

ASK us about...



Job Prospects

Resources

Directories:

These are useful for finding companies working in a particular sector. Depending on the directory, they may also give you some brief details on the company, like contact details, names of key personnel, or details of jobs.

Job hunting directories

These directories contain details of companies which have graduate jobs available. They are all available from Student Services or online:

- Prospects directory
- GET directory
- Target Jobs: www.targetjobs.co.uk

Current British directories

Having trouble finding a directory for your area of interest? This book lists directories available in the UK for specific job sectors. It is available from Student Services or the University Library.

Who Owns Whom

This book gives details of ownership relations between companies. You can find out if the company you are applying to is part of a larger company or the owner of other businesses. Available from the University Library.

Yellow pages

If you are having trouble finding companies that offer a certain product or work in a certain area, try the Yellow Pages. Full listings across the UK are available online at www.yell.com, or www.thomsonlocal.com.

Databases:

There are several databases of company information which are produced by expert researchers and give you an overview of a company's activities. These are available through the University Library.

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Sector information:

Information about the company's sector will give you an idea about the issues that the company might be facing now and its opportunities for the future.

Prospects sector information

The Prospects website: www.prospects.ac.uk contains links to the Prospects Sector Briefings, which cover 28 different work sectors. Information on each sector includes market size, future trends, and opportunities available.

Resources in the news:

Newspapers

The **Financial Times** is a dedicated business paper but most newspapers will have a business section that you can look at for the latest information on companies and markets. "Broadsheet" newspapers, e.g. **Guardian, Telegraph, Independent, Times**, are generally better informed (it is up to you which you choose to read!). Most also have content available online.

Sector magazines

Practically every type of work has its own magazine; it is worth finding a relevant one and reading it regularly for sector news. If you don't know which magazines are suitable, ask in the university or public library.

Online news sources

Consider looking at:

- BBC Business News: www.bbc.co.uk/business
- Google News: news.google.co.uk - type in the name of a company to search online news sources

Researching Employers

Why research employers?

There are two important reasons to research employers: to **decide** whether to apply for a job in a particular company, or to **impress** employers by showing knowledge and dedication. The approach you take to your research will depend on which of these reasons applies to you. But don't worry – you won't have to do all the work twice over! Every piece of information you gather adds to your overall picture of the company, and can help you to impress the company and decide whether they are right for you.

Need more help? Just ASK!

Call in for initial advice at a Help Zone "Drop In" in Student Services, who can 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

Tips for researching employers

1. Look for information on the company from as many different sources as you can. Get lots of different opinions so that you are considering various elements of the company's environment.
2. Online tools are particularly effective for this sort of research. Try a Google search on the company's name, or search for news about the company in an online newspaper archive (see "Resources" section).
3. There are books and directories in Student Services that can help you decide if a company is right for you. Some of these focus on a particular area of company culture – like equal opportunities – and some rate the environment overall based on feedback from the employees.
4. Use the company's website, but with caution - remember, they want to make a good impression on you. Read their graduate pages thoroughly and look for facts about what they are offering, e.g. training programmes or benefits.

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ADVICE SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE
Student Services

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

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ADVICE SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE
Student Services

Impressing the employer

Finding out about the company you are applying to means that you know exactly how to present yourself to make the best impression with them. Your knowledge of the company will also show that you care about getting the job and about working for this particular employer.

You are trying to get answers to as many questions as you can about the company. These can include:

- What products and/or services does the company sell?
- Who are its clients?
- Who are its competitors?
- What is the financial position of the company?
- Are there any changes coming up for the company, such as mergers, takeovers, new initiatives?
- What is happening in the company's sector that could affect them?
- What image is the company trying to present?
- What is the mission statement, or company vision?
- What key competencies will you be expected to demonstrate in order to fit into the company culture?

Tips

1. The best approach for this type of research is to look for high-quality information from sources that you can trust (see "Resources", overleaf, for some ideas). You won't impress the company if your information about them is wrong.
2. Your most important source of information for this type of research is the company itself. Read through their website and any other publicity (for example annual reports) that they produce. You will find out how the company wants to be perceived, which gives you valuable clues about how to present yourself to get the job.
3. If you can't find enough information from the company, contact them and ask them to send you some.
4. Financial newspapers and sector magazines (see "Resources" section overleaf) will help you get an idea of what is going on in a company's sector; they are also good sources of news about the company. Try to read the last few issues to build up a view of what is happening in the sector.
5. The university or public libraries often can give you access to databases of company information. Ask them!

Company Culture

The culture of the company you work with can make a great difference to how much you enjoy working there. Spend some time researching a company before you apply, so that you do not waste your time applying to a place you won't like!

The questions you ask will depend on what is important to you; but examples may include:

- Is the company committed to equality and diversity?
- How much will I get paid?
- Does the company promote from within?
- Is the company an ethical business?
- Is the company big or small?
- How formal is the company environment?

Where can I find help?

Books and Directories

There are a number of books and employer directories available within Student Services which can inform and enable your research.

Remember, you can speak to a Careers Consultant if you have questions about your research or if you want to discuss what you have found out about the company.

University Library

Your university library gives you access to a range of information and services including company databases, specialist magazines, directories, and staff who can help you find what you need. Don't be afraid to ask!

Public libraries

Birmingham Central Library provides a Business Insight service that can help you find company information.

Also please see our "Resources" section overleaf

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