

Career Planning Tips for Masters Students



Welcome from the Employability & Careers Centre

When you join the University of Surrey you can make use of the Employability and Careers Centre throughout your time at the University and for at least three years after you have completed your studies.

Find out more about our services here: www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers

When Should I Start My Career Planning?

As most full-time Masters programmes are only twelve months' duration we encourage you to start exploring future options as soon as possible.

Given the early closing dates for many of the most sought after graduate jobs it can be very helpful to start your career planning prior to commencing your course. Here are four steps that can help you achieve your career goals:

Step 1 – Explore Career Options

The first thing to consider is your broad career direction. Some courses may direct you to a specific career; others may be less vocational and you will need to clarify what career option is right for you.

Try using the Sector Information on the Prospects website if you wish to explore a wide range of graduate professions:

www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors

The Prospects site includes two matching tools that can help you to establish what career might suit you. You can access them here: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner>

Other useful sites that may help you to explore your career options further:

▶ www.brightnetwork.co.uk/career-path-guides/

▶ www.allaboutcareers.com

▶ www.insidecareers.co.uk/ (useful for careers in finance and consultancy)

Step 2 – Identify Graduate Job Vacancies

When are Graduate Vacancies Advertised?

You may be surprised to know that many large recruiters will open their graduate vacancies for September 2019 entry by **September 2018**, some may advertise their opportunities even earlier.

You will also find that some recruiters will have very early closing dates – many Investment Banks will have closing dates as early as **October 2018** for their **September 2019** vacancies. This is why it is important that you make an early start on your career planning and not leave everything until you start your course of study.

Where are the vacancies for Masters students?

Don't limit your job search to vacancies that specify a Masters degree as an essential requirement.

Many UK recruiters will not differentiate between vacancies for those with an undergraduate or postgraduate degree – they will often simply offer a **graduate scheme** for which they require a **minimum** of a good first degree.

Which websites should I use to search for graduate vacancies?

Here are some suggestions of websites that you may find useful when searching for graduate vacancies:

- ▶ www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate-jobs
- ▶ <https://targetjobs.co.uk/>
- ▶ www.insidecareers.co.uk (Finance / Consultancy positions)
- ▶ www.milkround.com
- ▶ www.allaboutcareers.com/
- ▶ www.thejobcrowd.com (Useful search facility by sector)
- ▶ www.graddiary.com/ (Includes details of key closing dates)
- ▶ <https://jobonline.thecareersgroup.co.uk/careersgroup/student>
- ▶ www.grb.uk.com
- ▶ www.gradjobs.co.uk/
- ▶ www.graduate-jobs.com/
- ▶ www.gradcracker.com/ (Science / Engineering vacancies)

Once you begin your studies at Surrey make sure you access vacancies we are notified of through our Career Hub **Surrey Pathfinder**: www.surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder



Did you know?

You can access our leaflet series and further resources on Surrey Pathfinder: surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder

I am an international student from outside the EU – can I still apply for graduate jobs in the UK?

In order to get a graduate job in the UK after your studies you need to find an employer who is prepared to sponsor you for a **tier two** visa.

You will need to establish whether your chosen employer is able to sponsor you **before** you start applying for graduate jobs. Often it is the large, high profile recruiters that are more likely to sponsor international students.

You may find the following information helpful: www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-career-advice/choosing-a-career/visa-sponsor-international-students/

Will there be opportunities to meet with graduate recruiters when I begin my studies at Surrey?

Our *Autumn Careers and Placements Fair* is scheduled to take place on *Wednesday 10 October 2018*.

It is our single biggest careers event of the year and is a great chance to network with over 140 exhibitors. Closer to the date of this event we will provide details of all of our visiting recruiters - you are strongly advised to research employers you wish to speak to in advance of the day.

Further details of this event can be found here:

www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers/whats/autumn-fair

Step 3 – Make Effective Job Applications

You may like to start drafting a CV that you can use when applying for graduate positions.

We can provide you with helpful guidelines that will allow you to see how you can draft a CV that is appropriate for UK recruiters.

You can download our “*Effective CVs and Covering Letters*” leaflet from our website:

www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers/resources/information-leaflets

Other useful resources that can help you find out how to draft a CV and accompanying covering letter can be found here:

■ www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters

■ www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/applications-and-cvs

Many recruiters will ask candidates to complete their own online application form. You may like to look at our leaflet titled ‘*Application Forms*’ for some tips and advice that will help you to make strong applications that will do you justice.

You can download this, along with many other helpful leaflets, from our website here:

www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers/resources/information-leaflets

Step 4 – Job Selection Process

The job selection process starts with a strong application as mentioned above.

If your application is successful there will follow a number of different steps that employers will use to shortlist candidates including:

Psychometric Tests - these are used by recruiters to check competencies including verbal and numerical reasoning.

Interviews – interviews can be offered face-to-face or may take place over the phone, using skype or through an automated video system.

Assessment Centres – these are often used by larger recruiters as the final stage of the job selection process. You will undertake a number of exercises that can allow you to demonstrate the capabilities employers are seeking such as communication, team working, problem solving skills etc

If you wish to find out more before you start your studies at Surrey you can read the leaflets we have available on our website covering each of these steps in the selection process.

Once you have registered as a student you can access a whole series of interactive **Development Development Tools** in [Surrey Pathfinder](#) including an online interview simulator, practice psychometrics tests and much more.

Once your course starts we will be running regular skills events led by a wide range of graduate recruiters and our careers staff who can give you further help and advice relating to all stages of the the job selection process. You can book your place for these sessions using [Surrey Pathfinder](#).

Enhancing Your Employability

What do employers look for when selecting applicants?

It won't surprise you to hear that most employers will look for a strong academic performance, however good grades alone will not be enough to get you your dream job.

What else do employers look for?

A relevant internship or placement whilst not essential can significantly increase your chances of success.

A lot of recruiters will identify particular **competencies** that they see as essential for success. These These can include **communication skills, teamwork, organisation, time management, IT skills skills and leadership capability** to name but a few.

In order to demonstrate evidence of the competencies they seek you need to have been actively involved in activities outside of your studies.

Activities that are likely to develop the skills recruiters seek include:

- ▶ **Part-Time / Summer Employment** – could develop customer service skills, time management fitting work around studies etc
- ▶ **Student Clubs and Societies** – can often demonstrate team working with fellow students and may enhance organisational skills if you are responsible for arranging a meeting or event.
- ▶ **Volunteering** – this also gives great scope to demonstrate teamwork, leadership and more besides. Volunteering also shows a commitment to ‘giving back’ to other people; something recruiters often value.

Before you start making job applications think about any activities you have been involved in over the last two years or so. You may be able to think about the **relevant competencies** you have developed and include details in your CV.

When you start at Surrey you can choose to get involved in any of the above activities – we can help you find a part-time job to fit around your studies. The Students’ Union runs a huge range of societies and a comprehensive student volunteering programme.

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Finding Work Outside the UK

GoinGlobal

Many students will be seeking work internationally in many and varied countries across the world. This can include international students returning home as well as UK students looking to gain valuable global experience.

The Employability and Careers Centre subscribes to an invaluable resource called GoinGlobal. Once you have registered as a Surrey student you can create your own personal GoinGlobal account.

Local writers have been used to produce **country specific careers information** covering a wide range of countries across the globe. Each guide provides helpful information on the nature of application and interview processes in each country which can vary significantly to the approach followed in the UK.

China Portal

The China Portal can be accessed at <https://chinaportal.guccu.org/surrey>

This resource provides excellent support for Chinese students looking to return to China at the end of their studies and been jointly developed by Lockin China and GUCCU.

As well as directing you to specific job vacancies this resource also prepares you for the type of job selection process that is used by Chinese employers.

Other useful resources covering work abroad

GradlinkUK www.gradlinkuk.com/about-us-uk.php

GradLink UK is a specialist careers site for international students and graduates who have or are studying in the UK. It includes sections for China, South-East Asia (ASEAN), the Gulf, Canada, Africa, India and Bangladesh. Further country sections will be added in the future.

Targetjobs <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/working-abroad>

Prospects <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/working-abroad>

Using the Employability and Careers Centre

We hope this leaflet has helped you to see how you can make an early start to your career planning before you commence your studies at Surrey. After registering as a Surrey student you can make full use of all of our services.

We are based at the heart of the **Stag Hill Campus** in the **Philip Marchant Building**.

Our Opening Hours are:

Monday: 10.00 – 17.00

Tuesday – Friday 09.00 – 17.00

The Employability and Careers Centre would like to welcome you to Surrey and encourage you to make full use of our services throughout your time at the university and beyond.

After you arrive at the University do call into our centre and find out what we can do for you.

Good luck with your studies – we look forward to seeing you soon.

Employability & Careers Centre

T: 01483 689001/2

E: careers@surrey.ac.uk

W: surrey.ac.uk/careers

Find out more:

surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder

