Service at <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/> or call 0800 100 900.

If you would like to book a careers appointment to discuss your options, please visit: <https://worchester.targetconnect.net>

myCareer

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Careers & Employability
www.worc.ac.uk/careers