



I want to go into employment

This offers you the chance to start earning, to get experience, and build your skills. Getting onto the first step of your career can increase your employability and confidence, as well as adding to your CV for the future.

Step 1 – What are your reasons for wanting to get into work?

- Have you considered all the possible different pathways you could take?
- Would you consider an apprenticeship or school leaver programme as a possible pathway?
- Are you ready for work, and can you balance the demands of work and study?
- What are the advantages of this pathway for you at this stage – and what are the possible disadvantages?
- Want to start earning some money? Remember, compared to graduates, going into employment at 18 can make it more likely you find yourself in a lower skilled job and with lower pay over the longer term.

Step 2 – Do you have a particular job role or career area in mind?

Yes – It would be useful to research your ideas further. You can find more information about different careers on the job profiles sections of your national careers website (such as National Careers Service), or on the UCAS website. In particular, take note of entry requirements, any particular work experience that might be advantageous, and the general skills, interests, and qualities required.

No – If you are not sure what you want to do longer term, consider using a computer based careers interest guide to help you identify possible careers or job roles that match your interests. Programmes may be available at your school or college and at local careers centres. There are also some versions available online.

Tip: No computer programme can tell you what career you should or shouldn't be doing, but they can be a helpful starting point for more research and a good basis for a discussion with a careers adviser. It's advisable to seek advice about which ones to use.

Step 3 – Do your research

Get a feel for how many vacancies there are and the rates of pay for the jobs you're looking for in your preferred locations. Try to do this over a few months so that you can get an idea of how competitive it may be to get the job you want.

Find two or three vacancies for the kind of job roles you're interested in. Consider the following questions:

1. How confident are you that you are ready to commit to a particular job in this career area / sector?
2. Find out about the sector and employer – is this the type of company you want to work for?
3. What for you are the three most and three least positive aspects of this job role / opportunity?
4. Have you achieved any required qualifications, subjects, and grades they are looking for?

5. Can you find examples of how you meet the 'essential' and 'desirable' skills and experience requirements the employer is asking for?
6. What interests you most about working in this job role / sector?
7. Can you give reasons why you want to work for this employer?
8. Do you need or want to get some work experience under your belt before going into full-time employment?

You can do any further research you need to do and check out employers' websites for any details and information you want. You can contact the employer to ask any questions you have.

Take a look at our [tips for getting started](#).

Step 4 – Check your thinking – get advice

You can narrow down your choices if you need to and before you apply, it is important to discuss your ideas further with teachers, parents, and a careers adviser. You can also call the helpline number or visit the website for the region of the UK you live in:

- England – National Careers Service – 0800 100 900
- Wales – Careers Wales – 0800 028 4844
- Scotland – My World of Work – 0800 917 8000
- Northern Ireland – Northern Ireland Careers – 0300 200 7820

Step 5 – Get your CV together

You need to prepare a targeted CV based on your particular career interests. This is where your research will pay off. Try where possible to match examples of your skills and qualities with those described in the job profiles and job adverts you've looked at.



Your CV will be a key reference and invaluable for you when completing application forms, which some employers require rather than asking you to submit a CV.

- Focus on how you meet the 'essential' and 'desirable' skills requirements and, any relevant experience and qualities you have which employers are looking for. Give examples or evidence of these – it doesn't have to be from work experience, it could be from hobbies, activities, volunteering, school, or college.
- Set out the qualifications, subjects, and grades you have, highlighting any they are looking for.
- Think about how you are going to present information about yourself so that it is relevant to each and every application you make.
- Each application you make should be focused on a specific job, and you should be clear why you're applying for that job

Step 6 – Start your search and apply for suitable vacancies

Your local job / careers centre may be able to provide help searching for vacancies. Recruitment agencies and websites can be another useful source. Don't forget, family and friends can provide a valuable network. It is estimated that a high percentage of jobs are never advertised.

If you want to get some work experience under your belt before going into full-time employment, search for local volunteering opportunities with charities, trusts, or projects operating in your area, or consider a work placement or internship. These can last from a few weeks to a year and are offered by employers in some sectors such as business, marketing, law, hospitality, and engineering. Depending on the type of contract on offer, you may or may not receive a wage. These are very popular and competition for places is high, so you will need to apply early.

There will be a variety of job sites locally, and nationally you can use the following websites:

Universal Jobmatch – England/UK –
www.gov.uk/jobsearch

Careers Wales – **[ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/Public/Default.aspx?mode=vacancy)**
Public/Default.aspx?mode=vacancy

My World of Work – Scotland –
www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-a-job

Jobcentre online Northern Ireland – **www.jobcentreonline.com/JCOLFront/Home.aspx**

Finally, be persistent! It's important to be proactive and keep going even though it's hard not to be disheartened if you get a low response rate. That's why it's best to maximise your chances of success by targeting your job hunting efforts rather than just mass mailing.

What next?

You can use the 'Doing your research' template and the Research Resources which have suggestions and sources for your research. Once you have completed some initial research, you may find it helpful to discuss your findings with a careers adviser.

See also:

'How do you make decisions' resource.

For advice and tips on applying for jobs, see [UCAS' job application advice](#).