

Thanks again to the Gradcracker employers who have kindly sponsored this third edition.



Job hunting

A pocket careers guide for engineering students

What you need to know.

What you need to do.

Job hunting

A pocket careers guide
for engineering students

gradcracker.com

The careers website for engineering students

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About this guide

First published in the summer of 2010, our pocket careers guide has been so popular with Careers Advisors and engineering students that we are now publishing this third edition.

This new edition has again kindly been funded by four Gradcracker employers. They want you to have access to the best careers advice as they know it will significantly increase your chances of success.

Thank you to our sponsors



University Careers Advisors and Gradcracker employers can order free copies of this guide by telephoning Gradcracker on 01347 823822 or by emailing us at info@gradcracker.com.

Gradcracker careers guide

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Understanding the different opportunities

placements & internships

What you need to know

- Generally, the terms work placement, internship and work experience are interchangeable.
- Placements can be year-long or for 10-12 weeks in the summer.
- Be wary of companies offering unpaid work experience (employers on Gradcracker only offer paid opportunities).
- Employers value candidates with work experience - especially relevant work experience.
- Employers can view a placement as an extended interview for the graduate programme - make sure you do too!

Understanding the different opportunities

programmes & jobs

What you need to know

- Graduate programmes usually involve a structured programme of learning and development over a set period of time - typically two years.
- Although a permanent job is not always guaranteed, employers are unlikely to invest time and money in your training for another company to benefit.
- Companies may offer specific job opportunities for graduates as well as, or instead of, a graduate programme.
- A place on a graduate programme or a specific job should be considered as equally successful first steps on your career path.

Finding real jobs

print and press

What you need to know

- Careers directories and on-campus literature are often printed well before the start of the academic year.
- Employers' recruitment requirements can change rapidly during an economic downturn.
- Employers cannot update their information or requirements in these publications during the academic year.
- Graduate recruiters rarely use newspapers to advertise work placements or graduate opportunities.

Finding real jobs

online

What you need to know

- Some careers websites are not regularly updated and information may be out-of-date.
- Some websites - especially those less popular with graduate recruiters - want to appear to be well populated with jobs and therefore do not always remove expired vacancies.
- Search engines - sponsored links have paid to appear and websites can use keyword loading to appear higher up the rankings than they deserve.

Finding real jobs

careers fairs & agencies

What you need to know

- Careers fairs can provide you with an early insight into the style and culture of a potential employer.
- Recruiters at careers fairs are always impressed by students who have researched their company.
- Recruitment (staffing) agencies charge employers a fee to find candidates - applying through an agency makes you more costly to employ.
- Few graduate employers would place a vacancy with an agency (and pay an extra fee) in times of high student unemployment.
- Some agencies post fake jobs in order to build a database of job seeking students.

Finding real jobs

look in the right places

What you need to do

- Find a careers website that you can trust.
- Your University's careers service will do all it can to help you - use it.
- Be search engine savvy - don't assume the top listed websites are the best.
- Be wary of the information contained on certain careers websites and in printed media - double check by visiting the employer's own website.
- If you visit a careers fair, remember, first impressions count - be smart and well-prepared.
- Learn to spot agency ads - they usually refer to 'my client' without naming the employer.

What employers want

key requirements

What you need to know

As well as the academic qualifications that employers specify, they are also scanning your application for evidence of:

- Work experience
- A targeted well-informed approach
- Leadership potential
- Problem-solving ability
- Communication and presentation skills
- Flexibility regarding location

What employers want

tick their boxes

What you need to do

- Try and find work experience before you graduate - ideally, experience related to your future career ambitions.
- Before applying, make sure you have checked that your degree meets the required academic qualifications.
- Look at your extracurricular activities for situations which demonstrate the qualities that employers consider to be key requirements.
- Show that you are willing and able to work nationally and/or internationally as required.

Stand out from the crowd

will they find you?

What you need to know

- Many students are using a 'scatter-gun' approach to job hunting - emailing CVs and application forms to as many employers as possible.
- In the current economic climate there are fewer opportunities available for students.
- The result of the above two factors is that employers are receiving a huge amount of applications.
- Many employers do not have systems in place to enable careful study of every application.

Stand out from the crowd

get their attention

What you need to do

- Target potential employers - make a shortlist.
- Research these employers as fully as possible.
- In your covering letter, make it clear that you know about the company to which you are applying.
- Highlight any evidence you can give that you meet the employer's key requirements.
- Check carefully (and get a second opinion) that your application contains no spelling, grammatical or factual mistakes.

summary

What you need to know

- Not all career opportunities are real.
- Not all information is up-to-date.
- Employers have a clear idea of what they are looking for in a candidate - and employers can be very particular in this economic climate.
- Employers value work experience highly.
- The number of candidates far exceeds the number of opportunities available.
- Only high quality, targeted applications are likely to be carefully studied.

summary

What you need to do

- Look for opportunities on a careers website you can trust to be up-to-date and accurate.
- Make full use of your University's careers service.
- Try and find work experience before you graduate.
- Research your preferred employers carefully.
- Use a covering letter to show that yours is a targeted application and to highlight how you meet their key requirements.
- Ensure your application contains no mistakes and ask someone else to check it as well.

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- We are looking for bright, driven and ambitious engineering students to join BP in either our engineering, science or business disciplines.
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Rebecca Wast, Graduate Resourcing Advisor

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“Candidates must have leadership skills, be results driven and be unafraid to make mistakes as part of their learning. Career opportunities can arise globally so we are particularly seeking candidates who have a pioneering spirit.”

Karl Robson, HR Manager

www.gradcracker.com/guardian-industries

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