

ASK us about...

Job Prospects



Social Networking

In recent years, there has been a huge growth in online networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Whilst these sites are great for socialising and keeping in touch with friends and family, many people are starting to realise the potential of social websites to help their employment prospects. Most sites are free and easy to join, and can be used to get job hunting advice and tips, network with employers, and connect with career experts.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com

Over 35 million members in 140 industries, providing a rich source of information about companies and who works for them. In the "Company Profiles" section, you can view people's career history, search for recently hired candidates and their skills and receive updates about company news. There is also a job searchengine on the site

How does it work? LinkedIn allows you to create a free profile based on your employment and education history. Once set up, you can start searching for contacts or "connections" as they are known on the site. You can also join networking groups, many of which are related to job searching and job networking.

Twitter: www.twitter.com

With around 175 million users, candidates and employers are increasingly turning to Twitter as a way to promote themselves. Twitter can help you find job vacancies and useful events, connect with employers and get up to the minute career advice.

How does it work? Twitter is a free microblogging site where users post updates that are displayed on their profile page and sent to others who follow them. Twitter enables users to interact with employers, agencies and other job seekers. About.com offers an excellent guide on how to get started and network through Twitter (jobsearch.about.com/od/networkingsites/p/twitter.htm).

Top Tips for Social Networking (and things to avoid):

- Google your name to see what comes up. Remember that these are public sites and employers may run a search on your name at the recruitment stages. Remove anything you'd rather keep private.
- Check your privacy settings, especially on Facebook. If you'd rather keep your profile private, change your settings so that only friends can see your photos and updates.
- Consider having professional accounts as well as a personal account, especially on Twitter.
- Start straight away: Building a network of connections and contacts online can take time. Join in discussions, post ideas and be engaged and proactive in your networking.

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T: 0121 331 5588
www.bcu.ac.uk/student-services

Networking and Social Networking

It's often said "It's not about what you know, it's about who you know" and this certainly applies to finding jobs. Networking can open up a world of opportunities, but the prospect of "selling yourself" can seem daunting to many students. However, networking isn't just about getting a job: it's about making contacts, building connections and sharing ideas - things you'll have already been doing at University.

Need more help? Just ASK!

Call in for initial advice at a Help Zone "Drop In" in Student Services, who will refer you to a career specialist if required:-

- City North Campus, First Floor Baker Building
- City Centre Campus, Gosta Green, Room G27
- City South Campus, Second Floor Seacole Building
- Millennium Point: Ask at Reception

Telephone 0121 3315588 or visit our web pages for dates and times of Drop Ins and services at other sites.

Careers and Job Prospects websites:

- <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/careers>
- www.bcu.ac.uk/alumni/careers

Online e-guidance service:

- www.bcu.ac.uk/askus

Social Media:

- Facebook: [BCUemploymentzone](https://www.facebook.com/BCUemploymentzone)
- Twitter: [@employmentzone](https://twitter.com/employmentzone)

View our full range of leaflets online:
<https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/careers> >> Quick Links >> Handouts

Making a start

Your social network of friends and relatives may be the last place you would think of looking for work, but it is probably the easiest place to start.

Let as many people as possible know that you are job hunting. Think about speaking to the following:

- Friends and family
- Previous employers
- University tutors and lecturers

Tell everyone what kind of opportunities you are looking for, and contact them regularly so they will think of you straight away if they hear of any relevant information or opportunities.



Top Tips for Networking

- **Preparation:** Identify what you have to offer a potential employer– focus on your strengths and skills. For help in identifying your key skills, see our handout “**Making yourself Employable**”.
- **First Impressions count:** Effective networking is all about establishing a rapport with someone. Be aware of your body language, focusing on positive gestures such as eye contact and smiling. Even small things like a good handshake can make an impression – practice yours with friends and family if you’re not confident!
- **Elevator Speech:** Networking opportunities can happen anytime, anywhere, so you may find yourself with just a few seconds to make an impression and get your message across. A good tip is to prepare an “elevator speech” - imagine you have just got into a lift with an employer and you have only the time it takes to reach the top floor to impress. What can you say in 30-60 seconds that conveys who you are, what you do and what you want to achieve?
- **Keep in touch:** Once you have made a contact, remember to stay in touch with them. Even if they can’t help you now, they may come in handy in the future. Swapping business cards is a great way of storing details. If you don’t have any, you can get personalised cards created from as little as 1p per card.
- **Don’t be afraid!** Remember, networking isn’t about the ‘hard sell’. It’s about establishing relationships and sharing ideas. Put yourself out there and have fun. What’s the worst that could happen?

Where can I network?

- Employer presentations and Careers Recruitment Fairs which are held on campus at various times throughout the year. Employers representing a wide range of careers will be attendance for you to talk to and many of them will have immediate vacancies. Visit our iCity pages for regular updates.
- Attend National Recruitment Exhibitions, these are held at the NEC at various times of the year. Details of recruitment fairs across the country can be found on the Graduate Prospects website: www.prospects.ac.uk.
- Look for likely employers in specialist graduate publications which are kept in the resource areas of Student Services in City North and on request at other campuses

Examples of questions to ask an Employer

Getting in

- How did you get started?
- What qualifications or qualities do you look for when recruiting?
- Are there useful stepping stone jobs or voluntary experience I should look for?
- Where are your vacancies advertised?

Career Development

- How long do people stay in this organisation?
- What additional responsibilities can staff take on?
- What sort of jobs do people move on to?
- What do you need to do to get on?

About the work role:

- What can you tell me about the things you do in a typical day/week?
- What are your main responsibilities, tasks and priorities?
- What are the skills needed to perform well?

About the organisation:

- What is the culture within the organisation?
- Are there any changes happening?
- What about salaries on entry and opportunities for progression?
- What are the misconceptions people have about working in this field?

Keep Track of Networking Activity

1. Make a list of everyone you know and what they do. This will include family and friends (including all your Facebook friends!), but also colleagues, friends of friends, and so on...the list can end up longer than you think!
2. Fill in any gaps by making sure you find out what people do (or even what they used to do), what kind of work it is, and what industry they are involved in.
3. Make sure everybody knows that you are looking for work and give them as much information as possible about what you want.
4. Ask for introductions to relevant contacts – but you don’t have to ask them for a job straight away.
5. Keep track of your progress; keep a record of every conversation, phone call or email. It may also be useful to record what you want to do next. Make sure that you always record the **who, what, when, where and why** of your job hunting plan.

Tip: Keep a job-hunting file including your CV, application forms and notes on the evidence you can offer to demonstrate your skills. You can also use this to record the outcomes of any contact you make with potential employers

ASK

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