

of your future



10 Work experience is highly valued by employers – 25% say it's almost a condition of employment, and 46% say it's viewed favourably when recruiting. For placement information try www.ncwe.com, or www.ukplacements.co.uk. Network with family members, friends and friends-of-friends to find out about their work and to hear about any relevant opportunities, and of course, never underestimate the speculative letter.

Is your CV ready to rock, though?

yes
13

no
12

11 Great. Now assess how relevant it is to the career you're looking to pursue and how you can use this to your advantage. Have you kept in touch with anyone at the company? A polite letter updating them on your progress and reiterating your interest in their industry will refresh their memory and help ensure that they have you in mind when they do look to recruit.

When you find an opportunity, is your CV ready to handle it?

yes
13

no
12

12 Getting your CV in shape might be a chore, but it's vital you get it right. It should demonstrate that you possess the key skills employers in your sector want. Tailor it to specific firms when the time comes. Your careers service will be able to point you to a stack of books about CV writing and presentation as well as offering advice and proofreading your drafts. The key thing to remember is to keep it relevant and concise. Go to Real World's CV Makeover on page 34.

go to
13

14 NICE WORK, IF YOU CAN GET IT

There's still plenty of time – don't get disheartened. If interviews or assessment anxieties are holding you back, your careers centre can give you interview practice, probably involving a mock interview, which will be filmed for you to watch back and cringe. The careers advisor will help you spot your mistakes and work on improving your skills. They can offer guidance on how to improve your performance in assessment and psychometric tests. C2, The Graduate Careers Shop (www.careersshop.co.uk) offers practice in psychometric testing and there are plenty of places to practise online, including www.shldirect.com. If possible, ask for feedback from the companies that you've approached so far and source someone who's already working in the profession that interests you to look over your CV and talk you through the interview process – you might be missing something glaringly obvious. It could be the case that you're simply applying for an extremely competitive industry and haven't struck gold yet. Luck and timing can often play a disproportionate part in a candidate securing a dream job. Be persistent. Look at the viability of applying for work experience in the field that interests you: this can lead to offers of full-time employment. But take time to soul-search. Are you convinced that the career path you're interested in right for you? It might be worth taking time to explore other options that are a good fit with your degree and personal profile. Good luck!

13 Have you applied for jobs and been unsuccessful?

no
15

yes
14

15 KING OF THE HILL

So you know what you want to do, your CV's sorted and you've got some work experience in the bag. It's time to take the plunge and start applying. Make sure you know where jobs for your sector are advertised, and don't forget to check companies' websites direct – many now advertise their own vacancies. Make speculative applications – research each organisation thoroughly, remembering to check the company website, if there is one – and target each covering letter carefully. Good luck!



Illustrations: spencer@peepshow.org.uk