

# CAREER PLANNING GUIDE FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATES

*Career success for Masters students*



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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been written for all taught postgraduate students, and postgraduates who have recently completed such courses, at the University of Kent. Its aim is to help postgraduates to achieve their career aims by providing information on opportunities for postgraduates, advice on job-seeking and details of the help and resources available to postgraduates – at the University of Kent and beyond. It looks at career opportunities for postgraduates and at the skills and knowledge which they can bring to a large number of jobs – not just those directly related to their studies. The booklet can only offer a general introduction and you should follow it up by using the various information resources to which it will point you or by discussing your own personal queries and issues with a careers adviser.

There is a very wide variety of taught postgraduate students, studying on full-time and part-time programmes across the full range of academic subjects. Some have gone on to postgraduate study immediately after their undergraduate degree, while others have returned to study after some years of employment. Some are studying for interest, others for vocational reasons: some plan to continue onto a research degree and an academic career while others may hope to use their studies outside academia.

This booklet inevitably has to generalise about the opportunities open to postgraduates and the skills gained through postgraduate study. Please use it as a starting point and continue your career planning by using the Careers and Employability

Service and the other sources of advice and information on careers and employment noted.

Whatever you are studying and whatever your future career plans, you should begin your career planning early and not wait until you have completed your dissertation before taking action. This will give you plenty of time to decide on your preferred career option, to develop a contingency plan and to gather information about opportunities through research and networking. Many major recruiters will advertise vacancies several months in advance of the starting date.



# CHOOSING A CAREER

## The first thing to do when planning your career is to think about issues such as:

- **Your interests**
- **Your values**
- **Your skills**
- **Your opportunities** – the job market for your subject or area of interest
- **Your personal circumstances** – such as geographical restrictions

This will help you to decide what you want from a career, what you can offer employers and what other factors might affect your choices. The following sources will provide information and advice to help you make these decisions:

- **Choosing a Career** A booklet produced by the CES to help you make career choices. It outlines the different stages of decision-making, the issues that students should think about during this process and provides resources that will enable you to find out more about yourself and your career options. Available in the CES building, or download it from [www.kent.ac.uk/publications.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/publications.html)
- **Prospects Career Planner:** [www.prospects.ac.uk/myprospects\\_planner\\_login.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/myprospects_planner_login.htm)  
An online self-assessment and career choice program that helps you to:
  - generate new job ideas and check out your existing ideas;

- identify your skills and find out what motivates you in a job;
- see how these match the jobs you are considering;
- research your chosen jobs in more detail and decide on the right choices for you
- **Your Masters – What Next?**  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/masters-degrees/your-masters-what-next](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/masters-degrees/your-masters-what-next)
  - Find out about the skills you have gained as a result of your postgraduate study and how you can present these skills most effectively to an employer.
- **Options with your subject**  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree)  
A series covering over 40 academic subject areas giving ideas for how graduates can use their degree subject or the employability skills acquired in studying it. Although targeted at undergraduates, much of the content is also relevant to postgraduates.
- **'What can I do with my degree in ...?'**  
[www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/degree](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/degree)  
Information on the destinations of Kent graduates and postgraduates plus links to employers and career areas likely to be of interest to graduates in that subject.





## Important things to keep in mind when making career decisions

- **Get to know yourself** – your employability skills, abilities and personal qualities. Without knowing what is important to you, what you want from a job and what you can offer, it will be more difficult to make career choices.
- **Other people can often help you to see yourself more clearly.** Try asking your friends, relations or tutors about your strengths and weaknesses, or talk over your ideas with a careers adviser. They could help you to see yourself more objectively.
- **Don't have fixed ideas about jobs**, such as who does them and what the work is like. Stereotyped pictures of jobs are rarely accurate. Find out what is really involved and look for the truth behind the popular image.
- **The best careers advice comes from people with first-hand knowledge.** Try and make contact with people doing the type of jobs that interest you and talk to them about their work.
- **Keep an open mind.** Be flexible. Be receptive to new job ideas. Don't reject career possibilities without some consideration first. Remember that your first career post does not have to set the direction for the rest of your working life if you don't want it to.
- **Make full use of the Careers and Employability Service.** Use our print and online resources and consult careers advisers with any queries and problems.

# SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH POSTGRADUATE STUDY

**Employers want postgraduates to be able to offer more than their academic subject knowledge. They also look for a range of skills: transferable skills such as teamworking, business awareness and communication skills plus, depending on the employer, more practical skills such as languages, numeracy, laboratory techniques and quantitative methods. These skills are important for jobs in all areas – business, education, research and the public sector – and you will need to show them on your job applications.**

The transferable skills most often sought by employers of postgraduates are:

- **Written communication skills**  
The ability to use the English language effectively in order to express your ideas clearly and at a level appropriate for your audience.
- **Verbal communication skills**  
Again, using language effectively but with the additional ability to speak confidently and clearly and to pitch what you say in such a way to have the desired impact on your listeners.



- **Analytical ability**  
Considering differing ideas, information and theories; picking out key points and details in order to construct or support your arguments; following complex reasoning; applying logic.
- **Critical thinking**  
Ability to question and not to take things at face value. Interpreting information and arguments; considering their validity in the light of issues such as their source, the evidence provided to support them and other material on the topic. Constructing a reasoned argument for your own point of view.
- **Planning and organising**  
Approaching tasks and projects systematically; managing time; setting targets; monitoring progress; delegating; ability to handle a number of different tasks simultaneously.
- **Research/Investigative skills**  
Use of a variety of sources; constructing research proposals; testing different theories; using specialist techniques such as statistical packages or laboratory equipment.
- **Innovation**  
Ability to take a fresh approach, think laterally, be original and creative, willing to try new things and adapt to new environments.

- **Problem solving**

Taking a systematic approach to problems; being flexible in finding solutions; looking at different angles and approaches; identifying the most appropriate solution for the situation.

- **Maturity and confidence**

Wide experience of life generally and specifically of working with other people; strong career focus; credibility with employers and clients.

- **Self-motivation**

Ability to work independently without the need for constant direction or feedback.

Anticipating what needs to be done; setting your own goals and working towards them. Being positive and professional. Taking responsibility for your own work and personal development.

- **Commercial awareness**

An awareness of the environment in which an organisation operates (public sector and charitable organisations face commercial and financial pressures too!). A focus on the purpose of the organisation and its clients and/or stakeholders.

- **Co-operation**

The ability to work with other people, inside and outside your own department or organisation. Working together to achieve a common goal. Allocating and sharing responsibilities and tasks.

Many of these skills are developed to a high level through postgraduate study. Others can be demonstrated through other aspects of your experience, such as part-time or vacation work and extra-curricular interests, so be sure to get involved in activities outside of your studies and to use these activities in your applications.

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions>



# YOUR CAREER OPTIONS

## **Once you have thought about your skills, and what you want from your career, you are ready to start looking at opportunities.**

You may have chosen your Master's degree with a particular career in mind and know exactly what you want to do; you may have only a more vague idea of how you can use your postgraduate studies in your career or you may have taken your degree purely out of interest and now be looking at a wide range of possibilities.

In some job areas, such as economics, political and social research, science and technology, education and psychology, a postgraduate qualification is often a requirement or a strong advantage. It can also be helpful if you want to work abroad, or for an international organisation, as in other countries a Masters-level qualification may be the norm for graduate jobs.

However, many graduate recruiters in the UK do not put any great additional value on a Master's degree, especially where the graduate has taken a taught Master's degree immediately following an undergraduate degree, and does not have a great deal of work experience beyond part-time and casual jobs.

While employers are happy to recruit Master's graduates onto their graduate schemes, these graduates apply through the same route as undergraduates and are not treated any differently in the recruitment process or when they start work. A recent (small-scale) survey of ten of the largest graduate recruiters found that only four even mentioned postgraduate qualifications and that only two of these had some specific roles where a postgraduate degree might be an advantage.

As a Master's graduate, though, you do have more to offer these employers than you did at the end of your first degree. At the most basic level, you have an extra year's experience, which makes you more mature and focused. Since most Master's students are self-funded, taking a degree at this level demonstrates commitment and motivation. If, during your postgraduate year, you have gained further experience and skills (through internships or extra-curricular activities) in addition to academic qualifications this can help you to stand out when competing with Bachelor's degree graduates. See page 4 for an outline of the employability skills developed through postgraduate study.

Outside these big graduate recruiters, there are plenty of opportunities where a postgraduate degree will be a requirement or an advantage and employers will value the specialist knowledge or practical skills gained through your studies. Some of these employers may have an annual graduate intake, but many more will only recruit on an ad hoc basis, as and when they need somebody with a particular knowledge base or skill set.

In general, though, postgraduates are highly attractive to a wide variety of employers, whatever their background.

The following pages look at some popular areas for Master's graduates hoping to use their qualifications or interests in their career, either directly or indirectly.



# NON-ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC-RELATED CAREERS IN UNIVERSITIES

**As well as academic roles, universities employ staff in a variety of academic-related management and support roles.**

These include:

- Administration, including student registration and admissions, central services administration, departmental co-ordination;
- Library and information services;
- Scientific support, e.g. laboratory technicians;
- Careers, employability and enterprise;
- Human resource management, including staff development/training;
- IT and systems support;

- Public relations and marketing posts, promoting universities to prospective students (in the UK and overseas), alumni, businesses and the community;
- Student welfare and support: counselling and advice services, disability support, international student support;
- Accommodation, catering and conference services;
- Arts, music and events;
- Financial management;
- Health and safety.

For more information, see [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/university.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/university.html)

Vacancies in these areas may be advertised at national level on the job sites below but, at entry-level grades, may only be advertised on the individual university's website.

## Finding a job in the higher education sector

- [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)
- *The Guardian*  
<http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/education/higher>
- Times Higher Education  
[www.timeshighereducation.co.uk](http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk)

Most of these sites list jobs covering a range of academic, research, managerial and support roles in higher education plus vacancies in other public and private sector bodies that may require or prefer a postgraduate degree.



# CAREERS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

## Careers in teaching

A number of postgraduates will go on to an Initial Teacher Education or Training Programme leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). These are available either through a PGCE course or while working in a school.

If you intend to teach in schools, you should have some work experience with the relevant age-range. Most providers expect you to have at least two weeks' classroom experience before you begin teacher training.

For further information on teaching careers, teaching qualifications and entry requirements see [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/sitesiteach.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/sitesiteach.html)

## Careers in research

### Humanities

Outside education, jobs which make direct use of a Master's degree in the humanities are unlikely to be more numerous at postgraduate level than they were after your BA. Areas such as the media, publishing and the heritage industry are highly competitive and, although your degree should be able to help you demonstrate an advanced level of skills and knowledge, employers will usually be seeking practical and transferable skills rather than purely academic expertise.



### Social Sciences

You may be particularly interested in the field of social research – working for central or local government bodies, think-tanks and consultancies. Commercial organisations, such as market research and advertising agencies, also make use of social research techniques and skills.

Subjects such as law, business and economics can also be applied with commercial employers specialising in these fields.

### Science and technology

Research and development scientists are employed in many organisations including manufacturing companies (cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, defence, etc), energy and utility companies, Government laboratories, charities and Research Councils.

For links to these and other areas, see [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/research.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/workin/research.html)

# FINDING A JOB – VACANCY SOURCES

**If you are looking for employers who run large-scale graduate recruitment schemes, you can find details on sites such as:**

- **Prospects**  
[www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate\\_job\\_search.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate_job_search.htm)
- **TARGET Jobs**  
<http://targetjobs.co.uk>
- **The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers**  
[www.top100graduateemployers.com](http://www.top100graduateemployers.com)
- **Milkround Online**  
[www.milkround.co.uk](http://www.milkround.co.uk)

There is a fuller list of these and other listings sites at [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html)

These are national resources which chiefly focus on large corporate and public sector recruiters. Many of these employers will begin recruiting in September for graduates to start work the following autumn, so apply in good time.



# APPLYING FOR JOBS

**While your postgraduate studies will have equipped you with a large number of the skills that employers want for graduates, if you are applying for posts outside the academic or research field, you will need to convince employers of two things:**

- that the skills you have gained can be useful in a non-academic setting;
- that you are motivated and enthusiastic about the position that you are applying for.

In other words, you not only need to convince prospective employers that you **can** do the job, but also that you **want to** do the job.

Your CV should therefore use your postgraduate study alongside your work experience and other activities as evidence of the skills and personal qualities required in that particular position. It should include:

- **A brief outline** of your academic qualifications, both postgraduate and undergraduate;
- **Work experience** – here, any type of experience may be relevant: part-time and vacation work, voluntary work, work shadowing, etc;

- **Extra-curricular activities and interests** – these do not just help to demonstrate your skills but also show that you have a life outside your studies!
- **Evidence of skills** such as IT, time management, project management and report writing;
- **References.** Usually just two references, one academic and one employer or character reference.



# INTERVIEWS

**The format of these, and the questions asked, will naturally vary according to the employer and the type of job but in most cases will focus as much on your skills and competencies as on your studies and research.**

With any interview, thorough preparation is the key to success. This will help you to appear confident at interview (however nervous you feel inside!) and provide evidence of your motivation and enthusiasm by showing that you have taken the trouble to research the career area and the employer to which you are applying.

As part of this preparation, you should:

- Think about **why you want the job** – what motivates you?
- **What you have to offer** that will help you to do the job – relevant experience, skills and/or competencies;
- **Prepare examples** that demonstrate these skills;
- **Anticipate questions** that you might be asked during the interview.

Demonstrating your motivation and competencies will be doubly important if you are applying for a position that has little or no direct relevance to your studies. While employers may find your academic qualifications impressive some, particularly in smaller organisations, may equally find them intimidating.

They may also have concerns about the relevance of these qualifications, your practical and people skills and your commitment to a career outside academia.

A survey of employer attitudes to postgraduate researchers found that the following concerns and negative perceptions were most often raised by employers outside academia:

- Lack of commercial awareness
- Difficulty in adapting to the working culture outside university
- Over-specialisation and lack of adaptability
- Unrealistic expectations – of, for example, salary and levels of responsibility

Although this survey focused on research postgraduates, some employers may have the same concerns about candidates with taught Master's degrees, so think about how you can counter them. Using all aspects of your experience, including part-time work and extra-curricular activities, rather than just focusing on your studies, is a helpful tactic. Questions about the relevance of your postgraduate degree, and your reasons for changing career direction and applying for a particular position, can easily be seen by the candidate as hostile but are a legitimate way for the interviewer to test your motivation and enthusiasm, so don't let yourself get flustered.



CONTINUED OVERLEAF

## INTERVIEWS (CONT)

### The questions

You can expect to be asked questions such as:

- Why did you choose to take a postgraduate degree?
- What did your course actually involve?
- How might your degree be useful to us?
- What do you know about this organisation?
- Why are you applying for this job?
- What do you expect to be doing in this job?
- Apart from your degree, what can you bring to the job?
- What other jobs have you applied for?
- Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
- Have you thought about carrying on into a PhD?

These questions are designed to assess your motivation – do you **want** the job? Other questions will aim to assess your competencies – can you **do** the job?

Competency-based questions will follow the format 'Give me an example of a time when you have ...':

- had to convince a person or group to do something that they were initially reluctant to do;
- had to analyse detailed information to extract the essential points;
- had to manage a heavy workload or a number of conflicting priorities;
- had to organise your time to achieve a specific aim;
- worked with a group of other people to achieve a common goal;

- taken a major decision;
- succeeded in a challenging task in difficult circumstances;
- solved a problem in a creative way;
- acted to improve a process or make a system work better;
- had to explain something in detail to a person or group who knew little about the subject;
- begun a task and then had to change your approach and do something in a different way.

Your studies will have given you material to use in answering many of these questions, but it is a good idea to provide a number of examples from outside academia as well – this will reassure the interviewer that you have experience beyond university and have gained skills from 'real life' as well as from study and research.



# THE CREATIVE CAREER SEARCH



**Unlike conventional jobhunting this involves a creative, active approach rather than being passive and reactive. Instead of just waiting to apply for advertised vacancies, you take the initiative and make an active search. Most jobs – the figure is generally estimated at 80% – are never advertised so the creative approach opens up many more opportunities.**

A key element of the Creative Career Search is networking – building up a network of people who can help you in your job search. This help may be very relaxed and informal, such as just chatting to people about their work, their current research or even a spare-time interest that they share with you, or it may develop into something further such as mentoring or work-shadowing.

Conferences are a good place for academic networking and you should be sure to attend these or other meetings whenever possible to get to know other people working in your field.

This networking may be both formal and informal and can give you an insight into the opportunities available and where to look for them.

Social media is another valuable tool in creating and developing networks. If you follow and interact with professionals in your area of interest you will be able to find out what is going on in this area, demonstrate your interest and motivation, showcase your skills and keep up to date with job opportunities.

# FURTHER STUDY AND ACADEMIC CAREERS

**Having taken your studies to Master's level, and successfully completed a research project or dissertation, may have fired you with the desire to continue onto an MPhil or PhD. You should seek advice from your dissertation supervisor on this option and your suitability for it.**

Studying for a degree based entirely on independent research is quite a different experience from following a one-year taught Master's course and self-motivation and determination are just as important as academic ability in achieving success.

Finance is another important issue to consider: although there is more funding for research than for taught postgraduate degrees, this does not mean that such funding will be easy to obtain! In addition, you need to apply early – usually in Autumn term – for funded research places.

The other question to consider is what a research degree will lead onto. An academic position is attractive to many postgraduate students, and a PhD is almost always a formal requirement for this.



However, the job market for lecturers and contract researchers is highly competitive and it is increasingly rare for postgraduates to obtain a position as a lecturer immediately after completing their PhD. More typically they will start out in a role such as Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant or Postdoctoral Fellow, often on a temporary contract, and may continue in a series of these contracts for several years. Teaching posts in particular are likely to be part-time and remunerated only on the number of hours taught. Candidates for academic posts need to offer teaching experience, administrative/organisational skills and a record of publications and conference presentations and should be geographically mobile (including internationally) to give themselves the best career opportunities.

A 2016 survey by Vitae found that less than half of PhD graduates were working in higher education three years after completing their degree.

As well as further academic study, you may wish to consider study for professional or vocational qualifications. In some careers, such as teaching or law, these will be essential, even for Master's graduates. In others, such as journalism or marketing, such qualifications are not essential but may be helpful in a competitive job market. Employers in some career sectors may pay for these qualifications, in which case you will usually study for them on a part-time basis while working for that employer.



# WHAT DOES THE CES OFFER POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS?

**Postgraduate students and researchers can access all of the general facilities and services offered by the CES, such as:**

## Careers advice

- A quick query advice service available every day for preliminary careers advice, help with CVs and application forms
- Individual guidance interviews to provide in-depth advice and help with your career choice and planning
- A programme of talks and workshops on a variety of topics, open to all interested students. These run throughout the academic year, but don't miss the annual Employability Festival in Autumn Term, with over 100 events.

## Careers information

- An extensive website [www.kent.ac.uk/ces](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces)
- Booklets to help with career planning and preparation
- Information for special-interest groups such as international students

## Employer information

- Employer directories, such as *The Times 100*, outlining major employers recruiting graduates
- Vacancy database of jobs, internships and research opportunities
- Help with applications, interviews and psychometric tests
- Employer presentations
- Annual Careers Fair

## Services specifically for postgraduates

We also offer:

- Dedicated web pages for postgraduates and contract researchers [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/postgraduate.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/postgraduate.html)
- Information on the destinations of previous students in your subject area [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/degree](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/degree)
- Advice on applications for academic or research posts

## Services specifically for you

Since all postgraduates are individuals, and the structure and nature of their postgraduate study also varies widely, web-based and print resources can only be of partial help in making career decisions and putting them into practice. We hope that this booklet will be a useful starting point for all postgraduates in their career planning, but do follow it up by making use of the one-to-one information, advice and guidance that the Careers and Employability Service can offer you from an early stage of your degree. It is not a good idea to put off any thoughts about careers until the day that you hand in your dissertation!



# CAREER PLANNER FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATES

**Your Master's year will pass very quickly so begin to investigate your options and plan for your future as soon as you can. Many graduate schemes and postgraduate research studentships have early deadlines, so you may have to start making applications in first term.**

## Autumn Term

**Talk to a careers adviser.** With so many potential career routes available it is sometimes difficult to know where to start. Careers advisers are available to talk over your options and help you to research your career choices and make decisions.

**Get the Careers Employability Award.** This will enhance your employability skills and greatly increase your chances of getting a graduate job. It uses quizzes and short assignments delivered entirely online via Moodle and can be completed in your own time, on campus or from home.  
[www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/careers/moodle.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/careers/moodle.html)

**Register for the Global Skills Award Programme,** designed to broaden your understanding of global issues and current affairs as well as to develop personal skills which will enhance your employability. All students registered for a taught Master's Degree are eligible to apply for a (free!) place. The Programme will give you the opportunity to broaden your experience, gain important skills whilst you are studying, and to meet and network with students from a wide variety of backgrounds and disciplines. For more details, and to register, go to [www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/skills/programmes/gsa.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/skills/programmes/gsa.html)

**Set up a profile on LinkedIn.** Our web page on using social media in your job hunting will help you to put yourself over to your best advantage  
[www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html?tab=using-social-media](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html?tab=using-social-media)

**Start to write or update your CV.** Make sure it is focused on the career areas that interest you. Get feedback from a careers or employability adviser.

**Find out about and apply for graduate jobs.** Many large employers will recruit early this term for graduate schemes starting in

the autumn after you graduate. Watch out for especially early deadlines, such as those for the Civil Service Fast Stream, advertising agencies and investment banks, and don't leave your applications until the last minute. You can find links to key graduate recruitment websites at [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html?tab=find-employers](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/findajob.html?tab=find-employers)

**Practise taking psychometric, aptitude, numeracy and personality tests.** Many large graduate recruiters use these and practising in advance can help you to improve your results. The CES offers free practice tests at [www.graduatesfirst.com/cp/kent/login.aspx](http://www.graduatesfirst.com/cp/kent/login.aspx)

**Attend careers and employability events** run by the CES or by your Academic School. These can be a great source of information and a way to build your network by meeting potential employers face to face. Don't miss the Employability Festival and Careers Fair in early November.  
[www.kent.ac.uk/ces/events/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/events/index.html)

**Research further study** if you hope to find a PhD with funding. Look at possible research topics and begin making informal enquiries to potential supervisors. See the resources on page 19 and our further study pages  
[www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/furtherstudy.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/furtherstudy.html)

## Spring Term

Even though lots of recruitment activity takes place in early autumn, graduate jobs and courses will be advertised throughout the year – it's not too late to keep applying.

**Attend assessment centres and job interviews.** Set aside time to prepare. Use the CES resources on interviews and assessment centres. Careers and employability advisers can help you to prepare and practise for interviews.

**Keep looking and applying for jobs.** This includes graduate schemes and jobs with smaller employers. Entry level graduate jobs can be advertised at any time of year, typically two or three months before the start date. Keep checking throughout the year – and after you graduate.

**Make speculative applications.** This means actively seeking opportunities – especially when vacancies are not being advertised. In many popular areas, such as the media, the arts and heritage sectors or advertising, entry-level jobs are rarely advertised as employers can fill the few such jobs that arise from speculative applications.

Making speculative applications is a great way to prove your drive and initiative to potential employers. [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/creativejobhunt.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/creativejobhunt.html)

Use **Kent Mentoring Scheme** to find Kent alumni and other people who can help and support you in your career. [www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/mentoring.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/student/mentoring.html)

**Go to summer recruitment fairs.** These are large events with many employers hosting stands. You can talk to the recruiters and discuss the opportunities they offer graduates and postgraduates. Find details of fairs around the UK at [www.prospects.ac.uk/events.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/events.htm)

Register with some appropriate **recruitment agencies**. Reputable agencies should be registered with the Recruitment & Employment Confederation [www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com) See also our pages on recruitment agencies [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/recruit.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/recruit.htm)

**Maintain your network.** Keep them updated. Let everyone (including social contacts) know the opportunities you're considering and how your job search is going.

Do you need to **rethink your strategy?** If you've been applying but haven't been getting many interviews, your applications may not be you doing justice. If you have been getting to interview but not getting job offers, your technique may be letting you down. The Careers and Employability Service may be able to help you make your applications more effective, improve your interview technique or suggest career areas where your skills and personal qualities will be more relevant.

**Keep in touch!** The Careers and Employability Service is open during the summer vacation, so you can continue to use us while you are working on your dissertation and for up to three years after you graduate.

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