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careermag FOR GRADUATES

A peak inside

National Graduate Week
What is CPD?
Adult Apprenticeships
Writing a speculative cover letter
Covid-19 and graduate recruitment
Where do social science students go?

Sector Spotlights

Pharmaceuticals
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Careermag for Graduates

Issue 2 | June 2020



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Welcome to the second edition of Careermap for Graduates

A decade ago, in the depths of the financial crisis, a significant number of employers kept recruiting and didn't fill all their graduate vacancies. I still find this hard to fathom. But even now, with coronavirus sinking the economy at a record rate, some employers are still hiring.

There is no doubt that this will be a difficult year if you want an internship to bolster your CV or a graduate job. But not all sectors are affected equally. Many tech and public sector organisations are still recruiting even though their offices are locked down by making full use of online interviews and assessments.

So don't let coronavirus leave your career plans floating aimlessly in the doldrums. You may not be able to get work experience, but can you volunteer? Dive into the many websites that offer online tutorials on video interviews and virtual assessment centres so you can show your best self when an opportunity does come your way. And remember that over 80 percent of employers don't recruit by degree discipline, so think flexibly and research your options.

Some of you will be reading postgraduate prospectuses. But think carefully before you sign up.

For some sectors a masters can be a real bonus, even an essential requirement, but not all employers will place a premium on your additional qualification. Again, do your homework and make the right choice for you.

Also take some time to reflect on what you have learned already and the skills you have developed from your extra-curricular pursuits. Yes, employers value your qualifications, but how you communicate with people, solve problems and get stuff done are equally important.

There will be fewer jobs and internships this year but be proactive and you will resurface in good shape as the economy and jobs market recover.

Stephen Isherwood
Chief Executive
Institute of Student Employers

So don't let coronavirus leave your career plans floating aimlessly in the doldrums. You may not be able to get work experience, but can you volunteer?



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About Careermag publications

Careermag is designed to provide quality information about careers and qualifications. Careers are not a linear path and you cannot know what you don't know. We aim to inspire and inform about all sorts of careers and opportunities, now and in the future.

We welcome your input! Please get in touch if you have any questions or something to contribute.

Contact the Editor at:
info@careermag.co.uk

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Welcome to Careermag for Graduates 2

These are strange days with the coronavirus making disruptions for everyone. It is undoubtedly a particular concern for students and recent graduates. But fear not! It is also an excellent time to get prepared for the world of work. The world is not going to stop turning.

We are delighted to be supported by the Institute of Student Employers (ISE) again for this issue. Tristram Hooley, Director of Research at the ISE, shares valuable information and support on what you can do to make the most of this time. In addition, we have top graduate career experts contributing many articles packed with advice, hits and tips for coping and preparing for your future.

Recognising that you may feel alone, over the next few issues we will be following 'Max the Grad' on his journey from recent graduate to finding his first 'real job'. He will be sharing his experiences, approaches and his job hunt – warts and all.

Take your time and take advantage of the space to really read through the whole issue. There is something for everyone.

We would love to hear from you! If you have any questions, have a great story to tell or just want to share your story, get in touch via our social media or email: info@careermag.co.uk.

Best wishes for success!
The Careermag Team



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A photograph of two young women in business attire. One woman is in the foreground, seen from the back, with her hair styled in a bun. The other woman is in the background, looking towards the camera with her hand on her chin, appearing thoughtful. They are in an office environment with a window in the background.

Times are hard, but graduate recruitment carries on...

Tristram Hooley (ISE) provides some insights for graduates looking to start their career in a challenging labour market.



- **Be prepared to do everything online including your interview.** Our research is telling us that firms have shifted their recruitment and selection processes online and cancelled most face-to-face activities. There is a strong indication that this kind of online recruitment may become the new normal. So, all that time you've spent online is now really going to pay off as you wow your new employer in a video interview.
- **Don't be surprised if you start your new job from your kitchen table.** It is not just recruitment that is moving online. Over half of employers expect to induct new staff online, and almost three-quarters (73%) are shifting their learning and development programmes into an online format. Think about how you are going to make a good impression if you start your new job online.
- **Don't give up hope if you don't find something quickly.** Hardly anyone walks into the job of their dreams, even in the best of years. The graduate labour market is very disrupted this year and a lot of employers may not be ready to start new hires in September. As the lockdown loosens the situation will improve. If you keep trying through the autumn, more opportunities will present themselves.

Over half of employers expect to induct new staff online, and almost three-quarters (73%) are shifting their learning and development programmes into an online format.

- **If you are not working, or if you are making do with an emergency job, try to make the most of your time.** A period of forced unemployment or under-employment doesn't have to be a wasted year. During that time you can gain new experience and skills, perhaps by undertaking voluntary work or doing some online courses. Try to keep developing your skills and improving your networks to help you find your way to your next job.
- **Remember that Covid-19 isn't your fault.** The challenges that you are facing as a graduate are closely related to the period in which you are graduating. Of course, you can do things to improve your chances of finding the job of your dreams, but ultimately politics and the economy shape all of our life chances. If things don't go as you hope, resist the urge to blame yourself. Try and focus on what you can do next, rather than endlessly going over your shortcomings. You haven't failed, there is a global recession on!

Overall, the recruitment picture for 2020 is becoming increasingly clear. The student labour market is currently down but not out. The future is extremely volatile and you are going to have to work hard to establish your career. But with a mix of strategic thinking, hope, resilience and good old fashioned luck, it will almost certainly work out for you in the end.

About the author

Tristram Hooley

Tristram is Chief Research Officer for the ISE



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10 Steps to boost your employability in the Covid-19 era



The Coronavirus pandemic has caused uncertainty and upheaval for many of us, not least for those of you currently in your final year. News and social media can often present mixed messages, so check out these 10 tips for taking control of your employability while socially distancing!

1. Get to grips with 'The New Normal' - Coping with change is never straightforward, as this article from [Mind Tools](#) explains, but by adopting a proactive approach to your career planning and decision making, you may feel that you have more control over your current situation and can start to explore potential present and future opportunities.

2. Consider what you want your future to look like in a post-Covid-19 world – This is an opportunity to consider your passion, purpose and how you might want to apply your skills and knowledge to make a difference in the world (check out the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) for some great examples of different challenges affecting the world today!).

3. Look after you – Mental and physical health and well being have arguably never been more important; don't forget to use your time learning/working from home to exercise self-care through reading, drawing, exercising or whatever works for you, even the odd Netflix binge!

4. Start that project! – This could be the ideal time to get cracking with that one project you've always wanted to do but could never find the time to complete, whether that be learning a language, mastering an instrument or starting a blog! You could also consider learning a new skill via the free courses available on sites like [Future Learn](#), [Open Learn](#), and [Coursera](#).

5. Keep your finger on the pulse! – With the situation changing for employers and even entire industries on a regular basis, it is useful to keep up to date with what is happening in the world of work – the [BBC Business Daily Podcast](#) is a good starting point!

6. Stay in touch with employers – Following companies on social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram is a great way to see how they are facing the challenge of Covid-19; you could even reach out to companies directly regarding opportunities to support their work but be mindful of the pressures that some of their staff may be under at this time.

7. Make connections – Talking and collaborating with others is even more vital in the current climate; reach out to alumni from your university on LinkedIn to seek advice or connect with professionals whose job roles interest you so that you can find out more about what it is like to work in their industry!

8. Enhance your online presence – Use this time to reflect on your skills and start or update your [LinkedIn](#) profile and CV; consider what your USP (Unique Selling Point) might be in a post-Covid-19 world and how you could communicate this effectively!

9. Become a Tech Wizard! – Many employers have already moved their recruitment practices online; by using this time to get to grips with digital application tools like [Video CVs](#), video interviews and platforms like Zoom, Skype and Google Hangouts, you will be getting yourself ahead of the game!

10. Help where you can – Consider ways you can use your skills and knowledge to support others safely during the current crisis, such as joining a [Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK](#) group; this will demonstrate the initiative, innovation and adaptability that is so often valued by employers!

About the author

Chris Webb

Employability Adviser, Sheffield Hallam University
Careers & Employability Service

A registered career development professional and member of the Career Development Institute (CDI) and Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), Chris has previously worked for education institutions in secondary education, FE and HE as a Careers Leader, Careers Adviser, Functional Skills Tutor and Study Programme Coordinator. All views are personal to Chris Webb.



Where do the Social Science students go?

The Australian philosopher Peter Singer once famously said that humans “were social before we were humans.”

Many who study human evolution now believe that our intelligence originated in the need to manage multiple relationships in our social groups. Remembering who did you favours and who didn't, who you like and don't, who is up and who's down in the social hierarchy, how another is likely to react to something you do? It all takes a lot of brainpower.

So it's hardly surprising that a lot of human effort goes into trying to understand human societies, institutions, cultures, organizations, groups, etc. We usually call this 'social science' and a lot of people do it.

UK universities produce about 650,000 social science graduates every year.

These students are taught by about 10,000 academic social scientists in the main 'disciplines' (anthropology, economics, sociology, politics and social psychology). Another 25,000 or so academics teach social science as part of more applied subjects like business studies, human geography, social policy, and so on.

But with only 35,000 academic jobs in the UK, only a very small fraction of social science graduates are going to end up working in academia. (Academic jobs are



But with only 35,000 academic jobs in the UK, only a very small fraction of social science graduates are going to end up working in academia... so where do the rest go?

highly internationalised. About one in five academics at UK Universities are from abroad and many UK academics migrate elsewhere).

So where do the rest go? We estimated there are probably about 350,000 to half a million people working in professional roles outside of universities that are applied social science.

In the public sector, including government, there are lots of applied social science jobs involved in doing, or commissioning, social science research. There are, for example, 17,000 civil servants in the 'policy profession' who do mainly applied social science work. Bodies like the Office for National Statistics, with around 800 staff, also do this sort of work.

The civil service is only 10% of the public sector and many people in the other 90% – health, education, criminal justice, local government and other areas – also do applied social science. And many social science graduates may go into the big public sector professions like teaching.

A smaller but interesting area are 'civil society' organisations like trade unions, political parties, think tanks, charities, and campaigning groups who often employ social science graduates in research and policy roles.

In the private sector one of the biggest areas for doing applied social science is market research. About 60,000

people work in this area. Some are employed directly by business organisations whilst there is also a substantial number of market research organisations like Ipsos MORI.

Social scientists may also work in industry in partnership with engineering and technical professionals, working on things like human-technology interfaces. Companies from Amazon, Facebook and Google to aircraft manufacturers or car-makers use social scientists in developing their products and services.

The final big area is one that applies across all these areas – management. Managing groups of people – which most managers do – requires a high-level of social skills which a social science education should have helped with.

About the author

Colin Talbot

Professor of Government at the University of Manchester and Research Associate at the University of Cambridge

Colin worked in a variety of jobs before becoming an academic in his late 30s.

He's advised governments, parliaments and public agencies around the world. He publishes academic articles and books, magazine and newspaper articles, blogs and tweets "rather too much" (his words).



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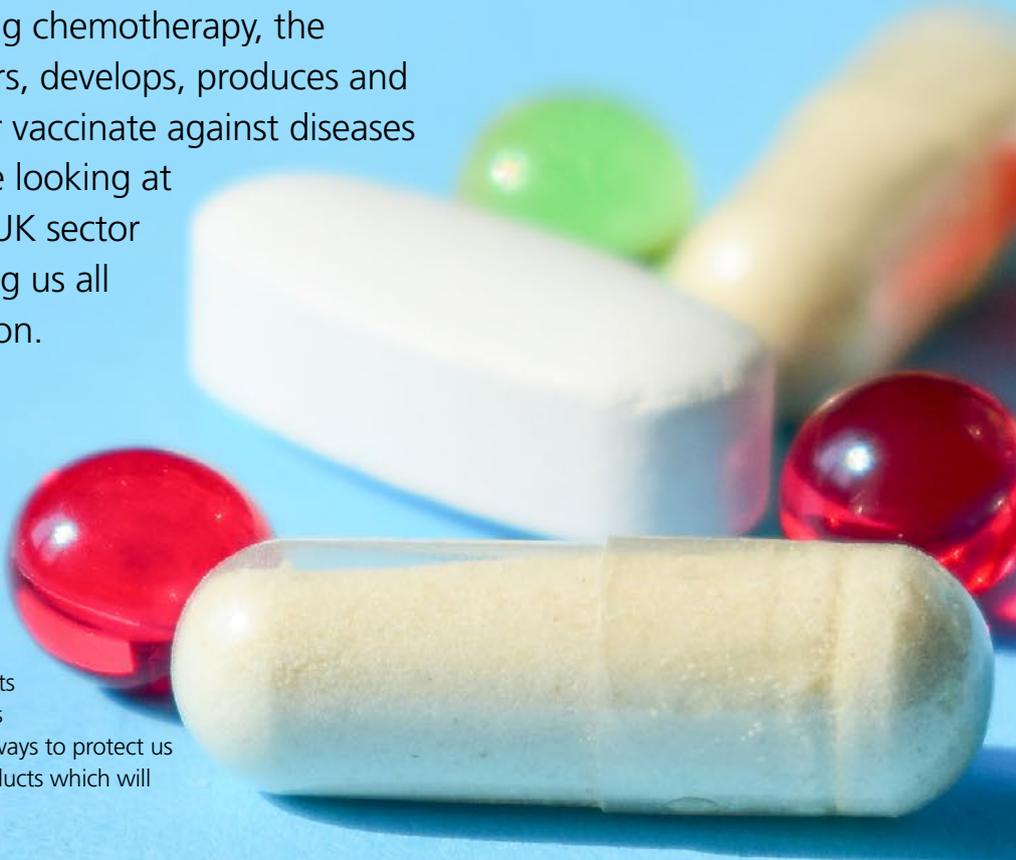
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Making things better...

From a simple aspirin to lifesaving chemotherapy, the pharmaceutical industry discovers, develops, produces and distributes medication to cure or vaccinate against diseases or ease the symptoms. If you are looking at a career in a globally-respected UK sector which has the purpose of making us all feel better and live longer, read on.

About the pharmaceutical sector

We all benefit from the pharmaceutical industry. From cradle to grave, every one of us uses some form of medicine at some point – from teething gel for toddlers to palliative pain relief for end of life care. Some of humanity's greatest achievements have been in the pharmaceutical industry. And it is still working towards keeping us healthy, finding ways to protect us against diseases old and new and developing products which will improve our quality of life.



What can I do?

The sector divides into three main areas, each with very different career opportunities.

Product Research and Development

This is the first stage in identifying the need for, and then developing, a new drug. It includes:

- **Lab-based roles** – scientists such as biochemists and microbiologists, lab technicians.

- **Clinical trials** – administrators, research associates and healthcare professionals who bring their front line knowledge to the process.
- **Regulatory affairs** – roles which involve ongoing quality monitoring, collation and submission of data and information to the regulatory agencies.

Manufacture and Production

Once a product has been approved, it can be used by patients. Whilst the manufacture of medicines is much like any other process, it is surrounded by industry-specific regulations for obvious reasons.

So alongside careers as production operatives and engineers, roles cover:

- **Quality assurance** – making sure there is no variance in the manufacturing process.
- **Quality control** – making sure every batch of medication meets the strict pharmacological regulations.





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- **Computer system validation** – ensuring that all computer systems are operating as they should.
- **Facilities engineering** – making sure that the infrastructure is safe and efficient to work and manufacture products in.

Distribution, Sales and Marketing

Roles in this area include:

- **Medical representative** – meeting healthcare professionals and introducing them to newly-developed products.
- **Marketing manager** – developing marketing materials and strategies.
- **Medical Science Liaison Officer** – providing scientific information to customers.
- **Pharmacist.**

In addition there are roles in legal services, distribution, finance, HR and logistics.

Skills

The industry has opportunities in all three areas – product research and development, manufacture/production and distribution, sales and marketing. Each area looks for a different skill set, but all need good teamwork, time management and creativity. Andrew Croydon, Skills and Education Policy and Examinations Director of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry confirms this.

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'Knowledge and understanding in the workplace must be complemented with possessing the right skills – both tangible and specialist. Increasingly, fulfilling careers in the industry are maximised by those who show adaptability and an ability for inter-disciplinary working.'

Skills you will need:

- For a science-based career in the sector you'll need a deep understanding of the specific area you have studied to degree level and in a STEM subject. The sector is always looking for graduates with Masters and PhD postgraduate qualifications – for some roles they are essential.
- In other areas of the sector the academic requirements are in areas appropriate to them - e.g. for a legal career in the sector, a law degree is needed.

There are other routes into the sector which can replace or enhance these qualifications. See the Pathways and Qualification section.

All areas of the industry need:

- **Problem solving skills**
- **Attention to detail and an analytical mind**
- **Strong numeracy and IT skills**
- **Planning, organisation, project management and presentation skills**
- **Teamwork**
- **Commercial awareness**
- **An enquiring mind and a creative approach**

Pathways and Qualifications

So, how can you get your career in the industry going?

Science-based Roles

To enter the sector after university, you will need to be studying for a degree in a STEM subject, and probably a life science.

There are opportunities in both government and commercial sectors, and some offer not only employment, but for those with the postgrad qualification, a PhD studentship, which allows you to earn while you learn.

You'll need at least a 2:1 in a life science subject, and for higher level roles be studying, or intend to start, an MSc or similar. Subjects which are particularly useful are biochemistry, microbiology, natural sciences, pharmacology and biomedical science. Obvious degrees which would stand you in good stead are any which are included in medical or health fields.

You may be able to start at technician level with a BSc but to progress further you'll need to study for a higher qualification, either before entering the workplace or during your first years.

Many pharmaceutical companies actively recruit graduates and offer great graduate schemes – examples are AstraZeneca, GSK, Pfizer and Bayer – giving you paid work whilst also giving you hands on workplace experience and support in studying for further qualifications.

Obvious places to look are science-specific publications such as *The New Scientist* and online recruitment websites. There are two main industry bodies which publish up-to-date information on working in the sector - The ABPI and the RPS - with specific information

"There are opportunities in both government and commercial sectors, and some offer not only employment, but for those with the postgrad qualification, a PhD studentship, which allows you to earn while you learn," explained Andrew.

SECTOR SPOTLIGHT ON IT PHARMACEUTICALS



and advice for graduates. If you have a particular company in mind and are already studying for a MSc etc, it's worth sending a speculative letter to them asking for more information about future opportunities, particularly if you are thinking of further study whilst being employed.

As the industry is fast moving, it is always looking for inquisitive, rigorous new scientists with new ideas. So, it's right beside you, ready to support you if you are thinking of being part of it, however you choose to enter it!

For graduate opportunities, head to www.careermap.co.uk

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The industry employs 73,000 people in the UK and invests £4.3 billion in UK-based research and development – making the UK a global leader in the sector.

(ABPI 2019 – www.abpi.org.uk)

The annual turnover of pharmaceutical goods in the UK in 2017 was over £42 billion.

(www.statistics.com/)

A pharmaceutical technician's average wage is £24,960 and the workforce is projected to increase by 4.9% by 2024.

(www.careermap.co.uk/careerometer/)



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Like any other sector, the pharmaceutical sector needs people skilled in other areas to help it function.

Your degree might be in marketing or law, HR or PR.

Useful links

The British Pharmaceutical Society

A charitable organisation which promotes the advance of the whole spectrum of pharmacology

They have an 'early career' membership scheme which costs £30 a year. Early Career Membership is for full time Postgraduate Students working on a pharmacological topic, Foundation Doctors, Clinical Fellows, Clinical Pharmacology Scientists, Core Medical Trainees, Specialist Trainees in their first or second year, Pharmacists in their first or second year of qualification, Industry Scientists within five years of the award of a degree and Post-Doctoral Researchers within five years of the award of a PhD. www.bps.ac.uk

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

The professional membership body for pharmacists and pharmacy. www.rpharms.com

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry

The trade association for over 120 pharmaceutical companies in the UK. www.abpi.org.uk

Supporting Roles

Like any other sector, the pharmaceutical sector needs people skilled in other areas to help it function. Your degree might be in marketing or law, HR or PR. If you've completed a degree in a subject like this, there are opportunities within the sector.

Or your degree may be science-based, but you also have a business head – you could combine the two and run your own successful pharmacy business or join the team of a high street pharma retailer and combine learning about retail as well as using your science background.

The industry also needs sales teams, distribution, manufacturing and logistics managers, IT specialists, data analysts, finance and project managers.

There are other areas of the industry which you could think about. You might be a great communicator, so have you thought about using your qualification in the media as a scientific writer? Or maybe you'd rather use your skills in the forensic science field as a Scientific Officer? Or continue your studies and remain in academia and university-based research?

Whatever you decide to do, you'll do it in the knowledge that you're part of a sector which is fast paced, fascinating and more and more important. And is ultimately there to protect lives and promote the health of all of us.

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There is much more than just a magazine! You will be alerted to live graduate vacancies on careermag.co.uk, receive newsletters with helpful tips from industry experts and access to a range of resources to help you find the perfect job.



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What is CPD?

Learning doesn't stop just because you complete your degree or pass your final exams. Like a one-massive learning curve, and the simple truth is that you can never know enough, but you can at least keep trying. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the training required to maintain a professional status after you have qualified.

In the case of some professions, specifically those that deal with the health of others, it is essential to keep up to date with the latest developments. CPD is a way of ensuring that the people who provide services are aware of the latest developments in their field. This can be done through a variety of means, including attending courses, conferences, seminars, and workshops. CPD is a way of ensuring that the people who provide services are aware of the latest developments in their field. This can be done through a variety of means, including attending courses, conferences, seminars, and workshops.

Veterinary is a subject which is so wide that it should be made impossible for one person to know everything.

The Institute of Veterinary Professionals (IVP) offers CPD to veterinary professionals to help them ensure that they are up to date with the latest developments in their field. CPD is a way of ensuring that the people who provide services are aware of the latest developments in their field. This can be done through a variety of means, including attending courses, conferences, seminars, and workshops.

Are you a newly qualified vet or studying to be one?

The Institute of Veterinary Professionals (IVP) offers CPD to veterinary professionals to help them ensure that they are up to date with the latest developments in their field. CPD is a way of ensuring that the people who provide services are aware of the latest developments in their field. This can be done through a variety of means, including attending courses, conferences, seminars, and workshops.

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Future Leaders Programme at GSK

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GSK offers a range of graduate opportunities and placement roles across all parts of our business – you can join us in almost all areas within Engineering, Tech, Science or Business. On every one of our programmes, you will be tasked with meaningful projects that truly make a difference to GSK’s mission!

Our Future Leaders Programme is for talented and ambitious graduates, providing an amazing opportunity to build leadership skills and start your career with one of the world’s leading healthcare companies. We want our Future Leaders to have a broad understanding of our company and we’ve designed our programme to offer exactly that. Right through the programme you’ll have access to all the support you need, but the ultimate responsibility for shaping your career will be yours.

You’ll experience different aspects of your chosen business area through your rotations, and learn how other areas of our business work. We believe in mentoring and coaching so there will be no shortage of people to give you interesting insights and expert career advice.

To join one of our programmes and help make a difference, you need to have real ambition, a genuine interest in your chosen career path and a self-motivated, proactive approach. You’ll need to be a clear, effective communicator who can work across boundaries and quickly build a rapport with a wide range of people. Just as important is the ability to adapt to change and stay focused when the pressure is on. While you’ll have the drive and confidence to trust your own judgement, you’ll also be a team

player who enjoys working with others. Not least, you’ll need an analytical mind, a talent for multi-tasking and the ability to influence people.

We are primarily interested in your strengths, potential and motivation rather than extensive previous experience, and our assessments have been designed to assess just that. For our more technical programmes you may need to be studying a relevant degree and also demonstrate technical knowledge too. Our Future Leaders Programme applications typically open each year in early October and make sure to apply early as some of our programmes are only open for a short time!

Top tips for applying to GSK:

1. Be thoughtful – consider why you want to work for us on the programme you’ve chosen and share your reasons honestly.
2. Be yourself – relax and show us your strengths. We want to help you find your perfect job, so you can fulfil your potential.
3. Be prepared – prepare for an online test by making sure to have a pen, paper and calculator to hand. Prepare for an assessment centre by thinking of lots of questions to ask – this is important for finding whether we’re right for you!



Life as a Mechanical Engineering Graduate



"I wanted to join a company that encouraged growth & development and saw it as a virtue"

Introduction

Meet Ade Akeredololu. Ade, joined the Graduate Scheme in September 2018 after graduating from University that same summer. He is currently undertaking a Route Asset Management placement and is scheduled to spend 6 months in the USA working with Network Rail Consulting, at their Boston office.

Ade, is based within Safety, Technical & Engineering (STE) function at the Network Rail headquarters, The Quadrant, which is based in Milton Keynes. Due to the scheme being rotational, Ade has been able to carry out projects and spend time within the Wimbledon and Feltham areas, as well as Milton Keynes.

Why did you apply?

During my final year at university, I was unsure of which industry to pursue but I did however have some preferences to the environment I wanted to be in. I wanted to join a company where my experiences could be valuable & transferable across the globe, where I would be able to have the flexibility and freedom to explore the different aspects & finally that encouraged growth & development and saw it as a virtue. I saw a future for myself at Network Rail.

What have you enjoyed about the experience?

So far, I've enjoyed the industry exploration afforded to me in my earlier months, the chance to attend meetings, conferences & seminars with industry experts and the senior leadership teams & the opportunity to grow and develop my technical knowledge. I think the thing I've most enjoyed however is getting to meet people from all around the country from such diverse backgrounds.

What's the culture like at NR?

It's a truly supportive environment that understands the importance and value of safety. The blend of expertise and knowledge throughout the company shines as you speak to everyone and coupled with their continuous support, really gives you a sense of family. The industry was described to us graduates as a 'railway family' at the onset of the scheme and we were all naturally skeptical, but it couldn't be truer.

What opportunities have you been apart of?

During the first 6 months of the scheme, you're encouraged to explore every part of industry and I was able to understand the magnitude and scope of how the railway operates. I've spent a week at a train maintenance depot to understand the industry from a train operator's perspective, spent time at a freight company to see how our work impacts freight travel & traveled around the country working with different teams to help make improvements to the railway. One of my favourite things I've done so far was visiting the Forth Rail bridge in Scotland, I gained an appreciation of how they managed the herculean task of maintaining such a historic structure. I've had the chance to spend a week with our Digital Railway function where we gained insight to the future of railway signalling. I helped organise Network Rail's national STEM activity 'Tomorrow's Engineers Week' for the Milton Keynes area. It was a tremendous event. We visited 10 schools during the week and spoke to over 500 students about STEM, Network Rail and safety around the railway. It was a such a rewarding experience.

Do You have any advice for future candidates?

It's OK not to have any prior knowledge, I didn't myself when I applied. What matters is your drive & determination.

The Graduate Labour Market

Go to university, get a decent degree, apply for a couple of jobs and start the job of your dreams, which is in your ideal location, with a highly-regarded employer that also pays well. Is that your plan? Easier said than done.

The reality is that many factors are involved in securing your first job after university. An understanding of the market is a starting point. There's a lot of data out there, and if you look at it all, you'll find inconsistencies and contradictions that could leave you feeling more confused than when you started.

At the time of writing, I looked at some graduate recruitment statistics from trusted sources. Some of the statistics are fairly consistent – for example, average salary and sector popularity are two key areas offering a degree of stability.

So, let's start with the basics. What are you up against?

In 2018, 138 employer members of the ISE completed a survey showing 17,667 graduate vacancies for that year. This number has varied between a low of 11,012, in 2003, and a high of 24,126, in 2015. Although these figures represent only a limited number of graduate employers, they clearly show how volatile the market can be. And this is before Brexit. We now have the added complications of seeing how coronavirus will impact the market, the effects of which might be seen for a few years to come.

According to The Employer Skills Survey 2017 (conducted by IFF Research, provided by the Department for Education and analysed by HECSU), these were the graduate jobs with the highest numbers of reported vacancies:

- **Nurses**
- **Human resources and industrial relations professionals (recruitment consultants, etc)**
- **Business sales executives**
- **Welfare and housing associate professionals**
- **IT user support technicians**

- **Marketing associate professionals**
- **Programmers and software development professionals**
- **Engineering professionals**
- **Sales accounts and business development managers**
- **Managers and directors in retail and wholesale**
- **Medical practitioners**
- **Solicitors**
- **Vocational and industrial trainers and instructors**
- **Primary and nursery education teaching professionals**
- **Business and related associate professionals**
- **Youth and community workers**
- **Chartered and certified accountants**

In 2019, The UK Graduate Careers Survey by High Fliers Research, the largest and most authoritative annual survey of final year students at the UK's leading universities, also found the biggest growth in graduate vacancies to be in public sector organisations, accounting and professional services firms and engineering and industrial companies.

Money Money Money

You may have heard of *The Times* Top 100 Graduate Employers. As the title suggests, it's a book that lists the top 100 employers as voted for by the students taking part in research by High Fliers. According to this book, graduate starting salaries at the UK's leading graduate employers were unchanged for the fifth consecutive year in 2019, at a median starting salary of £30,000.

Bear in mind that *The Times* Top 100 employers are predominantly large employers with significant graduate schemes. They are more likely to pay at the higher end of the scale. If we look at the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey figures from 2016–2017, median salaries of UK-domiciled full-time leavers who obtained first-degree qualifications and entered full-time paid work in the UK were £24,000

for male professionals and £22,000 for females.

When looking at the highest-paying graduate employers, you'll find some starting salaries in excess of £40,000. If you're motivated by money, then this may entice you to apply. I advise making use of websites such as Glassdoor to try to understand what it might be like to work for one of these high-paying employers. I once hired a graduate who lasted a year on a highly paid graduate scheme with a budget supermarket retailer. He confirmed rumours that these graduates often slept in the office and rarely took any holiday. He had been the last one left of his cohort. His colleagues had dropped off at various points throughout year one.

So, salaries are not the be-all and end-all. We do not know what either the short-term or long-term impact of the current pandemic will be. Jobs may look very different and salaries may be much less than previously. Your first salary is a 'starting' salary, and many factors will affect how quickly your salary increases. There are other benefits you should consider. Look at the job package as a whole – location, training, progression opportunities, likely job satisfaction, pension, holiday entitlement and other perks.

Although times are challenging and even a bit scary, don't give up! The economy may quickly bounce back or slowly evolve, but the world will carry on.

About the author

Sophie Milliken

Chief Strategy Officer for Careerpass Network and author of

[From Learner to Earnfr.](#)



Keep an eye on [Careermap](#) for up-to-date graduate vacancies.

How to write a speculative cover letter

You may have spotted an employer that you'd love to work for, but they're not currently hiring for any position that fits with your aspirations. Speculative applications can have great results, especially for those wanting to get an internship, work placement, apprenticeship or graduate job. You'll need to be engaging, expressive and able to confidently discuss your skill to really have an effect.

Why Send a Speculative Cover Letter?

If you're looking for a job within a competitive industry, you may need to be proactive with your job searches and job application as not all roles are formally advertised. Plus, if there's a company that you think could provide you with your dream job, why not give it a shot? A speculative CV with an accompanying cover letter is a great way of connecting with recruiters or potential employers when they're not advertising vacancies.

How to Start a Covering Letter

Before you think about sitting down and writing your covering letter, you'll need to research the company. Even if you know a lot about the company, you'll want to brush up on your knowledge in order to create a good cover letter.

Find out everything you can about the organisation, including its staff and also the wider industry they operate within.

Take a look through their website and also look for press releases as well as related news article to really find out what's happening at their organisation. Make sure you look at their social media profiles and also look on websites such as Glassdoor for staff reviews on working there.

The more knowledge you have to start with, the easier it will be to write your covering letter. It's this knowledge that will enable you to connect your skills, experience and interests to their company.

What Should your Speculative Cover Letter Include?

What you need to include within your cover letter will really depend on the type or sector the job you're applying for is in. It will also vary dependant on how much experience you have in that field or if you have transferable skills.

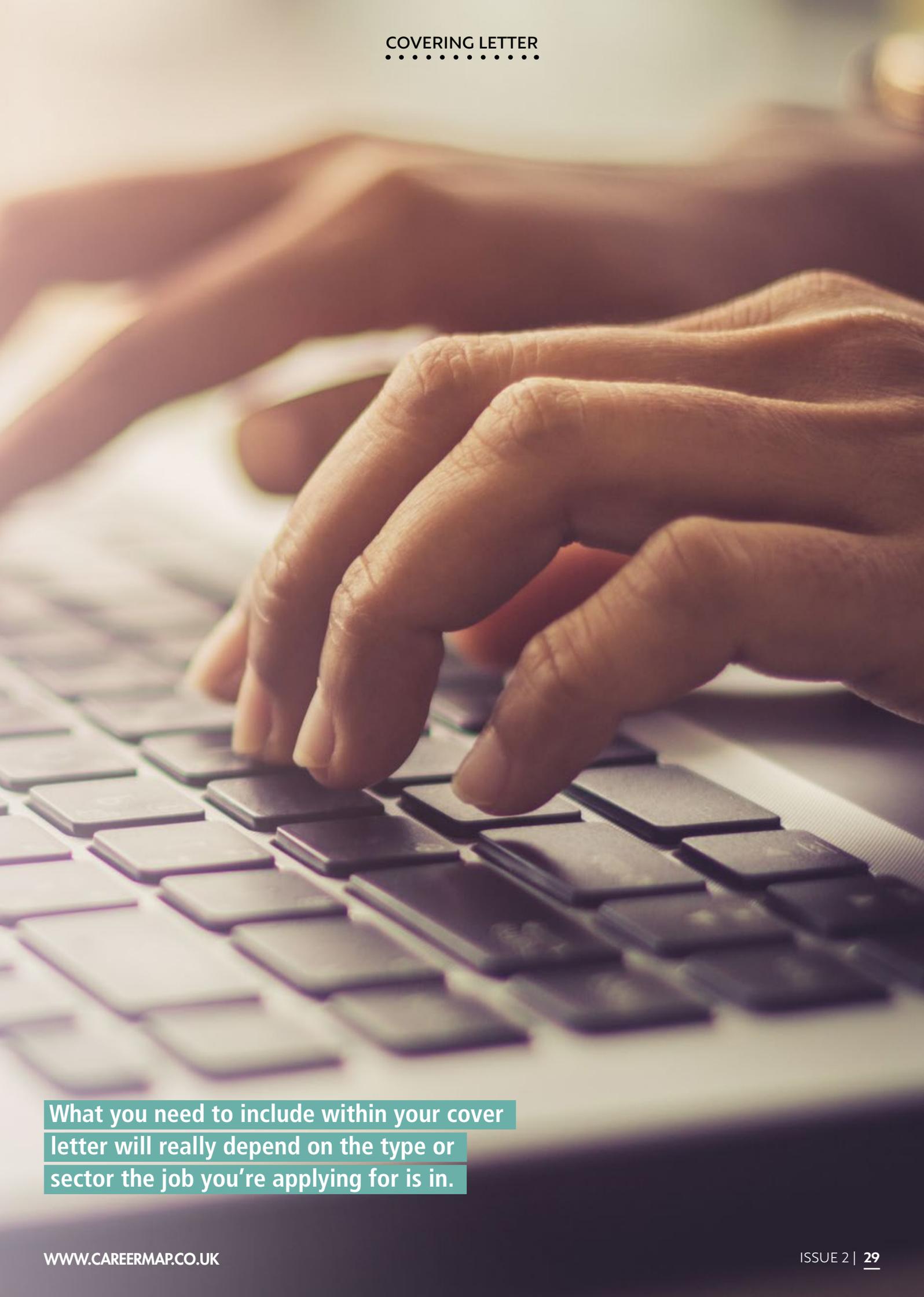
What to Include and what not to Include

The general formatting of a speculative letter will be relatively similar to a standard cover letter:

- Start with personal information such as your name, address and contact details. You should never include your national insurance number or bank details on your cover letter.
- Include information to your social media platforms such as LinkedIn. There should be crucial information about your work experience on there and it will also enable them to get a better indication on your interests through shared articles and endorsed skills.
- Include the manager's name if you have it, but if you don't just use Dear Sir/Madam.
- Within the first paragraph, you should outline what type of role you're looking for, and why you want to work for that particular company.
- The second paragraph should explain more about the skills you possess and any experience you have that could be of interest to them. There is no job description so you'll have to be inventive on how your skill set may apply to their business.
- The closing paragraph is the last chance for you to make an impression. You need to tell them exactly why you'd be perfect for the company and what you could potentially contribute. If there isn't an open job, why should they open one for you? What do you have that is different? This doesn't always have to be your skills, genuine passion for the company and their values could be enough.
- To close the covering letter, thank them for their time and sign-off the cover letter with 'Yours faithfully'.

The final thing to mention here is that you must ensure there are no spelling mistakes. This involves specific person names, product names and references to the company especially. You can use a spell checker or the

Continued on page 31



What you need to include within your cover letter will really depend on the type or sector the job you're applying for is in.

Your future begins ~~later~~ now

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- Develop invaluable career-boosting skills
- Become a teacher and leader with the UK's largest graduate recruiter
- Be supported every step of the way
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ALTER THE OUTCOME

T Teach
First



Grammarly app for the checking of punctuation and spelling, but they may not pick up branded names so you'll need to double-check.

Get to the Point, Set your Tone & Don't Apologise

You might think that sending a speculative application and cover letter could come across as pushy or presumptuous by the receiver. In most cases this couldn't be any further from the truth, HR teams are often impressed by this process as it shows passion, confidence and forthcomingness. It's also worth mentioning that recruiting can be a timely and expensive process, so someone coming forth is a great way for them to avoid this.

What you absolutely shouldn't do is open with anything apologetic such as 'I hope you don't mind me contacting you'. You need to be confident that you're offering them something of value and apologising for contacting them doesn't give that impression. A speculative application is verification that you're an enthusiastic and proactive individual, rather than arrogant or presumptuous.

The best start to a speculative cover letter is one that gets straight to the point. HR teams and managers are busy people so avoid long-winded introductions and ones that are copied off the internet as they'll have read it ten

A speculative application is verification that you're an enthusiastic and proactive individual, rather than arrogant or presumptuous.

times already.

Quickly explain why you're writing to them. Don't just explain, demonstrate how you can benefit their company with key highlights from your CV. Keep to a formal layout and ensure all the points in the 'What to include and what not to include' section are covered. Make a mental note to keep the information condensed.

By now you're likely wondering, how many words should a cover letter be? There really is no golden number, it's about how many words it takes to really sell your worth to the company. The general guidelines are to stick to around half a page and definitely no more than one page.

We hope our guide has given you the knowledge you need to go and write an amazing speculative cover letter that lands you the position you desire. Remember the cover letter is the bait to get the HR team to read your CV, so make sure your CV is as good as your covering letter!



What is CPD?

Learning doesn't stop just because you complete your degree or pass your final exam. Life is one massive learning curve, and the simple truth is that you can never know enough, but you can at least keep trying. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the training required to maintain a professional status after you have qualified.

Veterinary is a subject which is so wide that it would be near impossible for one person to know everything...

In the cases of some professions, specifically ones that deal with life or death matters, it is especially crucial to keep on top of all the newest developments. Certain fields, such as medicine, are being updated with new discoveries all the time, and it's important that the people who provide treatments are aware of any new research that has been done, otherwise human health can suffer.

The same is true of animal health, which is why veterinary professionals are legally mandated to undertake a certain number of hours of continuing professional development (CPD) every year. Even somebody who has been qualified for 30 years still needs to keep on top of new developments – indeed, it is arguably more crucial for somebody who first trained 30 years ago to do CPD, because there is a risk that a lot of what they learned is now out

of date.

The Webinar Vet offers CPD to veterinary professionals to help them ensure that they are compliant with legal requirements, although most vets and vet nurses voluntarily undertake CPD because they enjoy learning about new topics. Veterinary is a subject which is so wide that it would be near impossible for one person to know everything, but that doesn't discourage people from striving to become as

knowledgeable as possible.

The Webinar Vet provides CPD online, which means that vets don't have to travel great distances or pay unreasonable amounts of money, and also means more CPD can be completed in the same amount of time, with ease.



Are you a newly qualified vet or studying to be one?

The [Webinar Vet](#) is passionate about helping vets and nurses provide the best standard of care, ensuring that animals across the world are kept happy and healthy. Get in touch to find out how they can help you keep on top of your profession.



It's been my biggest challenge.
And my greatest achievement.

Graduate Area Manager Programme

- £44,000 starting salary (rising to £77,870 after four years)

Career Changer Area Manager Programme

- £53,485 starting salary (rising to £77,870 after three years)

Benefits

- Pension • Healthcare • Audi A4/BMW 3 series
- All-year round recruitment but places fill quickly

The Area Manager role gives you real responsibility and opportunities to progress. However, you'll need to have a 'roll your sleeves up' attitude, demonstrate your ability to lead a team and show a willingness to work outside your comfort zone. In return, we'll give you world-class training, a dedicated mentor, and support from your very first day. By the end of the training, you'll make a real contribution to the success of one of the UK's fastest-growing supermarkets. Amazing when you think about it.

www.aldirecruitment.co.uk/area-manager-programme



Feeding the nation

Food and drink is a vibrant, innovative and exciting industry. Across every community in the UK, nearly half a million people play a part in producing a fantastic range of food and drink that is enjoyed at home and around the globe. The food and drink industry is full of many rewarding careers in a range of different disciplines.

Food and drink is the biggest manufacturing sector in the country (larger than automotive and aerospace combined) and is a vital part of the UK economy. Ours is a national industry, with a footprint in every constituency. Vibrant sectors in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales demonstrate our geographical diversity. The food and drink industry ensures UK consumers can reliably access safe, affordable and nutritious food and drink at all price points. UK consumers and shoppers enjoy unprecedented choice and value and as an industry, we create many iconic products that are enjoyed all over the world.

What can I do?

Food and drink manufacturing is a hugely diverse industry, offering employment to

people with a wide array of skills and talents. Whether you're interested in food science, engineering and maintenance, innovation and sustainability or marketing, IT or finance, food and drink has opportunities for you. Key skills development is supported and encouraged, in particular essential leadership, management and exporting skills.

Food and drink businesses are always looking for STEM candidates who can take on a variety of roles, including: food engineers, process operators, technical professionals, food technologists, packaging technologists or new product development technicians. These roles give workers the opportunity to access on-the-job training, providing them with an understanding of

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how food and drink is produced within a manufacturing setting. It is this work that helps ensure that the highest quality products are being developed and produced for UK and worldwide consumption.

If you thrive working with operations or logistics, the sector offers roles such as operations manager, supply chain manager, materials supply manager and production team leaders. These vital roles work to make sure that distribution lines run smoothly and food and drink products are safely shipped to supermarkets and consumers.

Food and drink manufacturers also recruit for many non-operational roles that are essential to keeping businesses functioning. These range from human resource advisors, learning and development advisors, finance and payroll clerks, communications staff, IT and digital support staff, and marketing and sales specialists.

Skills

For most skill specific roles (i.e. engineer or food technologist) the right qualifications are important. However, businesses in the sector are always looking for candidates who have a passion for food and drink, and who are excited by working in this fast-paced environment in which every day presents new challenges.

Food and drink employers are looking for candidates who are clear communicators, work well in a team, show resilience, have a desire to learn and strive to ensure high standards can be met. Many employers are also looking for graduates who can be flexible when it comes to job location, as some food and drink manufacturers have



multiple sites that can be spread across the UK.

Businesses also offer the opportunity to gain professional qualifications within areas such as team or project management, health and safety, and food safety – allowing you to build the skills you need.

Pathways and qualifications

For graduate roles, most food and drink businesses look for a minimum 2:2 or

equivalent in a relevant degree to the role you are applying for. While your degree is important, many companies are looking for someone with the right personality to be a good fit for their company. It is always useful to research the company before an interview to know their priorities and the behaviours and values they look for in a candidate.

A university degree or BTEC qualification is not the only way to find a job in the food and drink industry. Many of the larger food and drink companies offer graduate schemes, especially for people who are looking to gain broader experience about the company and roles available to them before settling on a career. These can be a great opportunity to work in areas such as marketing, sales or finance, supply chain operations, and procurement.

Most food and drink businesses also offer a wide range of apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships that can support your development and progression within their business.

If you already know your area of interest, then there are some standard routes for growth within your field. If not, many companies support your learning by allowing you the opportunity to move





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into other technical areas as you learn more about the industry. Listed below are some examples of career paths available to you in the food and drink industry.

- **Food Engineering** – entry levels roles include an Engineering Apprentice, or a Junior Engineer if you have the correct engineering degree. Chemical, Electrical and Mechanical engineering degrees would be suitable for most food and drink Manufacturers. From here you can become a Multi-Skilled Technician, then a Shift Co-Ordinator leading into the higher engineering positions, including Engineering Manager.

- **Food Science** – a complex area with many opportunities covering product development, innovation, and food science. If you have a degree in Food Science, Food Science and Nutrition or Food Production

Management these would all lead directly to opportunities in Food Science. However, degrees in Biochemistry, Nutrition, Biotechnology or Microbiology would also give you the transferable knowledge to move into food and drink. The Institute for Food Science Technology (IFST) has worked with the University of Nottingham and UK graduate employers to develop Competencies for Food Graduate Careers (see link below). Their work demonstrates the wide range of initial job opportunities for graduates, with a corresponding choice of exciting careers following these first roles.

Facts

- In 2018, the total sales of manufactured food and drink exceeded £74bn.
- Manufactured food and drink contributes more than £28bn to the economy, 2.3% more than 2017.
- The food supply chain employs 4.3 million people and generates over £120 billion of added value for the economy each year.
- Premier Foods makes enough mince pies each year at their bakery for every single person in the UK to have three each.
- In one of their production lines, Premier Foods uses robots to pack 60,000 individual cakes per hour.
- KP Snacks can trace its origins as a business back to the 19th Century. Today they are the UK's second largest snack manufacturers with seven manufacturing sites around the country.
- At Coca-Cola European Partners, they sell more than four billion bottles and cans every year.
- The food and drink manufacturing sector delivered a reduction in food waste over 30% on a per capita basis since 2011.
- The industry employs over 430,000 people across every region and nation of the UK.
- 96% of the UK's 7,400 food and drink manufacturing businesses are SMEs.

Client contribution

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF)

The FDF represents the UK's biggest manufacturing sector.

fdf food & drink
federation
passionate about food & drink

<https://www.fdf.org.uk>

Useful links

Competencies: <https://www.ifst.org/resources/competencies-food-graduate-careers>

Food Careers Tool: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/foodcareers>

Tasty Careers Jobs Board: <https://tastycareers.org.uk/jobs>

Food and Drink Careers in Scotland: <http://www.fdfscotland.org.uk/sfdf/careers.aspx>

Technical Graduate Scheme

Associated British Foods plc



What is it like to work in F&D?

The best part of working in food and drink is that you get to see the results of your work in day-to-day life when you visit the supermarkets. Another great thing about F&D is the amount of variety and how fast-paced the work can be – consumer trends are always changing which means that we need to continually develop new products to keep up with the market and keep our brands interesting and creative!

What is a career in technical in the F&D industry?

Technical within the food and drink industry involves all aspects of product quality and food safety management. This includes everything from approving raw material suppliers to signing off packaging artwork, and everything in between. The technical team at Allied Mills help to ensure a seamless changeover with every unique wheat harvest, which is supported by laboratory testing. At Allied Bakeries, supporting the food safety programme and maintaining audit standards is fundamental, as well as working closely with production to monitor and improve product quality.

Examples of jobs you might be interested in after the Technical Graduate Scheme could include a technical role at a manufacturing site, working as part of a New Product Development (NPD) team or a food scientist in the laboratory. Some technical roles are very specific if you have an area that really interests you, or others are more generic if you prefer to have more variety (like me!). I currently work as Technical Manager at AB Sports Nutrition in Brighton, no two days have been the same so far!

Experience on the scheme

What job roles have you had?

Whilst on the Technical Graduate Scheme, I had the opportunity to work in four different locations and covered several roles within each of these. I started my scheme at Allied Technical Centre in Maidenhead, where I spent time learning about specifications, the laboratory department and core food safety skills, for example assisting in site audits and facilitating the improvement of food safety standards. I then spent three months at Allied Mills in Manchester where I spent time in a variety of different departments – from Operations to Engineering and Distribution. Finally, I completed two site placements at Allied Bakeries in Stoke and Belfast, where I led projects on Food Defence and Food Safety Culture.

What have you enjoyed the most?

The best thing about the Technical Graduate Scheme is the variety. Each placement that I experienced was very



The scheme involves lots of cross-functional working, one day I could be supporting Marketing to make a claim on a new product, the next I could be helping Production to resolve a quality issue...

different – every day I learned something new! The variety has also helped me to discover the areas of technical that interest me the most. I have created a wide network throughout ABF, meaning I have felt supported throughout the scheme. I still reach out to my colleagues from other sites regularly if I need support in my new role.

What is your biggest learning?

My biggest learning has been to get comfortable outside of my comfort zone! The scheme involves lots of cross-functional working, one day I could be supporting Marketing to make a claim on a new product, the next I could be helping Production to resolve a quality issue – this means I have learned to work with many different people, cultures and working environments, which required me to be very adaptable.

ABF Grocery Group won't be opening applications in September for a Graduate intake in September 2021. We have decided to take a 'year out' to review our Accelerated Grocery Graduate scheme and plan to recruit again in September 2021.

Associated British Foods | **Grocery Group plc**

Find out more on the ABF grocery grads website: <https://www.abf-grocery-grads.com/>

Unparalleled Exposure

Aldi Graduate Area Manager Programme



Callum Day has been an Aldi Area Manager for five years and credits his success with being an approachable manager, working well with his team and continually looking to develop

his own skillset. He comments: "Of course, everyone is excited about the amazing benefits associated with the Area Manager role such as an Audi A4/BMW 3 series and £44,000 starting salary, but for me it was the responsibility and realistic progression opportunities that enticed me. I studied business and management at university and knew that this was the only area that really sparked my interest – so the Aldi Graduate Area Manager Programme suited me perfectly."

As an Area Manager with Aldi, Callum is responsible for supporting the successful running of three Aldi stores. After 12 months of intense training, which gave him unparalleled exposure to every aspect of the business, he was given responsibility for his own stores. He was tasked with working closely with the Store Managers to ensure each store has everything it needs, from stock to staff requirements, and reporting back to the Store Operations Director to share the stores' results.

Callum is a Personnel Leader for the 90 Aldi colleagues working within the stores and cites people management as one of things he loves about his job: "I really enjoy working with people, helping them to progress as well as supporting them on a personal level. I like to get to know my teams so that I can identify when someone needs help, whether that's at work or if they're going through something at home. I am also extremely ambitious and while I want to continue to take on new challenges myself and develop within my own role, I also like to support my team in reaching their goals and moving up the ladder too. My favourite part of the job is when I get to promote someone. Seeing their hard work pay-off is wonderful and a stage of their career that I love to be a part of."



Explaining the advice he would offer anyone interested in joining the Aldi Graduate Area Manager Programme, Callum says, "Being an Area Manager comes with a lot of responsibility, which I think everyone should understand. By week 15 you'll have the keys to your own store and you don't check in with your Store Operations Director everyday so you've really got to take your training on board and hit the ground running. This is a huge motivator for me as I relish the responsibility, but I know that this can be a challenge for others, so new candidates must be prepared for this."

Callum enjoys being an Aldi Area Manager and is looking forward to furthering his career with Aldi – hoping to progress through the business in the years to come.



“My favourite part of the job is when I get to promote someone. Seeing their hard work pay-off is wonderful and a stage of their career that I love to be a part of.”

For more information on the Graduate Area Manager Programme go to: www.aldirecruitment.co.uk/area-manager-programme

For latest information go to:

- www.aldirecruitment.co.uk
- [instagram/AldiCareersUK](https://www.instagram.com/AldiCareersUK)
- [www.fb.me/AldiCareersUK](https://www.facebook.com/AldiCareersUK)
- [@AldiCareersUK](https://twitter.com/AldiCareersUK)
- www.linkedin.com/company/aldi-uk/



Adult Apprenticeships

- are they the path for you?

There is no upper age limit for adult apprenticeships so if you're over the age of 16, living in England and not currently in full-time education, you're eligible to become an apprentice!

Graduates on apprenticeship schemes are becoming increasingly popular. Whether you decide to embark on a master's apprenticeship related to your degree or retrain on a lower level apprenticeship in a sector completely unrelated to your degree – you have options!

Don't ever think you're too old to start an apprenticeship. It's just a great way to gain more qualifications and attain new skills. There are a range of apprenticeships across many different sectors, you really are spoilt for choice.

How could an adult apprenticeship help you?

You may be thinking of applying for an apprenticeship for many reasons, but some of the most common is due to wanting to get into an industry that requires a different degree to what you already have or wanting to complete a master's apprenticeship.

Applying for an apprenticeship programme

An apprenticeship will provide you with a paid position that boasts on-the-job training. You can apply for an apprenticeship just like any other job you've previously applied for.

Want some tips on applying for the right apprenticeship programme?

1. First, you'll need to research the apprenticeship you want to apply for thoroughly. Aim to know the role inside-out if you want to send the best application you can. This knowledge will also help you if you gain an interview at the next stage – you can research apprenticeship roles on our website.
2. Gather all the information you can on your experiences, hobbies, and interests and have this in front of you while you apply for the position. Your experience should match what the employer and training provider are looking for within the job specification. Having a list of your skills in front of you will ensure that you continuously keep connecting these plus your experience to the specifications.
3. When talking about your hobbies, match them to a skill they're looking for. For example, if you've been the captain of the university football team, explain how you exercised leadership and teamwork skills during this. You'll get plenty of apprenticeship training but you'll still need to apply skills to the specification, even those that are transferable.
4. Make sure you spell check your application and even get someone else to read through it before you send it to be sure. Good spelling, punctuation, and grammar are important because, if you don't get it right, even a good application can be dismissed.



If you're 24 or above, you could be eligible for adult skills funding if you attain an advanced-level apprenticeship or higher apprenticeship.



Benefits of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are designed to give you hands-on experience within an industry of your choice. The main benefit of apprenticeships is that you get to learn new skills, while also earning a qualification and a wage. The second prominent benefit is that you gain a qualification that's relevant to your job and industry at no cost to yourself. If you're currently in the sector you wish to work in, the experience will give you further skills, knowledge and experience and enhance your job progression.

Apprenticeships can take one to five years to complete depending on the levels you choose to complete and sector you're in. Apprentices that work more than 33 hours a week are entitled to tax credits, sick pay, a minimum of 20 days paid holiday a year and maternity/ paternity.

Funding

If you're 24 or above, you could be eligible for adult skills funding if you attain an advanced-level apprenticeship or higher apprenticeship. To check if you're eligible you can head over to the Student Finance England website.

Master's apprenticeships

If you're a recent or soon to be graduate then a master's apprenticeship is a viable route. They give you the opportunity to gain hands-on experience while studying for an MSc degree and working. Alongside this, you will gain sector specific skills which are relevant to your study.

I took the wrong degree at university, can I do an apprenticeship?

Absolutely! Graduates can apply for any level of apprenticeships, as long as it differs from their degree. For example, if you graduated from university with a graphic design degree you are not eligible for an apprenticeship in graphic design but you could apply for an accounting apprenticeship.

Realising you picked the wrong degree is daunting but remember you have options. Although this may feel like a setback, don't panic! Instead consider it as a learning curve for you to move onto the right path.

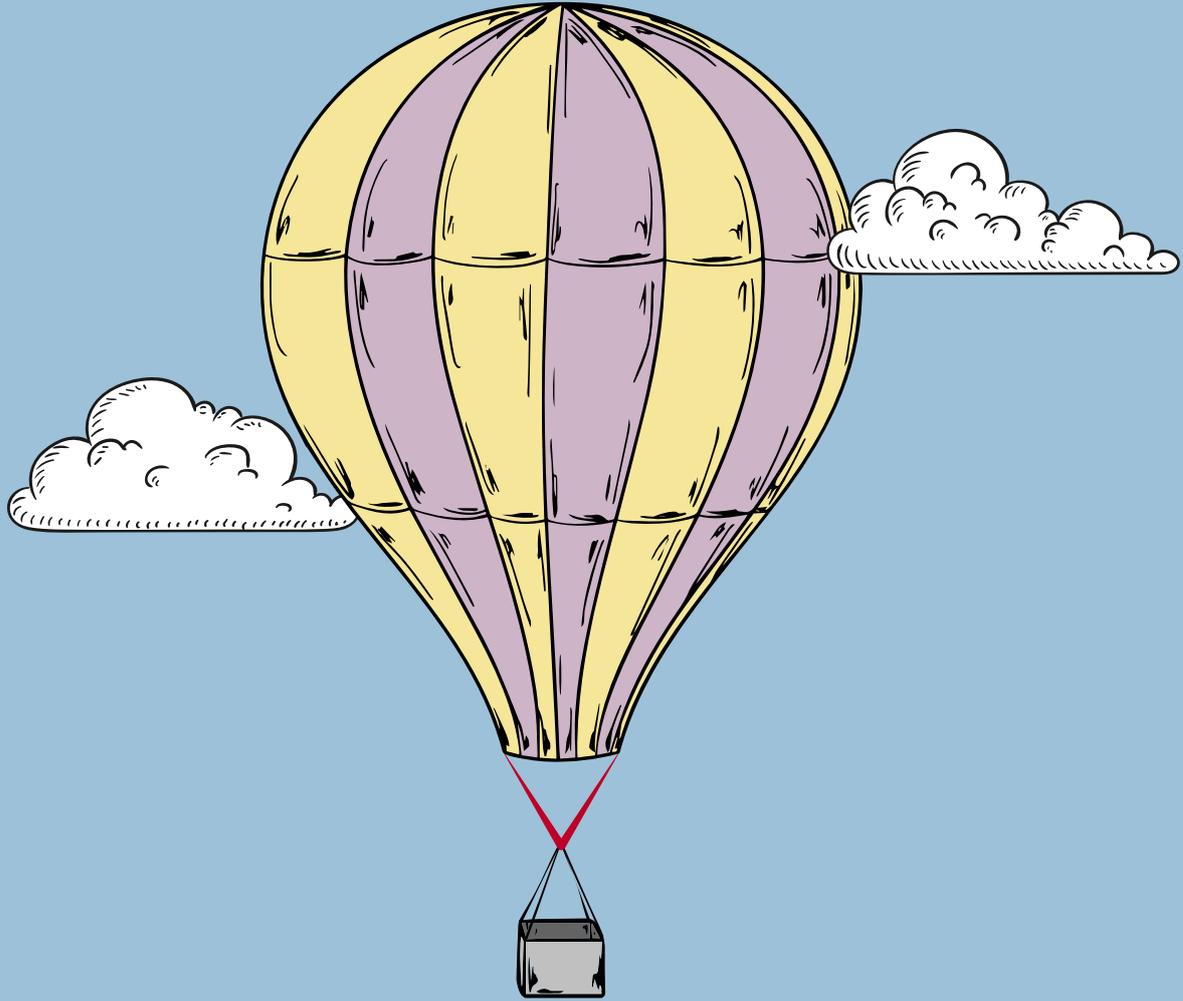
So whether you're considering a master's apprenticeship or retraining in an industry completely unrelated to your degree, you have options! Head over to www.careermap.co.uk to find the right career for you.

Levels of apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have equivalent educational levels.

Name	Level	Equivalent Educational Level
Intermediate	2	GCSE
Advanced	3	A Level
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

Some apprenticeships may also give you additional qualifications such as a diploma.



Chartered Accountancy is for big thinkers

Looking at things differently. Freeing your imagination. Coming up with new ideas. There's a lot more to accountancy than numbers. It's a career that can take you into pretty much any industry you can think of.

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So start thinking big, and find out where it could take you.

More than you'd imagine
icaew.com/careermag



Money matters

All businesses will need the services of an accountant at some point, whether they contract in their service or have a whole finance department. Like many careers, there are different levels. These can range from bookkeeping (making sure all the numbers add up, bills are paid, invoices chased) to running an international business and all their subsidiaries.

About accounting

Accountants keep and manage financial accounts for anyone from companies to the government and individual clients. Working either for an accountancy firm, in a company, or being self-employed.

What can I do?

The range of jobs in accounting is huge, but all require a keen eye for detail and a passion for numbers, especially making them balance. Depending on the level of qualification, jobs can start from simply keeping records on transactions or even just one part of the process such as Accounts Receivable and up from there. At the highest level, Financial Directors are often second only

to the CEO in making sure a business succeeds or fails.

With this in mind, as well as excellent mathematical skills, a good accountant needs to possess strong interpersonal and communication skills, whether dealing with clients or even senior management. It also means being very organised and up-to-date with the current business situation as you may be involved in making important decisions.

You don't have to be a math genius though! Most accountants work with basic calculations and let computers do the difficult work. If you like Sudoku, accounting may be just the thing, as it is about spotting trends, anomalies and being able to analyse what the numbers are saying.

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How to become an accountant

To become an accountant, you need to gain a formal qualification or a degree. You do not need an accounting specific degree, as there are many different routes to the job, but being good with people and numbers are essential for success!

As a career, it can get busy as the financial year comes to a close as tax returns and other matters need to be dealt with. However, it can be quieter at other times, allowing the workload to balance out over the course of the year. Lots of time will be devoted to working with clients on plans and strategies.

As you gain the relevant accounting qualifications and experience you can become a certified or even chartered accountant, which allows you a higher level of expertise and

Examples of jobs and labour market information

Powered by LMI for All. To find out more about other careers and labour market information visit: <https://careermap.co.uk/careerometer/>

	Bookkeepers, payroll managers, accounts payable, etc	Chartered and certified accountants	Finance managers and financial directors
About the job	Bookkeepers, payroll managers and wages clerks maintain and balance records of financial transactions, oversee the operation of payroll functions and calculate hours worked, wages due and other relevant contributions and deductions.	Jobholders in this unit group provide accounting and auditing services, advise clients on financial matters, collect and analyse financial information and perform other accounting duties required by management for the planning and control of an establishment's income and expenditure	Finance managers and financial directors plan, organise, direct and coordinate financial information and advise on company financial policy
You might find this job in...	Legal and accounting firms Wholesale trade Retail trade	Legal and accounting firms Head offices, etc Membership organisations	Private companies Public organisations Legal and accounting firms Financial services
Annual pay	£28,600	£44,720	£75,920
Common tasks in this job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • records and checks accuracy of daily financial transactions • prepares provisional balances and reconciles these with appropriate accounts • supervises payroll team and develops payroll systems and procedures • calculates and records hours worked, wages due, deductions and voluntary contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans and oversees implementation of accountancy system and policies • prepares financial documents and reports for management, shareholders, statutory or other bodies • audits accounts and book-keeping records • prepares tax returns, advises on tax problems and contests disputed claim before tax official 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in the formulation of strategic and long-term business plans, assesses the implications for the organisation financial mechanisms and oversees their implementation • plans external and internal audit programmes, arranges for the collection and analysis of accounting, budgetary and related information, and manages the company's financial systems; • determines staffing levels appropriate for accounting activities • assesses and advises on factors affecting business performance.

opportunities to move into management or specialisation in a particular area, such as tax or forensic accounting.

Here are some accounting qualifications and pathways available:

Accounting Technician

Licensed AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) members provide accounting, tax and business advice to more than 400,000 UK businesses. There are lots of choices for a pathway that depends on experience, other qualifications and preference on study. The best way to find the best route is to use the AAT Qualifications Navigator for suggestions of the best fit:

www.aatqualificationsnavigator.org.uk

You may be surprised to find out that you do not have to have an accounting degree to be an accountant. In fact, by gaining an AAT qualification can lead to a fast track to becoming a Chartered Accountant.

ACA from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)

Not to be confused with ACCA! The ICAEW has stricter and rigorous requirements for membership than the ACCA. The ACA generally takes three to four years to complete, whereas the CCA takes two. You can do this as part of a business degree or after with another. To become an ICEAW Accountant, you will need to pass 15 exam modules on different aspects of accountancy, finance and business. To find out which path to qualify, you can take the step-by-step questionnaire or use the live chat on:

<https://careers.icaew.com/find-your-route>

CCA (Chartered and Certified Accountant)

A Chartered Certified Accountant must be a member of the Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants (ACCA) and comply with its regulations.

This includes completion of up to 13 professional examinations and three years of supervised relevant accounting experience, but there is a range of entry level qualifications to start on the ladder. For instance, Foundations in Accountancy (FIA) is a great entry point for anyone new to accounting and finance.

You can do courses at university that include the ACCA qualification. Or if you do a different degree, you can add the ACCA and start at a higher level than foundation.

With this accountancy qualification, you can work anywhere in the world, and the job is extremely flexible,



whether running a corporation or working part-time for small to medium size businesses. There are good salaries and progression can be quick. You can work in any sector and the job often brings a wide variety of work on different projects.

To find out where to start, go to: <https://yourfuture.accaglobal.com/global/en/getting-started/planning-your-journey.html>

CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants)

CIMA qualifications focus more on business management. They give a good understanding of business practice as well as finance. There are no formal entry requirements and if you have any AAT qualifications, you can get a jump onto higher CIMA qualifications. Have a look at: <https://www.cimaglobal.com/Qualifications/>

CPFA (Chartered Public Finance Accountant)

This qualification is designed specifically for working as a professional accountant in public financial management. The public sector includes central government, local government and public organisations, such as education, emergency services, healthcare, law enforcement, etc. Think of the BBC, the world's oldest and largest broadcasting company,

Did you know...
...before they were famous, Mick Jagger, Robert Plant and Eddie Izzard all worked in accounting?

Continued on page 48

You may be surprised to find out that you do not have to have an accounting degree to be an accountant. In fact, by gaining an AAT qualification can lead to a fast track to becoming a Chartered Accountant.



There are accounting apprenticeships available. These allow you to earn while you learn and work toward an accounting qualification.

the British Army, the Cabinet Office, and many more. In fact, in June 2018, there were 5.34 million people working in the public sector!

You can study for CPFA qualifications on face-to-face courses or by self-study with online support. There are also CIPFA's Professional Accountancy Apprenticeships at Levels 3, 4 and 7. You can find out more here:

<https://www.cipfa.org/qualifications>

Accounting Apprenticeships

There are accounting apprenticeships available. These allow you to earn while you learn and work toward an accounting qualification. There are three levels of accounting apprenticeships: Intermediate (Level 2 or equivalent to GCSE) for jobs such as finance assistants and sales ledger clerks; Advanced (Level 3, equivalent to A-Levels) to work as trainee account technician roles; and Higher (Level 4-7 or equivalent to Foundation Degree) or Degree (Levels 6 and 7 that is degree level or even Masters degree). Higher and Degree Apprenticeships can offer a full Bachelors or Masters Degree without the cost of going to university. With it, you could work as an accountant manager or technician.

Accounting at university

Type in 'accounting' in the search on UCAS, and you will be faced with nearly 800 courses! Be prepared to narrow down your options by thinking about what you like to study and what you would like to do once you complete your degree. Many of the courses mix business and finance together, also there are courses that are sector-specific, such as Music Business and Music Performance or Construction Management. Some of the courses provide exemption from the UK's professional accountancy bodies' papers (eg: ACCA, CIMA, ICAEW,

CIPFA...), but you will still need to gain the separate qualification from them.

You can also look at mixing banking, mathematics, law, and more. It is wise to look carefully at each course, what it provides and what qualifications you could gain alongside the degree. It is important to go to Open Days for each university on your short list. They are all different, from how the courses are run and what support is given to location and type of uni (such as a city university or a campus). It takes a lot of studying to get your degree, be honest about the type of person you are and how much support you will need. (think about how disciplined you are!)

Increasing numbers of organisations are recruiting talent for the finance function from alternative degree disciplines. This stems from the need for well-rounded finance functions to evolve with the changing face of business. This means, you do not have to do an accountancy related degree. If you decide to do accounting later, you can do the qualifications directly from the accountancy bodies.

Careers and jobs in accountancy are available in small and medium organisations, not just the big banks.

Types of jobs in this sector include accountants, treasurers, bankers, actuaries, financial advisers and analysts, financial traders, tax inspectors and stockbrokers. You could work for a private firm, in the public sector or be self-employed.

- Accounts payable/receivable clerk
- Payroll assistant
- Head of Finance
- Stockbroker
- Forensic accountant
- Retail banker
- Chartered accountant

The big picture is all about small detail.

Audit opportunities for graduates

Want to get a closer view of business? At KPMG, a career in Audit gives you the chance to gain a deep understanding of businesses in one or more industry sectors – from entrepreneurial start-ups to large corporations.

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Tax Associate by the sea

Callum Wareing is a graduate from the University of Surrey, now working for BDO as a Tax Associate. We asked him about his journey transitioning from being a student to the world of work.

Callum studied accounting and finance at The University of Surrey and graduated with 1st class honors. He now works for BDO as a Tax Associate. This role consists mainly of tax compliance and advisory work for a wide range of clients from one man businesses up to large multinationals.

“I am lucky to have great colleagues, a varied workload and a culture where people are more than happy to explain things to you and will take the time so you understand, whether this be a partner or a manager. I also enjoy the flexibility offered; I was able to change my core hours from 9am - 5.15pm to 8am - 4.15pm, which meant I had more time in the evenings to do activities outside of work.”

BDO's Southampton office is based in Ocean Village with views over the surrounding harbour and sea. It has a pretty unique outlook compared to the concrete jungle of London. Callum lives on the Isle of Wight so usually commutes to work by ferry! At times if the weather is

bad due to fog, wind or storms this can result in the service being cancelled, so the commute is not always predictable.

Callum says the social side of things at the Southampton office has been great, “we have various out of work activities, whether this is networking with other firms, our annual Tax team BBQ or sports activities like football. We have set up a daily virtual quiz which has kept everyone sane and connected during these recent more challenging times and has been good healthy competition. I enjoy being based out of a regional office and don't feel I'm missing out on professional or personal growth opportunities, not being in a bigger city.”

Given the challenges presented by the current covid situation, Callum and his team have had to adapt to working differently. He finds working from home has been surprisingly enjoyable as well as productive, “I



I would 100% recommend BDO to new graduates looking for their next step. I have learnt so much during my 2 years here thanks to my fellow colleagues and the studies I have undertaken.

have removed nearly 2 hours of commuting a day and have been able to get odd jobs done.

An exciting place to work, some of BDO Southampton's Life Sciences clients have even been involved in work towards developing a treatment for the coronavirus.

For our team it's been important to fully utilise technology such as Zoom/Microsoft Teams to keep in contact with both colleagues and clients. Hopefully working from home will be more of the norm when things are back to normal – I quite enjoy it!"

After graduating university, Callum had various job offers including ones from the "big four". "Personally, I just got a really good feel throughout the whole interview process and I knew BDO was the right place for me when I had the chance to meet some staff members on my assessment day. I knew I would get a lot of support and BDO actually offered the joint ACA/CTA qualification which other firms did not, so that was another reason for choosing BDO."

BDO offers a unique experience due to the size and variety of their clients across all different industries. Every client has different needs which provides great opportunities to learn about different sectors and business types. BDO has offices right across the UK and in 162 countries around the world – so if Callum comes across

a scenario he or his team has not encountered before, it's likely someone in the wider BDO network will be able to help.

Would you recommend BDO to other graduates? If so, what advice would you give to them before applying?

I would 100% recommend BDO to new graduates looking for their next step. I have learnt so much during my 2 years here thanks to my fellow colleagues and the studies I have undertaken. The support from BDO alongside my studies and exams has been fantastic. I can see myself developing a great career at BDO.

I would recommend students do some research about BDO or any firm they are applying for – understand what they offer/what makes them different to rivals etc. I would also recommend just being yourself throughout the whole application process. BDO can teach you everything you need to know about the job, you don't really need to know anything before starting but having some knowledge on the sector really does help!



To find out more about the BDO graduate programmes please visit:
<https://bdoearlyincareer.co.uk/graduate-programme/>

Max the Grad

Meet Max! Max graduated with a Masters degree from the University of Bristol in March 2020. We will be following him on his journey to start a career over the next few issues of *Careermag for Graduates*.

This should be a familiar scene – you’re visiting family, catching up with a relative/ family friend, when you hear the pause that indicates they’re going to ask THAT question: ‘so what about getting a proper job?’. There’s nothing wrong with my current job as a Barista, and I dislike the implicit devaluing of an underpaid, underappreciated position. Yet, though I enjoy the job, I don’t want to do it forever.

Like others, I’ve a lot of ideas about where I want to go that I’ve only recently started to unwind. While I am trying to figure this out, I thought I’d take this opportunity to share the good, the bad and the nagging existential melodrama of trying to start a career.

Looking back, my path through higher education was guided more by interest than a clear plan. For my bachelors, I chose the University of Liverpool because of the city’s cultural legacy (Echo and the Bunnymen), and English because it was my strongest subject. Luckily, I swerved the potential flaws in this thinking by

switching to combined honours in English and History during my second year. I found what areas interested me and continued to do well academically. Despite making the most of university - including great work experience for the Independent - I struggled with next steps following graduation.

Cue: six months at a call centre, two months in India and the decision to move to Bristol to start a master’s in Social and Cultural Theory that September.

The latter proved the right choice for me, the flexible course developed my interest in cultural sociology - as a result I learned more about what I enjoyed and why. Taking modules in quantitative and qualitative research methods also gave me a practical skillset. I remembered how much I enjoyed the process of conducting research and communicating information creatively, which has become my (open-ended) brief for my first ‘proper’ job.

Finishing my masters and starting the job hunt, my first move was to reflect what

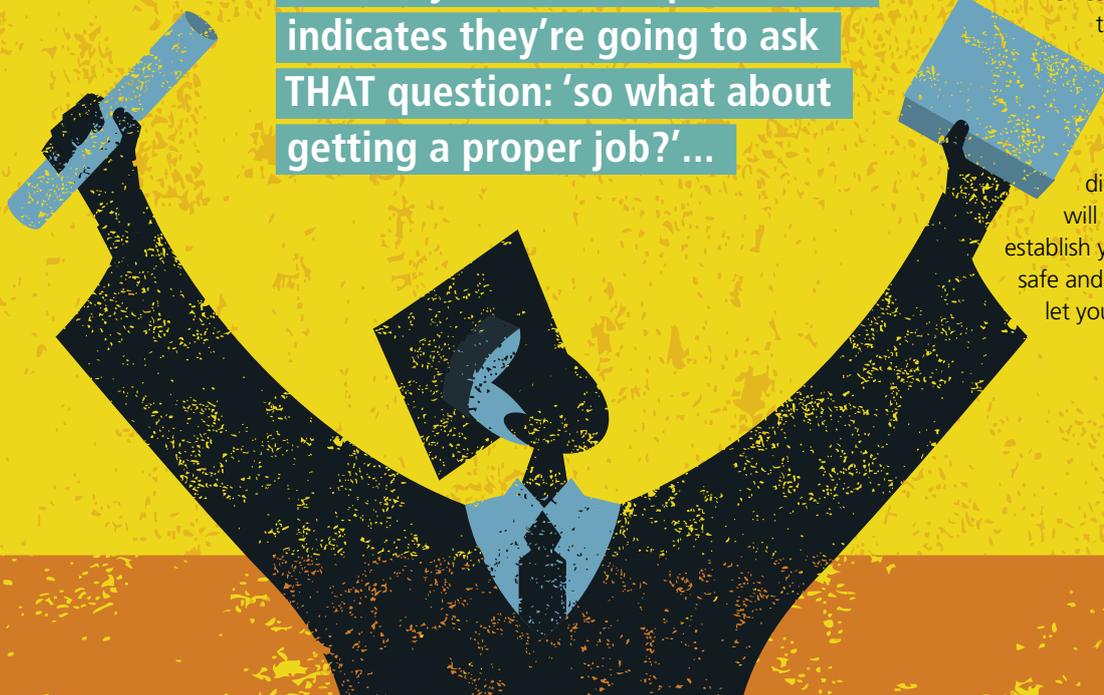


I wanted to get from work. I now know the skills I prefer to use (e.g. qualitative research, creative writing), and ideally, I would like a creative role within a team in a socially conscious line of work. Careermag and its Careermag have been useful for researching relevant jobs, helping to create an ‘A’ list of roles (media research, social research), followed by B and C lists of what I would entertain.

I have begun to research relevant industries, looking at entry level opportunities in research and writing fields. I have also searched online courses to help improve other skills. For example, many research agencies ask for candidates with a stronger quantitative skillset than I have, and so I am looking for courses to build on those..

Of course, there’s always the unexpected - the current coronavirus and lockdown are something nobody was ready for and it’s difficult thinking of how it will impact you as you try to establish yourself in adult life. Stay safe and I’ll check in next issue to let you know how I’ve got on.

...when you hear the pause that indicates they’re going to ask THAT question: ‘so what about getting a proper job?’ ...



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