



# Employability Handbook

## HE STUDENT SERVICES



University Centre  
Southend &  
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University of Essex

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS



## DO I HAVE THE DRIVE TO SUCCEED?

- How reliable, punctual and hard working am I?
- How can I show that I am enthusiastic about working for a particular company or organisation or about a particular job or career?
- Do I know enough about the world of work? What are my career options?
- How and where would I look for a job? Who could help me?
- How would I complete an effective job application? How strong is my CV?
- Do I have effective interview skills? How could I improve them further?
- What do I need to do from day one in a new job so that my employer realises that they have chosen the perfect person to join their team?

## HOW MUCH DO I KNOW ABOUT MYSELF?



- What am I good at? What are my skills, qualities and interests?
- What can I do to improve my skills? How open am I for new challenges and ideas?
- How confidently do I speak to people who I am unfamiliar with?
- How would I cope if I was rejected for a job? What feedback could I ask for to improve my chances next time?
- How do I control my emotions in difficult situations?
- How do I react if things don't go smoothly or if I make a mistake?
- Am I ambitious? What would I need to do to earn a promotion?

Our aim is to ensure that all students can access our service and to help students to develop the skills and professional disposition that they need to enjoy a lifetime of career success.

We want to help undergraduates gain confidence to compete in the graduate labour market by increasing their awareness of the knowledge and attributes that are relevant for graduate employment.

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# Plan your time effectively!

## Year 1

Don't leave it until your final year to think about your future. It's really important to start getting work-related experience from the first year to develop real skills to give you the best start in the graduate job market.

- Get some experience on your CV
- Research opportunities at University Centre Southend
- Research opportunities outside of University
- Get involved with Student Union activities
- Get started on your CV
- Learn about yourself
- International work experience
- Book a careers appointment

## Year 2

A year for reflection, planning and action. Book an appointment with HE Student Services to reflect on your experiences, make career decisions and develop action plans. Focus on the specific skills for the career that you are considering.

- Research career options
- Develop your job-hunting skills
- Get more experience
- Make speculative applications
- Look for work experience opportunities
- Develop your interview skills and practice!
- Investigate postgraduate study
- Plan your summer holiday



## Year 3

Even though your final year will be very busy, don't forget about your career goals.

- Focus on your career plans in the autumn term as many employers open up their recruitment early.
- Have a look at the Prospects directory – available in HE Student Services
- Check for early closing dates i.e. some graduate schemes; PGCE Primary.
- Attend events - Meet employers at local and national careers events i.e. London Graduate Fair.
- Update your CV
- Consider graduate internships
- Make speculative applications
- Network
- Make use of social media

- Prepare for interviews and assessment centres
- Start job hunting

## After your final exams

HE Student services are available throughout the summer months

- Book a one to one appointment
- Join our FREE Alumni network  
[www.southessex.ac.uk/Alumni](http://www.southessex.ac.uk/Alumni)
- Attend careers and recruitment fairs over the summer
- Look for vacancies
- Complete the Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education survey 6 months after you graduate
- Use our service for up to 2 years after graduation



**Wake up with  
determination,  
go to bed with  
satisfaction.**



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# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS



## Employability skills

Employers value graduates who can demonstrate competencies associated with global experiences and there is much evidence to indicate that work and study opportunities overseas offer a significant boost to students' employability.

### Nine key employability skills are:-

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Initiative and Enterprise
- Planning and Organising
- Self-Management
- Learning
- Technology
- Positive attitude and enterprising mind set

Think about the skills that you need to develop and how you can develop them.

### Skills that you have developed during your degree/ postgraduate qualification could be:

- Critical and analytical thinking
- Planning and organisation
- Research methods
- Time management
- Project management

- Advanced IT skills
- Presentation skills
- Group skills
- Team working

Review what you have done and where you want to go to help boost your confidence and see where your strengths and abilities lie.

Take each of the skills required by an employer and think of an example of that skill in practice.

### As a graduate you will have lots of different areas with which to draw upon such as:

- Your degree – think about course work, specific modules and project work.
- Work experience – think about work placements, project work as part of your degree and part-time jobs.
- Volunteering.
- Previous employment before you came to university.
- Hobbies, interests, out-of-university activities, clubs, sports.



## Competency-based applications and interviews: The STAR Approach.

The STAR technique is a good way to approach competency-based application forms and interview questions where you need to demonstrate that you have specific skills.

### What are competency-based questions?

**Competency-based questions are those that require you to answer with one specific example from the past.**  
**For example:**

“Please give an example of a time that you demonstrated leadership capability”

“Describe an occasion when you solved a complicated problem in a short time frame!”

“Describe a time when you rapidly adapted to change”

### What is STAR?

STAR is a useful technique for answering competency-based questions. It guides you step by step, helping you give well-structured answers that effectively communicate your abilities. Employers welcome answers that use STAR as they are clear and easy for them to understand.

**Situation:** Briefly set the scene. What context do they need to know in order to understand the rest of your answer? Keep it short! The situation should be roughly 10% of your answer.

**Task:** Describe briefly what you had to do (the task you faced). The task would be roughly 10% of your answer.

**Action:** What you did. How you did it. Your answer should focus specifically on how you demonstrated the competency they asked about. The Action is what helps the recruiter understand what you can do for them, so make this around 70% of your answer.

**Result:** A positive result that shows that you used the skill or attribute successfully. What happened, changed or got better as a result? Make the result around 10% of your answer.

Examples from settings closely related to the role you're applying for are desirable, but not essential. Examples from seemingly unrelated settings can still prove competencies very effectively. For example, the competency “working under pressure” could be proven through the examples of ; successfully handling a heavy workload at university, dealing with a busy period in your part-time job or managing a busy event for a society you are a member of.



**It's not what  
you achieve,  
it's what you  
overcome.  
That's what  
defines your  
career.**



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# CV and Covering Letters

- An employer wants to know:
- Is this person able to do this job?
- Will they fit in with the team?
- Does their CV articulate specific details on their individual skills, aptitude, potential?
- Key strengths including specific examples as evidence
- Qualifications (most recent first)
- Work experience
- Interests/ Achievements
- Personal details

Your CV is an opportunity for you to really sell your skills, qualities, qualifications and experience. It is the first contact with a potential employer so you need to make a good first impression!

- A quality is something that is ours, is part of our personality, it comes naturally to us.
- A skill is something that you have learnt to do.

## What should you include:

- Professional Profile including career aim and sector interest

## CV checklist

- Start with a bold statement that outlines your career aim, skills, experience and sector interest in a concise manner.
- Define key skills/key strengths sub headings so that you can demonstrate your abilities.
- Be specific. Provide details to demonstrate your skill in this area and be concise.

- Consider examples beyond education and employment to show the breadth of your experiences.
- Include examples that demonstrate a positive outcome as a result of your actions.
- Include any awards, achievements and recognition.
- Tailor your CV and covering letter to the role for which you're applying and specify exactly which role you're interested in.
- Demonstrate why you are interested in that role specifically and show an understanding of what is involved and how you meet the requirements.
- Show an interest in the employer and indicate what impresses you about them and/or attracts you to working for them.
- Cross-reference your CV with the essential criteria job description and/or person specification.
- Make sure all references to the company and their products or services are accurate.
- Present and format your documents appropriately: make sure they are professional looking and easy to read; avoid over formatting with lots of italics, emboldened and underlined text; make headings clear and appropriate.
- Avoid large blocks of colour, boxes, logos and fonts that are difficult to read.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- Use appropriate, professional language – no text speak.
- Consider the full range of your skills and experience, especially from university, identify which are most relevant, and express these in a way that the employer will understand using examples as evidence to demonstrate your skills.
- Include hobbies and interests only if they demonstrate your personality or are relevant to the role.
- Don't include the following unless you have been asked to or there is a specific reason to include them: your photo (exceptions may include performing arts applications); your age, gender or marital status; your nationality (though it may be worth confirming your right to work if you are from a country in which you are required to clarify your visa status)
- Check that your spelling and grammar are accurate and correct and get someone you trust to proof-read it for you.
- Make sure that you convert your documents to pdf format to guarantee that they will be displayed to your reader in exactly the same way that it displays on your computer.

# Interview Checklist

- Review the description and person specification for the job you are being interviewed for and re-read all the application documents you submitted when you applied.
- Anticipate questions the interview panel are likely to ask you, plan how you will answer and think about the specific examples that you will use.
- Re-familiarise yourself with information about the organisation. Research on their website, any social media presences and in the media.
- Book an appointment with a Careers Adviser to talk through likely interview questions and how you can prepare.
- Read all the details provided for your interview so that you can plan ahead. You may be asked to take certain documents with you and to prepare things in advance, possibly a presentation.
- Plan your journey for the interview carefully, giving yourself plenty of time to get there and aiming to arrive about 10 minutes early.
- Ensure you have the organisation's contact details with you so that you can let them know if you are delayed.
- Ensure you are dressed in smart, professional dress.
- If you have a telephone interview you may be using your mobile so ensure it is fully charged and that you have a good signal. For Skype, check in advance that everything is working ok, i.e. do a test call with a friend.
- Be polite and professional with everyone you meet from the moment you arrive until the moment you leave the building.
- Think positively. It's natural to be nervous but try and be confident and remember that they wouldn't be interviewing you if they didn't think you were suitable.
- Shake hands with your interviewer(s) when you enter the room.
- Listen carefully to everything your interviewer(s) tell you and ask you.
- Be aware of your body language, sit up straight, not crossing your arms or legs and not fidgeting. Maintain good eye contact but don't stare.
- Politely get clarification from the interviewer(s) if you are not sure exactly what is being asked of you in any of the interview questions.
- Answer questions fully and accurately, using the STAR technique when responding to competency questions.
- Consider the full range of your skills and experience, identify which are the most relevant for each question, and articulate them in a positive way that the employer will understand.
- Ask any questions you have prepared when prompted to do so and if appropriate.
- Thank the interview(s) for their time when the interview comes to an end.

**Life is  
about  
creating  
yourself.**



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## Internships/Work experience

High Fliers research identifies that large recruiters expect that a third of this year's full-time graduate positions will be filled by graduates who have already worked within their organisations.

More than 90% of the UK's leading graduate employers offered paid work experience programmes during the 2015-2016 academic year.

International experience: Employers value graduates who can demonstrate competencies associated with global experiences and there is evidence to indicate that work and study opportunities overseas offer a significant boost to students' employability. A 2014 study

on the impact of the Erasmus student exchange programme found that graduates with international experience were significantly more successful in the job market.

[www.erasmusprogramme.com](http://www.erasmusprogramme.com)

Nearly all employers expect new graduates to have some kind of work experience. It could be in the form of a part-time or summer job, an internship, a placement or volunteering.

### Transferable skills

Any kind of work experience teaches you to assess which skills you already have and those that you need to develop.

Skills such as teamwork, flexibility, communication, time management and dealing with pressure can be demonstrated by the jobs you do in your student years. These jobs also demonstrate to employers that you have a responsible attitude to work, are motivated and that you have experienced life beyond academic institutions.

## **Testing a choice career**

Work experience provides a great opportunity to check whether a job or a particular industry is suitable for you. Eliminating certain careers is just as valuable as finding out which ones you would like to pursue further. By the end of your work experience you will be more realistic and informed about future career choices.

If you are struggling to reach a decision about the career you would like to pursue, work experience can still help you to learn a great deal about your skills and qualities and which career options may be suitable for you. It will help you to discover which sort of activities you value, what sort of working environments you are most comfortable with, how you work in teams and how you respond to colleagues. This self-awareness is also really useful in communicating your motivation to a potential employer.

Large corporate employers now often recruit their graduate trainees from the students who have been on their internship schemes. For smaller employers, an internship can be a valuable and low risk way of finding and trialling the right candidate. Many popular professions now expect relevant work experience from applicants.

## **Internships vs work experience**

- Often work experience is an informal week or two gaining exposure to an organisation while internship is often used to describe a more formal, longer term period of practical training. Consider the details of any work placement carefully to ensure that you are aware of what will be involved.
- Large organisations such as IT, finance and consulting often run formal work placement schemes with challenging and demanding experiences.
- Some internships are aimed at particular year groups and are very competitive so make sure you do your research and apply as early as you can
- Many work experience schemes are offered during the summer period but application deadlines start from as early as October the year before. Take a look at JobOnline and STEP internships for further information.
- Many organisations offer work experience and internships without advertising on their websites. Therefore it can be useful to make a speculative application directly to an organisation that interests you. This is particularly common in sectors such as media, arts and not for profit. Internships can be found all year round and can vary in terms of length from one week to 6-12 months.

## **Work shadowing**

- As an alternative to work experience you may be able to work shadow someone in an organisation. This involves spending a day or two with a



professional, observing them and what their role entails. Decide on the career area(s) you would like to research and then look for suitable people to shadow. Think about your existing networks and anyone they could recommend to you.

## Volunteering

- “Volunteering is a great way to experience new opportunities that you’d perhaps not encounter in a work environment. The best way to get started is to pick something you enjoy. That way, when you talk about it to prospective employers, they’ll be able to see that you’re passionate and have interests outside of work and study.”  
Fiona Jamieson, Youthnet
- Volunteering can demonstrate the same skills and attributes as any other form of work experience. TimeBank, Guidestar and Volunteer Essex can be good starting points for finding volunteering opportunities.

## Volunteer Essex - Step into Volunteering

“When you finish studying and are looking at your employment options it can be overwhelming and difficult to know where to start. That is where volunteering can help.

By volunteering with a not-for-profit Organisation you can explore a potential new career path in areas such as; Health and Social Care, Youth Work, Child care, Horticulture, Business Development, Event Management, Communications and many, many more. Volunteering gives you the flexibility to fit around your other commitments and they will be

supportive of your search for paid work – they will also give you a reference. You can volunteer as much or as little as you want, from several days a week to once a week to occasional. Your volunteering experience will look great on your CV too, as future employers love to see that you are doing something positive for the community. Above all, volunteering is a lot of fun with lovely people; it feels good to know you are helping others and really boosts your self-confidence. You will also gain some valuable new skills and experience at the same time which can open doors for you. Why not contact your local volunteer centre (there is one in most towns) to arrange an informal chat to see if volunteering is right for you? Or visit [www.volunteerssex.org](http://www.volunteerssex.org) You have nothing to lose and it could be your first step to an exciting new career.

### Emily Middlemast

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**The expert  
in anything  
was once a  
beginner.**



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# Postgraduate Study

## Masters

These are taught programmes usually lasting 12 months, requiring serious depth of study. They conclude with a research project or dissertation. Masters courses can be theoretical or have a more vocational focus. In most cases you will apply directly to the course on their application form. There is not usually a closing date although you should check

for your specific course. There is currently postgraduate funding available through student finance.

## Postgraduate Diplomas

The content of these diplomas can be identical to a Masters programme, but without a dissertation or research project which would make it a masters.

The Diploma title is also used for programmes which provide a bridge into



a profession for example, the Graduate Diploma in Law. It provides a route for graduates of disciplines other than law who wish to qualify for legal training. Diplomas like this are sometimes referred to as conversion courses which allow entry to vocational or professional work.

## **PhD**

A PhD or 'doctorate' is a research degree. It is the standard requirement for those who want to become researchers and academics. It consists of an original research project and a substantial 'thesis' which outlines the research question tackled, the methodology, the results discovered and a discussion of their significance. It will also include a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to the topic. A student will manage the progress of their study under the guidance of a supervisor. Typically the research will take at least three years with a period of up to a year for writing up. Many people will take a masters before embarking on a PhD. Some PhDs are advertised through websites such as jobs.ac.uk and findaphd.com in other cases you will approach a department directly with your research proposal. The Vitae website has comprehensive advice on applying for a PhD.

## **Teacher Training**

ITT programmes in England and Wales are either school or university led, there may be differences in the way the training is delivered and led but they will all include classroom experience in schools and underpinning knowledge of teaching.

## **Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)**

Offered at a range of institutions, a PGCE focuses on developing your teaching skills, so you are expected to have a good understanding of your chosen subject and age range before you start training. You will attend lectures and spend a minimum of 24 weeks on placement in two schools or key stages.

If your degree subject does not link closely to the subject you intend to teach you may be offered a subject knowledge enhancement course as part of your application for some secondary level subject areas.

## **School Direct**

Schools recruit and train teachers on the job, in partnership with other schools or a university. School Direct courses lead to QTS, possibly a PGCE and/or Masters-level credits. There is an expectation, but not a guarantee, of employment within the training school at the end.

## **School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT)**

SCITT courses are delivered across England by groups of schools and training providers, leading to QTS. Most of the training is delivered in the classroom by experienced teachers, it may include attending a partner university if the training includes a PGCE, check individual providers for more information. Trainees will have one 'base' school and go on to further placements in at least one other school.

## **Teacher training in the post-compulsory sector**

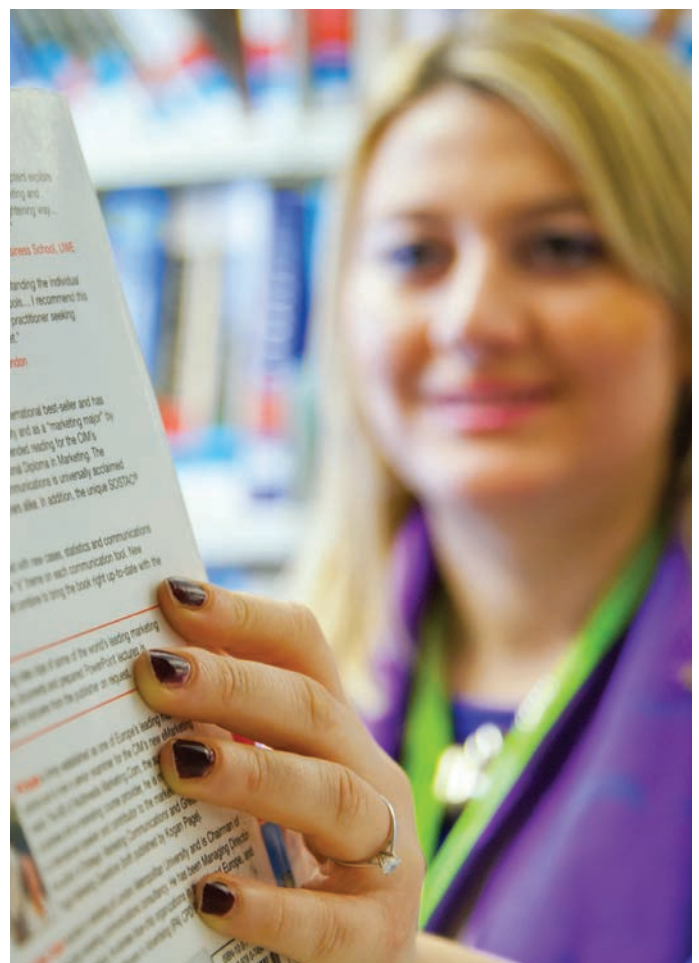
You can apply for a PGCE for the further education (FE) sector. Some FE institutions will appoint teachers with no teaching qualification provided you are prepared to begin one once employed. Applications are usually made directly to the institution that you wish to study at. It is also possible to do a postgraduate diploma in learning and teaching in higher education, which is suitable for academic staff and is usually studied part time or via distance learning.

## Teach First

The Teach First charity (England and Wales) aims to address educational disadvantages by training exceptional teachers to teach in challenging schools. In 2015 they have 2,000 places nationally across primary, secondary and early years.

Applicants need to have 300 UCAS points and a 2:1 or above, but there is some flexibility with this. The two-year scheme offers a Leadership Development Programme and management skills training for well-qualified graduates. You will gain a PGCE and QTS during this two-year period while working in the classroom and earning a salary.

Get as much work experience in schools as you can to help you decide and support your application. If you're not sure which age or subject would suit you best, contact schools in your area and ask to observe in a classroom. You should also speak to the teaching staff about the challenges and rewards of teaching.



**Ambition  
is the first  
step to  
success.  
The second  
step is  
action.**



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# Social media and your job search

If you are job-hunting social media is a useful tool for networking and finding opportunities.



## Build your online brand

- Have a professional image. A good photo helps people relate to you.
- Make your contributions interesting, informed and literate.
- Decide how you are going to manage your personal and professional social networks. Facebook is better for social purposes but keep your privacy settings high.
- Make sure content associated with your real name is something you will be happy for potential employers to see – even a few years down the line.
- Many people choose to have more than one twitter account or online identity so they can be radical or have fun without compromising their reputation.
- Blogging is a good way to demonstrate your enthusiasm and dedication for a particular subject or industry.

## Twitter

Twitter makes it acceptable to follow people you don't know. This opens up a whole number of networking opportunities.

### Twitter networking tips:

- Start with a professional, informative biography.
- Be active, tweet more days – a once a week tweet won't get you noticed, don't over tweet though.
- Engage – retweet things of interest, comment, ask and answer questions.
- Follow the relevant account. Companies often have a number of Twitter accounts – follow the job related ones, if it's a job you are after.
- Use to look for people tweeting about your area of work-interest. For example if you search for

**Success is  
how high  
you bounce  
when you  
hit bottom.**



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'games design' you'll find some interesting people and companies to follow and start interacting with.

- Use appropriate hashtags for your tweets and search for conversations using a relevant hashtag. For example #intern has a number of internship roles tweeted.

## **LinkedIn**

- LinkedIn is an online network used mainly for professional purposes, use it to establish a profile page which summarises your skills and experience, that other users can refer to.
- Introduce your profile page with a short summary of your experience, skills and job interests.
- Have a look at how other people have described themselves to get an idea of what is effective.
- In the experience section, provide a concise CV-style summary and use the skills and expertise section to list technical skills, professional skills and languages.
- Start making connections with people you know. These could be colleagues, lecturers or classmates.
- Network by joining groups. Join your college alumni group and networks related to your sector.
- Once you are part of a group it is possible to send an email message to an individual member.
- Ask people you have worked with in some capacity to provide a

recommendation on your page. It will add an endorsement to your abilities.

- Keep your profile up to date and post updates. It's a good way of keeping your brand alive.
- Take your time. If you are new to LinkedIn spend some time reading posts before you enter the conversation so that you become familiar with the accepted style and content.

## **Blogs**

- You don't have to write your own blog to use this method of online interaction. You can start by simply reading some good blogs related to your chosen field. There are some great ones that provide advice, information and useful links. One way to assess their credibility is by reading the author's biography, checking the number and quality of comments. The next step is to start interacting using the comments thread. If you like a post, tweet the link so that your followers can read it. Although the comments sections are informal make sure your comment is crafted and makes sense. It really undermines your point if there are bad spelling and grammar mistakes.
- Having your own blog can be a good way of showcasing your writing skills and your knowledge of a specific area. Sites such as wordpress.com; blogger.com or tumblr.com (for more visual blogs) make setting up your own blog easy. Before you start have a good idea of your content and perhaps have a few pieces that you can post over the first few weeks. Generate some interest in your posts by tweeting or posting the link on your LinkedIn page.

**If your ship  
doesn't  
come in,  
swim out  
to it.**



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## How to make the most of going to a careers fair.

- Graduate careers fairs are a great way to meet recruiters, find out more about employers and industries and hunt for jobs.
- Think ahead: plan your time at careers fairs
- Check which employers and organisations will be attending.
- Think about why you want to attend and what you want to get from the event. For example, do you want to research an industry sector; pick up information about companies;
- find out about job or work experience opportunities with particular employers; get information on application processes; or build up your contacts?
- Decide which employers you definitely want to visit. If you can get a floor plan of the exhibition hall, plot a route around the fair prior to the event.
- Look on the website and find out which presentations you would like to attend.  
**Presentations fill up quickly so note their times and be in the queue early.**
- Update your CV. While not all recruiters accept CVs at recruitment fairs, some might and it will be a useful tool to refer to when talking recruiters through your skills and experience.

## Research employers before you go

Recruiters will be busy and your time with them may be short. Prior research means you can make the most of your time with them and you'll create a much better impression.

- Visit employers' websites to find out what they do (products made/services offered) and to find out more about graduate roles, skills and qualifications required and recruitment processes.
- Prepare questions to ask recruiters and representatives. These can be about the recruitment process, which skills and qualities are needed, trends in the profession etc (take your questions with you).
- Prior to attending the fair, scan the news headlines and relevant industry sector pages of quality news websites to get a feel for what's going on in the sectors that interest you.

## Presentation matters if you want to stand out

You need to look presentable; clean and tidy is vital. It's important that you are comfortable, but also be professional.

## The recruiter will be considering you as a future employee.

What image are you looking to project?

When you approach recruiters at fairs:

- Smile.
- Be purposeful, confident and enthusiastic, but also polite and courteous.

- Know what you have to offer – your skills, qualities and experience.
- Prepare and practice a mini 'pitch' about yourself. It doesn't have to be a hard sell of your skills, just a simple, brief introduction.

### For example:

Hi. My name is John and I've just started my final year in engineering at South Essex College. I'm business-minded and I'd like to use this skill alongside my technical abilities. I'm interested in finding out more about supply-chain management roles and I noticed from your website that you have a supply-chain scheme for engineers. Can you tell me more about your scheme and what it involves?

- Visit your top priority employer after you've talked with one or two others – this gives you a chance to warm up and build your confidence.
- Don't go round as a big group, split up to make better use of your time. Even more importantly, this will show recruiters that you are a capable, independent individual.

## Be ready with specific questions to ask:

- What was your first year like? Did it meet your expectations?
- What experience do you like applicants to have?
- What words would you use to describe the company culture?
- What are the key changes or trends within the industry/profession?

## Questions to avoid:

- What does your company do?
- How much would I earn?
- Why should I apply?
- What can you offer me?
- What attracts you to a career in this industry?
- What skills and qualities do you think would be important for this role/our company?

## Make notes for future reference

Take a notepad and pen to write down the names and contact details of people you meet and to record any useful information you find out.

Once you leave an employer's stand, move to one side and take a moment to record your impressions:

- What makes the organisation different?
- Would you be happy working with these people?
- What did you find out that made you feel you would fit in?
- How would you be able to use your skills within the organisation?
- You may find that you refer to contacts you made and information you found out at careers fairs in applications and interviews.

Top tip: Graduate careers fairs are good opportunities to practice basic interview techniques. Think about how you would respond to typical interview questions:

- What do you know about us?
- What interests you about working for us?

## A few things to remember

- If you're not sure where you want to work, a careers fair can introduce you to a range of possibilities. Just don't engage employers in conversation unless you have at least some idea of what they do.
- Keep a copy of the fair guide with you for reference.
- If you're nervous about networking, see this as an opportunity to practice your skills.
- Try and step outside your comfort zone by setting a personal target i.e identify two or three employers you want to speak to and prepare some questions beforehand.
- After the fair, make time to read through all the information you've gathered.
- Think about how you will use this to focus your job search or enhance your applications.
- Employers get hundreds of applications but if you create a favourable, professional impression, they will remember you and look out for your application.



- Aim to get the contact details of people you have met. They can form part of your network not just for the immediate, but also for the long-term future.
- If you think of a question later, contact the person you met to find out if they can help. Consider sending your targeted CV and cover letter to them. Remind them in the cover letter that you met them at the Careers Fair.



# Effective job hunting

## Online

There are specific vacancy sites for most job sectors – the job profiles, to see these visit: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

As well as for finding vacancies, sector-specific sites are useful for getting a sense of the range of jobs and organisations. Use them to help build up a list of employers you would like to work for. This is also a good strategy for finding smaller employers that can initially be overlooked by some graduate job hunters. Use employer sites to get a sense of their organisational culture and to directly source vacancies.

Internet recruitment sites cover the complete range of occupations and businesses and normally allow you to search using broad occupational categories or tags.

Many employers and vacancy sites have a presence on Twitter. Follow them to keep up-to date and read our separate section on Social Media and Your Job Search

## Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education Survey (DLHE)

Every year we are required to ask all those who have recently completed a Higher Education course at South Essex College, to take part in the national Destinations

of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, to find out what happens to them after they leave University.

The survey we ask you to take part in is a national survey of everyone who has recently qualified from any university or higher education college in the UK. The information you provide will be analysed by the University of Essex but will also be very useful to us at South Essex College to advise our current students about the opportunities that are available to them. More information is available on [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk).



“The employability race starts as soon as you enrol on your chosen course so from day one you need to start thinking about what careers are open to you and what job opportunities you’d like to apply for. However the challenge for today’s students is how to stand out from your peers in a very competitive job market. Students today need a self-awareness of the skills that employers require such as how to deal with customers on the phone and be confident in face to face interactions with customers. Do take up volunteering opportunities that you have an interest in whether it’s helping a charity using social media or decorating a playroom as this demonstrates that you have initiative and will have hopefully gained work skills that will benefit the employer. Finally, the most important thing to remember is the right attitude, always research the employer and be positive and committed and BE YOU!”

**University of Essex**

Employability and Careers Centre



### Useful links

[Graduate talent pool](#)

[Rate my placement](#)

[Prospects](#)

[Guardian careers](#)

[Thegraduated](#)

[Facebook/HEstudentservices](#)

[Volunteer Essex](#)

[Target jobs](#)

[Inside Careers](#)

[All about careers](#)

[10 minutes with](#)

[Icould career videos](#)

[Careers box](#)





## My Story

**Amanda Hughes**

**BA (Hons) Photography**

"South Essex College helped me prepare for the workplace. I learnt a broad range of skills and my degree helped to make me stand out against others without a qualification behind them and showed my commitment. I now work for Bonham's auctioneers in Knightsbridge, London where I photograph a range of valuable objects that have been brought in by clients to sell."





## My Story

**Steve Lovell**

**BSc Sports Studies**

"I am doing Master's degree in Strength & Conditioning to train further for a career in sports coaching. I hardly left my bedroom when I started at South Essex College and preferred food to exercise but now I run in fun runs of eight miles and more, swim and play football up to three times a week. Going to the College totally changed my life."





**My  
Story**

## **Christina Wheatley** **BA (Hons) Business Studies**

"Having started higher education at 22 and achieved a first class honours degree, my goal is to gain more qualifications in auditing and further my career in business. Getting the qualification has also given me options so I am also considering becoming a teacher to share my knowledge and help others"





## My Story

**Marc Baker**

**BA (Hons) Graphic Design**

"After finishing my degree an opportunity came up at Essex Web Creative. I am now in charge as the creative graphic designer of the team. It's a great job because I can provide something that they need and produce fantastic work and beautiful art work. It is great to be able to help other businesses with their creative process. The skills I developed at the College have been a great benefit to me in my workplace."





## My Story

**Dani Martinali**

**BA (Hons) Fashion Design**

"Before I graduated I successfully landed a job at a company called Australia Luxe Collective in London as an assistant designer. I am working on developing a new women's outerwear clothing line. I am responsible for research, design and pattern cutting for first samples. Because I built up such good relationships with my tutors I now feel confident about my future. Doing higher education gets you in more doors and enables you to proceed to a better life for yourself."





## A degree is just a start.

Employers are looking for people who stand out from the crowd. They want graduates to be able to demonstrate that they have the skills that are necessary for working in their organisation.

Please don't hesitate to pop into HE Student Services or book a careers appointment if you need any support at any time.

### **HE Student Services**

3rd Floor, The Forum, Elmer Square, Southend

**Elinor Harwood-White** | HE Careers Co-ordinator  
01702 220475

**Grace Stickland** | Undergraduate Support Adviser  
01702 220499