



PREPARING FOR THE CAREERS FAIR

How do I prepare?

Think carefully about the career options that would suit you best. If you need help see www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/choose-a-career/online/ for online guidance resources and make an appointment with a careers adviser to discuss any queries you have. Then find out which employers are going to be at the fair and decide who you would most like to speak to. A list of exhibitors can be found via www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/find-a-graduate-job/fairs. Research your preferred companies' websites and think about what you want to say/ask. Make sure you collect the Careers Fair programme on the day which contains useful information on each employer. The programme will also be accessible online two weeks before the fair.

"Be prepared, do some research into companies that you would like to work for. Be confident and inquisitive, ask questions"

Mark, Principal LCC & MRMS Business Analyst, Rolls Royce

It is also a good idea to put together an up to date CV and take copies along with you. You can get feedback on your CV by attending a 15 minute Quick Query appointment at the Careers Service (Virgil Building, Mavers St) www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/one-to-one.

Isn't the fair just for engineers and business students?

No. Many employers look for graduates from any discipline because they are interested in the skills and attributes you have gained from your degree and your extra-curricular activities – not necessarily the degree content. But if you can't find any employers that could meet your career needs come to the Careers Service and we will help you identify relevant employers and appropriate job-search strategies.

Not a finalist?

You don't have to be looking for a graduate job to benefit from the fair:

- Use the opportunity to learn about what employers look for from applicants. Following the Careers Fair you can use this information to develop your skills and experience before and during your final year.
- If you are heading to the Careers Fair enquire about work experience, placements/internships. The programme will tell you which employers offer placements and internships. You can also ask about opportunities for further informal conversations or work shadowing to further your research.
 - First years – some employers do offer internships for first year students, but bear in mind that some internships will only be open to penultimate year students. Employers in some sectors will offer Insight Days and Spring Weeks aimed specifically at first year students – you can search for these in MyFuture (<https://myfuture.bath.ac.uk>). Take a look at our Finding work experience guide (www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/get-work-experience/index.html#guide), check out our summer internships fair which is held in November, and speak to our friendly staff who will gladly help you identify the right opportunities for you.
- Remember that employers will be quite focused on talking about their graduate opportunities – if they don't have time to talk about work experience etc., ask if you could contact them at a later date with your questions.

Who should I speak to?

You can speak to any company that interests you. Be open minded – you might learn about a company you hadn't considered before. Be confident – when you meet an employer, introduce yourself, find out their name and role within the company and ask if you could ask them some questions.

“Remember that a fair is not an interview but a chance to find out more from people that work for that organisation. They are often recent graduates so ask them about their experiences. If you are prepared you will be in a position to gather more information that may benefit your application”
Tamsyn, Student Recruitment Manager, PricewaterhouseCoopers

What do I ask about?

- **THE WORK:** day-to-day activities, highlights and challenges, what new graduates actually do. How will the work change over time?
- **THE WORKPLACE:** culture, location, size of the teams, impending changes.
- **SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES NEEDED:** What exactly are they looking for? What makes a candidate stand out? Where can you draw evidence from to show that you have these skills and attributes?
- **EXPERIENCE:** what sort of experience do they like graduates to have, do you need relevant experience, and do they offer any work experience opportunities?
- **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:** how will you be developed as a graduate? Are there opportunities to gain further qualifications?
- **THE INDUSTRY AND THE BUSINESS:** how much/what are applicants expected to know, where are the best places to look for information, and what are the issues and developments within the industry at the moment?
- **OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ABROAD/USE YOUR LANGUAGES:** is this a possibility? When might the opportunity to work overseas arise?
- **THEIR EXPERIENCES:** ask employers about their experiences working for that organisation, and why they chose this company/role. What do they wish they had known when they were applying for jobs? How much have they used their degree?
- **What not to ask:** 'How much can I expect to earn? What does your company do? What can you offer me? Can I have the teddy/pen/chocolate?

“What is it you really want to know about the industry or organisation? Take full advantage of the opportunity to speak to people who are doing the work you are interested in. This is a chance for you to find out what the day to day work, lifestyle and culture of the organisation is really like”
Jennifer, Recruiter, McKinsey & Company

What about international students?

Some things to consider:

- It can be frustrating to talk to employers about work permits/visas. The people you meet are often recent graduates who might not know the regulations around employing overseas graduates.
- If you cannot get the information you need on the day, politely ask for the name and contact details of someone to take your questions to.
- Learn about the schemes under which you could apply for employment in the UK. www.ukcisa.org.uk explains the options for employment in the UK. You could take some information with you to the fair to help explain your situation to employers.
- Company websites and/or job advertisements sometimes state whether the employer accepts applications from international graduates and whether they have any particular schemes for international graduates. Have a look before you attend the fair.
- Ask questions that show your genuine interest in the company and the jobs on offer. Although you need to ask questions about opportunities for overseas graduates, asking about this straight away could suggest that this is your primary concern.

Final tips...

- Be polite and enthusiastic. Remember that eye contact and body language are important.
- You don't need to wear a suit. Being casual is fine, but don't be scruffy –try to make a good first impression.
- Some employers get very busy. Don't be put off – be prepared to wait or come back.
- Make notes about your conversation with your preferred employers for future reference.
- If an employer gives you their card/contact details, it is an invitation to contact them.
- Be professional. Ask about the work and the company and avoid seeming overly interested in the salary and benefits.
- Turn up early and talk to employers when they are fresh and haven't already spoken to lots of students.

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This publication is available online at www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets.

If you need this information in another format, please contact us. www.bath.ac.uk/careers