



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- FAQ: [How do I find and apply for a PhD?](#)
- FAQ: [I am being made redundant and not sure which way to go now. Can you help me?](#)
- FAQ: [I have been applying for a lot of jobs, but now I think I want to do teaching. How do I get in, and what do I need to do?](#)
- FAQ: [I have a 2:2 and want to apply to a graduate scheme in accountancy/business/management. What schemes can I do?](#)
- FAQ: [I am employed as aand no longer want to do this. What can I do?](#)
- FAQ: [I am an international graduate but I want to apply for jobs in the UK. How do I do this?](#)
- FAQ: [I have been working in retail for the last two years or so as I just fell into it to earn some money and cannot seem to find a way out of this. I keep applying for positions in administration but all my work experience is retail. How do I get out of this?](#)
- FAQ: [I keep getting shortlisted for interview but then don't get the job.](#)

FAQ: How do I find and apply for a PhD?

Generally PhD opportunities are advertised on University websites and on Research Council websites. Another very popular place to see advertised opportunities is on www.findaphd.com.

If you are looking at PhD opportunities it is likely that you have an area of research that you are interested in. It would also be a safe assumption that you have read papers in that research area. If you haven't, this is a vital starting point. Other criteria you usually need to meet:

- 2.1
- An element of practical skills from your course (science students)
- A good mark for your undergraduate research project
- An academic referee who says you have the ability to do a PhD

Methods of application vary, but you are often required to fill out an online application form and attach a CV. Download the following booklets to find out more:

- CVs and Covering Letters
- Application Forms

Other useful websites are:

[Cardiff University PhD opportunities](#)
[Postgraduate Studentships](#)
[What do Researchers Do?](#)
[Academic Career](#)
[Research Councils UK](#)

FAQ: I am being made redundant and not sure which way to go now. Can you help me?

Redundancy is something that happens to many of us during our working lives. However, it is not necessarily a negative situation to be in; many people have used it as an opportunity for positive change in their lives and careers. What is important now is how you react to a situation which is not of your making.

Being made redundant can be a massive shock but try not to rush into any hasty decisions. Bear in mind too that there is no best way to deal with it, and no set plan that will work for everyone. Your reaction to being made redundant and subsequent action (or inaction) depends on your personality and on the circumstances surrounding the event.

So with the above in mind, I have listed some points which may help you get into the right frame of mind to deal with things:

Do:

- Keep calm
- If you need a break allow yourself to be sad for a time
- Stay positive, see redundancy as an opportunity for change
- Focus on moving on, rather than looking back
- Take stock of your situation and look at your options
- Get advice from professional advisers
- Talk to your friends and family.

Don't:

- Take it personally – in reality, the job has been made redundant, not you
- Get too down about yourself – most people face redundancy sometime
- Panic, don't make rash decisions
- Feel negatively about the company that made you redundant.

Taking Stock

One thing is certain: it's a time of change. Many of us find change a bit unsettling, but remember that it can also be for the better.

When you feel in a place where you can start to move forward, then the following will help you to do this. Use this down time to look at what you really want to do now. This could be a great opportunity to do something that up until now you never had the chance to do. It may mean that you wish to take up voluntary work, travel and not necessarily find a new job at the moment. However, if you do want to think about a new job, then the following might be a good start for you.

Self assessment

This is a great time to think about what you enjoyed doing in your last role and what you did not. What did you enjoy about the culture, environment – would you like a similar type of role in a similar company or something completely different? What didn't you enjoy and in ideal world would prefer not to do again? There are various packages, websites which might be helpful to you in assessing your values (*what motivates you*), skills, interests and knowledge/experience.

Sources of help:

- Target jobs '[Careers Report](#)' - computer-aided guidance system which gives a comprehensive report on possible career choices
- "[Prospects Planner](#)" computer-aided guidance system
- [Windmills Online](#) - useful site for assessing your strengths, values, skills gaps etc
- Download a copy of our booklet [Getting Started with Career Planning](#)

Job knowledge:

Once you have a few career ideas, then it's good to do some research on what these occupations might involve. Good websites for this are:

- www.prospects.ac.uk.
- www.targetjobs.co.uk
- www.careerplayer.com

Work experience:

Once you have some idea on some career options then work experience can help in choosing your eventual career direction, as it can give you:

- Inside knowledge of careers and organisations.
- Contacts within your chosen sector.
- A range of skills in demand in the workplace.

For ideas on work experience download our Work Experience booklet

Think about re-training:

It may be that the area you have chosen means that further training may be necessary or desirable. You should also consider the need for appropriate skills such as numeracy, computer literacy and foreign language proficiency and explore ways to enhance your competence if necessary.

Don't be put off by how long any re-training will take - that is an experience in itself, and the time flies by. One graduate who found herself in that position said "If you want to do something different, go for it".

- Visit Job Centre Plus and speak with an adviser.

- If you live in Wales you may have access to free re-training through the [ReACT II](#) programme and can also go to [Careers Wales](#)
- If you live in England you can also speak with a careers adviser. See the [National Careers Service](#)

Getting Further Support

If you would like to discuss this with a careers adviser and have graduated less than two years ago, then ring us at Careers and Employability on 02920 874227

If you have graduated over two years ago, then you are able to speak with a Careers Adviser – if you live in England contact the [National Careers Service](#)

If you live in Wales contact [Careers Wales](#) :

So Finally,

- Don't feel sorry for yourself. There's always something you can do.
- Don't rush into another job too soon. Use your time to think about what you really want and don't want.
- Give yourself a break if you need one. Ask for help and support - and allow yourself to feel sad.
- Ask yourself if you would benefit from a re-evaluation of your values and needs.
- If you want to do something different, go for it. Don't be put off by re-training. It's an experience in itself.

FAQ: I have been applying for a lot of jobs, but now I think I want to do teaching. How do I get in, and what do I need to do?

It is very frustrating to have made a considerable number of applications, with little or no return and this may well be a good time to re-evaluate your strategy. That said, if you haven't thought of it before, contemplating teaching is quite a change in direction; it is a profession which shouldn't be entered into lightly.

First, you need to think about which educational setting you want to train for, Primary, Secondary or Further Education. These are all quite distinct in terms of the duties and responsibilities. This is really well explained in

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/subjects-age-groups/age-groups.aspx>

Then, we'd advise that you get some observational classroom experience to check that your understanding of the role of the teacher matches the reality. Check too that your educational background matches the requirements of the sector that you are keen to enter:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/apply-for-teacher-training/basic-requirements.aspx>

If this is all in place, you may wish to contemplate making applications to train. The majority of applicants for teacher training apply to do a [PGCE](#), but other routes, such as [School Centred Teacher Training and School Direct](#) (the latter is usually for more mature graduates) also exist. The best applications come from graduates who have a broad range of work experience in schools and with children and young people. If you currently have some spare time, then volunteering in an educational setting will really enhance your profile. Funding varies widely, depending on the setting you are applying for (and sometimes the subject you wish to teach). An introduction to this is available at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/funding>

Applications can be made via [UCAS](#) from the autumn prior to the year in which you want to teach. Take great care with the personal statement as it really is the key to making a successful application. [Application Form Assistant](#) can help you, if you're struggling to make a start.

At every stage, the very helpful advisers at the government's [Teaching Line](#), will be able to answer your questions and hopefully get you started on a satisfying and challenging career path.

FAQ: I have a 2:2 and want to apply to a graduate scheme in accountancy/ business/management. What schemes can I do?

Many organisations do stipulate a 2.1 as part of their graduate entry requirements, but not all. Below you will find a host of employers who accept graduates offering a 2:2. The Civil Service Fast Stream and the National Health Service are perhaps two of the most high profile organisations who example 2.2 graduate opportunities. But graduate opportunities are not always with the large blue-chip organisations, you will find that opportunities also exist with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Irrespective of the type of opportunity that you are applying for, all employers will expect graduates to present a well- rounded profile of employability skills.

This is not an exhaustive list of employers however the employer recruitment profiles as listed below were correct as of August 2014.

- [Arriva](#)
 - **General Management Scheme**, need the right to live and work in the UK, a minimum of a 2:2 degree and a full UK driving licence (for UK Bus Division only).
 - **Engineering Management Programme**, need the right to live and work in the UK, a minimum 2:2 degree in Mechanical or Electrical Engineering, plus a full UK driving licence.
- [Abercrombie and Fitch](#)
 - **Management Training Programmes** in Store Operations, HR, Stockroom Systems and Visual Merchandising, accept a 2.2 in any degree discipline.
- [Arcadia Group](#)
 - **Buying** – classification not specified though need a fashion related degree such as BA Design, Textile Management, Fashion Journalism, Fashion & Marketing or Buying & Merchandising Management, plus some relevant work experience.
 - **Merchandising** – preference for candidates with numerical degree, BSc Business Management, International Business, Accounting and Finance, Mathematics, Economics & Humanities degrees – Geography, English, Psychology and Sociology.
 - **Finance Analyst** - any degree discipline
 - **Digital** – classification not specified, though highlights motivation towards digital technology, digital marketing & website performance.
- [B&Q](#)
 - **Retail Management Training Programme** - minimum of a 2.2 degree awarded in the last two years. Ideally with some retail experience and prepared to relocate anywhere within the UK.

- [Babcock](#)
 - **Commercial/Business Programme, Accounting and Finance** – 2:2 (Hons) degree in any discipline & “good ‘A’ level in Maths” (280 UCAS points required).
 - **Business Management & Major Bids** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in Business, Management, Law, Engineering or relevant discipline.
 - **Commercial and Supply Chain** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in Business, Economics, Law or related subjects. A full clean driving licence is also required, plus security checks & medical assessment.
 - **Human Resources** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in Law, Business Management or other related discipline. Plus security requirements & medical assessment.
 - **IT/IM** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in Information Technology, Business with IT, Finance or Science related degree, plus security checks & medical assessment.
 - **Operations Management** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in a Business related subject plus 280 UCAS points as well as security check & medical assessment.
- **Babcock Engineering Schemes.** The majority of Engineering Schemes will include security checks and a medical assessment.
 - **Building Services** – Degree in Building Services, Engineering Construction Management or similar discipline. Previous work experience desirable.
 - **Civil Engineering** - 2:2 MEng (Hons) Degree.
 - **Design Engineering** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree Civil, Structural Design or Mechanical Engineering & 290 UCAS points.
 - **Electrical Engineering** – 2:2 BEng (Hons) Degree.
 - **Environmental Management** - 2:2 degree in relevant subject, Graduate Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), recognised internal auditing qualifications, knowledge of ISO14001 Environmental Management Systems.
 - **Health Physicist** – 2:2 (Hons) Degree in a relevant subject, an MSc or PG (Dip) in Radiological Protection.
 - **Mechanical Engineering** – 2:2 BEng (Hons) Degree.
 - **Naval Architecture** - 2:2 BEng (Hons) Degree.
 - **Process Engineering – Chemical** - 2:2 MEng Degree in Chemical Engineering.
 - **Safety Engineering** - 2:2 BSc (Hons) Degree or 2:2 BEng (Hons) Degree.

- [Centrica](#) –the following opportunities are available for candidates offering a 2:2 degree in any discipline along with a relevant Master’s degree, **Procurement and Supply Chain, Marketing, Information Systems, Human Resources**. For Engineering roles **Health, Safety, Environment and Security** a 2:2 and a Master’s in Engineering or Science (not Social sciences).
- [Civil Service Fast Stream](#) (not Statistician/Economist) - opportunities are available across all sectors requiring the minimum of a 2:2 degree in a related subject.
- [CSC](#) - a global information technology company. Graduate programmes in **HR, Business, Finance and Consulting**, in addition to **Technology**. Will consider applicants with a 2:2 and relevant work experience.
- [Co-operative Group](#) – offer **CIMA Finance Programme, Business Management, HR Programme, Retail Operations, IT Leadership** “any degree discipline, although a business-related degree would be advantageous”.
- [Debenhams](#) – have a number of graduate opportunities to include **Buying, Supply Chain and Logistics** and **Allocation and Merchandising**. No degree classification is specified.
- [EDF Energy](#)
 - **Nuclear Business** 2:2 postgraduate Degree in Mathematics.
 - Engineering opportunities in **Mechanical Engineering/Chemical Engineering/Environmental Science/Chemistry**, require a 2:2 postgraduate degree in related subjects.
- [Enterprise-Rent-a-Car](#) – a Bachelor’s degree preferred in any subject – no classification specified. Also need a full driving licence.
- [FirstGroup](#)
 - **Operations** - 2:2 Degree in any discipline.
 - **Engineering** – 2:2 BEng or MEng, accredited by IMechE or IET.
- [GCHQ](#) – “The requirements change from campaign to campaign, so the class of degree varies from a minimum of 2:1 or a 2:2”
- [GIST](#) - **Operations Management Trainee Scheme**, 2:2 Degree in any discipline, plus a full clean UK driving licence.
- [ICAEW](#) – ACA from the ICAEW. You can search for current vacancies identifying job function, sector, location, degree classification and UCAS points. Some smaller/medium sized accounting firms will accept a 2:2 but may require 280+ UCAS points.
- [Jaguar Land Rover](#) – any degree discipline accepted for **Purchasing, HR, Marketing, Sales & Service**. For **Finance** and **IT** vacancies, a relevant degree is “ideal but not essential”. Minimum of 2:2 degree.

- [Kerry Group](#) – Graduate Development Programmes include **Finance, Commercial (Marketing & Sales), Supply Chain**. Accept any degree discipline, degree classification not specified as of August 2014, but have recruited those offering a 2:2 in previous recruitment campaigns.
- [London Treasurer’s Graduate Scheme](#) – CIPFA, Local Authority Finance, opportunities in East Midlands, London, Cambridgeshire, Northampton and East Sussex, minimum of 2:2 degree.
- [Majestic Wine](#) – **Trainee Manager Programme**, “Have a degree or relevant qualification in any subject”, also require a full clean UK driving licence.
- [Meta-Morphose](#) - **Sales Training** – minimum of 2:2 degree.
- [Mitchells & Butler](#) – Pub/Restaurant Management offer a **Retail Graduate Development Programme** 2:2 Degree minimum.
- [National Grid](#) – 2:2 is the minimum for engineering applications.
- [National Health Service \(NHS\)](#) – offer graduate training schemes in **Finance, HR, and Health Informatics Specialism**, at least a 2:2 in any degree discipline.
- [Nestle](#) – **Finance, Marketing, Engineering, HR, Sales, Supply Chain**, some schemes will accept a 2:2, whereas others i.e. HR will accept a 2:2 plus a Master’s Degree.
- [Norbert Dentressangle](#) – **Logistics Management** – no Degree classification specified, though would prefer a graduate from a Business School or a university Master’s course in Transport and Logistics.
- [Pareto](#) – **Graduate Sales/Recruitment** – consider all degree disciplines and classifications.
- [PwC Inspired Talent](#) –The “Outstanding Achievement” entry route – “it’s an innovative way we’re able to support applications from people who may have not met the academic requirements, but have excelled in somewhere else”. (PwC, August 2014).
- [Royal Mail](#) – for Logistics Graduate Scheme a minimum of a 2:2 is required (a logistics or transport-related degree is essential), plus previous work experience i.e. industrial placement while a student.
- [RWE npower](#) – programmes include **Business Analysis, Finance, Marketing, Sales, Customer Operations** – no degree classification specified as of August 2014, though 2:2 degrees have been accepted in previous recruitment campaigns.
- [Scottish Power](#)
 - **SP Energy Networks** - 2:2 Degree in either Electrical or Mechanical Engineering.
 - **Generation** - 2:2 (Hons) Degree in either Electrical, Mechanical, Control & Instrumentation or Civil Engineering.
 - **Iberdrola Engineering & Construction** - 2:2 (Hons) Degree in either Electrical Engineering or Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering.

- **Retail** - 2:2 (Hons) Degree in either Business Administration, Business Management, International Business, International Business with a Modern language (Spanish) or Marketing.
- **Scottish Power Renewables** - 2:2 (Hons) Degree Mechanical Engineering.
- [Siemens](#) - graduate opportunities in **Industry, Infrastructure & Cities, Energy, Health Care, Corporate Finance** and **Financial Services** a minimum of a 2:2 degree in a relevant engineering or business-related subject.
- [Stagecoach Group](#)— Degree in any discipline at 2:2 or above for their **Operational Programme**.
- [UK Power Networks](#) - offer graduate schemes in **Engineering and Business and Commercial Management**. A minimum 2:2 degree required. The Engineering Programme is only open to engineering graduates with at least an electrical engineering module.
- [Yorkshire Water](#) - offer a **Graduate Development Programme** involving a number of structured placements. Degree classification not specified as of August 2014, though have recruited those with a 2:2 in previous campaigns.

FAQ: I am employed as a ... and no longer want to do this. What can I do?

The first question to ask yourself is why you want to make a change

For example: Is it boredom with your current role? A stressful environment? Lack of opportunity for progression? Relationship problems in work? Feeling undervalued? A re-organisation that has affected your role? You feel the need for a new challenge?

It is worth giving a lot of thought to the reason you are wanting a change in order to work out whether you really want a complete change of career or whether you just need a change of surroundings or management style or working conditions.

Sometimes it may be possible to bring about a satisfying change simply by changing your hours or the organisation you work for.

Here are some points to consider:

If you don't like the culture you are working in – then it's worth thinking about other types of culture where your skills could be used. For example working in a law firm which has a different emphasis, or leaving an HR role in a large commercial organisation and going to a Charity or SME instead. Even changing from one local authority to another may provide a considerable change of culture.

If you really dislike parts of your job - or feel that you don't get the opportunity to use all of your abilities – then think about whether what you do is typical for someone in your area of work. If you're unhappy with the job itself, then things may not improve if you simply change department or employer and you may want to consider a bigger change. However sometimes it is possible to develop your role within an organisation – talking to your line manager or the HR department to explore this option may be helpful

What are your relationships like with your colleagues, managers, clients or others? If there are problems, are these due to specific personality clashes? Or to the prevailing culture in that organisation? Or to the nature of the role you work in? If you like the people and environment that you work in, could you look at changing your role within the organisation? Or look for a similar role with another employer? Sometimes problems arise due to a problem in communications in an organisation – is the issue something that talking to your line manager or to the HR department could help to resolve?

Is your work-life balance the problem? Are you having difficulty fitting everything around your family life? You have a right to ask your employer for flexible working arrangements although they can refuse if they consider there is a good business

reason to decline your request. Another option to explore is working from home which has become more possible due to modern technology

The second question, if you decide you want a complete change, is what do you want to do?

You may have one or more ideas about this or you may have no idea at all. If you have no idea then you may find it helpful to complete an on-line career choice questionnaire. For example you could look at:

www.prospects.ac.uk Find the section called 'What jobs would suit me? This is a computer aided guidance programme matching skills and motivations to possible careers

www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-report Use the online questionnaires and psychometric tests to explore your interests, strengths, personality and abilities to provide possible job matches.

These questionnaires will help you think about your strengths, abilities and values and what is important to you in a job – for example being able to help people or the environment, earning a lot of money, being involved in administration, following up a creative talent, working for yourself ... and so on.

Once you know what it is that you do want to do....

Then your next step will be to ensure you have accurate and up to date information about the career area you now wish to enter, in order to consider whether it is a realistic option - and then to begin researching possible type of employers, or perhaps further training required, for this area of work.

Some alternative career ideas may involve you having to re-train and you will need to give some thought as to whether and how you could accomplish this. If you have financial commitments you may want to look at whether it would be possible to stay in your current job and follow a part- time or flexible study route, or look into whether any employers give sponsorship for training..

It is worth remembering that, in addition to postgraduate courses of study there are also a range of vocational courses offered at local Colleges of Further Education which may be of interest to you – for example courses in Marketing, Accountancy, Counselling..

Once again you will find excellent help on the websites www.prospects.ac.uk and www.targetjobs.co.uk where you'll find descriptions of various areas of work as well as an opportunity to register to be informed of vacancies.

These sites also list postgraduate study courses, whilst for further education courses you can check the website of your local College of Further Education

Cardiff University's Careers and Employability website also has a [vacancy listing](#) area. Here you will find Cardiff University's National Vacancy listings

You can also search the websites of individual companies that interest you and of professional or trade bodies covering the areas of work you are interested in.

There may be a specific publication or newspaper that advertises vacancies in the sector you are looking for, for example New Scientist or Social Work Today ... and also a related website - perhaps even a related App. Check out the professional association website for your chosen area too if applicable

Using a recruitment agency is a typical way to find work in specific sectors. There are a high number of recruitment agencies in the UK. Here are some useful websites to help you research them:

www.agencycentral.co.uk - For sourcing agencies by industry sector, skill or location.

www.applegate.co.uk/recruitment-services - For details of nationwide recruitment agencies.

www.britishcompanies.co.uk/recruitment.htm - A list of the UK's top agencies and websites.

www.grb.uk.com - The graduate recruitment bureau. A list of unfilled graduate vacancies in the UK.

www.jobs1.co.uk - For sourcing agencies by occupation specialism, or location. The site directs jobseekers to the relevant job centre plus, recruitment agency or employer..

www.just4graduates.net - A useful website that agencies may post their graduate vacancies onto.

www.monster.co.uk - Type in the word graduate in the key words to see hundreds of graduate vacancies.

www.recruit-online.co.uk - For sourcing agencies by agency name or location

www.reed.co.uk/graduate - Specialist graduate sub division suitable for graduates. Other agencies advertise on this site so worth checking.

www.totaljobs.co.uk - To find graduate trainee vacancies click on this option under Industry/Sector

www.yell.com - For local area agencies, search under "Employment Agencies" and the area you require.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list as the sector is continually changing.

THE POWER OF NETWORKING

One of the best ways to find a job is through networking. You can go to networking meetings (for example organised by professional associations), tap into your own personal network, or ask friends 'who they know'.

The Internet is now overflowing with social media and there many ways to use this in order to network, and eventually find a job. This is becoming a powerful tool in job hunting and recruitment.

Use Linked-In.

- Linked-in is basically a directory of companies and the professional staff who work in them. Individuals and companies use LinkedIn for networking, job searching, recruiting staff and company research.
- LinkedIn company profiles are a good way to find more information on a company you're interested in. You'll be able see your potential connections at the company and begin to network with them. Also a company can see your details and may contact you regarding a job opportunity
- Your profile is one of the most important parts of LinkedIn. This is what you use to connect with people in your network and your profile is how you get found on LinkedIn, because it contains information about your skills and experience.
- The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the more chances you will have to be found and to be contacted. Use your LinkedIn profile like a CV and provide prospective employers with detailed information on your skills and experience.

Twitter

- Many companies have a corporate presence on Twitter and so you can search by their company name to find them.
- You can then follow a company that interests you on Twitter to keep up to date with their current areas of focus and new projects
- When you're looking for employment, Twitter can be a useful part of your job search strategy, helping you to make connections and even to build a sort of personal brand or image.

Facebook

Can also be used for career networking but because it has grown out of social profiles you may need to go through it and clear out areas that may make it look un-professional. Take a close look at your Profile and decide what you want business contacts or prospective employers to see or to know about you - and what you don't. Tidy up your profile and keep it simple and relevant to your job search, with minimal photos. Choose your Friends wisely and remember your Friends can see information about your other Friends. Be careful what you share on your Facebook pages.

Instagram

Instagram can also be a good way to establish your personal brand for people interested in creative career areas and it demonstrates your social media skills

Good luck with your job search!

FAQ: I am an international graduate but I want to apply for jobs in the UK. How do I do this?

In reply to this, you need to ask yourself two further questions.

Firstly, what do I need to know about the UK job market as an international graduate?

It is worth noting that the UK graduate job market is distinct from many other countries in that entry to many business and professional fields is open to those from any degree discipline. This is especially true for graduate training schemes with large companies. The selection process for these starts 9-12 months prior to the start date. So, if you missed this process during your studies, you can apply during the remaining months of your student visa after your course officially ends. If you do this, you will need to consider your availability to participate in the selection process after your student visa expires (normally four months after the end of your course). Check the work visa policies of companies in the FAQs section of their recruitment websites. Large companies who offer graduate training schemes are often multinational in nature. They are the most likely ones to recruit international graduates in the UK. It may also be worth checking their website for international or global schemes on offer including those in your home country or region. Graduate Training Schemes and other job opportunities are advertised on the Careers & Employability Centre [Jobs Pages](#) Register also with Target Jobs, Prospects, Monster, Milkround etc for vacancy alerts.

A key aspect of your job search strategy is leveraging your strengths as an international graduate. Research UK companies who have trade links with overseas markets and vice versa. Consider whether your language(s) and cross-cultural skills could enable you to make a distinct contribution. The following websites may help you to identify hot sectors and key companies for international trade:

[UKTI](#)

[China Britain Business Council](#)

[UK India Business Council](#)

[International Chambers of Commerce](#)

[British Chambers](#)

Secondly, what are the visa regulations governing work in the UK after my studies?

Once you have completed your studies, you are allowed to work full-time until your student visa expires. Beyond this, it may be possible to extend your time in the UK by applying under one of the following visas:

- **Tier 2 (General) Skilled Worker** visa for a stay of up to 6 years. In order to obtain this visa, you must secure a graduate job offer before your student visa expires. The job must be at a particular skill level, pay a minimum salary of £20,500 per annum and the employer must be registered with the UK Government as a licensed sponsor.
- **Tier 5 Temporary Worker** visa for a stay of up to 2 years in the UK for work. There are many different schemes within Tier 5, so you need to check if you meet all the requirements of one or more of them. In most cases, you cannot make a Tier 5 application in the UK if you have Tier 4 immigration permission, so you will have to return to the country where you usually live and make an entry clearance application there. However, it is possible for students to apply in the UK under Tier 5 (Government Authorised Exchange) if you need to stay for training in order to qualify in your profession after your studies here and since 1 October 2013, if you also stay to do an internship. Check out the [UK Visas website](#) for details of Tier 5 Internships sponsors like AIESEC, BUNAC or International Student Internship Scheme (for Chinese graduates).
- **Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme** for students who have almost finished their UK PhD or other doctorate qualification an additional 12 months of Tier 4 (General) immigration permission in which to look for and start work in the UK.
- **Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur** visa for up to 12 months initially, for those who have successfully completed their studies and have a credible and innovative business idea.

For further information on the above visas and other routes, download the Employment Regulations booklet in the Graduates section of our website. For an update on the visa changes, go to the following websites:

[UKVI](#)

[UKCISA](#)

Social Media

Join the LinkedIn group 'Cardiff University Careers International'

Follow international career updates on Twitter @cardiffglobal

FAQ: I have been working in retail for the last two years or so as I just fell into it to earn some money and cannot seem to find a way out of this. I keep applying for positions in administration but all my work experience is retail. How do I get out of this?

The first thing to consider here is why your applications are being rejected?

Do you have the relevant experience/skills?

You mention that all your experience so far is in retail, so perhaps your applications are failing to demonstrate clearly your suitability for work in an office environment.

Before submitting an application you need to look closely at the person specification for the role that you are applying for. This will list the essential and desirable competencies which you need to demonstrate in order to be shortlisted for the role. You may find that there are some skills which you can't demonstrate effectively because you haven't worked in an office before. If this is the case, you need to think about ways in which you can develop the skills which you are lacking at present. Typical administration skills include IT, word processing, database management etc. Think carefully about whether you have any of these skills already – perhaps you have a hobby or pastime which has helped you to develop your IT skills? If not, there are lots of ways to develop new skills, perhaps by signing up for an evening course at your local college, or by volunteering with a local charity to help with their administration work. If you are able to build up some voluntary admin experience, your applications for paid work will be stronger.

Is your application technique up to scratch?

Go back to your most recent application and check whether your application form addressed each of the points on the person specification. If not, this will help to explain your rejection. You need to address each of the requirements separately, providing concrete evidence of your competence/experience in each. It's important to spend time on your application form to make sure it sells what you have to offer in the most effective way possible. For further tips on application forms you might like to take a look at our booklet, available from Careers & Employability.

Are there other roles with your current employer?

You mention that you have worked in retail for a couple of years. Do you know the location of your current employer's Head Office? There may be office based roles available within the organisation, and as an established member of staff with a proven track record you are in a good position to apply for roles internally. Another option is to find out whether your employer has a Graduate Training Scheme. If so, is it possible to apply for a place, or to get a transfer onto the scheme? This would enable you to explore other areas of the business away from the shop floor.

FAQ: I keep getting shortlisted for interview but then don't get the job.

This is really tough especially when you feel like you have worked hard on researching the job and performed well on the day.

Unfortunately there may be a number of reasons why you weren't selected ranging from someone was better than you on the day to something an interviewer is unable to articulate or unwilling to disclose. [Career advantage](#) has a comprehensive list of reasons why people have been unsuccessful, it may be worthwhile going through and asking yourself honestly, if any relate to you.

Most reasons can be divided into Preparation and Presentation. Below are some of the common problems and some suggestions about how to overcome them.

PREPARATION

Lack of research particularly about the organisation and role is a common reason why people are unsuccessful. Use the information below to help ensure you are researching the correct information and then using that knowledge and relating it to your own skills and experiences.

Research the company

- Researching the company before an interview will make you better prepared to ask and answer questions.
- What is its mission? Look on the company's website for a mission statement or marketing strapline.
- What are its values? Look for information about its customer service standards, for example.
- Is there anything distinctive about its culture? For example, some companies based in the UK but which originate from overseas may have cultural differences such as unusual working hours or not observing public bank holidays. How would you fit in and is there anything you would want to ask about at the interview?
- Investing time and effort in this research will pay off, and it is the least that employers expect.
- Be prepared for questions about the sector in which the organisation operates. Who are its main competitors? What market issues is it currently facing? These questions apply to public sector organisations as well as to commercial companies. For example, if you were being interviewed for a post in higher education administration, you might research the impact of tuition fees.

Research the job

- Most employers will send you a job description and person specification, and often other background information. But look on their website, too. Some sites will have sections with information for potential employees, including the competencies they recruit to. Be prepared to make a thorough search to gather the information you need.
- As well as researching what the job involves, try to find out about:
 - how it fits in with other roles within the organisation
 - line management and reporting responsibilities
 - the level of autonomy or supervision you will have
 - any professional training that you will be required to undertake
- You will then be well placed to demonstrate your knowledge of the job at the interview, and there will be fewer surprises when you start work.
- Have you been completely honest in your application? – if you have “bigged” something up on paper it will be quite easy for an experienced interviewer to see through the bluster.
- A really useful thing to do is practice your answers out loud, practicing helps with nerves which can affect your voice and mannerisms.
- Video yourself! Seeing and hearing yourself from another angle is invaluable.
- Reflection after the interview, particularly straight after can be uncomfortable and sometimes you can be way too negative, however, it can be effective if you can stop yourself from thinking every answer to every question was rubbish!
- Make a note of the questions you were asked, as this can be useful preparation for future interviews for a similar role.

PRESENTATION

You may think you have covered all the basics as far as interview preparation is concerned but have you thought about the non- verbal vibes you give off. This involves how you look and how you behave.

Research has shown that in the first few minutes of an interview, the interviewer will notice:

- 55% visual impact of how you look
- 38% tone of your voice
- 7% what you say

This does not mean that what you say is not important, but rather that it is your body language and how you look and speak that people will remember most from a first meeting.

Appearance

People often think they have this right but there is some interesting research on what to wear, remember it is different for different sectors. For females some make-up is better than none at all. Bright colours are a general no- no, as are wacky socks and ties for males. Now is not the time to show off your sense of humour.

If you have visible piercings or tattoos you will know that some people use them to make assumptions about you. It is up to you to judge what is appropriate for the organisation you want to work for, and whether you are prepared to compromise on your appearance. There are loads of websites offering advice on what to wear, take a look at this [Telegraph article](#), it has some pretty comprehensive advice.

Behaviour

The tone of your voice - you need to sound enthusiastic, you can “feel” passion and enthusiasm.

Other helpful hints for on the day include:

- Know exactly where you are going and get there slightly early.
- Be polite and courteous to everyone you meet. The panel may consult them and they might be your future colleagues.
- Smile when you go in and when you leave, and regularly in between.
- Greet everyone on the panel warmly. Shake hands if it is easy to do so.
- Wait until you are offered a chair before you sit down.
- Sit upright in your chair and wait for the interviewer(s) to take control.
- Look at the people on the panel; be alert and interested at all times.
- Be aware of any habits you may have, particularly when you're nervous, eg. Nail biting, foot tapping, playing with your hair.
- Use pauses in speech to stress points.
- Listen carefully to what is being asked of you. If you are unsure, ask for clarification.
- Ask if you can return to any question that you cannot answer.
- Remain positive and optimistic.
- Be a good listener as well as a good talker.
- Leave with a smile and thank the interviewer(s) for their time.

Get feedback

Below are some suggested questions to ask an employer after an unsuccessful interview:

- How well did I answer questions about the job and the company?
- How well did I answer questions about myself, my skills and experience?

- On the basis of my application and interview, what do you think is my weakest area?
- And what is my biggest strength?
- How did I compare to other interview candidates?
- Do you have any observations on my appearance, body language, or tone of voice?

Remember that all interview experience is valuable and can help you to refine your technique for next time.

You may have done well in all areas but simply lost out to another candidate with more experience. Although frustrating, this does mean that you performed well, were employable and don't have any major areas to address for your next interview.

For further help please take a look at the [Interview & Assessment Centre booklet](#).