BUILDING your FUTURE

A guide to CityCareers and preparing for employment

START HERE

Sponsored by:

CityCareers
CAREERS, STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH
Whether you already know what kind of job you want after you graduate, or you’re not sure and want to explore your options, CityCareers is here to help.

Employers are always keen to see excellent grades, but increasingly, they also look for applicants with work experience and evidence of key transferable skills acquired outside of the lecture theatre. Your tutor and the staff in your Course Office are there to help you do the best you can academically. We’re here to help you with deciding where you want to go and developing the skills that will get you there.

If you are embarking on a postgraduate degree, no doubt you will already be thinking about where you would like your studies to take you. Your time at City will fly by, but we can help you think about transitioning into a new field or finding your first position after your course is finished.

In this handbook, you will find advice on what you should be thinking about during each year of your university course, information about the services CityCareers provides and ways to develop your skills and the basics of the job application process.

As you work through the handbook, be sure to look out for the Aurasma icon, which indicates that a photograph links to a related online video. If you have an iPhone, iPad or Android device, download the Aurasma app and follow the CityCareers channel. Whenever you see the icon above, scan over the photograph with your device. All of our videos are also available on our website: www.city.ac.uk/careers.

We wish you all the very best with your studies and we look forward to helping you achieve your personal and professional goals.

The CityCareers team
Your career journey

It’s never too early (or too late!) to start acquiring work experience and developing employability skills. CityCareers is here to help by providing guidance, advice and resources. We offer a wide range of opportunities for you get the experience you’ll need as you begin to apply for jobs.

This chart provides some guidance on what we recommend an undergraduate on a three year degree should do each year, but remember that everyone’s career journey is different. Careers Consultants can help you develop a plan that is right for you.

**Do your research**

**Year one**
- Visit CityCareers for guidance on exploring different careers and options in your sector
- Explore the types of careers open to graduates in your discipline. We have career planning resources to help you think about your skills and what types of roles would be best for you
- Attend employer events to find out what you need in order to get into a particular career. Throughout the year CityCareers offers employer panel events, presentations, and employer in residence sessions where you can learn more about employers and careers in your field.

**Year two**
- Target specific employers you think you’d like to work for at career fairs, employer events, and open days. Research them and apply for any internships or work experience they offer.

**Year three**
- Book an appointment with a careers consultant to review your cv, cover letters and applications.

**Build your cv**

**Year one**
- Create a draft cv of your experiences to date: education, work experiences, extra-curricular activities. Think about the skills and knowledge you acquired and what you liked and didn’t like about these experiences.

**Year two**
- Review your cv. Look for gaps in your experience or skills that employers will want, and find ways to develop these skills.

**Year three**
- Book an appointment with a careers consultant to review your cv, cover letters and applications.

**Gain great experience**

**Year one**
- Visit ExperienceCity to find out about opportunities to get involved around the University: you may choose to join clubs and societies, participate in sports, represent your course, help out at the Students’ Union, or undertake part-time work and volunteering.

**Year two**
- If your course has an industrial placement option, speak to your Course Office and start thinking about where you’d like to apply. The careers consultants can review and help you improve your applications.
- Continue to expand and develop your skills by taking on leadership roles in clubs and societies, volunteering, or working part-time.

**Year three**
- Practise employer selection tests and assessment centres with CityCareers
- Book a mock interview to practise your interview skills
- Apply for jobs and graduate schemes. Make sure you know the deadlines for graduate schemes in your field and apply early
- Get the job and start your career!

**Kick start your career**

**Year one**
- Apply for insight programmes with companies in your field. There is a list of opportunities for first years on CareersHub. These usually take place in the spring and you’ll need to apply in the autumn term.

**Year two**
- If you want to do a summer internship or study abroad, start thinking about this at the beginning of your second year. For summer internships, application deadlines may fall as early as the autumn term. Contact your Course Office to discuss studying abroad.
- Apply for the Professional Mentoring Programme or Snapshot Scheme to get further insight into the working world.

**Year three**
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- Apply for jobs and graduate schemes. Make sure you know the deadlines for graduate schemes in your field and apply early
- Get the job and start your career!
CareersHub

CareersHub is our online system for everything careers-related. You can:
• Book an appointment with a careers consultant
• Register for career events
• Find resources for your field
• View vacancies from employers around the UK
• Get information about working abroad.

To get to CareersHub, go to www.city.ac.uk/careers.

“We can work with you to DEVELOP the right type of cv for YOU”

Postgraduate students

Whether you have chosen to study at postgraduate level because of a passion for your subject, because you wish to further your career, or because you want to change your career, CityCareers can help you plan your professional life after you graduate from City.

Finding your first job

If you’ve gone straight from undergraduate to postgraduate study, you can use all of the advice in this booklet to help you get started on your job search after you finish your course. You probably have a good idea of what jobs and industries you’d like to explore, so we can help you fine-tune your search, develop your cv and cover letters and practice your interview skills.

Making a career change

If you have significant work experience already, we can help you navigate job-hunting at a higher level. We can work with you to develop the right type of cv for you, demonstrate how your previous work experience fits into your new career field, look for jobs in your new field and provide interview advice for tricky questions.

Academic and research careers

If you want to continue on to doctoral study, or if you’re already a doctoral student and you are looking for jobs in academia, we can help you with resources specific to academic and research work. We can review personal statements for further study and help you draft an academic cv.

International Students

If you are an international student and you want to get work experience in the UK after you complete your studies, it is very important to prepare and start your job search early. We can help you develop the skills and experience to make your cv stand out to employers, and advise you on approaching the recruitment process as an international student. Your experience as an international student and language skills can be valuable to employers.

You can also work part-time during your studies through Unitemps or for an external company as long as you stay within any restrictions on your visa.

If you have questions about your visa, the Student Centre has International Student Advisors who can help you.

Work and Study Abroad

Adding an international aspect to your work or study experience can help you gain skills and stand out to employers, especially if you want to work internationally after you graduate.

CityCareers can advise you on options for studying abroad as part of your course or for postgraduate study, finding internships and placements abroad and working internationally after you complete your course. We have resources to help you find opportunities in countries around the world as well as advice about working in different countries.
Industry Insight panels
Professionals from a number of organisations are invited on to campus to talk about their role, their industry and entry routes to different professions. Typically, a panel Q&A session will follow the talks to give you the opportunity to ask questions.

Employer presentations
Employers use this time to share their company history, promote their organisation, describe their company culture, talk about career paths and opportunities and share tips for applications and interviews.

Employer in Residence
Employers will be based in CityCareers for mock interview or cv check sessions. The intention here is to allow students to talk informally on a one-to-one basis with representatives from different companies and to ask questions that could help them decide whether they would fit into that organisation’s culture.

Careers events
CityCareers offers a wide variety of opportunities to meet employers throughout the year. You will find out what employers are looking for in candidates and get a chance to network and find out more about different careers. All our events are posted on CareersHub.

Employability Skills Programme
The Employability Skills Programme will prepare you to make the transition from education to work, exploring all aspects of the selection and recruitment process. These sessions will cover the skills that are most valued by recruiters, how you can reflect on these and how to articulate your experiences clearly when talking to employers. If you attend seven out of the nine different sessions, you will be awarded a certificate. Each evening session is a repetition of the afternoon session.

Career Fairs
City University London Career Fairs are formally structured events where between 20 and 35 employers are represented, each with their own stand. This is a rare opportunity to meet lots of companies within just a couple of hours. You will be able to speak with HR representatives who can go into detail about the company’s application and selection process and graduate trainees who have only been with the company for one or two years. Graduate trainees can talk to you about their personal experience when applying as well as their role duties.

Each sector-specific fair will have a preparation workshop on the Monday prior to the event. Students should attend this to get top tips on how to network with and impress employers. They will also collect a VIP pass at this session, for fast-track entry to the fair.

2014 Fair Dates:
• Banking, Finance and Consultancy Fair: Wednesday 1st October 2014
• Engineering, Science and Technology: Wednesday 8th October 2014
• Law: Wednesday 15th October 2014

Mock assessment centres and psychometric tests
Throughout the year we offer the opportunity for you to try out some of the practical exercises which employers may use, and receive constructive feedback from fellow students and Careers Consultants about performance. These sessions will help you prepare both practically and mentally for the employer’s selection process.

Careers Consultant workshops
Throughout the year our Careers Consultants offer practical advice sessions and workshops to help you develop your job search and professional skills. Topics include job search strategies, writing cvs, cover letters and applications, interview skills, communication skills and more. They also offer informal drop-in sessions to discuss careers topics.

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Developing your skills

In addition to advice and guidance, CityCareers offers a variety of programmes to help you get involved and develop your employability skills. You can find more information about all of these programmes on our website.

ExperienceCity

The wide range of activities at City can make it difficult to decide where you really want to dedicate your time and energy. ExperienceCity is the place to go to find out about all activities available at City and in the Students’ Union, whether you’re looking to develop key skills for your future career or to simply find out how you can get involved during your time at City. Through the site you can also learn how to reflect on the activities you’ve already taken part in and how they have contributed to your development. This can give you a head start when thinking through how to make job applications.

Find ExperienceCity at experience.city.ac.uk.

Tracking your experiences with MyPortfolio

MyPortfolio is an online space which can be used to save your cv, organise and manage your applications, store professional contact details, identify your skills and set yourself goals.

Using MyPortfolio will help you get organised when making multiple applications. It acts like your own personal career database, making it much easier for you to make job applications and help you prepare for interviews. You will learn about your skills and identify examples, which you can use for your job applications and preparing for interviews. Also, you will be able to set yourself goals to help with your ongoing professional development.

You can access MyPortfolio through CareersHub.

Professional Mentoring Programme

The Professional Mentoring Programme pairs you with an industry professional who will commit their time to support, advise and guide you towards personal and professional development. It is open to second and third year undergraduate students and postgraduate students from any year. This six-month engagement is an effective way to complement your studies and develop your confidence, employability and professional network.

As a Mentee, you should:

- Develop your confidence and employability skills – whether you are an undergraduate starting out or a postgraduate embarking on a new career direction
- Hone your communication skills by interacting with established professionals
- Experience a professional relationship with a person in industry and understand the nuances of such a process
- Have someone with experience and knowledge of the working world act as a sounding board for your career aspirations

- Gain insight to the graduate labour market and/or clarify your career plans
- Have someone from your field or a related field assist you in the job application and interview process.

The Professional Mentoring Programme is a stepping stone to becoming a highly employable graduate and a great opportunity for personal development.

Applications are taken in October and January of each year. Find out more at www.city.ac.uk/careers.

2014 Application dates

Autumn intake:

- Undergraduate: Applications open on 29th August and close on 10th October 2014
- Postgraduate: Applications open on 21st September and close on 9th October 2014.

Spring intake:

- Undergraduates: Applications open on 4th December 2014 and close on 29th January 2015.

CityCareers services

www.city.ac.uk/careers-thalia

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CityCareers services

“Engage with INSPIRING role models and industry PROFESSIONALS”

SNAPSHOT:
Insight into Industry Scheme

This competitive scheme offers a “snapshot” into different sectors and career paths including finance, engineering, IT, marketing, HR, law, media, retail, not-for-profit and the public sector.

We offer you an opportunity to:
- Meet with and shadow professionals who have specific knowledge about the career in which you are interested
- Take part in a range of Snapshotters’ Challenge sessions and team-building activities designed to equip you with top employability skills
- Win an Employability Award for outstanding Snapshotters.

Who we want: pro-active, engaged, inquisitive, driven current students from any discipline who possess the necessary enthusiasm and motivation to make the most of the scheme.

Applications open in September and close on 31st October 2014. Find out more and apply at: www.city.ac.uk/careers.

Sprint London Programme

The Sprint Programme is a fantastic opportunity for women from all backgrounds, ages and stages in their lives and study; regardless of their subject, department or career aspirations, to take hold of their personal development and achieve their ambitions.

The four-day programme covers a range of key development topics which aim to help you:
- Use your personal power and influence
- Identify your values, attitudes and direction
- Manage your time effectively
- Learn how to use assertiveness positively
- Build your image, networking skills and confidence
- Engage with inspiring role models and industry professionals
- Work with a mentor (provided by sponsoring companies) to continue achieving your goals.

The programme is sponsored by various employers and there is a summer and spring intake. Find out more and apply at: www.city.ac.uk/careers.
Working as a Widening Participation ambassador

The Widening Participation Outreach team is responsible for working with schools and colleges, delivering a range of events and activities. We can help you become a WP Student Ambassador, a role in which you will work with young people in London to promote higher education, help raise aspirations and attainment and contribute towards a fairer society. This might involve supporting visit days to the university, talks in schools or tutoring young people.

We are looking for students who enjoy working with young people and are organised, responsive and committed. The role requires you to be outgoing, friendly and approachable. It’s a great chance for you to develop your transferable skills whilst earning some money. The role is very rewarding, flexible and fits around your studies.

For a full job description and link to the application form, go to www.city.ac.uk/careers/wpambassadors. Applications open in September and close on 10th October 2014.

Paid work opportunities

Working for Unitemps

Unitemps is an in-house recruitment agency providing opportunities on campus and in local commercial businesses for students and graduates. With a wide variety of roles throughout the university and local community, you can gain work experience, develop valuable employability skills, and earn money during your studies and summer breaks. Working for Unitemps will enhance your cv and provide practice writing cover letters and working in a professional capacity.

To view vacancies and apply, go to www.unitemps.com, or come see us at CityCareers for more information.

Volunteering is a great way to meet other students, help your community and undertake work experience all at the same time. There are many different ways you can get involved, from planting trees in local parks or working at a hospice, to providing legal support or even setting up your own project to tackle a social need. Whatever level of involvement in whatever area you’re interested in, we can help you find the volunteering opportunity that’s right for you.

Volunteering can help you develop your professional skills, from office work to leadership and communication. Employers value the commitment that volunteering shows — especially if you can volunteer in your field.

We run a volunteering fair in the first term as well as one-off events throughout the year where you can get a taste of a range of different experiences.

Visit volunteering.city.ac.uk or come in to CityCareers for more information.

Volunteering is an exciting and enjoyable time but it can also be worrying and stressful for new students. CityBuddies matches current City students with new undergraduates so they have someone to support them during their first months; guiding them around the University, building their confidence and showing them all that City has to offer.

You may have had a Buddy when you started University. As you go into your second and third year, you can apply to be a Buddy to incoming students.

As a volunteer CityBuddy you will gain skills and experience for your cv and enhance your employability. After CityBuddies you’ll be given help and guidance on how to best present the skills you’ve gained when talking with employers. Plus you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you’ve made someone’s journey into university a bit less stressful. Some CityBuddies will make friendships with their new students that last throughout university.

Visit city.ac.uk/buddy for more information. Applications to become a CityBuddy open in February.

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Prove it!

Subjective statement:
Excellent numeracy and data analysis skills.

Evidence:
I have acted as Treasurer for the City University London Cheerleading Society, with responsibility for a budget of £5,000.

Preparing your cv

What is a cv?
A cv is a representation of your academic and work experience, skills and extra-curricular activities. It should show an employer what you have achieved and demonstrate that you are the right person for their role. Your cv should focus on outcomes and achievements, providing evidence of your experiences rather than subjective statements. Drafting your cv early can help you start thinking about your skills, experience and achievements, and how you can build on them throughout your time at university.

Three questions
Your cover letter should answer three questions:
• Why this job/opportunity? What is it about this job that appeals to you? Show specific evidence that you meet the specifications of the role
• Why this company? You should demonstrate knowledge of the employer and enthusiasm about its work. Link this to your personal experience — don’t just list facts about the employer
• Why you? What have you done and achieved that demonstrates your ability to fill this role? Look at the person specification and address the major points with examples from your experience.

How do I get started writing my cv?
1. Visit CityCareers or our website to find our Writing a cv information sheet and sample cv
2. Start thinking of what you’ve already done in each area: Education, Work experience, Professional skills, Achievements & awards, Extracurricular activities and Volunteering
3. Book an appointment with a Careers Consultant to review your cv draft and discuss your career plans.

Writing a cover letter

Employers will generally ask you to apply either by filling in an application form or by sending a cv and cover letter. A cover letter is written to the company, introducing yourself and providing context for your cv. It should explain how your past experiences and achievements relate to the specific requirements of the role and convey why you are so interested and enthusiastic about the company and the role. A cover letter is the first thing the employer will read from you, so it should make a good impression and make clear how you would be a good candidate for their role.

A cover letter should be specific to the job you’re applying for. Employers can spot a generic cover letter or one that’s been pasted from other sources. You also risk missing details if you use the same cover letter for different applications. As with any written communication, always make sure your spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct.

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You can make an appointment with a Careers Consultant to review your cover letters. The Consultant will work with you to ensure the letters are as effective as possible.

If you’re applying for roles with Unitemps, your cover letter matters just as much as for roles in outside companies. Use your Unitemps applications to practice writing great cover letters.
Preparing an application form

The application form is usually the first hurdle in the selection process for industrial placements, vacation schemes, graduate schemes and some jobs, so it is really crucial to make sure that it’s right. Like a CV, your application form must convince the employer that they should interview you. Unlike a CV, you are required to answer specific questions. This can make the process simpler, but you also need to think about your answers carefully.

Follow instructions

Read the form through carefully and note any specific instructions and follow them exactly. Do not send a CV instead of or as well as completing the form, unless this has been specified in the application instructions.

Be prepared

Allow yourself plenty of time to read the form, plan your answers and draft them. Research the organisation then tailor your answers to their needs.
- Explore their website
- Search news archives for recent items
- Talk to people who know the organisation
- Update yourself on current issues in the sector.

Top tips

- Make your answers clear and concise and stick to word limits.
- Be positive about what you have to offer
- Avoid duplicating information
- If you have significant gaps without employment, visit a careers consultant to discuss how best to present this
- Spelling and grammar must be perfect. Some recruiters may allow for a very small number of errors but others may reject an application with just one error. Ask a friend or Careers Consultant to review your application before you send it
- Always keep a copy of your application. It can help when you are preparing for the interview
- Don’t use ‘text language’ or jargon
- Not all employers keep to deadlines. If they receive a high volume of quality applications, they may close the application window so watch closing dates and don’t delay too long.

Preparing for interviews

For most employers, an interview with an applicant is just one part of the selection process, but often a very important part. It might be face-to-face, by phone or by video conference. You may be faced with a panel of interviewers or just one person. You might be asked to do a task or make a presentation as part of the interview.

Interviewing is one of the most important aspects of the recruitment process, and can also be one of the most challenging. The best way to get over interview nerves and develop a confident interviewing style is to prepare and practise.

CityCareers can help you prepare and practise with a wide variety of resources:
- Workshops on interviewing techniques
- Print and web resources on common interview questions and interview advice
- Employer-in-residence sessions where you can have a practice interview with a graduate recruiter
- Mock interviews with our Careers Consultants tailored to the jobs you’ve applied for.

Getting started

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We offer workshops on completing application forms in the autumn and spring terms. You can also book an appointment with a careers consultant to review your application form answers.
Developing professionalism

What is professionalism?

Professionalism is how you present yourself to potential employers and how you interact with managers and colleagues in the workplace. It encompasses areas such as:

- Email and written communication
- Phone manner
- First impressions when you meet employers and interviewers
- How you dress
- How you handle conflicts and disappointments
- Punctuality and reliability.

Every interaction you have with an employer, a Careers Consultant, the Unitemps recruitment team, as a volunteer or student ambassador, and with visiting employers is an opportunity to act with professionalism. Developing these habits now will help you in recruitment processes and in your future employment.

General professionalism

- Use a sensible email address (usually your name) and check it regularly.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, capitalisation and punctuation in your email communication.
- Start your emails with “Dear” and the person’s name. Include your contact information if you’re asking someone to contact you.
- Dress appropriately for interviews and events where you will be meeting employers.
- Ensure you have voicemail on your phone and answer the phone professionally.
- Return calls promptly.
- Review your social media presence. Would an employer be impressed by what they see on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or other social media?

Applying for jobs and the recruitment process

- When applying for jobs, make sure you follow all instructions in the application.
- Read the person specification and make sure you meet a majority of the requirements before applying.
- Always be on time for appointments, interviews, assessment centres, training, or any employer events. Plan your journey to make sure you have enough time.
- If you’ve had an interview, send a thank you email to the interviewer or recruiter.
- If you’ve had an interview and were not accepted for the position, it’s okay to politely ask for feedback. If you receive feedback on an interview, respond graciously and thank the respondent for their time.

Professionalism also includes being able to manage yourself and develop your own career. Students and graduates who stand out are those who ask questions and learn quickly, are self-sufficient, and seize opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience.

Attending assessment centres

What is an assessment centre?

Assessment centres are selection events where an employer will ask you and other applicants to complete a number of tasks. These are to assess your abilities across a number of areas. Such events may take place at the employer’s premises or another venue such as a hotel or conference centre. They might be half a day, a full day or longer.

Why do employers use assessment centres?

Employers (particularly in the banking, finance, accountancy, consultancy and IT sectors) feel that they can obtain a much broader picture of what you are like if they assess you over a longer period, doing a variety of tasks. They want to see you demonstrate skills such as written communications, team work, presentation skills, problem-solving, leadership and creative thinking. An assessment centre is often designed to be a simulation of the work environment. You may be asked to do a variety of tasks such as a test, interview, group exercise, e-tray exercise, case study, role play or presentation.

Preparing for assessment centres

- Find out as much as you can about the company and the job beforehand.
- Ask the recruiter if they can tell you what will be involved at the assessment centre.
- Remember that you are being assessed on your ability across all tasks, so don’t despair if you feel that one task doesn’t go as well.
- Check the dress code to make sure that you present yourself appropriately.
- Make an effort to mix with the selectors and other candidates.
- Remember that you are being assessed even during social activities such as breaks and lunch.

Practising for Assessment Centres

You can find resources for assessment centres on CareersHub. These will describe the different types of tasks you may be asked to complete, and provide samples that you can use to practise. You can also attend sessions on assessment centres with employers and mock assessment centres with our careers consultants. Check the events section of CareersHub for specific event listings.

If you want to discuss assessment centres with a Careers Consultant, you can book a guidance appointment. You can talk about assessment centres in general or a specific assessment centre you have been invited to.

Applying for jobs and the recruitment process

- When applying for jobs, make sure you follow all instructions in the application.
- Read the person specification and make sure you meet a majority of the requirements before applying.
- Always be on time for appointments, interviews, assessment centres, training, or any employer events. Plan your journey to make sure you have enough time.
- If you’ve had an interview, send a thank you email to the interviewer or recruiter.
- If you’ve had an interview and were not accepted for the position, it’s okay to politely ask for feedback. If you receive feedback on an interview, respond graciously and thank the respondent for their time.

Professionalism also includes being able to manage yourself and develop your own career. Students and graduates who stand out are those who ask questions and learn quickly, are self-sufficient, and seize opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience.

Getting started

“"You may be asked to complete a VARIETY of tasks”"
The next step

Dates for your diary

CityCareers host a series of events and workshops throughout the academic year. Here we list a few key dates for your 2014/15 diary, but be sure to check our webpages for more information. We wish you every success as you begin to build your future.

Fair Dates
1st October
Banking, Finance and Consultancy Fair

8th October
Engineering, Science and Technology Fair

15th October
Law Fair

22nd October
Volunteering Fair

Application Deadlines
9th October
Professional Mentoring for Postgraduates

10th October
Professional Mentoring for Undergraduates, autumn intake

10th October
Widening Participation Ambassador

29th October
Volunteer Management Programme

31st October
Snapshot Scheme

29th January – Professional Mentoring for Undergraduates, spring intake

Need individual careers advice?
You can have your cv reviewed, discuss your applications, have a mock interview or get career guidance from one of our Careers Consultants. Book 20 or 45 minute appointments on CareerHub by visiting: www.city.ac.uk/careers.

Email enquiries careers@city.ac.uk
Telephone enquiries +44 (0)20 7040 8093
Find out more, visit www.city.ac.uk/careers

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“As you can see, it’s made up of a lot of people. Some I see every day. Some maybe less so. But each and every connection I’ve made here has taught me something. And I know many of them will last for life.

I’d recommend KPMG to any graduate because, no matter which path you take, you’ll be working with some of the brightest brains in business with access to the best professional development around.”

Katharine, Graduate Trainee

Visit www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/graduates to find out about careers for graduates from all degree disciplines in Audit, Tax, Advisory, Technology, Marketing and HR.