



Feeling stuck?
We can help you...



Job Searching: Starting Out

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Finding the right job is not easy and you will need to use lots of energy, commitment and creative thinking not only to obtain the job you want, but also to ensure that you keep moving up your chosen career ladder.

The information in this guide can help you plan and succeed in your job search, whether you are thinking of returning to work, changing your career or looking for a new job.

Research yourself

This is one of the most important aspects of job searching. You need to spend time researching what you want. Itemise the skills you have gained which will be helpful for future jobs.

Useful points to keep in mind when looking for work:

- What can you do?
- What type of work are you looking for?
- What kind of company do you wish to work for?
- What qualifications, skills, and experience do you need/have to find the job you want?
- Where can you find vacancies for jobs you are interested in?

When looking for work

- Be organised and systematic. Develop a plan of action
- Write a list of where you can find out about vacancies you are interested in
- The internet offers a wide range of sites which have vacancies and there are a number of online recruitment agencies. See the Jobs section on this website for local job listings and links to sites.
- There are a large number of on-line recruitment agencies
- Visit your local jobcentre www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk and www.worktrain.gov.uk
- Look in local and national newspapers/professional and trade journals
- Remember that you can find out about jobs through 'word of mouth'
- Contact employers you would like to work for directly to see if they have vacancies – send speculative letters
- Keep a list of the jobs you have applied for and copies of the job description, application forms, CV and letters for future reference
- Use Public Sector Job lists (e.g. local authorities/health services) – Links to Local authority websites: www.barnsley.gov.uk, www.doncaster.gov.uk, www.rotherham.gov.uk, www.sheffield.gov.uk
- Always leave a telephone number where you can be contacted

What is a job description?

Most large organisations have formal, written job descriptions. This will describe the main duties involved in the job.

What is a person specification?

Most large organisations will also send out a person specification with the job description. This will highlight the skills, knowledge and personality needed for the job. You will need to submit an application form which shows how you meet the job specification. The form will include a page in which you write why you are applying for the post and how you meet the job specification giving specific examples

It is important that you read the job-description and person specification carefully before filling in the application form so that you can ensure that you would both enjoy and be able to do the work. You will not be invited for an interview unless you demonstrate that you meet the requirements of the job specification

What is a CV?

Some employers ask people to send in a CV rather than fill in an application form.

A good CV will considerably boost your chances of getting a face-to-face interview by highlighting relevant skills, experience and value to a potential boss.

It offers you the chance to sell yourself by presenting information about yourself in a way, which highlights your strengths and experience to your advantage.

It is useful for sending out when making speculative enquiries

Some employers ask for a CV to be sent with the application.

You can use it as a personal reference to help you complete application forms

The average length of time spent by someone reading your CV is 20 – 30 seconds. The reader will quite often simply skim through your CV in order to decide what happens next.

A good CV should be:

- Relevant
- Selling your achievements
- Easy to read and follow
- Detailed, accurate and up to date
- Truthful
- Highlighting the skills you have developed both in and outside of work
- No longer than 2 pages maximum
- Spell and grammar checked– have a friend read it through

- In the same style throughout - do not mix fonts and formats or use heavy graphics
- Structured carefully and logically. Show you are organised by having an organised CV
- Positive about your work history

Don't:

- Leave any gaps in your work record - employers may assume the worst, for example that you were sacked
- Lie - many employers use information service companies or sophisticated new software to check CV details for accuracy, including educational qualifications, places of study and the veracity of job references
- List all the one-day training courses you have ever been on
- Include a photo unless you know the employer wants one
- Fax it without sending a copy in the post as well
- Use jargon, elaborate fonts, or colours – keep it simple
- Copy someone else's CV
- Run out of copies to send, in case the job you really want comes up.

Skill Keywords

Below is a list of words that you can use as a memory jogger to include your skills in your CV.

- Implemented procedures
- Planned budgets
- Completed tax forms
- Reconciled figures
- Organised resources
- Archived files
- Scheduled rotas
- Generated savings
- Filed documents
- Forecasted results
- Applied systems
- Processed invoices
- Analysed
- Prepared bids/accounts
- Audited
- Verified
- Planned sales strategy
- Managed resources
- Prepared quotes
- Logged
- Negotiated contracts
- Empowered staff members
- Appraised my team
- Hired new staff
- Trained new staff
- Led customer care group
- Mediated in discussions
- Motivated teams
- Observed trainees
- Authorised procedures
- Interviewed
- Organised events
- Facilitated communications
- Headed a task force
- Recommended
- Coached
- Debated
- Won over
- Stimulated discussion
- Co-ordinated
- Followed-up leads
- Counselling face-to-face
- Networked
- Dealt with
- Researched options
- Analysed information
- Summarised reports
- Edited user manuals
- Researched customer needs
- Prepared reports
- Classified data
- Wrote proposal
- Translated information
- Spoke at events
- Wrote news releases
- Defined
- Made presentations
- Wrote sales pitch
- Categorised
- Presented
- Developed a range of materials
- Assembled components
- Operated machinery
- Set up tools
- Constructed
- Designed
- Crafted
- Protected
- Controlled output
- Maintained
- Composed
- Fixed problems
- Created
- Devised
- Invented new product
- Renovated
- Transformed
- Worked up initial design
- Installed equipment
- Analysed data
- Scratch built prototypes
- Serviced networks
- Provided technical support
- Wrote manuals
- Eliminated defects
- Repaired
- Devised codes
- Monitored results
- Research alternatives
- Mechanised systems
- Programmed
- Solved
- Tended
- Computed

Personal Keywords

Even if the job/education you are seeking is essentially 'talent based' e.g. arts or sports, you will still need to demonstrate that you have a range of additional skills to enhance your application, for example skills in leadership, organisation and communication.

In addition to phrases, which describe your skills, you also need to include words and phrases, which describe your outlook and personality. Some suggestions are listed below. You must use words, which are true of you and give the reader a sense of your own personal qualities.

- Enthusiastic
- Responsible
- Innovative
- Practical
- Persuasive
- Articulate
- Welcome challenge
- Honest
- Efficient
- Consistent
- Calm under pressure
- Able to diffuse tension
- Clear thinking
- Nurturing
- Sympathetic
- Imaginative
- Sensitive
- Tenacious
- Rational
- Co-operative
- Compelling
- Astute
- Confident
- Visionary
- Have staying power
- Dextrous/Nimble
- Accurate

The Next Step

Once you have organised your job search and spent time thinking about your history and skills, you are ready for the next step: building your CV. For information on how to write a CV and examples you can look at the **CV Types and Samples** guide.