

THE OXFORD GUIDE TO CAREERS **2023**



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Developing career ideas



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Application essentials



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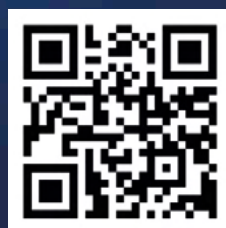
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WELCOME TO THE OXFORD GUIDE TO CAREERS 2023



Jonathan Black,
Director of the Careers Service

After two years of generally remote working, disrupted lives, and organisations trying to work out the best New Ways of Working, it's exciting and wonderful to be returning to normal. We've all missed being with other people, having creative working sessions, and the chance to meet employers and colleagues in person.

In Oxford we're looking forward to hosting live panel discussions, in-person careers fairs, and the chance to travel to internships all over the world. We want to retain the good parts of the last two years, as we've learned we can achieve even more, meet many more of you, save you time, and still provide all the skills training that employers want. We'll give you the choice as many of our 1:1s, insight talks and so on will be offered online.

Employers are in transition, so do stay adaptable and open to new opportunities. Focus on developing your set of transferable skills – like teamwork, business awareness, leadership, and problem solving – that



every employer is seeking when they recruit. You can develop your employability skills in our programmes and also in activities in many other places including college, department, student societies, sports, volunteering, and the creative arts.

We have written this Guide for any and every Oxford undergraduate or postgraduate, artist or scientist, who each usually have one of three questions:

- Where do I start?
- How do I gain more skills to improve my chances (especially in this time of change)?
- Where do I find jobs and internships?

You'll find answers to these questions, and many more in this Guide: from 'How do I write a winning CV?' to 'What does it take to be a solicitor?' and from 'How do I get experience in the museum and heritage sector?' to 'How do I meet a careers adviser for a 1:1 meeting?'.

This Guide is just one of the many free services you can access from the University Careers Service. Other services you can use include:

- To get started:
 - Book a confidential 1:1 (there are over 5,000 online every year to choose from).

- Visit in-person careers fairs.
- Meet some employers in person and online.
- Arrange to have some information interviews with alumni.
- Log onto or attend one of the many 'Introduction to...' talks we run.
- To gain more skills:
 - Take part in the Oxford Strategy Challenge or The Student Consultancy – online or in person.
 - Get work experience through an Oxford-exclusive summer internship.
 - Attend Insight into Teaching/Medicine/Business/Publishing/Academia/Pharma programmes.
- To find jobs and internships:
 - Log onto CareerConnect.
 - Sign up for automatic alerts about new jobs in your industries of choice.
 - Connect with the Internship Office to explore our Summer Internship Programme and Micro-Internship Programme.

We look forward to meeting you in person or online at our fairs and events – both while you are here and for the rest of your career.

In-person OXFORD UNIVERSITY CAREERS FAIR



📅 Thursday, 6 October 2022 | 11:00-15:00
📍 Examination Schools, OX1 4BG

Meet recruiters, explore graduate roles, internships and full-time jobs, and find out about different career options at Oxford University's careers fair for all sectors.



www.careers.ox.ac.uk/oucfc

THE OXFORD GUIDE TO CAREERS 2023

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www.youtube.com/user/OxfordCareersService

www.facebook.com/internshipoffice

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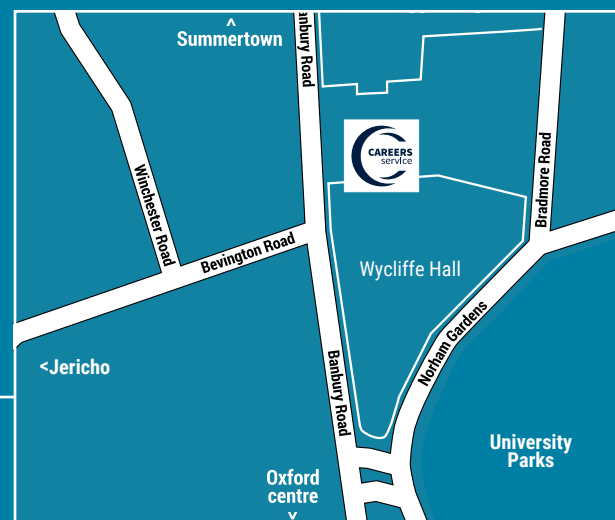


The Careers Service provides support and impartial advice on any careers-related topic. Use this Guide to get started, and see our website for in-depth guidance: www.careers.ox.ac.uk

56 Banbury Road,
Oxford OX2 6PA

The Careers Service offers a full programme of support and activities both online and in person.

See www.careers.ox.ac.uk for details.



Daily

Advice appointments: Confidential and impartial one-to-one meetings with a careers adviser held online, on the phone or in person at the Careers Service, with extra sessions hosted in departments and colleges. Book in advance on CareerConnect.

Weekly

Newsletter: The easiest way to keep up to date during term, our newsletter hits your inbox each week with details of upcoming events and opportunities.

Talks and workshops: We frequently host talks on specific career options and run skills workshops, many with invited external speakers. Most are open to all students, with some tailored to master's students, DPhil students or research staff.

Termly

TOSCA: Work in a team to help local organisations solve real business problems and develop your employability skills: includes consultancy training.

Skills sessions: Workshops and presentations on a specific topic, such as psychometric tests or interviews, led by an employer or a careers adviser. All advertised on CareerConnect.

Micro-internships: Two- to five-day voluntary, full-time work placements with a host organisation.

Annually

Career fairs: Meet employers and alumni to learn about and explore some of the options available. Starting early in Michaelmas term, we run at least eight sector fairs, whether online or in person!

Opportunities: Nearly 10,000 vacancies and internships are advertised every year on CareerConnect.

The Summer Internship Programme: Hundreds of work experience opportunities in many sectors and countries exclusively for Oxford students.

Plus...

Insight into: Short programmes to help you develop your knowledge and understanding of a specific field, including Insights into Teaching, Medicine, Business, Publishing and Academia.

Recruiter in residence and mock interviews

Meet employers one-to-one and learn about their sector or organisation, get advice on your CV and applications or have a practice interview. Times and topics advertised on CareerConnect.

The Careers Service and COVID-19

In 2022 and 2023, all our usual workshops, programmes and appointments will go ahead. Over the last 2 years of the pandemic we have, more than ever, been reviewing how we bring our careers services to you. Going forward we are planning to run some of our events, such as careers fairs and workshops, in person while others will predominantly be online. Some events may be hybrid – with options to attend in person or online! We plan to be out in departments and colleges too wherever this is possible. All the details you need will be included on the event information when you book your place on CareerConnect in the usual way. We are staying up to date with the latest employer news so that we can pass useful information on to students and alumni via our website and weekly newsletter.

CareerConnect

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/careerconnect

Accessed with your Oxford Single Sign-on, CareerConnect is the password-protected area of the Careers Service website that provides dedicated services enabling you to:

- Book appointments.
 - Browse our calendar of events.
 - Book your place on workshops and employer-led events.
 - Search our extensive database of job vacancies and internships.
 - Access additional resources to which we subscribe on your behalf, including practice tests.
- ... and much more!

What's next? What's first?

Take a breath, find your bearings and think about what would most help you move forward.

Most students will explore career options, including further study, alongside their studies. This Guide is for everyone considering what to do at the end of their current course, and will help students who have a clear focus to sharpen their career objectives and add polish to their applications. It summarises our guidance and signposts further resources to explore options, make decisions, and work purposefully towards a successful future.

Consider the following questions about your possible next steps and mark where you currently stand on the grid on the opposite page.

- How clear are your ideas?
- How well do you understand your core interests and motivations?
- And, do you have sufficient understanding and experience to make a sound decision?



Career readiness grid

1 Make a start

Whether your next move is to explore a little and try something new, or to reflect on your personal preferences and start planning, the important thing is to make a start.

- Attend a career fair or company events.
- Use career planning tools to generate ideas and a focus.
- Get involved with a student society.
- Sign up for some workshops.

The pointers opposite (for students in Quadrants 2 and 3) indicate more specifically what's needed to move 'down' and 'right' on the Career Readiness Grid.

Remember, it's never too late to start, and the Careers Service is here to support you all the way.

2 I have a focus but I'm not sure...

...how to show companies I am a strong candidate;
...if it is truly right for me.

Whether your focus is a logical next step from your degree, or comes from career planning (or even a hunch), getting some experience will help you both to be a stronger candidate and understand better why a role, organisation or further study option is right for you.

The most powerful way to find out if you enjoy something is to try it. See the guidance on [Gaining Experience and Developing Skills](#) for advice and ideas about opportunities to 'learn by doing'. Consider:

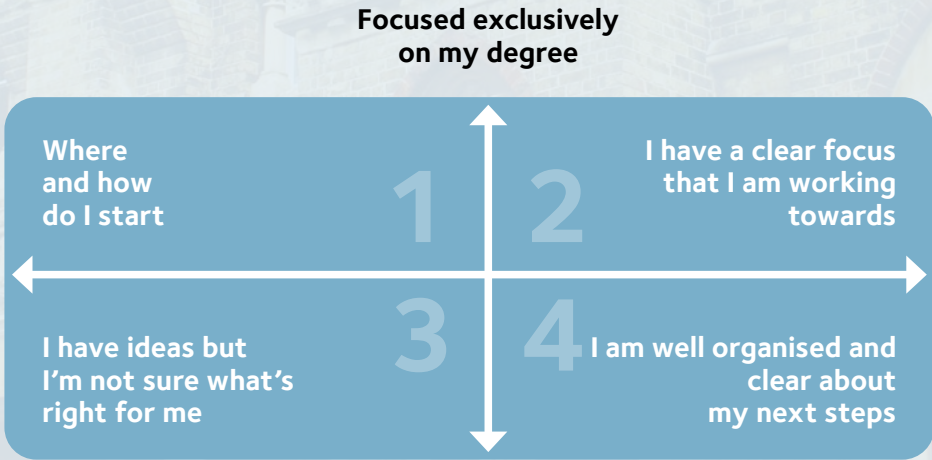
- Taking on a similar role in your extracurricular activities (for example, for a student society).
- Doing an internship or volunteering.
- Participating in [the Careers Service's employability programmes](#).
- Work-shadowing or short-term work experience.

Use career fairs and company-led events to talk with alumni and others working in specific fields to test any assumptions, deepen your understanding and extend your thinking. When combined with experience you may identify additional ideas to develop into your plan B and plan C as a back-up to your primary focus.

If you have doubts or questions, book an appointment with a careers adviser on CareerConnect for an unbiased conversation.

Plot your progress!

Unsure what I want to do



3 I enjoy lots of different things: how can I choose between them?

Oxford students often have potential to succeed in many different roles and fields and, yes, it can be difficult to choose!

If you are already exploring options and taking on different roles to build skills and experiences, see the section on [Developing Your Career Ideas](#) for guidance and tools such as Career Weaver to help you identify your pattern of interests and motivations. Reflect on your experiences and try to identify any themes that are important to you:

- Why do you choose to do these activities?
- Which skills do you use?
- What do you enjoy doing most and why?
- How important to you are the people, relationships and outcomes?

Once you understand what kind of work and outcomes offer you intrinsic satisfaction, further research through the web and 'in person' into industries, roles and organisations will help you to create focus and make decisions.

If you are struggling to narrow your focus, a confidential chat with a careers adviser can help you gain clarity.

4 Organised and clear about next steps

If you have placed yourself in this bottom right quadrant (you may already be applying and interviewing), reflecting on how you developed your focus, examining any assumptions and aligning your choices to your core motivations can:

- reinforce decisions made;
- strengthen applications, by improving the evidence you present of your skills and interests;
- help identify viable alternatives.

Additional support can still be helpful, especially if your early applications aren't working as you'd like. Attend workshops, company events and chat with a careers adviser to hone your approach and consider what plan B and plan C might look like.

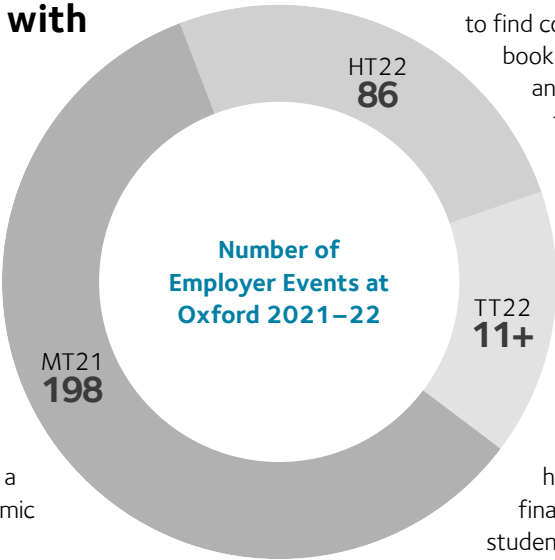
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www.careerweaver.ox.ac.uk
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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/i-am-deciding-on-a-plan
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/i-have-a-clear-plan

Careers term by term

Graduate recruitment runs year-round and there are always new positions being advertised. However, many of the biggest recruiters link their cycles to the academic year, with full-time positions for finalists advertised from late summer, for entry the following year.

Every year, hundreds of organisations visit Oxford specifically to meet you – to start a conversation. However, our academic terms are NOT created equally.



Careers fairs

The following fairs will be run in person. [See our website and CareerConnect for details.](#)

- **Oxford University Careers Fair (for all sectors):** Thursday 6 October, 11.00 – 15.00, Exam Schools
- **Finance and Management Consultancy Fair:** Friday 7 October, 11.00 – 15.00, Exam Schools
- **Science, Engineering and Technology Fair:** Saturday 22 October, 10.30 – 13.00, Exam Schools

- **Law Fair:** Saturday 15 October, 10.30 – 1.00, Exam Schools
- **Careers in Computing Fair:** Michaelmas Term, see our website for dates
- **Jobs for Mathematicians Fair:** Michaelmas Term, see our website for dates

Earlier this year, we ran the Careers Conference for Researchers in Hilary term and the Summer Careers Fair in Trinity term. Dates for 2023 yet to be confirmed.

Michaelmas term

Michaelmas term is the time to talk to firms that interest you. In fact, we run eight of our annual career fairs in weeks 1 to 3, and this term will account for almost 75% of all the company presentations and company visits coordinated by the Careers Service in the whole year.

At our career fairs and company presentations you can meet:

- Recent alumni working in areas you might be interested in – people who were in your shoes not so long ago.
- Recruiters who can tell you more about the firm, graduate roles and training, and the recruitment process.
- Senior managers and business leaders (many will also be Oxford alumni) who can provide a wider perspective on the organisation and graduate career trajectories.

Use the Events Calendar on CareerConnect to find company presentations and to book places on relevant workshops and skills sessions offered through the Careers Service.

Finalists and one-year master’s students

Full-time jobs and graduate schemes
Applications will already have opened during the summer at most large graduate recruiters. If you have not already started, finalists and one-year master’s students should move quickly to:

- Understand the application processes for different firms and be sure to note and hit any deadlines.
 - Beware! Some sectors close as early as the end of October (notably banking and investment, the Civil Service Fast Stream and management consultancy) and some have ‘rolling recruitment’, filling vacancies as and when students apply.
- Other firms will open applications during this term and into Hilary term. Monitor careers sites, set email alerts and follow target companies on social media to make sure you hear first about new opportunities.

Plan enough time to make high quality applications: CVs, cover letters and application forms take time to complete well and should be tailored for each and every application.

[Read our advice on crafting good applications in this later section of the Guide.](#)

Be ready for the recruitment process to move quickly once you have applied. Online testing, interviews and assessment centres can all follow within a few weeks, and offers may be made before Christmas.

Consider booking a one-to-one discussion with a careers adviser and find relevant workshops and skills sessions advertised on our Events Calendar on CareerConnect.

Considering further study?

Research possibilities *now* to understand application processes and funding options.

- Popular courses can fill quickly, so consider applying early.
- Research deadlines to apply for grants and bursaries too.

[Read more about bursaries and grants in our further study article here.](#)

More than one year to completion

Internships, spring weeks and insight days

Organisations with substantial graduate recruitment programmes are increasingly interested in meeting penultimate-year students, freshers and second years on a four-year course. Use careers fairs to ask about internships and ‘taster programmes’, and when applications will be opening.

Some companies now start to accept applications for internships and insight days towards the end of Michaelmas, with many more opening in the new year. The recruitment processes often mirror those for full-time positions because success in the internship can lead to an offer for a full-time position the following year.

First years and second years on a four-year programme should note that places for taster days and spring weeks are limited and can fill in less than a week. Be sure to sign up for alerts if you intend to apply: the prize not only includes first-hand experience of the organisation but quite often a fast-track to paid internships the following year.

Hilary term

Finalists and graduating master’s students who have made good applications should expect January and February to be busy with interviews. Continue to target new graduate programmes and seek advertised positions – you may also find attractive internships to apply for. Similarly, those targeting further study should continue to make applications to courses and funding bodies.

Hilary Term is also a key time to start seeking internship and summer opportunities. The advice above about applying for full-time positions all holds true here. Some firms that recruit graduates only open their summer internship places to penultimate-year students, and these can lead to full-time offers for interns that do well. But also look out for other opportunities including our own Summer Internship Programme, which offers all Oxford students exclusive internship opportunities, many of them in sectors where internships can be hard to find, or overseas.

Keep abreast of the skills sessions, workshops and seminars offered at the Careers Service via the Events Calendar on CareerConnect.

Trinity term

Be sure to keep on track academically and invest enough time to do yourself justice in finals or any exams that you have.

The big graduate schemes form only a small proportion of the graduate employment market and the number of vacancies offered every month through CareerConnect remains fairly constant through the year, so there are always new opportunities. However, keep an eye open as some graduate schemes re-open this term to fill any remaining places. You can also apply to firms that have year-round rolling recruitment.

The Careers Service continues to offer workshops and careers advisers continue with confidential one-to-one discussions during Trinity and the long vacation, on Skype, telephone or virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams.



Careers year by year



Finalists and one-year masters'

Develop your plan and extend your research

- It is never too late to start thinking about your career. Make a commitment to make a start and give yourself the best chance of success. Turn to the [Developing Your Career Ideas section](#) and make plans to talk to a careers adviser.
- If you already have clear goals, or even fuzzy ideas, research online and meet employers at fairs and at company presentations. See the [Events Calendar on CareerConnect](#) for dates and to book your place.
- Research options of further study and apply early to popular programmes.

Make applications and prepare for interviews

- Understand your motivations, your strengths and be ready to support your applications with evidence as discussed in [the Application Essentials guidance](#).
- Find the [workshops you need on our Events Calendar on CareerConnect](#).
- Polish your application skills and seek advice from a careers adviser if you want a second opinion on your CV, cover letters or application form.
- Submit applications for both your plans A and B (and plan C ...) in parallel.
- Be ready for online tests and interviews, some of these happen straight after you have submitted your application.

It's not too late to develop your skills and experience

- Continue to be fully involved in student life through societies, volunteering and extra-curricular activities.

- Consider participating in [our skills programmes and Insight programmes](#) if you haven't already done so.
- Apply to our own [Summer Internship Programme](#) from January onwards.

Network and build your visibility

- Meet contacts and alumni at events and reach out to them.
- [Use LinkedIn and social media as research tools, to follow targeted companies and make yourself easier to find.](#)
- Attend the cringe-free networking workshop run by the Careers Service each term, bookable on CareerConnect.
- For some sectors – such as creative careers, journalism, publishing, charities – networking and speculative approaches can be important to uncover opportunities: thinking six months ahead is key.

Penultimate year

Start to focus on what you might do after graduating

- Review your career preferences and interests, or start your self-assessment. [The Developing Your Career Ideas section will help.](#) Follow the advice to finalists above – the same rules apply!
- Plan, research and develop your CV – attend relevant workshops organised by the Careers Service.
- Attend the relevant careers fairs. Get into your job-market research and look for application deadlines – be aware of deadlines as early as October for consulting, banking and the Civil Service among others.
- Apply for summer internships, including those

advertised from January onwards as part of the [Careers Service Summer Internship Programme](#).

Talk to people and network

- Find out about their jobs, their companies and the sector at the many careers fairs and company presentations held in Oxford or virtually. Most people remember what it is like being in your position and want to help.
- Use LinkedIn to contact alumni whose work interests you.
- Get advice and tips from final-year students. Ask about their summer internships and for introductions to their colleagues to learn more.
- Plan how to make the most of your summer vacation, and make speculative applications to find work experience with organisations of interest that don't offer formal internships.

Considering further study?

- Talk with tutors, supervisors and research students in your field.
- Ask about working as a research assistant during vacations.

Build your skills and experience

- Get elected to a position in a society, common room or club and make a difference by organising an event, running the show or starting something new – all will develop your skills and add value to your applications.
- Sign up for workshops and skills sessions at the Careers Service or [join one of our employability programmes](#).
- Try out different ideas, perhaps via our micro-internships, work-shadowing or work experience. Volunteer with local charities or through the [Oxford Hub](#).

More than two years from completion

Get involved and enjoy Oxford

- Join and get involved in societies, clubs and a social life alongside your studies.

Start thinking

- It's never too soon to start thinking about your post-university plans.
- Develop some awareness of your career-related preferences and interests with some self-assessment exercises, such as [Career Weaver and other tools in](#)

[the Developing Your Career Ideas section.](#)

- [Visit the Careers Service website to start researching what you could do and check out your options.](#)
- Talk to a careers adviser if you need help with your plans or ideas for how to get started.

Start to develop your skills

- Review the skills you can evidence already. Consider where and how you can develop these further, and which new skills you might develop.
- Review your ideas by following the guidance in the [Gaining Experience and Developing Skills section](#).
- Support your college or department with their outreach programmes.
- Get involved with an Oxford SU campaign or a charity fundraising event.
- [Volunteer with Oxford Hub and local charities in term-time and during the vacation – a great way of gaining skills, meeting people and making a difference.](#)
- Participate in staff/student liaison committees within your college or department.
- Refresh your old CV; attend a CV workshop.

Gain some experience

- Look for, and apply to, insight days, spring weeks and work-shadowing opportunities in different sectors for inspiration. Places are limited and application windows can close within days, so register for notifications and be ready to apply as early as October.
- Apply for vacation work to earn money and gain experience and skills. Every opportunity can provide meaningful experience: bar and retail work can develop your customer focus, teamwork skills and insights into what makes a successful business.
- Visit the vacancy database on CareerConnect to look for part-time and vacation opportunities.
- Apply for a summer placement on the [Summer Internship Programme from January for overseas internships, and from mid-February for internships in the UK.](#)
- Start to build your network, and to learn about sectors and organisations.



DEVELOPING YOUR CAREER IDEAS

With hundreds of possible directions, many students find it hard to decide what they want to do after graduating, and may even find the process quite daunting. This chapter can help you:

- make a start
- identify careers that might appeal to you, and
- choose between them.

Five steps for better career planning

Take time to understand what you enjoy most and what helps you succeed. Combine these insights with research into your preferred options to make decisions and take action.

1 What you do and what you like best...

Use Oxford's Career Weaver app to explore what interests and motivates you most.

Reflect on past experiences that have given you a sense of enjoyment, achievement or real satisfaction.

Consider how you decided which subject to study and which elements of your current studies most engage you.

Examine your extra-curricular activities and ask yourself:

- What appeals to you about your chosen activities?
- What gives you most satisfaction?
- What do you learn or gain from your extra-curricular activities?
- Why do you continue with this activity? Or, why did you stop?

Link these questions to the prompts in the table on the next page to begin to better understand your personal pattern of career interests and motivations.

Your strengths and skills are also important and you can develop existing skills and learn new ones whilst at University. Start with the eight employability skills listed below and consider what you are good at and what you really enjoy doing. Think about your range of skills:

- Where have you developed and used them?
- How do you like to use and apply them, both in your studies and extra-curricular activities?

See [Generating Career Ideas at www.careers.ox.ac.uk/generating-career-ideas](http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/generating-career-ideas) to learn more about using Career Weaver and a variety of additional tools and ideas you can use, including:

- Psychometric tools based on short questionnaires, including [Prospects Career Planner](#)
- Suggestions for other tools to look deeper (for example, CareerRadar; Strengths Profile) and books like *Build Your Own Rainbow* and *The Squiggly Career* which offer ideas and resources.
- Book an appointment with a careers adviser to discuss any questions you have and for advice on how to interpret and apply the insights gained.

What is your personal pattern?

Our Career Weaver tool helps you to think about what you value most in your working environment. It provides a rich variety of short exercises to stimulate and structure your thinking and helps you to identify and describe:

- What you love.
- What you are good at.
- Why you do what you choose to do.

Use your SSO to open your personal account at www.careerweaver.ox.ac.uk and begin to explore, define and explain your most important drivers and best examples.



Core employability skills

The next chapter defines the 'transferable' employability skills listed below and reviews many options to practise and develop them.

- Business awareness
- Communication
- Creativity
- Initiative
- Leadership
- Planning
- Self-management
- Teamwork

In addition to these core employability skills, some jobs require specific skills such as languages, computing and IT, or even specific laboratory skills.

Style of work	Nice to have	Important	Essential
Analytical (researching and investigating, numerical work)			
Collaborative style of working			
Creativity and generating ideas			
Enterprise and business			
Managing and leading people			
Social and caring roles			
Solving problems			
Supporting and advising people			
Theoretical and conceptual (working with ideas)			
Working with defined processes			
Working with technology			

Motivations	Nice to have	Important	Essential
Altruism or benefiting society			
Challenge			
Connection (belonging and friendship)			
Empowerment (autonomy)			
Financial reward			
Fun			
Influence			
Job security			
Learning and personal growth			
Personal recognition			
Positioning (for the next career move)			
Prestige or status			
Progression (scope for rapid advancement)			
Responsibility (for delivery or people or things)			
Variety			


2 Exploring possible occupations and creating your ‘long list’

As an Oxford graduate from any discipline it is possible to work in many industries. In the UK, the majority of graduate roles do not require a specific degree and many organisations seek to attract a diverse pool of candidates. This opens a world of possibilities and creates choices for you.

Start to build your ‘long list’ of possibilities, considering both the industry sector(s) and the kinds of roles you might be interested in: remember, similar roles can often be found across different sectors; whether it’s design work, financial management, planning, managing or communicating.

It might be important for you to use the knowledge gained from your degree, or find a related role where you can still draw on that knowledge. Alternatively, you may choose to apply the transferable skills that you have in a totally new area.

- Ideas and tactics to build your long list include:
- Review roles suggested by an online career-planning tool.
 - Explore what alumni from your subject chose to do:
 - [Review the Graduate Outcomes Survey on the careers website.](#)
 - [www.prospects.ac.uk](#) has pages on ‘What can I do with my degree?’.
 - Examine the careers of 250,000+ Oxford alumni via the University of Oxford page on LinkedIn.
 - Browse jobs boards, including CareerConnect – what catches your eye?
 - Think about careers related to your interests and extra-curricular activities.
 - Dream a little, envisioning your future in an ideal world...
 - What are you doing? What skills are you using?
 - What happens? What results do you deliver?
 - Where are you working – an office/outside/at home?
 - Who are you working with, and how?



It’s OK not to know what to do and it’s OK to take your time to find it. If you find something you really want and truly believe you’re suited to then you have a much better chance of getting the job and of enjoying it.

— Rachel Ballard, Music, New College, 2016

[Read Rachel’s full profile](#)

- What does an ideal working day/week look like? Each time you find an idea of interest to you, consider the specific skills and attributes typically required for that role and how strongly these match your preferences. Also, look for related or adjacent fields to increase the options you are considering.

3 Researching your options

Researching industries, individual organisations, and roles helps you make better choices. It also lays the foundation for successful applications because it helps you:

- To be clear that you’d be happy doing the job!
- To signal why you are motivated to do the job with that specific organisation.
- To impress recruiters with insightful questions and an awareness of issues or trends that may affect their market.

Research: get first-hand experience

First-hand experience allows you to explore whether you have the ability and interest to perform well in a role. You also learn more about the organisation, its people and working culture, which helps you to evaluate whether you are likely to enjoy working there.

The next chapter provides a fuller overview of the options available, which include not only internships and work experience but also a variety of shorter opportunities to visit organisations. These programmes can help you to:

- Learn about an industry and a role, and the organisation and its culture.
- Develop transferable skills and a track record that provide evidence of your ability and motivation.
- Secure an offer to the next stage:
 - Insight programmes may provide a fast track to an organisation’s internship programme.
 - Leading employers report that nearly a third of their graduate intake will have undertaken work experience with them, and this rises to more than two-thirds in some sectors.

Research: other methods

Read widely to research the industries and organisations you are targeting. Start with the following ideas:

- [Read our industry sector introductions in this Guide.](#)
- Dig deeper with over 50 in-depth sector briefings and the resources we have listed on our website: [www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sectors-occupations](#).
- Company websites, particularly their career pages, often provide lots of information, including:
 - Profiles of recent graduates.
 - Information about their graduate programmes.



- Tips and practice materials for the recruitment processes.
- Professional bodies' websites.
- Free resources at the Careers Service:
 - Podcasts of relevant panel discussions.
 - Search for GoinGlobal (country guides) and practise psychometric tests on our website.
- Join relevant LinkedIn groups to keep up to date with current topics in the sector.
- Use your Single Sign-On and Bodleian Library membership for free subscriptions to *The Financial Times*, *The Economist* and plenty of leading newspapers and industry journals.

Research: talk to people

To go beyond the information on an organisation's website, talk to people – lots of people – about what they do, what they like and don't like, and ask for their advice.

Read the guidance on how to find and network with people who are able to share their experiences and offer relevant advice and insights into the roles that interest you most.

- During term time, particularly in Michaelmas term, take advantage of the many chances to meet and talk with company representatives – check the Careers Service Events Calendar on CareerConnect.
- Attend our career fairs and industry panel discussions to hear from and meet recent graduates and recruiters.
 - Attend company presentations and events to meet

- senior managers, alumni and recruiters.
- Talk informally with family, alumni, and others to understand their careers and what their organisations are really like:
 - Talk to friends and finalists returning from internships or work placements.
 - Use LinkedIn to find alumni you might approach directly.
 - Join relevant societies to find like-minded students and more events – many with employers.
 - Speak to a careers adviser who has a particular interest in that sector.

4 Narrowing down your options

For many people, career planning is an ongoing process, revisited and revised as they gain experience, learn and grow. The choices you make now are just the first steps; changing career direction in the years after graduation is quite common.

However, it is important to engage. Make a decision rather than 'drift' into a career or further study simply because it seems within reach. To weigh up the 'pros and cons' of different choices, analyse your options and listen to your intuitions, with the aim of identifying which roles best match up with your key criteria.

One option is to build a 'decision-making grid', where you weigh the relative importance of your key criteria and score each career option independently. In the worked example (opposite), it seems that option Y is least attractive – and could be discarded – but it might be worth pursuing both options X and Z as attractive choices.

To distinguish between options X and Z more fully, it may be necessary to do further research or add additional factors to the grid, or use an alternative approach. The Careers Service advice on How to Make a Career Decision provides further details on the 'decision-making grid' and three other decision-making strategies: the D.E.C.I.D.E.S. model, Force-field Analysis, and Visualisation.

At this stage, you do not need to narrow your choice to a single option. In fact, we recommend you work in parallel on your 'plan B' (and perhaps 'plan C') in case your first choice does not work out. For every option you follow, though, allow yourself enough time to undertake sufficient research and to make high quality applications.

Example of a decision-making grid

Decision factor	Weighting	Option X	Option Y	Option Z
Staying in Oxford	2	2×2 = 4	2×2 = 4	2×1 = 2
Creative job	3	3×1 = 3	3×0 = 0	3×1 = 3
Learning: quality of training	3	3×1 = 3	3×1 = 3	3×2 = 6
Total		10	7	11

Weighting of criterion:
3 = important, 2 = quite important, 1 = less important.

Criterion satisfied in this occupation/role:
2 = almost ideal, 1 = quite good, 0 = not met at all.

5 Moving forward from your decisions

- Allow plenty of time for this and in particular:
- Plan ahead and attend events listed on our Events Calendar on CareerConnect. These include:
 - Career fairs.
 - Company presentations.
 - Skills workshops and training sessions.
 - Ensure you receive the Careers Service's weekly newsletter.
 - Save searches on CareerConnect to receive job alerts.
 - Check application deadlines for your top choices and begin to plan your applications.
 - Bookmark target firms' careers pages, set up email alerts for vacancy notices, and follow them on LinkedIn and social media.
 - Continue to research your target organisations and roles.
 - Check your own online presence, particularly your visibility on social media.

Researching employers' diversity and inclusion policies

It is often difficult to know whether an employer is genuine about recruiting applicants from diverse backgrounds and not just 'ticking a box'. There are several indicators that will help you to decide whether a recruiter is truly proactive. If you are interested in specific recruiters, research their diversity and inclusion policy and practice, talk with their representatives at careers fairs and question them as to what their organisation does to recruit and retain staff from diverse backgrounds.



- Indicators of the strength of their commitment to recruiting from diverse backgrounds can include:
- They are a 'Disability Confident' employer. Look out for the government-endorsed logo below on their promotional material and vacancy adverts. This means the employer has made a commitment to employing disabled people.
 - They are accredited as a 'Mindful Employer', indicating that they are extremely supportive of employees with mental health issues.
 - They have diversity networks and buddy schemes, such as Gender Balance Network and Carers Schemes.
 - They partner with and provide internships for people from under-represented backgrounds through organisations such as SEO (Sponsors for Educational Opportunity), EmployAbility, The Windsor Fellowship, and Rare Recruitment.
 - They score highly on indicators such as the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index due to their work ethos and practices.

There is more advice on equality and diversity in the application process on p.50.

“ You might be tired of hearing it, but you've probably got more free time on your hands now than you ever will. Use it wisely! Start figuring out what you like and dislike (just as helpful), and to start building the foundations that will give you the best shot of landing that dream role.

— Issah Abdul-Moomin, PPE,
Lady Margaret Hall, 2014

Ethical Networking

The phrase ‘it’s who you know, not what you know’ makes us a little uncomfortable as we put more emphasis on widening participation, diversity and inclusion.

Surely we want to live in a world where people are hired based on a diligent and transparent process which considers:

- Formal qualifications.
- Size and scope of relevant achievements that prove skills and strengths.
- Sector and organisation knowledge that proves enthusiasm and fit with the role.

So what are the ethical reasons for networking?

- To become aware of opportunities: it is said that 60% of jobs are never advertised (‘the hidden job market’), for example, a start-up with no time nor HR department.
- To understand what really goes on inside organisations so that you choose the right opportunities to apply for.
- To uncover the language and terminology of the organisation so that you can make your achievements sound as relevant as possible and talk like an insider to establish fit and enthusiasm.

Beyond the objectives of ethical networking, we need to approach the subject with emotional intelligence, people do not like being sold to or taken advantage of:

- ‘As you walk into a room to network: don’t prepare to sell yourself; prepare to understand people and

“Students ask me what it takes to be successful and there are many factors. But most important is to go out into the world and make lots of friends and no enemies. It is never worth winning an argument and losing a friend. Bake cakes, buy beers, socialise at lunchtime. The more you can turn your tutor or supervisor or other senior people into sponsors who support you and push you forward for things, the more successful you will be.

— Dr Mike Moss, Careers Adviser

how they may be helped’ – Maurice McCartney, entrepreneur-in-residence, Oxford Careers Service.

- ‘Networking is about conversation and generosity,’ adds Dr Rachel Bray, Research Staff Hub lead and former careers adviser at Oxford University.
- ‘You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you,’ says Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

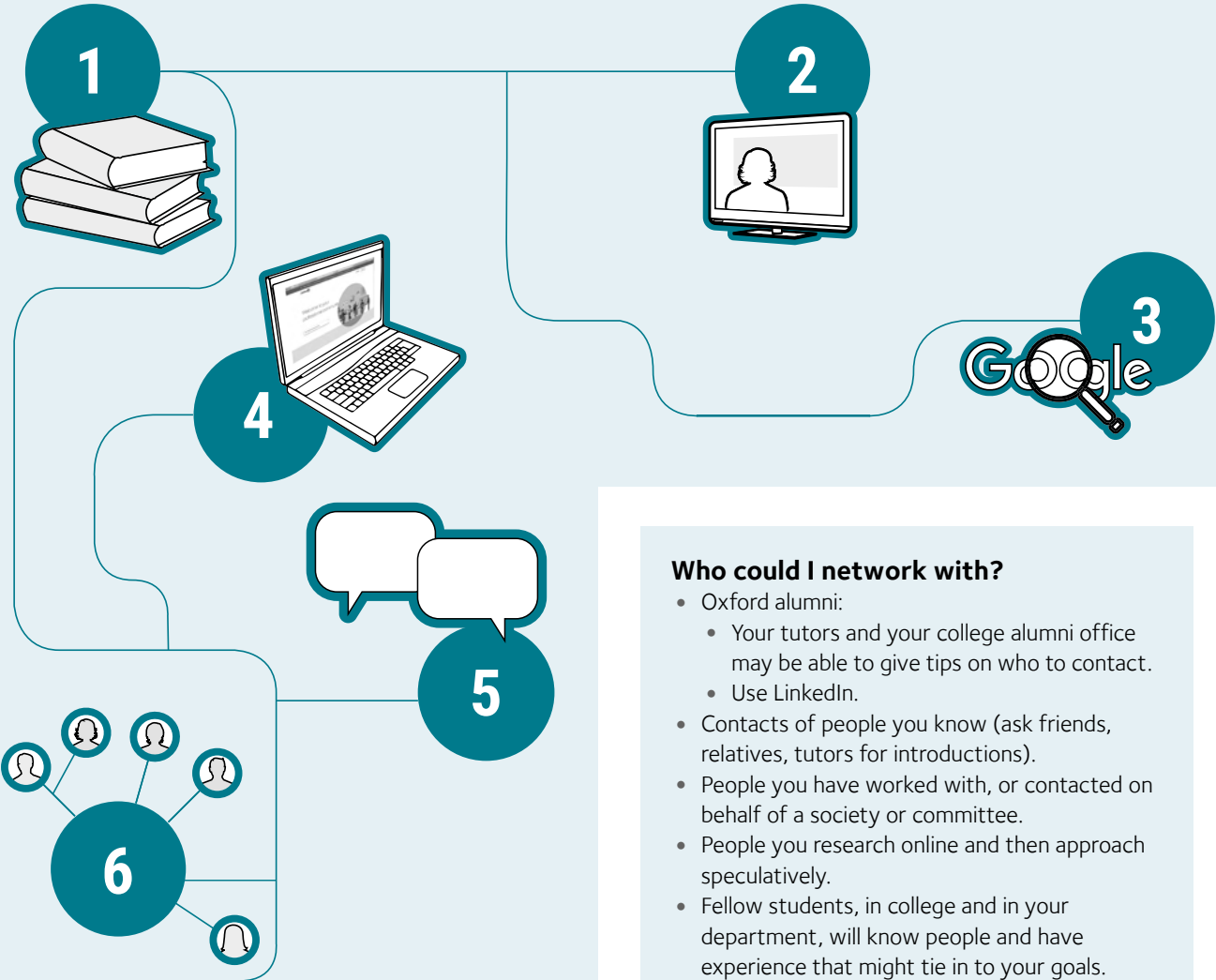
Viewed through this lens, networking is a way of life; the goal is to build and maintain a ‘network of reciprocal assistance’. So it is best to think of networking as going out and making new friends. The only thing to get used to is that this very normal human process is preceded by some planning and preparation so that you can find out more about new organisations.

How do I approach people?

The key to effective networking is research. Always prepare in advance; when you are going to meet someone, look them up on LinkedIn, so you can talk their language. Sheryl Sandberg, the chief operating officer of Facebook, gets very embarrassed when women ask her to mentor them: ‘While asking a stranger to be a mentor rarely, if ever, works, approaching a stranger with a pointed, well thought-out inquiry can yield results. Focus on how to manage a business not on how to manage a career’. When Bill Gates was a teenager he read ‘tons of biographies and autobiographies’ of technologists and business people to create a foundation on which to build his commercial awareness (so he could start Microsoft at 19 years old).

Also, tailor your elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is three sentences:

1. Who am I? – tailor it to resonate with who they are looking for.
2. What do I want? – tailor it to resonate with what they are offering.
3. A question – to start a conversation, research it, make it engaging and demonstrate the depth of knowledge you already have.



Discovering your network

- 1 Read (auto)biographies of sector leaders.
- 2 Engage with the latest stories from the sector in mainstream media.
- 3 Research the sector on Google, so you never ask a question that is answered on the website; look at competitors.
- 4 Research people who work in the sector on LinkedIn.
- 5 Talk to junior sector workers and note the language and technical terms they use as they talk about their job.
- 6 Network with sector leaders or interview them when you understand the job inside out and how to talk about it like an insider.

Who could I network with?

- Oxford alumni:
 - Your tutors and your college alumni office may be able to give tips on who to contact.
 - Use LinkedIn.
- Contacts of people you know (ask friends, relatives, tutors for introductions).
- People you have worked with, or contacted on behalf of a society or committee.
- People you research online and then approach speculatively.
- Fellow students, in college and in your department, will know people and have experience that might tie in to your goals.

Platforms for networking

- **LinkedIn:** The biggest professional social network, with powerful search tools.
- **Twitter:** Use the search facility to find people who mention their employment or university in their profile.
- **Facebook:** Post a message to your personal contacts letting them know what you are most interested in and asking for recommendations for people to contact.
- **Industry websites:** Many employer websites include ‘about us’ or ‘staff team’ pages where you can learn more about who works there (sometimes there is also an email address).
- **ResearchGate:** A social networking site for scientists and researchers to share papers, ask and answer questions, and find collaborators.

To...

alumni91@college.ox.ac.uk

Subject

Student advice request on [sector/job function]

Dear [Name],

I'm a [second year/finalist] at [college] here in Oxford and I'm interested in working in/as [sector/job function].

I want to work in [briefly reference relevant courses/websites/societies/reading] and John Caruthers suggested that you might be willing to share your experience in the field.

I would truly appreciate a few minutes of your time to discuss your insights into [the work/role/their company/how best to prepare]. Perhaps we can meet for a ten-minute chat/arrange a time to speak by phone/Skype.

I know that you might be busy and if it will not be possible to [meet/speak], I fully understand. Thank you for considering my request however, and if there is anyone else you'd recommend I contact to learn about the sector, I would greatly appreciate an introduction.

With best wishes,

Signed

Email/social network message

- 1

If you do not have a direct email address, try an organisation's generic email address marked 'FAO [name of contact]', politely asking for it to be forwarded.
- 2

Make a connection so your contact understands who you are and how you found them.
- 3

Build your credibility and show you are serious by briefly outlining relevant research, and explaining where you identified them as a potential contact – perhaps the college alumni office or LinkedIn.
- 4

A reference from someone they know can be a powerful incentive to respond, but check first with your source that they are happy for you to use their name.
- 5

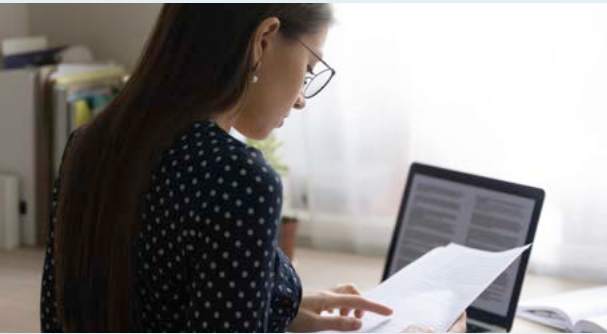
Asking for advice or information is useful – it is free to give and people are usually happy to share what they know. It also covers many possibilities, including where to find information, insider views on careers, tips for getting in, other potential contacts and even unadvertised jobs.
- 6

Explain what you are most interested in. Try to be specific so they understand what you hope for and can judge whether they can help you – if you ask a vague question, you will get a vague answer, or none at all.
- 7

Suggest a way forward, and be specific about what you are expecting: 10 to 15 minutes is realistic for a first chat or call.
- 8

Show respect for their time, keep it polite and positive, and keep the door open to future contact.

Building your occupational awareness



It can sometimes be useful to look at what other Oxford students have done after completing their degrees to get a better understanding of the breadth of choices open to you. To go beyond the outline provided here, use the Careers Service's webpages on 'The Graduate Outcomes Survey' to see the early-career destinations for Oxford graduates from 2012 to 2018.

Further study

Just under 20% of graduates choose further study and the Careers Service provides support and advice on this:

- From finding courses, to assisting with applications, and advising on potential funding sources or studying abroad. [Turn to the Further Study advice](#) for more information on options and planning for further study.

Consider carefully what benefits you hope to gain from undertaking another degree, against the time and costs required. Although further study is a prerequisite for some careers, and highly desirable for others, for many careers it's unnecessary and may make no difference to either your entry level or starting salary.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/further-study

Occupational sectors

Careers are often labelled according to their industry sector, and the latter section of this Guide provides short industry introductions and company listings covering over 21 major industry sectors that our leavers enter. There are many more – nearly 50 – detailed briefings on our website, covering all the sectors in this Guide and more. Briefings usually include sections such as:

- Types of job.
- Entry points.
- Skills and experience.
- Getting a job.
- External resources.



Source: Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017–2018 (data collected 15 months after graduation)

Students who go into work after graduation, work in a wide range of sectors such as:

- Education
- Health and social care
- IT and computing
- Government and public services
- Banking and investment

- Law
 - Consultancy
 - Scientific research and development
 - Media, journalism and publishing
 - Engineering and manufacturing
 - Arts and heritage
 - Consumer goods and retail
 - Advertising, marketing and communications
 - Accounting and financial services
 - Civil engineering, construction and property
- And many more... Don't worry if you're not interested in any of the listed sectors; we'll try to help you find the right sector and role for you.

Functional roles

The industry or sector that someone works in is only one aspect of their career. Equally important is the role or function that the person takes on. Many larger companies offer graduate-entry programmes where the first two to three years involve rotation through a number of different functional areas to provide a broad grounding in the company and its business. Graduates

also have time to assess their strengths and preferences for later specialisation.

It's important to consider which functional roles you might be most interested in. For some people, the function becomes their primary goal, so remember that the same functional role can be found in many diverse industries: charities need IT specialists, marketers and HR managers as well as front-line volunteers, fundraisers and policy-makers. Data analysts are needed as much in the advertising and retail sectors as in academic research, policy, finance and consultancy organisations.

Take time to think more broadly about where you might find opportunities that you'd be interested in.

If you don't limit yourself by exclusively targeting industries that seem to have the "right label", you may be surprised at the possibilities you find – both as a first career destination or a few years later.

For example:

- Aspiring journalists can learn valuable skills in a PR role in any sector, and by blogging.
- Considering a career in IT? IT roles exist in virtually every sector and organisation.



“ Don't panic if you leave Oxford unsure of your next steps! Many graduates have no idea what they want to do after leaving university. It can also take time to find your first post-university job, so don't get discouraged. Bear in mind the Careers Service supports alumni as well as students, which is an opportunity definitely worth taking.

————— Hannah Shearer, Development Assistant at Exeter College, BA History, Balliol College, 2014

Changes in direction

It's also true that careers develop over time. Whatever direction you start out in doesn't tie you to that industry or function for life. It's quite natural for your ideas to develop and change as you gain experience and find new interests, or as new opportunities present themselves.

A change of career doesn't mean wasted time: most of your skills will be transferable to other careers. Some graduates choose to gain specialist expertise through a graduate scheme, such as general management, marketing or accountancy, and use this as a stepping stone into an industry where graduate opportunities can be harder to find – such as in arts & heritage, charities, or the creative industries. These first career steps can provide both professional qualifications and experiences that are highly valued, but which may be hard to come by as a new graduate entering directly into certain sectors.

Read the alumni profiles included in the industry sectors of this Guide: they demonstrate that shifts in career direction are quite common, and that even a radical change of direction is possible.

The Careers Service only tracks leavers' initial career destinations using the official DLHE and Graduate Outcomes surveys. However, we have surveyed alumni ten years after leaving and this revealed that:

- On average alumni had worked for three employers since leaving Oxford.
- The sector in which alumni worked after ten years could be very different from the sector they initially entered.

In recognition of the fact that careers are not fixed, the Careers Service provides access for alumni to a large number of our events and services for life. We also have a careers adviser specifically working with alumni who can advise on decisions and strategies for managing career changes.

Why do some sectors seem more visible than others at Oxford?

Whether it's the advertised listings in this Guide, company presentations on our termly Events Calendar or sector-specific career fairs, you will probably notice that recruiting firms within the four 'City' sectors are highly visible in Oxford. So why do accountancy, banking and investment, consultancy and law firms stand out so much, if they each account for only a small proportion of all the destinations of leavers?

There are a few reasons for this apparent imbalance:

- In some sectors, such as media, retail, and FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), and energy, a few big organisations dominate – and many are already household names (BBC, Google, John Lewis, Sainsbury's, Shell and Unilever.) These companies don't need to advertise their names or brands to become known, and students find their graduate opportunities unaided. In contrast, large 'City' firms can have significant graduate programmes but aren't well-known outside their field, so need to promote themselves more.
- Smaller organisations – which account for the majority, perhaps 85%, of all graduate-level jobs – generally have less predictable recruitment needs, smaller recruitment budgets, and may not have a 'graduate programme' to promote. Instead they will hire into specific graduate-level positions, advertising these individual jobs as and when positions arise.
- In some sectors – such as, advertising, arts and heritage, charities, international development, marketing and PR, and media and journalism, only a limited number of 'graduate schemes' exist. A lot of recruitment is done from the network of people known to the company, often from people seeking relevant experience and visibility through volunteering (charities), or being runners/assistants (TV and film) or fieldworkers/volunteers (development). Paid and unpaid industry-specific work experience tends to be very important in these industry sectors and both direct approaches and speculative applications are often expected.



Routes into graduate employment

The Careers Service offers impartial advice on different approaches to finding graduate-level employment. We can relate this to different industry sectors and roles, and will not steer you in any particular direction.

Within a sector, there are a typical set of recruitment processes, but each organisation will manage its vacancies and applications in its own way, so:

- Understand both the industry pattern and the exceptions for the roles you are targeting.
- Be clear about timescales and deadlines from the beginning.
- Start your sector research with the 20+ short industry briefings in this Guide. Each one includes advice on recruitment processes and outlines ideas on how to develop relevant skills, enriched by personal stories and advice from Oxford alumni, and current opportunities from some of the major employers.
- Talking to companies and people doing the work in which you are interested can be invaluable. While you can network all year round, the first few weeks of Michaelmas term see hundreds of companies visiting Oxford every year for our career fairs and company-led events. We are planning for in-person fairs once again in 2022:
 - See [Careers Term by Term for an overview of the recruitment year at Oxford](#).



What can you offer an employer in addition to your degree qualification? Graduates who can demonstrate the transferable skills most commonly sought by recruiters will find that they have a competitive advantage in the jobs market. The eight core employability skills that employers look for are described here: www.careers.ox.ac.uk/develop-your-employability-skills. Use this resource to identify your own skills gaps, get tips on improving your profile and boost your chances of job success.

Rebecca Ehata, Careers Adviser, Oxford University

- Use the Events Calendar on CareerConnect to find dates, times and locations.
- Follow employers' websites, Facebook and Twitter for the latest news and job alerts.
- Use national graduate career sites like Prospects, TARGETjobs, and Milkround.

Graduate training programmes

Organisations that recruit a number of graduates every year often have structured training schemes. These generally last for one or two years and provide formal training and development as part of a structured programme. Often they also offer 'rotations' through a succession of roles in different parts of the organisation. Graduates gain a range of experience, specific skills, and a broad introduction to the firm and its industry.

Applications usually open during the summer (July onwards) and often close during Michaelmas term (as early as October!) for start dates in July to September following graduation. Check the relevant industry sector briefings for more specific information.

Oxford's numerous Michaelmas term careers fairs support this cycle. These, together with our other fairs in Hilary and Trinity terms, are excellent opportunities to meet a wide range of recruiters and alumni, to find out more about their work and explore possibilities. With a little preparation, they are also a chance to make a good first impression and show your interest in an organisation.

Many employers also run separate company presentations in Oxford. Go to these whether you are simply interested to learn more about their graduate scheme, or use them specifically to deepen your knowledge about that company and meet more people from the firm. You'll find these listed in the Events Calendar in CareerConnect.

Individual graduate roles

Many, many more graduates join organisations to fill a specific position rather than as part of a graduate training programme. All types of organisations offer these direct entry roles, including employers with big graduate schemes.

Direct entry roles are advertised widely, generally one to three months before a job starts. The best places to start looking for vacancies include:

- Individual organisations' websites and, increasingly, their social media feeds.
- The Careers Service's vacancy database on CareerConnect.
- National graduate career sites like Prospects, TARGETjobs, and Milkround.
- Industry professional bodies and specialist media channels.

Finding work in specific UK locations

Geography and reputation mean that recruitment at Oxford can appear London-centric. However, opportunities exist across the UK:

- Major organisations often offer a choice of locations in regional offices.
- Some sectors, like education and healthcare, provide opportunities countrywide.
- Many thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) offer graduate jobs too, and the websites of professional bodies usually list locations for SMEs in their industry.

Some regions are recognised for specific industries. For example, Manchester is increasingly seen as a creative hub, and Cambridge has a reputation for science and computing start-ups. Oxford is also particularly good for science, health and publishing jobs, and has a vibrant and growing tech sector: attend our 'Summer Fair' each Trinity term to meet some of these dynamic and rapidly expanding companies.

Many job platforms allow you to search by region – including our own vacancies on CareerConnect – and you can search specifically for jobs in:

- Scotland www.s1jobs.com
- Wales www.gowales.co.uk
- Northern Ireland www.gradireland.com

Read the [advice on working in different countries and UK visas](#), or see a careers adviser at the Careers Service for advice if you are considering working abroad.

Unadvertised roles

A significant number of job vacancies are never advertised or only advertised via social media. Employers often recruit people they know, who are recommended to them, or who approach them speculatively. In certain sectors, such as media and advertising, networking is an essential and expected part of the application process for both full-time jobs and work experience.

Networking can help you understand the industry in which you are interested and uncover possible opportunities. For more information see our [advice on ethical networking](#).

As you build your contacts and knowledge, you develop the foundations to make well researched speculative applications that are properly tailored to the specific needs of an employer.

Recruitment agencies

Recruitment agencies help organisations recruit staff for a fee (paid by the company) by providing their clients with quicker access to pre-screened and qualified candidates. Agencies often specialise in specific sectors, and if you have relevant experience they can be an extremely effective way of finding work. Research agencies in your field and select one or two to build a relationship with.

If you are working with an agency, it is important to remain actively involved in your own job search and continue to check employers’ websites and other sources for vacancies.

Jobs from internships and work experience

Work experience and internships can be a great way to secure a full-time offer. This is especially true for companies offering internship programmes exclusively for penultimate-year students: these are often used as a core recruitment tool, with a successful internship leading directly to a job offer for the following year. Research by High Fliers confirms that at major employers, nearly a third of positions are filled by graduates who had already worked for the company. Our experience suggests that in some specific sectors, such as banking, this proportion can rise to as high as three-quarters of graduate positions.

All companies – large and small – may offer work experience or internships. In line with the advice for finding full-time positions, use companies’ own websites, our CareerConnect jobs board, and graduate recruitment sites. Speculative applications can also be highly effective, and sometimes firms will even create an opportunity when approached directly. Read our advice online about making speculative approaches.

Specific opportunities for Oxford students include:

- The **Oxford University Internship Programme**, run by your Careers Service, which sources hundreds of internships in locations around the world exclusively open to Oxford students.
- The **Micro-Internship Programme**, run by the Careers Service, offering voluntary learning and development opportunities in the vacation periods.
- The Oxford Hub offers a range of programmes to support both young people and the community – go to www.oxfordhub.org or email hello@oxfordhub.org.

For more ideas on how to find work experience and short-term engagements, turn to our advice on:

- [Gaining Experience and Developing Skills](#)
- [Application Essentials](#)
- [Networking](#)



Further study

Taught masters’, research masters’ or doctoral degrees? In the UK, Europe, North America or elsewhere? Narrowing down your options can be tricky.

Consider your motivation

- It might be to satisfy intellectual curiosity, to access a specific career or to change direction. Think about what you need to know to assess how effectively potential courses can deliver your goals. Talk it over with a careers adviser if you need to.

Talk to people

- Recommendations from Oxford academics in your field.
- People working in your sector of interest – find them on LinkedIn.
- Get in touch with prospective tutors and supervisors.

Do your research

- Academic literature and conference proceedings to find key research groups.
- Destination statistics for each course.
- University rankings.
- Research Excellence Framework assessments of research departments www.ref.ac.uk.

Fees and funding

Costs vary but are likely to run to many thousands of pounds.

- **Self-funding** is the reality for many graduate students: savings, family support or loans.
- **Postgraduate loans** of £11k–£12k are available for masters’ degrees in the UK. Loans of £26k–£27k are available to residents in England for doctoral study at UK universities. www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan.

Careers adviser Abby Evans answers further study FAQs

Do I have to do a master’s degree before a PhD?

Not always: it is possible to go straight on to a PhD programme from a first degree course. This is common in science and engineering in the UK. Some PhDs have a master’s year built in. However, in many continental European countries a master’s degree is required to begin a PhD. Even in the UK, most arts, humanities and social science students complete a master’s degree before embarking on their PhD.

Will I need a first class degree?

Most courses ask for at least a 2:1 class degree or

- **Research Councils**, www.ukri.org, fund some UK PhDs by allocating funds to Doctoral Training Centres or departments to distribute to eligible candidates.
- **Scholarships** are listed on the graduate admission pages of university websites. Check eligibility and closing dates carefully.
- **Graduate assistantships**, and other opportunities to teach or conduct research in your department or college, may provide additional income. In the US, they are a common way to fund study. Discuss opportunities with departments.
- **Sponsorship** or employer support is relatively rare but not unheard of in scientific and engineering disciplines (for example, Industrial CASE awards – via Research Councils – and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships at ktp.innovateuk.org).

Studying abroad

Higher education is an international marketplace. You might be tempted by lower fees charged in certain countries, by the opportunity to improve your language skills or by a centre of academic excellence in your subject. Many universities in Europe offer courses taught in English. Application schedules vary, so research the differences carefully.

There are useful country-by-country overviews at www.prospects.ac.uk and on GoinGlobal via www.careers.ox.ac.uk.

The Careers Service publishes advice on study in the USA and abroad, all available online.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/further-study/

equivalent, and many graduates with 2:1s successfully apply for further study. However, a first class degree might increase your chances when applying for popular courses, and may help you secure funding.

How can the Careers Service help?

In addition to extensive information on our further study webpages, we also offer seminars on a range of aspects of further study including Postgraduate Study in North America and in Europe, Writing Personal Statements. You are welcome to book an appointment with a careers adviser to discuss your options, strategies for choosing courses or securing funding, or to get feedback on your application materials.



Working in different countries

You may decide to work outside your home country as part of a career with international postings, as time out after your studies, or as a planned long-term emigration. Opportunities are numerous and many Oxford graduates work internationally at some point in their career.

Consider your motivations carefully and research your options thoroughly to understand what opportunities are available. You will need to be aware of requirements in terms of languages and qualifications and to investigate any work restrictions. [Visa options for working in the UK are outlined in the next article.](#)

Jobs with international opportunities

Multinational companies, multilateral organisations, international development agencies and diplomatic services may all offer secondments or transfers to their international offices after a period of time, or as part of graduate training. Talk to organisations of interest to assess your chances of gaining an international posting if you work for them. If you have wanderlust, a range of organisations have graduate programmes that are explicitly intended to give international experience. Often these require fluency in more than one language,

and/or extreme flexibility regarding job location. Examples of such recruiters can be found in many different sectors, and include BMW (automobiles), Aviva (insurance), Unilever (fast-moving consumer goods), TUI (travel), Airbus (aerospace), Pandora (retail), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

If you are seeking short-term work in another country and an opportunity to experience international environments, the Careers Service's Summer Internship Programme provides opportunities across the globe.

Time out after your studies

Taking some time out to travel after graduating can often be funded by working simultaneously. Depending on your nationality, there are a number of visa schemes to help you gain short-term employment outside your country of citizenship. Check with the embassy of your destination to find out more, and see the website Anywork Anywhere for many examples and further resources: www.anyworkanywhere.com.

People who are fluent in English are in demand as teachers all around the world, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is a popular option for experiencing life in another culture. TEFL can also become a longer-term international career. Certain schemes and some schools will provide training and others will require further qualifications. Read our online advice about TEFL teaching for full details.

Other options exist for volunteering/work experience where you receive bed and board: for example, teaching positions brokered by the British Council; VSO; WWOOF; Work Away. See the advice on Gaining Experience and Developing Skills: Volunteering for details.

Employers at Oxford and beyond

Many multinational firms visit Oxford's career fairs. If you are interested in working for one of their global offices, ask their UK representatives how you can apply to work for the firm in a different or your home country. Some international employers also visit Oxford to give recruitment presentations (and may conduct interviews here), so check CareerConnect's online Events Calendar regularly for details.

Many other fairs organised by international recruitment organisations take place throughout the world: some in London, while others are 'virtual' and held online. Look out for details of these on the Careers Service's blog and weekly newsletter.

International networking

Make the most of opportunities, while you are in Oxford, to develop your language skills and intercultural awareness by joining relevant international student societies. Employers may contact international

student societies to advertise in-country roles. Alumni from Oxford live all over the world, and are often happy to give advice to current students. Use your college alumni office or LinkedIn to connect with them, or contact international alumni branches via their websites or Facebook groups. [See the earlier article on Ethical Networking in this Guide.](#)

If you are an international student looking to work at home, maintain links with your home country. For example, keep in contact with friends at university there and join your national student society at Oxford for networking opportunities. Use the resources and tips described above to research your options and stay in touch with relevant opportunities and developments in your home country. Remember that the recruitment cycle and processes may be different to those in the UK.

Online resources

Online databases provide a vast array of resources to aid job-seeking in most countries. Many are referenced on the Careers Service website. Some examples you can search for include:

- The Careers Service's vacancy database on CareerConnect frequently holds job postings placed by international recruiters.
- GoInGlobal – an external resource accessible via the Careers Service website with your Oxford Single Sign On, featuring profiles of 42 countries, a directory of employers, as well as international vacancies and internships.
- Our online briefing on finding work outside the UK contains links to a number of national and regional jobs boards.
- GradLink – advice and job boards for graduates looking to work in China, South-East Asia, the Gulf, Canada, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and India.
- EURES – a website listing private and public job opportunities across all member states of the European Union.
- If you know your destination, search for 'expat' websites which may offer great advice and opportunities to meet others who have made the same transition.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/goinglobal
www.myoxfordnetwork.com
www.gradlinkuk.com
www.ec.europa.eu/eures
www.graduateland.com

Visa options for working in the UK

To stay in the UK to work after your studies, international students will need permission in the form of a visa. The rules about working in the UK are complex and change frequently, so be sure to check for full and up-to-date information.

The University's visa and immigration advisers give regular talks at the Careers Service on the current work visa options and can also cover individual queries. Check our Events Calendar on CareerConnect for details. Regrettably, the Careers Service's staff cannot advise on visas.

Graduate Route

The Graduate Route is an opportunity to remain in the UK to work, or look for work, for two years if you have completed an undergraduate, PGCE, or master's Degree, or three years if you have completed a DPhil.

You will need to have successfully completed your qualification before you apply but unlike other routes you do not need a job offer or sponsorship from the

University or an employer. You must be in the UK to apply and you must have a valid Tier 4 or student visa at the time of your application.

The Student Immigration team has answers to frequently asked questions about the Graduate Route and you can check the gov.uk website for updates on the launch and how to apply.

Skilled Worker Visa (previously Tier 2)

Applicants are eligible for this visa if they have been offered a job by an employer who holds a license and have been issued a Certificate of Sponsorship.

The salary offered for Skilled Worker Visa applicants must be appropriate to the type of work and meet the minimum salary requirement. If you switch into this category from a student visa or within 2 years, your qualifying salary could be 70% of the usual level.

If your last visa was a student visa and you wish to apply from within the UK you will have to show that you completed a degree or at least one year of your DPhil. For more information on what is required see the Home Office requirements.

Start-up Visa

This visa is for students who have an innovative, viable and scalable business idea for development in the UK. Oxford University can endorse applicants each year and applications are made via the Careers Service. We advertise details of the application process via the Careers Service's blog and in our newsletters. If you are

endorsed by the University or another authorised endorsing body you will need to [apply for a start-up visa, which is valid for two years, via the gov.uk website.](#)

Tier 5 for an internship in the UK

You could apply for a Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange visa for an internship related to your degree for up to a year. This would normally need to be sponsored by a third-party sponsoring organisation, such as:

- Access Tier 5: www.accesstier5.com or Tier 5 Intern: tier5intern.com
- For Government information on this, see: www.gov.uk/tier-5-government-authorised-exchange

Other options

Nationals from some countries may have access to other routes for working in the UK, including a scheme for Commonwealth citizens with a grandparent born in the UK, and the Tier 5 visa (Youth Mobility Scheme), both of which you must apply for from your home country.

More information

www.ox.ac.uk/students/visa/work
www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas
www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice

GAINING EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

Making time for extra-curricular activities alongside your studies can not only be enriching personally, but professionally too. Learning new skills and developing those you most enjoy will contribute crucially to your overall employability as the majority of organisations look for both academic qualifications and interests beyond academia.

Graduate employers expect you to have both a solid (predicted) degree class and strong employability skills that you have developed at university.

On the following pages, we highlight the core employability skills that recruiters look for, and suggestions of how to build and improve these while you are at Oxford. Additional job specific skills can be expected for many roles as well, such as strong numerical and analytical skills, or specific language and technical knowledge or expertise.

Recruiters tell us that they are generally impressed with the ability of Oxford students to display these skills compared to other graduates. However, they stress the importance for Oxford students to develop and demonstrate skills that are not necessarily developed through their academic work – especially commercial awareness and teamwork.

To support you, the Careers Service run a number of programmes to enhance your experience and work-relevant skills, including insight schemes, internships and personal development programmes. These are outlined in [the guidance on employability programmes](#).

“Despite the challenging academic workloads, make time for extracurricular activities because the skills you learn here will be invaluable and help you later with your job interviews. Recruiters appreciate the extra effort and time that goes into these activities and enjoy listening to competency examples related to outside academia.”

— Dr Lakshmi Manjoosha Adapa,
IT Consultant at Accenture

Developing core skills

1 Initiative

Recruiters want you to be able to demonstrate making things happen and getting things done. Ideas to help you develop this include:

- Organising a unique fundraising event for a charity.
- Helping to increase participation or membership for an event or society.
- Setting up an Oxford student arm of a professional organisation or a charity.
- Joining [The Oxford Strategy Challenge \(TOSCA\)](#).
- Developing your own website, or building one for a student society.
- Starting your own society, social enterprise or small business.
- Volunteering as a student representative for your course.

2 Communication

Employers want to see that you have good interpersonal skills, and can communicate verbally and in writing – to empathise and persuade. You can display these skills by:

- Persuading guest speakers to attend a society event you are helping to organise.
- Securing corporate sponsorship for a club or encouraging alumni to donate as part of a college fundraising campaign.
- Representing an external organisation as their Oxford brand ambassador.
- Work experience in a customer service role.
- Write a regular blog on something that interests you, and record ‘likes’ and ‘click-throughs’ quantitatively.
- Contributing articles or reviews to student publications or contributing to [Oxide Radio](#).
- Creating publicity materials for a charity.
- Acting as secretary of a student society or your Common Room.
- Debating at the Oxford Union or the Oxford International Debating Society.
- Creating YouTube presentations or doing your own podcasts on something of interest to you.
- Volunteering to help with outreach and access events: assisting at Oxford open days, or visiting schools to encourage students to apply to Oxford.
- Volunteering to give a presentation in your college/department on an academic project.

3 Teamwork

Organisations want to know that you can work in a group to achieve something tangible. There are many ways to develop teamwork skills, including:

- Joining a sports team. There are dozens of student-run sports clubs, and many more for individual colleges. See www.sport.ox.ac.uk for inspiration.
- Getting involved in a choir, orchestra or band – or helping to produce a play.
- Contributing to the decision-making of your Common Room committee, or a student society.
- Choosing to do group project work, if the option is offered on your course.
- Joining [The Oxford Strategy Challenge \(TOSCA\)](#), or student-led initiatives for consultancy work in a group, like OxAid or the Microfinance Initiative.
- Completing a Duke of Edinburgh award.
- Campaigning with Oxford SU. Campaigns promote many good causes, from mental health to racial equality.
- Becoming part of the student team that runs Oxford Hub.

4 Creativity

Creativity is about being curious and innovative, finding new ways of doing things and understanding and taking risks. Consider:

- Driving change, improving systems and services.
- Brainstorming ideas for events or realising a themed ball.
- Lighting, set and costume design as well as performing and directing.
- [Creating ideas or work for The Agency](#), run by the Careers Service.
- Joining Oxford Entrepreneurs’ pitching event: [Idea Idol](#).

5 Planning

Employers will want to see evidence that you can organise people and resources to achieve objectives and work to a deadline. Outside managing your studies, ideas of how you can develop this include:

- Organising a ball, bop, conference or campaign.
- Co-ordinating your Common Room’s annual elections.
- Organising a group or event to raise money for charity.
- Organising an away-day for a society, or an inter-university match for a sports club.
- Editing a student publication, such as a newspaper, website or yearbook.

6 Leadership

Employers will want you to have the ability to motivate, influence and organise others. Leadership involves having a vision, enrolling others into your vision and delivering tangible quantified results. You can develop this by:

- Taking a position of responsibility in your Common Room or with Oxford SU.
- Producing or directing a play, or organising an event, such as a ball.
- Joining the Oxford University Officers' Training Corps, for their leadership development training programme.
- Volunteering with youth organisations, such as the Girl Guides, Scouts, or even a cycling proficiency group!
- Offering to help train new staff in a part-time job, captaining a sports team, or running a student society.
- Leading a team on The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA).
- Encouraging students to apply to Oxford.

7 Self-management

Recruiters will want evidence that you can manage your own time, are flexible, resilient, and can improve yourself based on feedback. You can demonstrate this by:

- Doing any extra-curricular activities or part-time work in addition to your degree. This will signal to employers that you can balance various responsibilities and workloads.
- 'Up-skilling' yourself. Why not take a course at the Oxford Language Centre, or a free computing course at IT services during term?
- Setting yourself personal goals that require training to complete, such as running a marathon.
- Participating in an organised charity challenge, such as the RAG Jailbreak or the 'Three Peaks Challenge'.
- Undertaking an extended research project as part of your academic studies.

8 In-touch and agile

Academia is about specialisation, and many courses at Oxford are quite traditional and/or theoretical. Being 'in-touch' means being aware of the broader general context, and being sensitive to new and emerging trends. Being agile means demonstrating responsiveness to these emerging trends in a practical and productive way. You can:

- Research the latest and potential future trends in your sector of interest. How will machine learning influence sectors like banking and consultancy? How will machine learning automate the communication between people of different

languages? How will robotics and artificial intelligence influence medicine, law, government or manufacturing? How will sustainability affect global travel and food security?

- Take part in initiatives towards zero emissions, zero single use plastics etc.
- Get involved in data analytics, machine learning, robotics etc.

9 Computing & IT

You could boost your IT ability by:

- Enrolling in a free course and learning to do something new: Oxford's IT Services offer a wide range of free courses during term.
- Free coding workshops are run by CompSoc and CodeFirst: Girls.
- Self-directed video based learning at LinkedIn Learning (formerly lynda.com): free to you via the Oxford IT Services' website using your SSO.
- Downloading professional software, such as Adobe Creative Suite, and seeing how proficient you can become during the free trial.
- Familiarising yourself with another operating system.
- Taking free LinkedIn Learning online courses via Oxford IT Services to develop greater skill with, say, Excel. All you need is your Oxford Single Sign-on.

And if you are already quite skilled, you could try:

- Designing an app.
- Making a website for a student society.
- Volunteering to help out your college IT officer.
- Joining CompSoc or attending Oxford Geek Night to meet and learn from developers and designers.

10 Commercial awareness

All organisations – including not-for-profits – will want you to understand the key factors behind successful businesses. You can develop commercial awareness by:

- Organising an event that has to turn a profit, such as a concert, ball or a college bop.
- Joining The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA) to get an insight into a local business.
- Suggesting ways to improve efficiency at work, resulting in time or cost savings.
- Attending the Careers Service's Insight into Strategy and Management programme.
- Negotiating with a local business to give a discount to members of a student society you belong to.
- Taking part in a business case studies workshop run by the Careers Service.
- Joining relevant student societies, such as Oxford Entrepreneurs, or the Oxford Guild.
- Taking part in virtual investment competitions online.

Joining employability programmes

The Careers Service runs several programmes to help students develop and practise the key skills outlined in our article on core employability skills.

The Oxford Strategy Challenge

The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA) is a team based experiential learning event, with participants working on real strategy-focused client challenges over a week. TOSCA is an opportunity for you to develop a broad range of transferable skills including teamwork, leadership, communication and business awareness. These along with the client relationship experience, will help you demonstrate your potential in applications, on your CV, and in interviews. You will be placed in a small team providing consultancy on a client project. The project you will work on will be important to your client, an opportunity for hands-on client experience, and you will make a real contribution to an organisation. The programme runs regularly throughout the year so check the website for current dates.

“ [I] would recommend to anyone regardless of their career aspirations ... the skills I gained from it were truly invaluable and could be applicable to any future career.

———— TOSCA participant, 2022

The Student Consultancy

The Student Consultancy (TSC) is a more in-depth experiential learning programme providing hands-



on consultancy and strategy experience with client organisations. Over a period of 4–8 weeks you'll participate in a team on a project that's important to the client – it might be understanding what customers value, a fundraising strategy for a charity, or ideas on how to promote their products and services to more people. TSC currently runs termly, see our website for full details.

(Dis)AbilityWorks

The Careers Service puts inclusion and accessibility at the front of everything



it does. We aim for all of our services to be accessible but, recognising some students prefer bespoke support, we also offer a series of events and workshops to advise and provide practical help and resources for students with a disability, neurodiverse condition, mental health need and/or long-term health condition. Events will be publicised through the Events Calendar on CareerConnect and sessions are likely to include:

- Extended 1:1 guidance sessions.
- Talking to employers about a disability: if, how and when.
- Developing confidence in your career planning.
- Developing resilience.
- Advocacy with recruiters.

Insight into... programmes

The Careers Service has established a series of ‘Insight into...’ programmes to accelerate students’ learning and provide direct experience of the workplace and style of work in different sectors. We offer a range of programmes highlighted below and overleaf. For more information, including how to apply, see the webpages for Our Skills Programmes, and monitor our blog posts and the Events Calendar on CareerConnect to hear about new programmes.



Insight into Medicine

If you are thinking about a career in medicine, spending time shadowing a doctor is extremely important. It can help you decide whether a medical career is right for you, and will enhance your UCAS application to medical school. If you have difficulty arranging your own medical work shadowing, this programme enables you to spend a day with a hospital consultant in Oxford. This programme runs in 9th week but not in every term – check the Events Calendar on CareerConnect.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-medicine

Insight into Pharma/Biotech

This programme is specifically for science students who are interested in working in the pharma/biotech industry and includes online panel talks which focus on different roles within this sector. Typically running each academic year, this programme provides the chance to hear from scientists working in biotech research who will talk about the differences between academic life and industrial research, alongside those who have opted to use their science away from the bench but still in the pharma/biotech industry. As part of the programme we have also introduced a panel talk with speakers who work in the Medical Communications industry.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-pharmabiotech

Insight into Teaching

Whether you are considering a career in teaching or are just weighing up your options, gaining an understanding of life as a teacher in a school is very valuable. This programme allows you to learn more about the realities of being a teacher through informal and insightful seminars, and connects you to local schools to spend time observing lessons, shadowing teachers, and perhaps even planning and teaching a lesson.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-teaching

Insight into Publishing

Insight into Publishing gives future publishing candidates the chance to hear from professionals in the different departments of publishing companies as varied as HarperCollins, Elsevier and Oxford University Press. Participants gain an insight into the future of publishing and discover practical ways to make their job and internship applications publishing-focused. It runs over three sessions and is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students from all degree backgrounds.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-publishing

Insight into Academia

This seminar series explores topics relevant to those considering higher education roles in research, teaching and related areas. Open to current matriculated Oxford University students, alumni and early career research staff at the University. These informal sessions are intended to provide an open and impartial forum for you to learn more about the reality of becoming and being an academic, how to position yourself for success, and practical guides to job search and the application process in the UK and globally. All are led by careers advisers and we often invite early career academics and others to join us to share deeper insights. For more information see the website.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-academia

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/employability-skills
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/tsc

“Cherwell School were really accommodating and I got to see a variety of lessons through year group and ability. It was great to see different teachers’ styles and how the different sets changed: teaching the top and bottom of the year. I enjoyed chatting to the children – hearing what they enjoyed about lessons and what they hated.

— Insight into Teaching participant, 2019

“Thank you for the brilliant answers and energy in these three Insight into Publishing sessions. I feel so much clearer about applications and industry basics now.

— Insight into Publishing participant, 2022

Insight into Strategy and Management

Our Insight into Strategy and Management programme is designed to demystify business and increase understanding of professional life to help students become ready for employment. At the end of the programme you will be able to demonstrate to prospective employers a broader understanding of business, strategy and finance principles. You will also learn about matching your personal profile to prospective employers to help with career choices, and how to apply the learning to cases and interviews.

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-into-strategy-and-management

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/the-agency
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/insight-programmes



Seven ways to gain experience

Work experience is an opportunity to explore your options and learn new skills.

- Work experience can be:
- A way to develop valuable skills and accomplish something noteworthy.
 - A chance to try out possible career directions.
 - An opportunity to make contacts in fields that interest you.
 - A chance to earn money.
- Work experience provides a valuable opportunity to develop awareness and understanding of yourself: what really interests you, how you like to work, and what you find most fulfilling.

It also has a very important role in enhancing your employability. In a study of major graduate employers (*High Fliers* 2017), half of the recruiters surveyed warned that graduates with no work experience were unlikely to be successful in applying for graduate-level jobs in their organisations. This is because work experience:

- Enables you to enhance and apply your skills.
- Provides evidence of your skills and achievements that you can highlight in your applications and talk about in interviews.

There's lots of work experience that you can do. For example, student committee roles, volunteering, summer jobs and individual projects. What you've chosen to do already can be a useful clue as to what other forms of work experience and ultimately, jobs, might be fulfilling, as outlined in the [earlier section on Developing Your Career Ideas](#). Here are seven ideas to get you started.

“ Make the most of every opportunity! You never know where something is going to take you, or who you might meet on that journey.

— Esme Herman, Anthropology, Magdalen College, 2020

1 Do an internship

“ A short fixed period of paid work experience in an organisation, usually working on a graduate-level, structured project or a defined set of tasks, which is designed for someone hoping to enter the profession.

These might be advertised opportunities requiring an application, or arranged with an organisation after contacting them speculatively. They can take place at any time of year, but most advertised opportunities take place in vacations, particularly the summer. Some organisations offer internships purely to provide interested students with some first-hand experience and do not expect to hire interns at the end of the period. Others use internships as a core part of their recruitment process, particularly major graduate recruiters, who often advertise summer internships for penultimate year students in Michaelmas term.

The Careers Service also runs The Oxford University Summer Internship Programme, a unique scheme exclusive to Oxford students which provides 4–12 week funded summer work experience across the globe.

2 Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to develop employability skills and help others at the same time. As a volunteer you can work on projects or tasks that still use and develop your skills, but you have the added benefit of full flexibility and negotiable hours.

Here are a few suggestions for finding volunteering experience while at Oxford:

- The Micro-Internship Programme – provides short-term learning and development experiences in Week 9 or 10 of each term based in organisations across the UK and beyond.
- Oxford SU – organises diverse fundraising activities you can get involved in, including the annual RAG campaign. Oxford SU also wants volunteers for Target Schools and other programmes. See www.oxfordsu.org
- Oxford Hub – a student-run organisation that acts as a focal point for charitable activity in Oxford. It co-ordinates a variety of volunteering projects in many sectors. You can visit its website at www.oxfordhub.org
- Do-It – a web-based national database of volunteering opportunities. Search for projects in Oxford at www.do-it.org

- OCVA – Oxford Community and Voluntary Action is our local city volunteering hub, with lots of opportunities available: www.ocva.org.uk
- UN Volunteers – international volunteering opportunities with a development focus: www.unv.org
- Consider getting in touch directly with local organisations with causes you care about to discover if there's something you could help with, or to suggest a project, both in Oxford or near your home.

3 Insight days/open days

Some organisations advertise insight days, giving students talks and tours at their place of work. These are often offered to help students who are interested in the industry make a more informed application, but are not offered in all sectors. Many major graduate recruiters will run company presentations and events in Oxford or virtually, where you can learn about the organisation, their recruitment processes and meet their staff.

How recruiters support equality and diversity

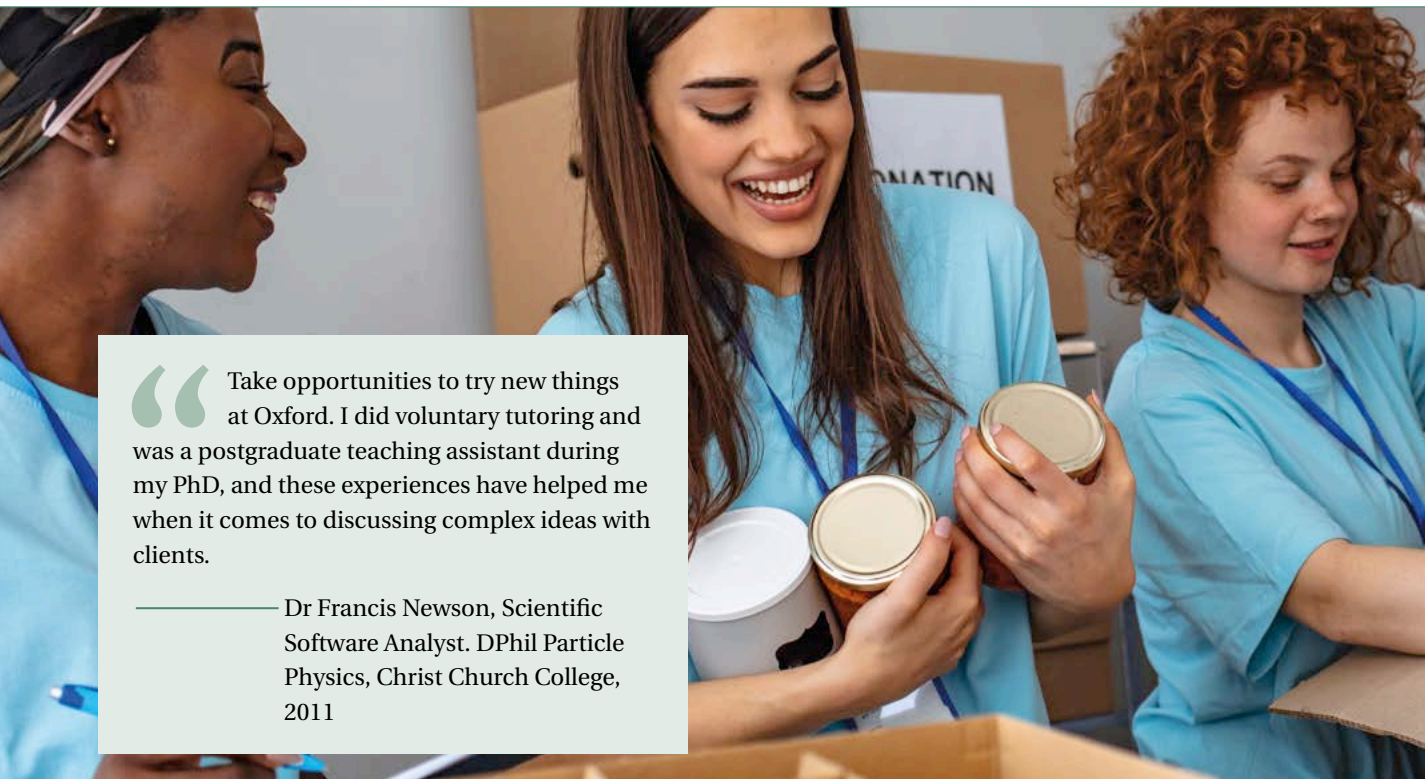
Recruiters are very keen to raise their profile with applicants from all backgrounds and to dispel perceptions that may deter applications. The best way to assess whether their projected image is 'reality or myth' is to speak with current employees.

A useful starting point can be the 'buddy and mentor' groups or forums (such as, LGBT and BAME forums), which many organisations now promote.

An increasing variety of organisations are also establishing internship programmes, insight days, networking events and mentoring opportunities to encourage a greater diversity of applications. Such opportunities will be focused on groups which an organisation feels are under-represented in their employee profile; so check what is available in the industries that you are most interested in. There may be opportunities that focus around gender, ethnicity or sexuality, or for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

You could also explore specialist organisations that support candidates from under-represented groups, such as Creative Access, SEO London or Rare. Alternatively, look for programmes run by specific employers, such as the Civil Service Fast Stream's Summer Diversity Internship Programme.





“ Take opportunities to try new things at Oxford. I did voluntary tutoring and was a postgraduate teaching assistant during my PhD, and these experiences have helped me when it comes to discussing complex ideas with clients.

— Dr Francis Newson, Scientific Software Analyst. DPhil Particle Physics, Christ Church College, 2011

4 Work shadowing

Shadowing is a short period of time spent observing in a workplace. It can help you assess at first-hand whether a possible career might suit you, yet you don't have to have the skills needed to actively participate in the work. For this reason, formal shadowing programmes are often offered in fields where further training is required in order to actively participate, such as the health professions or teaching.

It is actually not difficult to set up shadowing yourself in any industry. Contact the organisation or individual you would like to observe, and ask! If they are not able to help, you could ask whether anyone might be willing to have a conversation with you to help you learn more about the work they do.

5 Spring weeks/spring insight programmes

In an increasing range of sectors, organisations with larger graduate intakes now run one- or two-week insight programmes targeted for first years (and for second years on a four-year course). These discovery programmes often happen around Easter and usually have their own application process. In addition to offering participants industry insights and the chance to meet recent graduate recruits, they frequently include some skills development, advice on applications and may lead directly to offers for summer internships in your penultimate year of study. Some accept applications in Michaelmas, so start looking early!

6 Vacation and seasonal work

Seasonal jobs can provide money, an insight into an industry and demonstrate your adaptability and skills. They are often advertised in the few months preceding a vacation. They might be found on local employment websites, the organisation's own website, through temping agencies, word-of-mouth or by signs on organisation premises. You might also be interested in organisations which offer seasonal work abroad (such as Work Away or WWOOF), some of which run on an accommodation-for-work (work exchange) basis.

7 Personal projects

Depending on your goals, you might want to generate your own experience. It could be:

- Managing a 'fantasy fund' to demonstrate your passion for financial markets.
- Creating a piece of work to add to your artistic portfolio.
- Starting an entrepreneurial or charitable endeavour.
- Using your technological skills to code a new website/app/ game.

See if there are any local organisations that might be interested in using your project to help their work, or giving it publicity. Working with other organisations will give you new contacts and might lead toward referrals as well as increasing the scope for your project. These could all be added to your CV under 'Relevant Experience' or 'Projects'.



Making the most of the Internship Office

The Internship Office at the Careers Service offers a range of unique schemes that provide Oxford students with research and professional work experience opportunities with organisations across the UK and around the world.

The Summer Internship Programme

This programme offers hundreds of summer internship opportunities in locations across the globe, all exclusively available to current matriculated Oxford University students. They're offered in a wide variety of sectors, and often come with funding support or travel scholarships. There are opportunities suitable for students of all levels of experience and of all years of study, from first-year undergraduates to final-year DPhils. Internships can be in person or remote.

Examples of funded opportunities offered previously include:

- Internships with world-leading international development organisations, such as the UN Development Programme as well as development charities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Professional placements from multinational organisations like Mitsubishi in Japan and consultancy companies around the world.
- Scientific research internships with universities and institutes in Brazil, Germany, Israel, Mexico and more.



- Teaching positions in schools around the world.
- A wide range of arts and heritage internships.

The Internship Programme also offers access to placements in the UK, beyond the undergraduate internship schemes of the major graduate employers. Many Oxford-based opportunities frequently feature among these internships, with an increasing number of placements available within Oxford University itself, including colleges, departments, the Bodleian and the University museums.

The Internship Office ensures that every placement comes with appropriate funding or assistance with travel or accommodation. The internships are advertised from January each year, with application deadlines from February onwards.

Crankstart Programme

If you are a Crankstart Scholar, additional funding is available specifically for undertaking internships. You can apply for this at any point during your undergraduate studies. Internships can be sourced through our regular programmes, independently (directly with an employer) or through our Crankstart Exclusive Internships, which are advertised via a regular bulletin.

The Micro-Internship Programme

The Micro-Internship Programme offers voluntary, short-term learning and development opportunities

across the UK and beyond. Placements last up to five days, and take place in 9th or 10th week of each term. The opportunities are open to all matriculated students. Each placement offers the chance to gain useful insight into a particular sector while tackling a challenging work project to gain key employability skills. Micro-internships are available in all sectors, from investment firms to consultancy, tech start-ups to heritage sites. Placements can be in person or remote.

Mentoring Programmes

The Careers Service runs two mentoring programmes for undergraduate bursary holders. Both programmes handpick experienced professionals to suit the mentee's area(s) of career interest, and encourage collaboration to explore aspects of a profession that may be of interest. Mentoring can be a great way to gain different perspectives, insight into certain sectors and develop key skills – among many other things.

More information

See the Our Internship Office section of our website: www.careers.ox.ac.uk/internships



APPLICATION ESSENTIALS

“Tailoring applications to a handful of organisations is better than applying a scattergun approach. It can be tempting to copy and paste similar content but demonstrating you understand the employer's culture can help make your application stand out. Each application took me around a day and a half but the time is worth it: there is a career at the end.”

Amy Rickwood, Future trainee solicitor, New College, 2019

Good advice on applications applies to every aspect of the process, from preparing your CV and cover letters through to interviewing and assessment centres. And it is relevant for any application, whether it's for further study, a small charity, a graduate position or an internship with a leading multinational.



Successful applications

Throughout the application process:

- Demonstrate that you have the desire to do the job; the right mix of skills; and potential to grow and learn.
- Explain clearly why you want to join their organisation; and how you fit both the role and the culture.

Successful applications therefore grow from enthusiasm for an organisation and knowing you would be happy doing the job. Invest time in identifying your preferences, motivations and skills. Research industry sectors to target your efforts better; try to understand the culture and style of different organisations and the skills and qualities sought. Talking to people working in the sector can really help to deepen your research.

For more detailed advice, see our section on [Developing Your Career Ideas](#).

Good research is vital and will help you stand out. It lays the foundation for communicating clearly how you meet the requirements for the role and fit the organisation. Before applying, analyse the advertisement or personal specification to understand:

- What the job entails.
- Which skills are most important.
- What excellence might look like.

All elements of your applications can then:

- Actively promote your strongest relevant skills and abilities.
- Present evidence showing where and how you have developed and applied these skills and abilities.
- Persuade your audience of your interest, excitement and motivation for the role and their organisation.

Identify and evidence the required skills

Identifying the skills and competencies required for a role can be straightforward because these are often listed in the job description and personal specification. Application forms often ask you to give examples of the specific skills sought. Even where these are not clear, or when making a speculative approach, you should try to identify which **core employability skills** are likely to be most important for the organisation.

Effective applications are supported throughout by evidence – it builds credibility. Simply asserting that you have a skill does not work, not least because anybody can make that assertion! Consider the opposite example in the ‘Assertion or evidence?’ box.

The examples you use in written applications and interviews can be drawn from a variety of activities, as transferrable skills are developed in many situations – through your studies, extra-curricular activities, and work experience. Choose examples that:

- Relate to what you actually did, rather than what you might do in a hypothetical situation.
- Show your personal contribution, even within a team effort.
- Had positive outcomes.
- Are relevant to the employer – signpost this by mirroring the language used in the job description.
- Are fairly recent (preferably in the last two to three years).
- Allow scope for you to expand on if asked for more detail in an interview.

From building your CV to answering competency-based questions in interviews, you can [add structure to your evidence by using the CAR or STAR mnemonics](#).

Assertion or evidence?

I will make a strong contribution at [company’s name] because I am a good team player and natural leader.

Last spring, my leadership enabled our student consultancy team to make robust recommendations to our client, a local charity, on how to increase volunteering amongst sixth formers based on over 100 survey responses.

Remember...

Lastly, remember that recruiters are not mind-readers, and frequently work to tight deadlines. Never expect recruiters to infer how you fit their criteria. Instead, make it easy for them to find the evidence they are looking for.

- Be direct and state how you meet the criteria clearly, with lots of evidence to back up your claims.
- Mirror the language used in their recruitment literature to:
 - Align your style to theirs.
 - Enable software used to scan applications to match your evidence to the key competencies and skills required.
- Highlight relevant aspects of your background, knowledge and experience for each organisation and role.
- Reflect how your aspirations and longer term goals align to the opportunity.

Demonstrating commercial awareness

Good candidates are able to: demonstrate an understanding of an organisation’s core activities, products and services; the marketplace – including competitors; and how political and technological change might affect their sector in future.

- Learn about the sectors you are targeting.
- Attend company events and career fairs, talk to alumni, join relevant student societies.
- Read journals and websites dedicated to the sector.
- Find and follow professional bodies and opinion leaders as well as companies and organisations.
- Be ready to discuss industry trends and how current issues might affect an organisation’s markets or strategy – and/or their clients.
- Read the (financial) news and follow one or two major current affairs over time.
- Consider how organisations in the sector compete with one another.
- Become comfortable with business terminology and financial measures relevant to the sector and role.

Gain first-hand experience and insight through our [employability programmes](#) and work experience. See our [advice on Gaining Experience](#).

Equality and diversity in the application process

Many students worry that recruiters will be biased, fearing preconceptions about race, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental health conditions, social class or age.

The reality is that recruiters want the ‘best individual for the role/scheme’ and are keen to recruit employees from diverse backgrounds, but are not always sure how to demystify or prevent misconceptions.

Many employers are proud to have robust diversity and inclusion policy and practice – look for indicators when researching organisations. These organisations recognise and value the unique skills, experience and attitudes that individuals bring owing to their personal circumstances. They also understand that students with a disability, health condition or those who have had to ‘suspend studies’ are often concerned that they may be at a disadvantage in the recruitment process – that it will not be fair.

Applicants have protection in law. This will vary depending on the country you wish to work in but the UK Equality Act 2010 protects you – at all stages – from discrimination due to disability, age, gender, race, religion and beliefs and sexual orientation. It is worth familiarising yourself with the law – see www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance and the law in the country you’d like to work in.

Whilst you may fear that your circumstances will be viewed negatively, for the recruiter they are often seen as an asset – for example, your problem-solving skills developed through having a disability may be much higher than others. Ultimately, what matters is how you evidence your skills, motivation and competencies throughout the application process – you are your best advocate!

Depending on your situation, and to prevent putting yourself at a ‘disadvantage’ to others, you may choose to ‘disclose’, or be open about, your circumstances, so that the recruiter can put in place adjustments/support that enable you to demonstrate your potential at each stage of the application process (such as, extra time for online tests, specific software for visually impaired applicants, visiting the test centre before the day to familiarise yourself with the layout and many more).

It is your personal decision whether or not to tell a recruiter of your circumstances. And, if you do choose to share this information, you must also decide at what point in the recruitment process (application, interview, job offer or in the job) to do so.

Everyone’s circumstances are different and understanding your situation in this context can be difficult. Try not to pre-judge how recruiters might view you from what you have read or heard in the media and from others – instead, seek advice and more information to help YOU to make the right decision for YOU.

- The Careers Service has advisers who specialise in disability and diversity issues and can help you to decide if, when and how you might want to be ‘open’ about your particular circumstances.
- Approach the organisation’s recruitment team for advice – this is an important part of their role.

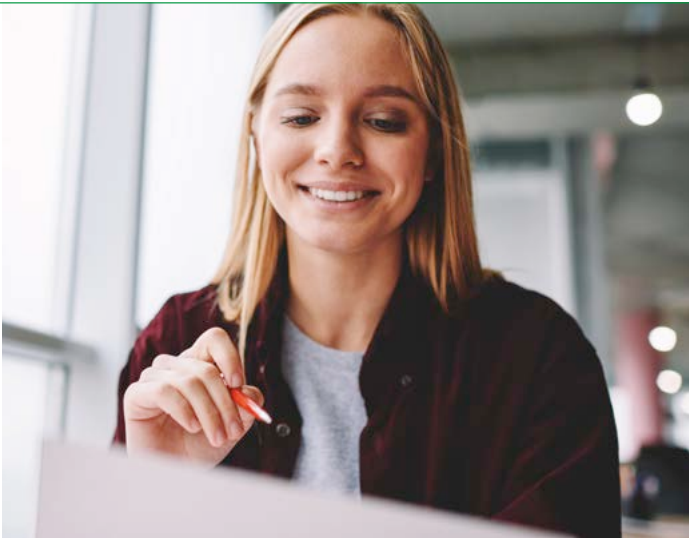
CVs

The goal of a CV and its cover letter is to get you to an interview; for a speculative application, it is to encourage the reader to respond positively.

Remember, recruiters usually review CVs very quickly – perhaps only 10–20 seconds – and so CVs have a certain style all of their own. The primary challenge is to make it easy for the recruiter to find exactly what they are looking for. Focus on their core requirements and adjust or adapt your CV for each specific application.

Getting ready to create your CV

- Create your long list of all your experience, achievements and key dates. Transferable skills are developed and demonstrated in diverse situations, so include:
 - Educational achievements, prizes, awards.
 - Voluntary, paid and unpaid work experience.
 - Involvement in societies, sports and clubs.
 - Additional interests and skills (for example, languages; IT skills; music).
- For each application, identify the skills and competencies required.
- Select your most relevant experiences to demonstrate the skills and competencies required for the role.
- Select your format – for most graduate positions, a standard reverse chronological format is recommended (see [Siân Magellan’s CV](#)).
- Consider which headings are most useful to present your experience most effectively:
 - EDUCATION will normally be at the top.
 - EXPERIENCE rather than ‘Employment’.
 - Headings such as ‘POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY’ or ‘AWARDS’ can signal other important information.
 - INTERESTS or OTHER INTERESTS AND SKILLS should be included to indicate extra-curricular activities and diverse talents. This section might include sub-headings such as Languages; IT Skills; Sports; and Music.



There are four key characteristics of CVs that work well

Relevance

- Content is relevant to the position applied for – this is not a list of everything that you’ve done.
- Content highlights your personal contribution.

Clarity

- A well laid-out CV is inviting to read and easy to scan quickly.
- Use simple language – avoid jargon, acronyms and technical details that may not be understood or provide too much detail.
- A standard reverse chronological format helps recruiters as they know where to find what they are looking for.

Evidence-based

- Provide evidence of your contribution and impact.
- Focus on ‘actions taken’ rather than ‘responsibilities’ to showcase your skills.
- Use numbers, percentages and values to quantify your impact and give a sense of scale to your actions.
- Avoid unsupported assertions or opinions.

Brevity

- Avoid paragraphs, as these are slow to read.
- Use bullet points to package information succinctly.
- Avoid too much context, excessive detail or unfocused material that will dilute the impact of your most relevant messages.

Other forms of CV

Some roles may allow for, or invite, a different form of CV.

Creative CVs

If you are applying for a ‘creative’ role, in advertising or design for example, they may look favourably upon an infographic or otherwise visually unusual CV. This allows you to project something of your style and personality and can demonstrate your ability and skill in communicating information clearly in a creative and striking way.

Academic CVs

There is no upper limit on the number of pages expected in a CV for an academic post. Information should still be relevant, brief, evidence based and clearly presented. If applying for a postdoc, fellowship, lectureship or research assistant post, make sure your CV has:

- Sections for professional memberships, publications, and conference presentations/posters.
- A focus on areas specific to academia, such as research experience, teaching experience and any university/college administration or committee work.
- Details of successful bids for awards, grants and collaborations.
- Referee details – usually three – ideally academics who both know you and are recognised in your field. It can take a number of revisions before you are

happy with your CV, and getting a second opinion can be very helpful. It might all make perfect sense to you, but you could be surprised by the things that others may question or not understand. Ask a friend to check it or meet a careers adviser for feedback.

Final checks

Once you think your CV is ready, we recommend a few final checks:

- First, ensure that you are putting forward your best case – that everything included is relevant.

Applications outside the UK

Expectations and conventions for what is acceptable in a CV varies between countries: for example, a photograph is never included in a resume for the USA, but is expected on a German CV. If applying outside the UK, research country-specific current practice, starting with:

- [Our advice on Working in Different Countries.](#)
- GoinGlobal country reports, free to use via [www.careers.ox.ac.uk/goinglobal](#).

- Second, always check carefully for errors and typos – many recruiters dismiss well qualified candidates if there is even one typo in the CV, cover letter or application form!
- Finally:
 - Hold your CV at arms-length – does it look easy to read?
 - Fold it vertically and scan the left side in 10 seconds:
 - Will the reader get the gist of your application?
 - Are your strongest skills immediately visible?
 - Check for jargon and acronyms, and over-long bullets – edit vigorously.
 - Is it the right length?
 - Some employers (for example, investment banks) expect just one page.
 - Aim for a maximum of two pages, except for an academic CV.

Finally, finally!

Take a good break and then proofread – yes, again! – double checking for errors and typos. Save your CV as a PDF to ensure it keeps its beautiful formatting when you send it.

More information and examples
[www.careers.ox.ac.uk/cvs](#)

Comments on Siân Magellan’s CV

Overall

- Looks easy to read.
- Text and dates aligned, no full-stops and plenty of ‘white space’ around text.
- Consistent use of headings, capitals, and bold text provide clear signposting.
- No jargon or acronyms that may muddle understanding.
- Numbers, percentages and values add clarity and give a sense of scale.

Bullet points

Separate bullet points cover a single idea, skill or activity.

Note: Siân has used **Context, Action, Results (CAR) as a structure** for her Experience section.

- **Context:** Dates, organisation name and positions/role give sufficient context.
- **Action:** Bullets start with active verbs/skills, aligning these to left margin for ease of scanning.
- **Results:** Outcomes included to show how and where Siân added value.

SIÂN MAGELLAN

Balliol College, Oxford, OX1 3BJ
M: 07685 314529 E: Siân.magellan@balliol.ox.ac.uk

EDUCATION

BA Hons English, Balliol College, University of Oxford 2019 – 2022

- First year exam results: 2.1 (65 average)
- Researched and delivered on time 12 3,000 word essays on new topics in each 8-week term for discussion with peers and leading academics

St John’s School, Milton Keynes 2012 – 2019

A levels: French A*, English A*, Chemistry A, Geography A
GCSEs: 5 A*, 3 A, 1 B including A* in English and Maths

EXPERIENCE

WWOOF, Organic Farm in Haute Vienne, France, Volunteer (summer) 2021

- Independently planned and organised 2 months’ work in France
- Improved to near-fluent French, while learning food production chain process
- Developed good working relationships with 22 colleagues from 12 countries

Oxford University, The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA), Team Leader (Online) 2020

- Led a team of 5 students to develop marketing strategy for local start-up
- Designed and executed electronic and phone surveys, engaging 250 participants
- Presented recommendations to client; all implemented within 3 months and delivering 20% increase in sales within 6 months

EGM Analysis, Market Research Assistant (1 month internship) 2020

- Produced 8 accurate data tables to summarise previous field activities using SPSS
- Presented daily key data summary to managers with a colleague
- Developed knowledge and interest in marketing and consumer goods

Red Lion Hotel, Newport Pagnell, Waitress (part-time summer work) 2020

- Provided professional, courteous dinner service in busy gastro-pub with 80 covers
- Maintained positivity and good working relationships in high-pressure service environment

Milton Keynes Hospital, Data Entry Clerk (part-time holiday work) 2020

- Developed administrative skills, and understanding of organisational processes
- Ensured accurate classification of records and meticulous proof reading
- Liaised with 6 hospital departments to compile datasets to tight deadlines

OTHER SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Languages: English – native; French – near-fluent; German – conversational
IT: Proficient in Excel and SPSS, WordPress, InDesign and MS Office
Music: Lead clarinettist in Milton Keynes Youth Band; member of National Youth Orchestra
Marketing Officer for Balliol College wind ensemble. Promoted concerts and managed ticket sales, increasing audience numbers by 30% in the first year
Sport: Balliol College women’s football team; training twice a week
Captain of St John’s School women’s football team (under 18s)
Travel: Extensive travel throughout Europe, including organising work placement in France

Cover letters

Always submit a cover letter if you have the chance. Aim to be focused and engaging. Make a strong and persuasive case built on your research and supported with evidence linked to your CV.

The cover letter gives you scope to:

- Showcase what interests and drives you, your enthusiasm for an organisation and the role.
- Align yourself with the organisation’s strengths, values and culture.
- Highlight your knowledge and strongest, most relevant skills for the position.

Try to sound professional yet conversational, rather than wordy or too stiff and formal. Write in clear, concise English – take care not to drown your reader with detail, and avoid jargon they may not understand. Search online for advice from [The Plain English Campaign](#), which offers simple, clear guidance on improving your writing style.

While this may sound simple, your early cover letters may go through three or four drafts (or even more!) before you are happy with them.

When you feel your cover letter is finished, put it down overnight (or at least for a couple of hours) before reading it through – aloud.

As you read, listen to yourself:

- Does it say clearly what you want it to say?
- Does it have your ‘voice’? Do you sound confident? Enthusiastic about the company? Excited about the role?
- If you insert a competitor company’s name, does the letter still read the same? If so, try to differentiate each letter more!
- Are there any sections that are hard to read or follow? If yes, try simplifying your language, using shorter sentences or try taking that section out completely.

This advice also applies if you are writing a speculative letter or application, perhaps asking an organisation if they can offer you work experience. State clearly why you are writing in your opening paragraph, and go on to outline two or three areas where your core skills and experiences best fit the organisation’s needs. Close with an indication of what you would like to happen next.

Top tips for cover letters

The outline letter opposite provides ideas about content and structure to enhance your letters.

- Keep it short – a concise letter demonstrates focus and strong communication skills.
- Project confidence – write with the assumption that they will interview you.
- Keep the tone and content professional – attempts at humour are best avoided.
- Include specific relevant details that show your research and how you consider they differ from their competitors – do not cut and paste content.
- As for CVs, double check for errors and typos: using a spell checker is not enough.
- Ask for feedback from a careers adviser.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/cover-letters

Your address
your.email@provider.com

Their address

Date

Dear . . .

OPENING PARAGRAPH: Simply state what you are applying for and where you found out about it. This tells the recruiter why they are reading the letter, and helps them know which promotional tools work. Briefly introduce yourself: what you are studying, where, and which year you are in or when you will finish.

Explain **why you are interested in the position and/or the organisation**. Differentiate yourself. Genuine enthusiasm and specific knowledge of the organisation will set you apart from those sending generic letters. Draw on your research to demonstrate understanding of the business and the way they work that goes beyond the corporate website. Reflect what you learnt from speaking with their staff: be specific about why you want to join the organisation or why the position is particularly attractive for you: back this up with evidence from your past, or link this to your broader career plans and aspirations.

Help the person reading your letter to understand **how you meet ‘essential’ requirements** for the role. State explicitly how you match their criteria, supported by evidence from your CV. Focus on your accomplishments and the most relevant transferable skills you have for the role. If you have good evidence for any ‘desirable’ traits in the job description, include this too. Even if you think the position is out of reach, you may convince the recruiter you are qualified enough and able to do the job – particularly if you demonstrate strong motivation elsewhere.

Support your claims with **examples from your CV**. You may build a stronger, more credible case by linking different experiences to highlight different aspects of competencies or development of a skill. Consider these examples:

- having run [named event] at school, I further developed my organisational skills when raising [£££] through a College fundraiser in my first year and, more recently, by leading [a major event] for the [named Society] attended by [number] of people.
- the [role applied for] would allow me use my passion for helping others, which underpins both my work as College Welfare Officer and the real sense of achievement I get from tutoring disadvantaged children through Oxford’s Schools Plus programme.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Keep it simple and clear. Thank the employer for their interest in your application and reiterate your desire to join the organisation. If known, refer to the next step: for example, ‘I look forward to interviewing with [Company name] in two weeks’, or ‘discussing the position with you soon’.

Yours faithfully, (if you started ‘Dear Sir or Madam’)
or
Yours sincerely, (if you addressed the letter to a specific person)

Signature

Application forms for employment and further study

Many applications, both for employment and further study, require an application form. You are more likely to be successful sending targeted applications, rather than a mass of near-identical forms.

Application forms usually include questions that prompt similar content to a good cover letter and/or competency-based interview questions, such as:

- Why are you interested in this role/organisation/career?
- What are your three strongest skills for this role?
- Provide an example of a time when ... [you have taken a leadership role].
- Outside your course, what extra-curricular activities are you involved in?
- Which relevant transferable skills can you demonstrate?

Draft your answers offline first, so you can:

- Bring your answers and job description to review with a career adviser at the Careers Service.
- Thoroughly check for typos.
- Ensure you don't lose your answers if the server 'times out'.
- Create a bank of material to help you answer similar questions asked by different organisations– but always tailor responses.
- Review your answers before your interview.

Always follow the instructions given. Stick to the word count if specified. Use concise sentences and active verbs.

Personal statements may be required if an organisation has listed the skills and experience needed for the role in detail. Aim to show how you meet each item on the list. Be guided by their sub-headings and consider using these to organise your own statement – making it even easier for recruiters to find the evidence they are looking for!

More information and examples
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/application-forms

Applications for further study

For most courses applications are made direct to each university. In Europe and North America most further study applications open during the autumn with deadlines between Christmas and Easter, but some do close earlier so check individual closing dates carefully. Some vocational courses have a centralised application system, notably graduate entry medicine, teacher training, and some law courses.

- Details differ, but you are likely to need the following:
- Application form.
 - Personal statement and/or research objective.
 - Transcripts of university exam results.
 - Two or three references.
 - CV.
 - Examples of written work.
 - Results of standardised tests (such as, GRE for the USA).
 - Payment of a fee.

More information
See [our guidance on types of further study, choosing a course, studying abroad, fees and funding](#) and www.careers.ox.ac.uk/further-study

How to reflect the same experience in a CV, cover letter and application form

For any application, you should lead with your best, most relevant experience for the role. It is likely, therefore, that you will want to refer to some experiences more than once in different elements of the process.

The paragraphs below illustrate how this might look for Siân Magellan's TOSCA leadership experience in her cover letter, application form and CV.

1. Cover letter

While participating in The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA), I developed my leadership skills by leading a team of five students to design and implement a marketing strategy to increase sales for our local start-up client. I organised our meeting schedule, allocated roles to each team member, coordinated with the client, implemented our surveys and ensured that we delivered our recommendations on time. As a result of my team's recommendations, six months later our client's sales have increased by 20% and I received excellent feedback both from the client and other members of my team.

2. Employer Application Form (EAF) Describe a time when you demonstrated leadership skills:

Last January I led a five-member team on The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA), a programme run by Oxford University Careers Service to build commercial awareness and team skills. Within this timeframe, my goal as team leader was to deliver a series of recommendations to our team's local start-up client to increase its sales. First I organised a series of meetings when all or most of us could get together to work on the project. Secondly I asked each team member to share their skills and insights into how they could contribute to developing an effective marketing

strategy. Thirdly, and based on the combined skillset of my team, I allocated roles to each member, covering research, survey design and implementation, budgeting and reporting. Having established a way forward, we then agreed a timeframe for each aspect of the project. As team leader, as well as being responsible for survey implementation, I remained the focal point of contact with our client, keeping them up to date with all our project implementation, key findings and asking for any clarifications when required. I also kept in touch regularly with each team member in between our team meetings so that I could deal with any unexpected delays or findings and keep our project on track. We delivered our recommendations on time to our client, who welcomed and implemented them all. Six months later, the client's sales have increased by 20% and our suggestions are still being followed.

3. CV

EXPERIENCE

Oxford University, The Oxford Strategy Challenge, Team Leader (Online)2020

- Led a team of 5 students to develop marketing strategy for local start-up
- Designed and executed electronic and phone surveys, engaging 250 participants
- Presented recommendations to client; all implemented within 3 months and delivering 20% increase in sales within 6 months

Recruitment assessments

Psychometric and online assessments were widely used even before COVID-19 greatly increased virtual recruitment. Online tests may be used as an initial screening stage or later in the process, and candidates may be retested at assessment centres.

Recruiters use online assessments to screen large numbers of candidates. See [the Careers Service's advice](#) on preparation and how to access free practice materials. To perform at your best in any assessment:

- Practice first to be familiar with the test and styles of questions so you can focus on finding correct answers rather than wasting time trying to understand how to answer the questions.
- Read instructions carefully and always use any practice questions offered by the recruiting company.
- Choose a time and place where you can focus without distraction.

In timed tests, work as quickly and accurately as possible. Read questions and answer-choices carefully. With multiple-choice questions, try to eliminate wrong answers quickly; for example, by using estimates in a numerical test to discard some options without working out every alternative. Keep an eye on the clock and do

not spend too long on any one question – if you get stuck, move on rather than wasting time.

Types of Assessments

Ability tests assess candidates' potential, not their knowledge. They are timed. Practice helps with familiarisation.

Numerical reasoning tests usually require only GCSE-level maths, and typically require candidates to extract information from charts and graphs, and calculate percentages and ratios. If your mental maths or calculator technique are rusty, start practising.

- Study different types of charts and financial reports in quality newspapers and the financial press.
- Attend the Careers Service's numeracy refresher sessions, advertised via CareerConnect.
- Brush up using maths revision games (for example, BBC Bitesize: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

Critical Thinking Assessments (for example, Watson-Glaser CTA), and some *verbal reasoning tests*, evaluate your ability to extract the details and main points from a short piece of information, sometimes requiring you to make logical inferences from the text. Effective practice can improve scores by supporting familiarisation with question types and with the range and subtleties of the distinctions you need to make. Use the free practice resources on the Careers Service's website linked above. You should also read broadly outside of your academic discipline (for example, technical and business journals) to become comfortable with different written styles and language.

Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) use a multiple-choice format and ask candidates to evaluate possible responses to work-related scenarios, or to identify the best (and worst) options. Scenarios frequently

create a tension between achieving an objective (the task), the resources needed, and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may need resolving first, or which conflict with the organisation's stated values. These tests require the candidate to make finely balanced decisions.

In-tray/e-tray exercises try to simulate the working environment and can combine aspects of any of the above (verbal; numerical; CTAs; and SJTs) in a time-pressured environment.

Game-based assessments use simple electronic games that require no special skills (or preparation). They can be engaging and fun, but remember they are still assessments!

Personality and Learning Style assessments evaluate traits and work style preferences. They are usually not timed, and there are no right or wrong answers. Answer intuitively as yourself.

Further study applications: tests and interviews

Admissions tests are rare in the UK for Masters and PhD programmes. However, some vocational programmes (for example, Medicine) do require test results, and there may be tests to demonstrate your language capability.

In North America, standardised tests are an almost universal part of the application process. You will most commonly come across the GRE, but others exist and it is important that you check both which tests are required for your chosen courses and the cut-off dates for taking these. Research requirements early for any course you are considering. Due to Covid many paused GRE requirements, but it may be widely used for 2023 entrance.

Equality and diversity: disclosure or being 'open'

If you feel that you might be at a disadvantage to others in the application and selection process (for example, in online tests or video interviews), owing to a disability, health condition or dyslexia and dyspraxia, then contact the recruiter beforehand to discuss if the process can be adapted or 'adjustments' could be made for you, for example, by giving you extra time in the timed tests. Your experiences of adjustments that are made for you at university are a good guideline for what to ask for, or advise a recruiter to put in place.





Many employers believe that individual interviews can't tell them enough about candidates and prefer to use a range of selection techniques incorporated into an assessment centre.

What to expect

Assessment centres (ACs) tend to be a few hours to a full-day in length and will consist of a range of selection methods such as aptitude tests, personality questionnaires, case studies, group discussions, spoken presentations, one-to-one interviews, socialising (which is still observed!) and meeting recent joiners.

In 2020–21, companies successfully moved ACs online and we expect many will continue to use virtual ACs in future.

Applicants will usually be assessed against selection criteria based on the company's competency framework, which defines the core abilities, skills and behaviours judged to be necessary for the role. These competencies are likely to include **key transferable employability skills** as well as company-specific competencies and/or technical skills for some roles.

- Typically, competencies include areas such as:
- Creativity, analytical skills and problem solving.
 - Effective communication skills and teamwork.
 - Business/commercial awareness.
 - Ability to influence/persuade.
 - Drive, initiative and flexibility.

A typical one-day assessment centre may consist of:

- Introduction and company presentation.
- Psychometric testing.
- In-tray exercise.
- A presentation.
- Lunch/socialising informally.
- Group exercise, solving a work-related problem.
- Interview(s): ranging from strengths-based to competency-based interviews.

The assessors will keep notes of how each candidate performs. Try to stay focused and in the moment throughout the day and stay positive even if you feel you under-performed in an exercise, as most skills will be assessed in more than one exercise and assessors are evaluating your overall performance.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/assessment-centres

Presentations and written reports

You may be asked to prepare some materials in advance of the assessment centre or be given some time to prepare on the day based on a case study. You will present to the assessors, and possibly other candidates. When preparing your presentation:

- Make sure that you understand what is required and the time you have both to prepare and to present.
- Consider your audience – this will influence the content, level and tone of your presentation.
- Timing is important as you will be stopped when your time is up.

Keep the structure simple:

1. Tell them who you are and what you are going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Summarise what you have told them.

Because time will be short, it is best to start with the key issue and your main conclusion or key recommendations. The rest of the presentation should support this conclusion.

- Structure your arguments and limit complexity – focus on three to six main messages.
- Support your ideas and themes with examples, statistics and facts, and (brief) anecdotes – but keep it moving to reach the end of your presentation.

Consider whether an interactive element would be appropriate given the context – in a teaching or training type role play, for example, this could be appropriate. Allow time for questions at the end if this feels appropriate.

Group exercises

The most important outcome for group exercises is for the group to deliver successfully against the given brief. This really is not about winning or losing!

Successful teams work together. They find and use the best contributions from across the whole team and good teamwork involves listening to, acknowledging, and following through on the ideas of others: it's about building on one another's strengths and contributions.

But yes, you are being assessed, and assessors can only judge you on the contributions they see, so it is important to get involved and make sure that your contribution is heard. Even if your ideas are not taken up by the group there are many alternative ways that you can gain recognition – for example, by leading, facilitating, generating ideas, encouraging, monitoring progress, re-capping/summarising, questioning, or analysing.

- Get a good grasp of any information you are

- given, but don't waste time on minute details.
- Use the information given and help the group clarify objectives and select decision-making criteria. Use these to keep the discussion focused on shared priorities.
- Be assertive and persuasive, but also diplomatic.
- Listen to what everyone else has to say, and try to get the best contribution from each person.
- Don't assume that shy or quiet members have nothing to contribute – ask for their thoughts.
- Find the balance between taking your ideas forward and helping the group to complete the task.
- Keep an eye on the time and overall objective of the exercise, and help ensure that the group keeps on track and delivers against the brief.
- Wear a watch so you can still keep track of time if there is no clock in the room.

In-tray exercises

In-tray or 'e-tray' exercises are a test of your ability to deal with a real work scenario. You may be given a simulated inbox full of emails, reports and other correspondence – or it may start nearly empty, but you can expect additional emails to arrive during the exercise.

- Employers are usually looking for you to prioritise your workload, draft replies, delegate tasks and recommend actions.
 - Keep focused – time is often short, so work quickly and avoid getting too absorbed in any single aspect of this task.
- Take care to:
- Read the instructions carefully and thoroughly.

- Prioritise what is most important or urgent by scanning the information.
- Identify which items you need to complete during the exercise (handling tasks that are both 'urgent & important' as a priority).
- Select which items could be delegated/referred to someone else and those that can be noted for completion 'later'.
- Highlight any resource constraints, conflicts between tasks, or implications for the organisation.
- If asked to draft a written response to any item, identify the main points of your response quickly and expand concisely on them.

Confident interviews

If you have been invited to interview, you have convinced the employer that you are suitable for the role on paper. An interview is your opportunity to confirm this impression, and demonstrate that you are what the hiring manager is looking for.



Remember interviews work both ways: you're interviewing the prospective company as well as being interviewed. I built up a good rapport during my Arup interview and knew the people I'd met would be great to work with but it definitely wasn't like that for all other interviews. Don't be afraid to turn down a job offer if you don't think it's the right fit for you.

— Tabitha Kennedy, Environmental Consultant, Arup. BA Geography, Hertford, 2016

How to prepare

Repeat the preparations detailed throughout this section, but in more depth. Re-read the job description and candidate specification, and ensure that you understand the job and the competencies required. Be clear about the points you absolutely want to make, and practise building them into different answers.

As a starting point, prepare some answers to typical questions, and practise answering them aloud. Articulating your answers is harder than thinking them over in your head, and saying them aloud will help you to sound more convincing and fluent on the day.

- Be clear on your motivations: why you want to work for the organisation and do that specific job.
- Be ready to show commercial awareness:
 - Consider how recent global events, current affairs and the economy may affect the organisation.

- Think about how the organisation competes in its market, and how it compares with its competitors.
- Read a quality broadsheet and be ready to offer an informed opinion on business and current affairs.
- Prepare some questions (note them down) to ask at the interview.

Support at the Careers Service

- Sessions for improving your interview skills are held each term, and dates and times are advertised in our weekly newsletter and on CareerConnect.
- Employer-led mock interviews are offered every term. You are able to make a recording to review at a later point, and the recruiter will give feedback to help improve your technique.
- You can also use a short discussion with a careers adviser to discuss interview technique or tackle some general interview questions.

Competency-based recruiting

Many companies still use competency frameworks to identify and group related skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities that are needed to be effective within their organisation and the range of situations typical for a particular role.


In interviews, competency-based questions are common and tend to follow the structure:

"Can you tell me about a time when.....?"
[insert competency here]


Using a simple framework to provide structure to your answer helps you to:

- Tell your story clearly and makes it easier for an interviewer to follow that story.
- Include all the most relevant and important points.

Structure your responses with these mnemonics:



Situation
Task
Action
Result



Context
Action
Result

For example, use the STAR outline to:

First: Briefly describe the specific SITUATION you were in.

Second: Describe the TASK you needed to accomplish. Give only enough detail for the recruiter to appreciate your contribution.

Third: Describe the ACTION(s) you took. Keep the focus on what you did rather than the efforts of the team, even for a group project.

Lastly: Describe the RESULT. Based on relevant measures of success, outline what happened and what you accomplished.

When appropriate, probably within an interview, you can extend this structure by including 'E' for **EVALUATION** (STARE):

- Highlight what you learned from the experience, or what you would change if you went through the process/experience again.
- Explain how this experience might be relevant in the role applied for.

Strengths-based recruiting

More and more graduate recruiters use this type of interview as they understand that employees will perform best when using their individual strengths. They aim to get the best out of you by focusing on your natural aptitude, what you enjoy doing and what engages you.

In this type of interview, interviewers may ask a wide range of questions to get a good feel of your personal abilities and will be looking not only at what you say but also how you say it; to see if your tone, body language and expression demonstrate a genuine motivation.

- They may ask questions such as:
- When are you at your best?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - What do you do well?
 - What do you love to do in your spare time?
 - How would a close friend describe you?
 - How do you feel when working on a disorganised project? What do you do in situations like this?
 - How do you ensure you maximise your time to achieve your goals and targets?
- In order to prepare you will need to think about your achievements academically, professionally and in an extra-curricular capacity. What have you done that you particularly enjoyed – why did you enjoy it? Also, as with all interviews, think about the organisation and the role you are interviewing for: does it allow you to use your strengths and natural talents?

On the day

- Plan your route and aim to arrive 15–30 minutes early to settle down and relax. Plan what you will do if there is an unexpected delay. Always have the name and telephone number/email of your main contact within the organisation.
- Consider what you are going to wear: be clean, neat and tidy, and dress appropriately for the environment you would be working in.
- First impressions are important: be ready to say hello with a confident handshake and steady eye contact.
- Remember – you are on show from the minute you arrive to the point that you leave.
- Be polite and friendly (but not over-familiar) to everyone you meet – receptionists, secretaries... everyone. Arrogance or rudeness will be noticed and will work against you.

In the interview(s)

- Don't be afraid of silence:

Top tips for answers

Try to use examples from different experiences, such as your studies, work experience, extra-curricular activities and volunteering.

- Be as clear as possible – many of us tend to ramble when we're nervous, so use specific examples that provide evidence of your skills and contribution.
- Feel free to use examples already mentioned on your written application: the interviewer will not have memorised all of them. Be ready, however, to go into more detail.
- Think about the structure of your answer to ensure you that get the relevant points across clearly. For competency-based questions, use the STAR/CAR mnemonic.
- A good interview is a dialogue, and you should take an active role in the conversation.
- If you are not sure that you understand the question, ask for clarification. Similarly, if you are wondering whether you have answered a question fully, you can ask the interviewer if they would like more information.

- Take time to think before answering.
- Make sure you answer the question you have been asked.
- Structure your answer so it is easy to understand.
- If you have finished – and the interviewer remains silent – don't keep talking to fill the gap.
- Be positive in everything you say:
 - Don't make negative comments about previous employers or tutors.
 - If asked about something that went wrong, outline what you learned from the experience and how you would handle it differently next time.
- Aim to keep answers reasonably short – if there is more that you could add, perhaps ask the interviewer if they would like more details or further examples.
- Don't let a friendly, informal interview style lull you into a false sense of security: you are still being assessed.
- Keep your answers professional, focused and relevant.
- Be aware of body language and try to maintain eye contact. This is particularly important in a panel interview, where eye contact can help you to engage all the panel members.

After the interview

As soon as possible after the interview, jot down notes of what was discussed, what you feel went well, and what didn't go well. Consider how you could

Prepare for the most typical questions

Employers will want to understand what your interests are, what you enjoy doing, and how these relate to the position, so some questions are quite common. They will want to understand what motivates you and how much insight you have into yourself, their company and the role – so be sure to prepare well and practise aloud for these FAQs.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What attracted you to this company?
- Why do you want this position?
- What will you bring to this role?
- Tell me about a time when you led a team/ completed a project/worked with someone you found difficult to work with.
- What would you do differently if faced with that (difficult) situation again?
- What do you consider your greatest strength?
- ...your greatest weakness?
- What has been your greatest achievement?

have responded differently and what you could add to strengthen your answer(s). This will help if you are asked similar questions in future – including during a final-round interview – if the organisation decides to drill deeper into areas that have already been assessed.

Handling offers or rejections

If you're offered a job and are still hoping to hear back from other recruiters, look up the advice on [handling offers on the Careers Service's website](#). If you are still unsure, discuss your situation with a careers adviser. If you are not offered the job, do feel free to contact the recruiter for feedback – it can be really helpful. Most importantly, learn from the experience and try not to lose confidence.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/types-of-interview
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/interview-technique
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/make-a-good-first-impression
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/case-study-style-interviews
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/telephone-video-interviews
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/handling-offers
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/handling-rejection

Virtual and phone interviews

Some employers have reverted back to in-person interviews now that COVID-19 restrictions have relaxed, but some are still using virtual interviews, particularly for first-round interviews. Prepare for phone or virtual interviews as if for a face-to-face interview – don't treat it any less formally.

If you're asked to do a video (or pre-recorded) interview, you'll be sent a video link and will complete the interview via webcam. You'll be asked a question, given a short time to prepare, and then have to record your answer; you can usually pause between questions but not after the question has been asked.

When preparing for the interview

- Ensure that you have privacy for the interview away from noise and distractions. Ask friends or family not to disturb you – put a sign on your door!
- Ensure your phone/laptop is charged, check the signal/internet access, and/or that the virtual platform the recruiter has invited you to use is working properly.
- Have your CV or application form available as a prompt, as well as some paper and a pen for making notes.
- The main difference between telephone and in-person interviews is the lack of visual cues, but your body language is still very important as it affects your confidence and performance.
- Dress smartly, even for a telephone interview – as this will affect your overall attitude and confidence.
- Smile! By smiling, you will sound friendlier and more confident.
- Use gestures as you would in a normal conversation; this will help you sound livelier. Vary your pace and pitch to avoid sounding 'flat'.
- If there are any long silences after your answer and you are not sure whether to continue, you can always ask, "Would you like me to expand further on that?"
- You can stick post-it notes around your screen if there's some information you really want to remember during the interview – the recruiter can't see them.

INDUSTRY SECTOR BRIEFINGS AND ALUMNI PROFILES

The overviews over the next 70 pages give you a summary of each sector followed by revealing insights from Oxford alumni about how they got into the sector, the skills they use day to day and how they made their applications stand out. This is an excellent place to start your research.

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ACADEMIA AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Working in the university sector offers a wide variety of professional roles from academic research to HR.

Academia – a career in academic research and/or teaching – can be a stimulating career option, with the potential for significant autonomy and flexibility in your working life. It is a challenging route that demands commitment to your area of research and to producing the publications, grant applications and projects expected by university departments. Competition for roles often means several years of insecurity while trying to find a permanent position.

It is near essential to have a **DPhil/PhD** in order to gain a permanent academic position in the UK and many other countries, though a small number of fixed-term research-assistant or technician roles for Masters graduates do exist. Following a DPhil/PhD, next steps include a postdoctoral research position or a fixed-term teaching contract; in some subjects it may be possible to move directly into a junior lectureship. Independent fellowships offer a grant to develop your own research, so attract many applicants. Postdocs, fellowships, assistant and technical roles may last from six months to several years.

Early career academics often take on a variety of roles as stepping stones to a permanent position, or towards a ‘portfolio career’ with academic work one of several strands such as consultancy, editorial or advisory work. Permanent lectureship roles combine research and teaching with administration duties, such as organising seminars and committee work. There are very few permanent teaching or research-only academic roles.

Professional support roles in universities typically offer a stimulating range of activities, including opportunities to develop policy and interact with academics engaged in cutting-edge research. The range of specialisms extends from HR legal and finance roles through to research and teaching support, libraries, catering, fundraising, publicity and more. These roles often offer greater stability than an academic pathway.

“Working at the interface of research, teaching and action is very exciting. Persistence, courage and being strategic are all key to making academia work for you.”

Getting in and entry points

For academic roles: Networking during your DPhil/PhD to hear of posts through contacts, and know people to advise you on applications. Postdoc positions are advertised year-round, but fellowship deadlines can be up to one year before they start. Junior research fellowships – most offered at Oxford, Cambridge – are highly competitive, and are advertised year-round, with many open between February and April. Lectureships are advertised year-round for the UK (though often in line with the academic cycle) and from September to December for North America.

For professional support roles: jobs appear throughout the year, and are advertised on jobsboards such as jobs.ac.uk, as well as on university vacancies pages. For roles such as admissions and outreach, recent student experience is advantageous, though opportunities to move into professional roles extend from entry-level to the most senior positions.

Extra-curricular ideas

For an academic pathway:

- Before doing a DPhil/PhD, gain experience by supporting research in some way. Ask academics in your field how you might assist, or get tutoring or teaching experience with any age group.
- During a DPhil/PhD, get university teaching experience or tutor on programmes such as The Brilliant Club.
- Start building a network around your area of interest. Join relevant societies, and attend Careers Service talks on developing a professional network within academia.
- Get your work out there; submit articles for publication and help with outreach events.
- Speak at conferences, or organise one yourself.
- Apply for internships with non-UK universities and/or industry to gain international and practical experience, for example, those offered by the Careers Service.

For professional support roles:

- During your studies, get involved in extracurricular activities in your department or college.
- Search the professional, managerial and support roles advertised on www.jobs.ac.uk to identify roles of interest. Most professional-support functions are filled by university graduates.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/academia
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/researchers

Oliver Hedges

Major Initiatives Assistant, Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, University of Oxford.
 BA History, New College, 2016

“What: I started working for the University of Oxford a year after graduating. I have been in administrative roles within the Sports Department, Medical Sciences and History of Art. I now work within Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach delivering two large outreach projects: Opportunity Oxford and Foundation Oxford. These act as bridging programmes, allowing disadvantaged students to improve their skills and potentially gain a place at Oxford which they may not otherwise receive. It is incredibly rewarding to organise events and projects that help others have the university experience that I enjoyed.”

Why: After university I started applying for graduate schemes. It was only part-way through this process that I realised that this was not the life, nor were these the careers, that I wanted. I started my first job in the Sports Department almost accidentally; a friend recommended I apply for a sabbatical sports position. During that year-long contract I realised that I wanted to stay within the university environment, and within Oxford. Since then, I have moved between departments regularly, and have discovered just how varied and interesting working at a Higher

Education institution can be. There is such a wide range of roles and skills needed that every job has felt fresh. I personally really enjoy project and event management and have been able to take positions that allow me to explore these areas further.

Advice: Be open to the different roles and careers you can have after leaving Oxford. Do not just focus on the ‘traditional’ Oxford career paths, as you may overlook something more enjoyable. You also do not have to settle on a career immediately after leaving Oxford. Give yourself space to explore different opportunities. Finally, when considering your career choices, you should factor in the external factors and priorities you may have, as well as the career path itself. These could include where you would work; what the work-life balance is like; and whether it is compatible with everything you want to do outside of the job.



Dr Lena Rose

Lecturer, University of Konstanz (Germany); Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Law Faculty at Oxford, 2019–2022; DPhil in Social and Cultural Anthropology, St Cross College, 2013–2019; MSc Migration Studies, Kellogg College, 2012–2013.

“What: I am an anthropologist by training – my research is situated at the intersection of migration, law, and religion. My work examines the tension between power, culture, and religion in asylum processes of converts to Christianity in Europe, through ethnographic observation of court proceedings, interviews, and case law analysis. In my doctorate, I conducted research among a Christian minority in the Middle East to understand how they navigated their belonging to, and also shaped, ‘global Christianity’. I have published my work widely, provided expert opinions on BBC Radio 4, and am currently preparing my first monograph.”

Career path: My career path has crossed a number of disciplines. I funded my DPhil through various scholarships and lots of work as a research assistant, which took longer but added valuable research experience. I was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship straight out of my DPhil, which has allowed me to expand my research.

Pros: If you are passionate about your subject, being an academic is extremely stimulating; you get to teach bright students,

interact with international colleagues, have time to read, think, write, and design projects at the forefront of your field, and, depending on your area, translate results into real world impact.

I particularly like my periods of immersive ethnographic research which allow me to experience different life-worlds and deeply challenge my thinking and perceptions.

Cons: The financial return and long-term job security don't necessarily reflect the high level at which you work, nor what you may have invested into your education and development. This is generally true for the first ten years post PhD.

Top tips/advice: Create a network of academics who share your research interests from an early stage – present at relevant conferences, publish in and beyond academia, and don't be shy to reach out to scholars whose work you like; Twitter is a great tool.





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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/iia




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UK and international internships available in a wide variety of sectors, carried out in person or remotely.

ACCOUNTANCY AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

The financial services sector includes some of the largest graduate recruiters and offers positions across a wide range of functional roles (such as, legal, HR and technology roles) alongside financial and advisory roles. A high degree of comfort with numbers is important for finance-related roles, as well as key employability skills such as communication, team-working, problem-solving and analytical skills.

In many areas, graduates can expect to study for a professional qualification alongside their work, which provides a firm foundation for a professional career. Most employers will pay for the training and routinely offer study leave to trainees. Accountancy training normally takes three years, and actuarial training from three to seven years.

Accountancy

Accountants work in varied roles across a broad range of service areas, including advisory, assurance, corporate finance, tax and risk. Accountants play a key role in decision-making by providing accurate financial information and analysis for management. Therefore, organisations look for people with strong commercial awareness and good interpersonal skills – not just ‘number-crunchers’! There are opportunities in both commercial and public sector organisations at firms of all sizes. The larger organisations, including the ‘Big 4’ (Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC), have broadened their focus to provide strategic advisory services, and now also include large management consultancy practices.

Chartered accountants provide professional advice to fee-paying clients, small businesses, large organisations, and individuals – in areas such as audit, financial reporting, insolvency and restructuring.

Management accountants usually work in-house (although they can be external), and their role is to advise an organisation’s senior management about the financial repercussions of business decisions, and to monitor corporate spending.

Actuarial work

Actuaries are risk management experts, applying mathematical tools to assess the probability and risk of future events. Actuarial assessments are used in

various industries, especially the pensions, insurance and investment sectors. Most successful candidates will have a numerate degree (such as, mathematics, statistics, economics), but students from other disciplines can demonstrate their numerical ability by passing the Certificate in Financial Mathematics (CT1) exam.

Insurance

Insurance is focused on protecting the value of an individual’s or organisation’s assets, and has huge breadth, including corporate insurance, personal insurance, reinsurance, and life assurance.

Firms are similarly diverse. Employers are generally open to graduates of all degree disciplines, although some employers have a preference for numerate degrees.

Getting in and entry points

Meet firms at our virtual careers fairs in Michaelmas term and at company presentations, and monitor your target firms’ websites.

Accountancy: The large accounting firms open graduate recruitment during the summer in the year before graduation. Positions in London fill quickly in Michaelmas term, so apply early, whilst vacancies for regional offices may exist late into the year. Firms with smaller annual recruitment targets will typically open vacancies in Michaelmas term or recruit on an on-going rolling basis. It can also be worth considering a speculative approach to small firms even if no ‘graduate programme’ is advertised.

Actuarial work and insurance: Graduate programmes will vary depending on the size of firm and areas of specialism, and application deadlines also vary, so research and prepare applications early.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Demonstrate your interest in the sector by becoming active in related student societies – such as the Oxford Guild or the Oxford Finance Society.
- Show your financial acumen as treasurer for a society or JCR/MCR.
- Help run an event that makes a profit, from charity fundraising to a college ball.
- Apply to ‘insight days’ and ‘spring week’ programmes as a first year (or a second year on a four-year degree).
- Attend the Careers Service [Insight into Strategy and Management programme](#).

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/accountancy

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/actuarial-profession

Sophia

Business Development, Admiral Insurance
Classics, Exeter College, 2017



What: I joined Admiral’s general graduate scheme in 2017 after graduating with a classics degree.

Admiral is one of the largest car insurance providers in the UK with a presence in eight countries, including Spain, Italy, and France. After completing the scheme, I accepted a full-time role within the business development team, which acts as an internal consulting function to help shape the future of the business.

Why: I was initially drawn to the 18-month graduate scheme because it encourages you to rotate around different areas of the business. I wasn’t entirely sure what I wanted to do when I left university, so I was keen to join a graduate scheme where I was able to do a bit of everything. With a variety of different departments and products within several different markets, I was able to shape the graduate scheme to suit my specific interests, which was a huge bonus.

The length of the scheme was just right and it allowed for quick progression into a permanent role. The multinational nature of the business also meant there were opportunities to work internationally, which is something that I had always wanted in my career.

A financial services company may not sound like the best fit for a classics graduate; however, my degree has helped me in surprising ways during my career so far. I was able to apply learnings from my philosophy and logic modules to areas such as pricing and IT, and I was able to apply my analytical and creative thinking to areas such as product development and problem solving. If you’d told me during my first year that my classics degree would help me to understand rating tables, coding and product development, I don’t think I would have believed you!

Advice: A career within financial services or insurance isn’t just for graduates from numerical backgrounds; as a humanities student you have valuable transferable skills, so don’t be afraid of applying.



Ian McFarlane

Actuarial Associate, APR LLP
BA Maths, Balliol College, 2017



What: As an actuarial student, my job is broadly to predict and manage financial risks, largely in insurance, pensions or investments. At APR, most of our work involves being placed in a client company, working alongside the client’s own actuarial teams to perform this analysis, so that we can offer additional expertise and a fresh perspective. Our work is important as we help these companies protect and enhance their assets, which in turn protects policyholders.

Why: I always wanted to use the maths and statistics I’d learned as a student in my work, and being an actuary is the perfect career for that. The role is technically challenging and allows for continuous progression, thanks to the variety we get from moving around clients and projects – each one is different and there is always something new you can learn. My organisation has a strong and comprehensive training programme, with a lot of scope to tailor this to each person’s strengths and interests as you progress. These opportunities mean that there’s always a sense of moving forward and developing professionally – I’ve learned a lot in just one year here!

Main challenges: Balancing work and studying for the actuarial exams is very different to being a full-time student, and definitely takes some getting used to. My employer is very supportive and has a generous allowance of study days (days you can take off work to study in the lead-up to the exams), but it takes a lot of commitment, so make sure you’re aware of this before choosing an actuarial career.

Advice: Before you apply, make sure you understand the job as fully as possible – actuaries work in lots of different sectors and the job is more varied than you may initially think. It’s also worth looking into how the exams work and how much study is required – employers usually won’t expect you to study for these on your own beforehand, but they’ll want to be clear that you’re committed and informed.




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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/fmf

ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND PR

Dynamic, diverse and fast-moving, this sector offers roles for graduates from all degree disciplines. There are some 10,000 agencies in the UK, from specialists to multinationals offering services across the full span of communication specialisms.

Employers look for creative graduates who have high-level communication, analytical, and organisational skills and a keen interest in digital and social media. Different roles at agencies commonly include creatives, account management, strategic planning, media planning and buying, and production.

Graduates from STEM subjects and people with IT skills are increasingly in demand because of data analytics to unlock insights into customer behaviour, and the potential for application of AI (artificial intelligence) to exploit the rapidly evolving digital landscape. The sector offers numerous opportunities for social media strategists, analysts, web developers, and user experience (UX) designers.

Fields of operation (and terminology) for agencies in the sector overlap, but can be broken down as follows:

- **Advertising** uses paid-for space across all media to motivate people to buy products and services, or to alter their attitudes.
- **Public Relations (PR)** involves managing and enhancing reputations (people, products or services), principally by influencing the media. Tools range from press releases to promotional events.
- **Public Affairs** is similar to PR but focuses on persuading policymakers to adopt particular viewpoints.
- **Marketing Agencies** will advise on brand strategy, management and communications, and provide services across the range of advertising, market research, media planning and buying, PR, distribution, sales strategy, etc.
- **Market Research** seeks to understand people's preferences to inform product development and/or marketing campaigns.

Opportunities exist in cities all over the UK but the main cluster of agencies are in London. Large agencies and PR consultancies are often international in scope, with some having a parent company based in another country.

Getting in and entry points

Most agencies recruit into specific roles as positions

arise, with a few offering specific graduate schemes (and internship programmes). Applications for these often open during the summer – deadlines can fall early, some before the end of October.

Expect competition for advertised positions to be intense, but there are alternative routes into agencies. This is a highly networked sector. It is therefore very helpful to be visible and known: work experience is important, and speculative approaches for full-time roles, internships or work experience are often welcomed as they demonstrate interest, motivation and initiative.

These industries thrive on creativity, so think about making your speculative approach a little different too. Not all agencies want a traditional CV, and creative alternatives can sometimes be effective, such as an infographic or videographic CV. A website or blog are good forums to showcase skills, and it is important to use social media to keep in touch with agencies' latest work and to hear first about new opportunities – but candidates are advised to manage their own web-visibility carefully!

Agencies are not the only option however. Marketing and communication roles are needed in all sectors, and there are many prestigious graduate programmes with larger companies in brand management, marketing and market research (consumer business insight), and general management roles – deadlines often fall in November and December. You can also gain experience as an in-house marketing assistant, for example with a charity or technology firm, as a foundation to build on.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Get involved in the marketing of an event, fundraiser, or any aspect of promotion of a student society and enhance your use of social media.
- The Oxford Strategy Challenge, run by the Careers Service, gives you first-hand practical experience and insight and often has marketing and communication projects.
- Get involved promoting Oxford SU's campaigns.
- Stay abreast of the industry through key resources, such as *Marketing Week*; *Campaign Live*, and The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) website.
- Apply to be 'brand ambassador' for a recruiter looking to raise their profile at Oxford.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/advertising
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/marketing
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/public-relations

Rachel Ballard

Marketing Consultant, The Value Engineers
 Music, New College, 2016

What: I'm a consultant at The Value Engineers (TVE), a strategic marketing consultancy. From day one you're thrown right into the deep end: real projects, with real responsibilities and client interaction almost instantly. My first projects covered an array of brands, from Sony to Angry Birds to McDonald's, and a broad spectrum of work, from creating the next best cheese product, to developing a holiday journey for a customer, to tracking interest in the biggest tech brands on a global scale. This variety has continued throughout, and is a hugely valuable aspect of the job and my enjoyment of it.

How: When I graduated I knew that, although music would always remain a hobby, I didn't want a career in it. But I had very little idea of what I did want as a career. It was at a Careers Service event that I saw a talk given by TVE. It was like a penny dropping. They spoke about the variety of work and brands, but also that they were looking for graduates who could think creatively, strategically and rigorously. Until then I didn't realise it was this balance I was looking for from a career. Now it seems fairly obvious.

Top tips: It's OK not to know what to do and it's OK to take your time to find out. If you find something you really want and truly believe you're suited to, then you have a much better chance of getting the job and of enjoying it.

I found my organisation thanks to the Careers Service. Attend as many talks and events as you can and use all the resources available; unsurprisingly, it's invaluable knowledge and advice.

If you don't ask you won't get. Talk to anyone you can about careers, applications or interviews. You have nothing to lose and it could give you that winning edge or sector knowledge that makes the difference.

Really think about what you'll enjoy from a career and why. You'll pinpoint roles that will suit you faster (and avoid wasting time on applications that don't), plus self-knowledge shows maturity and thoughtfulness – two things employers are keen to find.



Melanie Eckersley

Strategist, Mother
 Fine Art, Lady Margaret Hall, 2015

What: I work as a strategist at a communications agency. Communications is a bit of a catch-all term including advertising, PR and design; my role is all about connecting the dots between brands, people and culture. For my role, I interrogate what a brand wants to communicate and why, what real people ('consumers') want or need and how the brand fits into wider culture. As a result, communications is key to aiding the growth of the business and ensuring the brand appears desirable and truly relevant. Remember that tone deaf Kendall Jenner Pepsi advert in which she 'solved racism' by sharing a can with police? Another way to describe my job is making sure fiascos like that don't happen!

Why: My job has a lot of parallels with working as an artist. When I attended The Ruskin School of Art, my art was often intended to be experienced in specific ways. I would consider what I wanted to make people think and feel. Of course, people bring their own life experiences with them, meaning their interpretation never exactly equalled my intention. But I loved the process of creating something and trying to get a stranger to understand it, and that's pretty much what communications strategy is all about.

It's great in that every project is different; you get to work with super creative people; it's informal and collaborative. But there are also some other elements worth bearing in mind: projects have tight deadlines, which can mean late nights; creativity is subjective after all so you can't be too precious about your ideas; it can take a year of interning before you land a permanent job.

Top tips: For budding copywriters and art directors – consider doing an advertising course to help you pull together a 'book' of ideas, for example, Watford or School Communications Arts.

For those interested in client servicing, strategy or production, look up internships at agencies like Mother, Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH), Grey and Engine.

The best tip I ever got was to reach out directly to people whose career you admire. Just ask if they have time for a virtual coffee. People love talking about themselves! And the more you do it, the less weird it will feel.



BANKING AND INVESTMENT

Opportunities in this sector are many and varied, so if you are interested in finance you should be able to find the role and firm that's right for you.

Generally, this sector can be split into the buy-side and the sell-side, within which there are a variety of roles offering very different remuneration, work/life balance and skill requirements.

The buy-side (investment)

The buy-side make money for their clients including high-net-worth individuals, companies, governments, pension funds etc by investing their capital in various financial products. Their aim is to deliver higher rates of return by devising effective investment strategies.

You may have heard of terms including hedge funds, pooled funds, mutual funds etc. All of these fall broadly under the asset management umbrella and have roles including fund managers, analysts, researchers and operations analysts. All have different skill sets but as an investment analyst you would typically conduct research and analysis to make decisions about which companies to start or stop investing in.

The sell-side (banking)

The sell-side provide a market for their clients (the buy-side) to purchase financial products; this is known as market-making. They also provide complementary research and custodian services (the holding of assets). The market-making roles, often referred to as 'markets' or 'secondary capital markets' include sales, trading and research roles.

The sell-side also has another core function in helping companies raise capital. This can be in the form of debt (similar to you taking out a credit card or loan) or equity (selling a part of their company). These markets are often referred to as DCM (debt capital markets) and ECM (equity capital markets).

Quantitative/Proprietary Trading firms, also sometimes known as "electronic market makers", are another significant part of the sector. These firms develop trading strategies based on quantitative analysis using automated trading models, and typically hire graduates with masters and PhDs in STEM subjects.

Mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance

The other function of investment banks and other specialist corporate finance houses is to help companies to restructure through buying or selling parts of, or their whole company, or

merging with another company. This is known as M&A and the function most readily associated with 'investment bankers'.

This is a deals-based, high-profile function and often the most competitive. Bankers in this area often work the longest hours, and are among the most highly remunerated.

Getting in and entry points

This is a highly competitive sector so proper research and preparation are key to securing the right job.

You don't need to have studied a finance-related degree, but it's important to have a keen interest in, and understanding of, the wider concepts within the banking industry and global markets. You also need a high degree of analytical intelligence and the ability to build and maintain good working relationships in what can be a competitive and pressurised environment.

In order to secure a full-time graduate role getting work experience is very important, and even a requirement for some firms. It's important to note that most banks, and increasingly asset management firms, use their internships as a major pipeline for their graduate programmes. Look for banking 'spring weeks' (typically one-week work experience) in your pre-penultimate year and summer internships (8–12 weeks) in your penultimate year to gain as much experience and exposure as possible.

Have a good understanding of application deadlines; these are usually in early Michaelmas term and often work on a rolling basis, (they are reviewed as and when people apply) so there is a benefit to applying early.

If you don't get an internship in your penultimate year, all is not lost; a number of the large banks offer 'off-cycle' internships for those who have just graduated and smaller boutique banks, corporate finance houses and trading firms offer less rigid recruitment processes.

See the more detailed briefing on our website for further information on the skills required and recruitment timeframes associated with the different job functions.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Engage with employers at careers fairs, etc, especially in Michaelmas term.
- Join and actively participate in relevant student societies: for example, the Oxford Alpha Fund, CapitOx, the Oxford Guild, and the Oxford Finance Society.
- Demonstrate your skills at managing finances by overseeing your own fantasy fund or learn a valuation methodology such as discounted cash flow (DCF).
- Apply to 'insight days' or 'spring week' programmes in your first year (or second year of a four-year degree).

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/banking-investment

Oliver Brophy

Investment Banking Analyst, HSBC
MBiochem, Trinity College, 2020



What: As an analyst within Debt Capital Markets on the Emerging Markets desk at HSBC, I advise clients across corporate, financial and public sectors in Central & Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, on raising debt capital from international investors, primarily through the issuance of bonds. On a more day-to-day level, my work is broadly split into two categories: client coverage and deal execution. The former involves more "flow" style coverage, such as sending frequent market updates and new issue pricing levels to clients, as well as preparing more event-driven pitching materials, while the latter encompasses the entire issuance process, including the preparation of legal documentation and marketing materials, arranging and running investor meetings, and final transaction pricing and allocation.

Why: Having read Biochemistry at university, the answer to this question is perhaps not as immediately obvious as for some, but coming into banking from a non-financial background is much more common than you might think. I really enjoyed my degree and would absolutely still choose it if I had my time again,

but I just didn't see myself in a career in science. I knew I wanted to work in a fast-paced environment, one that placed emphasis on collaboration and teamwork, and have always been more quantitative and analytical in my approach, so finance felt like a natural fit.

Advice: Back yourself, back your skills and don't be afraid of the unknown. Many opportunities don't require you to have a specific background or knowledge-base, but rather the ability to learn, to apply your existing skills and, perhaps most importantly, the willingness to do so. It can often be daunting trying something completely new, but getting outside your comfort zone is so important for personal growth, and not doing so can mean you miss out on fantastic opportunities that may be perfect for you.



Nicole R

Quantitative Trader
MMath Mathematics, Trinity, 2019



What: Market-making firms connect buyers with sellers. A supermarket is essentially a market-maker; it connects food producers with consumers, and the consumer pays a premium for the convenience the supermarket provides and the risk the supermarket takes (the risk being that no-one wants to buy their food). Financial market-makers such as Jane Street provide an analogous service, by facilitating the movement of financial products between market participants.

I work as a quantitative trader, so day-to-day, I do a combination of paying attention to live markets, researching, and writing code. When I'm watching live markets, I monitor our algorithms to ensure they're doing the trades we desire, and react to unforeseen circumstances and changing market conditions. Doing research involves building new models or investigating new potential trading strategies. Once the research is complete, I write code in order to implement the changes recommended by the research.

Why: I wanted a job where I felt like I was still learning every day, and I definitely get that as a trader. Life as a trader involves reacting quickly to changing market conditions, as well as using cutting-edge mathematical modeling techniques and technology. The nature of the job means that there is always more to learn.

Working in a trading firm feels a bit like being in a STEM department working on a problem set with your friends. The big difference is that the problems are considerably more involved, usually don't have tidy solutions, and the stakes are higher because you don't get given the answer if you can't figure it out. For me, it's satisfying to know that when you do figure something out, it will have real-world consequences as opposed to just being an answer to an abstract problem.

Advice: Internships and in-house programmes are your friends! It's really difficult to know what a job actually entails before joining, and internships are a great way to test out a job or an industry with no strings attached. You also get the opportunity to talk to lots of full time employees and learn about what they like (and don't like) about their work. Plus, you get to meet a bunch of like-minded people - your fellow interns - and try out something new somewhere new.





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DA VINCI

Main location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

About us: Da Vinci is a unique trading firm made up of some of the brightest minds in the industry. We were founded in 2015 by a group of passionate professionals who wanted to do things differently. Every day, we work hard to build the best proprietary trading house in the world through our innovative approach to trading, culture and tech. We identify opportunities based on short to medium-term strategies and we provide liquidity to the markets. Our philosophy towards work is best captured by "Be good, work hard and great things will happen". We are meritocratic by nature and believe in empowering our colleagues. We hire the most talented people, continuously challenge them, give them room to experiment and provide everything they need to reach their full potential.

Opportunities available: Graduate roles for Traders, Quant Researchers and Software Engineers

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Candidates are advised to apply through our website by uploading their CV and motivation: davincitrading.com/careers

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Jane Street®

Main locations: London, New York, Hong Kong

About Us: Jane Street is a quantitative trading firm with offices worldwide. We hire smart, humble people who love to solve problems, build systems, and test theories. You'll learn something new every day in our office—whether it's connecting with a colleague to share perspectives, or participating in a talk, class, or game night. Our success is driven by our people and we never stop improving.

Opportunities available: Full time and Summer internship opportunities are available in Quantitative Trading, Software Engineering, Quantitative Research, and Business Development.

Graduates sought: Mathematics, Computer Science, Physics and other highly quantitative subjects are preferred. No finance experience is necessary.

Vacation work: Summer internships are available. We think of our internships as an investment in the future of Jane Street, and for good reason – a significant fraction of our new employees over the past several years were once interns!

Application Advice: Applications are open all year round, but early application is encouraged. Please submit your CV online via our website. A cover letter is not required, however, you have the option to add further info about yourself in the comments section of the application.

www.janestreet.com

DA VINCI

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Opportunities available: Quantitative Strategists, Software Engineers, Algorithm Developers.

Graduates sought: Students of all academic levels from STEM disciplines.

Vacation work: Summer and off cycle internships available for penultimate year undergraduate or postgraduate students.

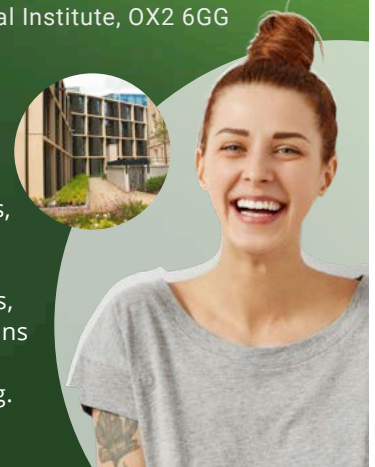
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BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

From multinational companies to city councils, business permeates all organisations. The range of opportunities spans a wide range of functions including strategy, HR, IT, finance, marketing, logistics and sales to name but a few.

Many Oxford graduates enter this sector for a career with prospects of early management responsibility, high salaries, excellent benefits and the possibility of working globally.

Given the breadth of roles available within business and management, it makes sense to consider the type of business you want to work in (small tech start-up to major supermarket chain), and the sort of role that appeals to your strengths and interests but, generally speaking, management activities include:

- Defining objectives, allocating resources, meeting targets and taking responsibility for the business decisions.
- Project work.
- Recruiting, supervising, motivating and developing staff, to ensure effective teamworking.
- Effective communication.
- Controlling finances and managing budgets.
- Problem solving and dealing with complaints.
- Managing change.

The opportunity to enter general management is often seen as a stepping stone that in time can either remain as a standalone function particularly in a manufacturing or retail organisation, or to carve a particular professional route in one area. Graduates can be recruited by a variety of industries and sectors such as consumer goods, retail, energy, healthcare, transport and leisure. Management and leadership opportunities aside, job titles across 'business' can vary significantly and so deciphering what is involved in the role is crucial: if strategy and problem solving really appeal, look out for business analyst graduate roles; for growing a business (including sales), look out for business development executive roles.

Getting in and entry points

Many organisations offer management positions that specialise in specific areas, such as technology, marketing, finance, human resources or distribution, all of which have an element of general management work within them.

Other graduate schemes offer the chance to try different 'rotations' over the course of typically two years before deciding to specialise. Competition for these schemes can be intense. Many of these opportunities will open in August and September with deadlines on a rolling basis. Students who have gained commercial insight via an internship or position of responsibility during their degree are likely to be at an advantage when applying for graduate schemes or management roles. Demonstrating motivation for the business you apply to is essential, as is showing your ability to work with people and build relationships.

Deadlines for internship schemes, usually aimed at penultimate-year students, also tend to be in Michaelmas or early Hilary term. If you want to gain some experience in a company that doesn't appear to advertise an internship, approach them speculatively for some experience or a shadowing opportunity. While multinational corporations offer a number of internships and graduate roles, it's worth remembering that the majority of businesses are small or medium sized, in which case research businesses in your local area and find out if you can help out with any office tasks or projects during the vacation.

Looking further ahead, if your aim is to reach the managing director role in an organisation, most large companies will look for someone with experience in more than one management area and in more than one company so be prepared to work in different businesses across the industry.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Run a mini-business that has to turn a profit, such as a theatrical production or a college ball.
- Make use of the Oxford Foundry, the entrepreneurial centre for Oxford students.
- Sign up for **Insight into Strategy and Management**, to learn core elements of strategy, marketing and management and learn how to build a profit-and-loss account.
- Join **The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA)** for an insight into the challenges faced by real businesses and for the opportunity to help solve problems faced by local companies.
- Become a campus ambassador for a large company (many employers advertise these via CareerConnect).
- Sign up for other relevant student organisations such as the Oxford Strategy Group and Oxford Women in Business.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/business-management

Catherine Haigh

Sales Account Manager, Procter & Gamble (P&G)
BA Human Sciences, Keble College, 2017

What: People often ask me how I ended up in sales after doing a degree like human sciences – without having done a more specific degree. The answer, for me, is simple: people. If you don't understand your consumer, you're not going to get anywhere in sales. I currently work for P&G as a national account manager. I manage our Pampers & Gillette business with Amazon and Ocado UK. Put simply, I sell the nappies to Amazon, and Amazon sell them on to the consumer. Within this process, I have to forecast my sales (very tricky during the COVID-19 peak), negotiate with my buyer on launching new products, build longer-term growth strategies, manage my budgets and spend day-to-day and build a good relationship with my retail partners. The revenue of these businesses is worth over £45 million a year, and I'm accountable for that number (great when it goes up; harder when it goes down).

Work experience: I completed a ten-week sales internship in my company's Harrogate office in the long vacation between my second and third year at Oxford, and the experience was invaluable. I got to work on genuine, meaningful projects and received coaching. I was offered a sales account manager role upon completing my degree, which I chose to defer for a year.

In that year, I worked in Santiago (Chile) for three months, back-packed around India and started filming a documentary.

Top tips:

- Double-check the key details. The worst thing is to fire off an email only to realise two seconds later that you've addressed it to the wrong company or included someone else's product. I unfortunately sent off my Unilever application with the title 'Dear P&G' – no surprises, I never heard back. Ask the people nearest and dearest to you to proofread your application. Family, friends, or a careers adviser – most people will be happy to give your first stab at a cover letter a read. A second set of eyes can make a world of difference.
- STAR – this is not just another annoying acronym. Situation, Task, Action and, most importantly, RESULT. Too many applicants, when asked to provide a 'A scenario when you did X' are great at reeling off details on the situation, what the problem was and the action they took. However, don't forget to share the result of your actions.



Ann-Marie Jay

Business Analyst (IT Analysis and Design), REED Specialist Recruitment
Earth Sciences, Worcester College, 2017

What: My teammates and I are involved in all non-technical aspects of the software development process at REED – from analysis of a problem through to ensuring any development meets business stakeholder requirements.

Career path: After graduating, I worked at the Oxford Careers Service and as a private tutor while recovering mentally from completing my degree and figuring out what I wanted to do. I found the experience invaluable and it enabled me to mentally adjust to post-degree life.

How: In September 2018, I joined the REED graduate training scheme. My first role was as an employment adviser working on a government welfare-to-work programme; I loved the team but I interviewed for my current role when the opportunity came up to try something that was a better fit for me.

The business analyst role is not technical – I have absolutely no knowledge of coding – and it allows me to engage my problem-solving and creative-thinking skills. I'm also involved with projects across the business and am exposed to all aspects of the recruitment process; it provides valuable industry insights

and a huge number of connections. Although I no longer work in an operational role to support and enable people, I have been able to work with local universities to support their care-experienced and estranged students.


Lessons learned:

- Ask for help when you need it.
- Don't let fear stop you from making a change or taking on a new challenge.
- Taking a break is not necessarily a bad thing – it will allow you to refocus your energy.
- You can't enable someone who doesn't want to help themselves.
- Every opportunity to improve on yourself is a gift.
- Make the most of any careers/networking advice and support available to you – through the Careers Service, friends and family, and professional mentoring.





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- Women in education

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BUSINESS WITH PURPOSE

The phrase 'business with purpose' is not a new sector in the traditional sense, but terminology that seeks to define the changes we are seeing within the business world.

There has been a huge shift in the business sector over the last few years, with a large proportion of companies putting a greater focus on sustainability initiatives, social and environmental impact, and employee welfare. This is sometimes referred to as ESG: environmental, social and governance matters. As well as this section, take a look at the [business and management overview](#), [charity and social enterprise overview](#), and [energy, sustainability and the environment overview](#) in this Guide.

A huge range of roles exist in this area, from operational, financial and managerial (for example, sustainability manager, supply chain manager), to technical. Other roles use research or academic skills (for example, climate science, sustainability knowledge, wellbeing at work), or involve consultancy, teaching or training or technical skills (for example, material scientists, environmental scientists).

When conducting your job search, it is worth looking at the structure of individual companies to see if the organisation takes sustainability, environmental, and social issues seriously by embedding them within company values and strategic planning. If there is someone in a senior position within that company who is charged with leading on strategy for sustainability, for example, this is a good indicator that the company is looking at its suppliers, customers, environmental impact, communities, and wellbeing of employees alongside pure profit and shareholder interests.

One way of showing that you are a 'business with purpose' in a meaningful and recognisable way is by certifying as B Corp. In order to be certified, a company must undergo an evaluation process and impact assessment. These businesses are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, suppliers, community, and the environment. The majority of B Corps will also ensure their business goals are aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. [There is more information on B Corps on bcorporation.uk.](#)

The following insights and advice can also help:

- Develop expertise and relevant skills in a different sector before moving into a business with purpose.

- Browse job adverts to understand which roles commonly require further study and qualifications. Investigate career destinations of graduates as well as the backgrounds of the tutors of further study courses.
- Ask alumni and others working in your preferred field for course recommendations.
- The vast majority of roles are advertised as individual opportunities – check organisations' websites, as well as [sector-specific job sites such as B Work](#).
- Consider the issues that are important to you. Do you want to work to minimise plastic use? Are you interested in innovating materials to be more eco friendly?
- Unilever, Danone and P&G are taking great steps to move big business forward in this area. You could also look at Patagonia and Finisterre (retail/fashion sector), Ella's Kitchen (fast-moving consumer goods), Triodos Bank (finance) and Kickstarter (community and crowdsourced funding platform) for growth examples. See the [B Corp directory](#) for a list of certified companies.

Getting in and entry points

Competition for positions can be high so relevant experience on your CV is vital. Consider:

- Advertised internships and short-term seasonal jobs.
- Asking directly about jobs, internships or volunteering by networking and approaching speculatively. Positions may not be advertised widely (or at all!).

Extra-curricular ideas

- Join or follow the work of relevant societies such as, [the Oxford Climate Society](#), or [become a member of your college's Green Impact Team](#).
- Seek out companies within the Oxford area who are seeking to do business better. Look at [OXWash](#) and [certified B Corp ClimateCare](#) as a starting point.
- Submit articles for publications on issues relating to 'business with purpose'.
- Create a LinkedIn profile and follow business with purpose thought leaders like Paul Polman (ex-P&G, Nestle and Unilever) and Colin Mayer (Said Business School) to keep up-to-date.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/business-management
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/charities
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sustainability-environment
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/careers-with-social-impact
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/entrepreneurship-social-enterprise

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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/ism



Jonny Walker

Analyst, Deloitte Consulting
BA Theology & Religion, Worcester College, 2019

Why: I became interested in social enterprise towards the end of my time at uni. Business is great at innovating and finding new ways of doing things, but primarily focused on the pursuit of profit. Charity is brilliant at focusing on injustice in society, but isn't always the most strategic in its approach. So, what if we could channel the innovation and strategy of entrepreneurship to tackle issues of injustice in the world? In pursuit of this, I worked for a year for a social enterprise coffee roastery employing people coming out of prison, followed by a year working for a member of the House of Lords leading large scale social reform ventures, before joining Deloitte as an analyst.

What: I currently work for an offering in Deloitte's Human Capital Consulting arm called Major Programmes, which delivers large scale transformation programmes, from helping businesses reach their net zero commitments to working with the Government on major capital infrastructure projects. My programme offers a broad range of both project opportunities and types of work within them. This ranges from change management – enabling business to adopt new technology through communications and training, for example; to project management – overseeing

the various teams within a project and ensuring progress is tracked and commitments are delivered on time and to standard.

Advice: Balance purpose with competence. It is important that you do the things you are most passionate about. At the same time, there is wisdom in acquiring the skills that will allow you to be most effective in those endeavours. It is worth not just thinking about what you would like to do now, but about where you would like to get to, and what experiences, connections, and skills you need to get there. This might mean that you are not always doing what you are most passionate about, but you will be gaining the tools needed to serve your long-term vision. It may be tempting to settle at these points, particularly if the role offers good security or a high salary. I would therefore also recommend connecting with people currently doing the things you would like to end up doing, both to remind you of your goals and to learn the lessons they have.



CHARITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

This sector offers: diverse roles; a chance to drive change; and the opportunity to work on a cause that matters to you.

Charities do not seek to make profits, and are usually funded through donations and grants. Social enterprises are businesses which trade for a social/environmental purpose, reinvesting profits to further this purpose.

There is a huge range of causes served, and workplaces range from small start-ups to big organisations with a more corporate culture. Charities and social enterprises have the same range of job roles as any organisation, such as marketing, HR, PR, IT, project management, fieldwork, finance, policy, and research. Charities often also have an extensive fundraising or 'development' department.

Getting in and entry points

The following options offer different ways into the charity and social enterprise sector:

- Internships – although paid opportunities are advertised, internships are often offered as unpaid volunteering. If it is not possible for you to volunteer, ask whether there's any way they could make the opportunity more accessible: fewer days or hours, or working remotely to allow you to accommodate other paid work.
- Job opportunities generally will require some previous experience, such as volunteering. Administrative, project or case-work supporting roles can be a way into the sector. Check organisations' own websites and specialist job sites such as Charity Jobs, Third Sector Jobs, Guardian Jobs, Idealist and Social Enterprise UK.
- Contact organisations speculatively to find short-term roles and entry-level work.
- Graduate schemes are relatively rare and have been affected by the loss of funding caused by the pandemic, but examples still include Gradunique (BHF and Macmillan Cancer Support), Wellcome Trust and Cancer Research UK.
- Some people transfer into the charity sector having gained skills and expertise in a private company first. This is particularly true of roles like accountancy or legal work where the charity or social enterprise might not have the resources to train someone.

- Further study – many roles are accessible without a further degree but this may be important for some roles, such as those in policy. If you are considering further study as part of your strategy, it is advisable to:
- Understand which roles commonly require higher qualifications by reviewing job descriptions and advertisements.
- Ask people working in your preferred area what qualifications they have and which courses they recommend for entry and progression (if any).
- Investigate providers and specific courses, including the background of tutors and destinations of recent graduates.

Extra-curricular ideas

Relevant experience is usually essential. Here are some ideas to try while you are here at Oxford:

- Explore volunteering opportunities through Oxford Hub, which also offers grants and training for those wishing to try out a social enterprise idea, or find opportunities using www.do-it.org or OCVA.
- Join a cause-related student society: get involved in projects and committee or leadership positions, or establish a new society serving a cause you care about.
- Participate in **The Oxford Strategy Challenge**: charities and social enterprises are among the clients seeking student advice.
- Look out for **Oxford Micro-Internships** which are often based in social enterprises and charities.
- Get involved with Oxford University Innovation social enterprises.
- Look for the Skoll World Forum activities and the fringe events such as Oxjam.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/charities

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/entrepreneurship-social-enterprise

“The 'learn, do, retire' model of work is no more and I think now it's about taking opportunities in their various forms, working hard but staying kind. If you're looking for experience in the third sector and start-up world, come and volunteer with us.

— Beth Kume-Holland, Founder and Company Director, Patchwork Hub

James Ghaffari

Director of B Corp Certification, B Lab UK
PPE, St. Peter's College, 2012

What: At B Lab UK, we are creating a community of companies (B Corps) that want to put people and planet alongside profit and redefine what it means to a successful business. My role is to build this community by helping companies understand the importance of sustainability and manage the impact of their operations on their employees, suppliers and customers as well as society and the environment in general.

Working with these businesses across sectors is a great opportunity to understand the different ways in which companies can create positive impact through their business models and it is always intellectually challenging to explore how sustainability relates to food and drinks brands, construction firms or the financial services industry, for example.

Why: With a decade left to meet the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development that define how we can meet the needs of humanity within the means of the planet, I believe we must harness the power of business to create positive change. For too long, companies have been allowed to exploit people and degrade the environment, but now many are realising this system can no longer work.

I enjoy the pleasure of working with those who already understand this imperative, and the challenge of convincing those who do not that we must make a just transition to a more equitable and regenerative economy.

Advice: Don't discount small companies and start-ups when looking for your first role. Working in these companies will expose you to a wide variety of different positions within the sector and force you to build a broad skill set at the start of your career. It will also give you the opportunity to see a direct link between the work you put in and the outcomes you create – something that can be trickier in a bigger organisation. Finally, start-ups are usually more agile and willing to listen to all voices in the company, so they can be fun and empowering places to work!

So find the smaller firms doing the exciting and experimental things in the sector in which you want to work and send them an email, as they can always use an extra hand.



Esme Herman

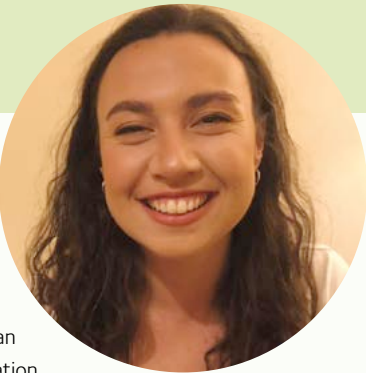
Prison Officer, Unlocked
Archaeology and Anthropology, Magdalen College, 2020

What: Unlocked is a charity dedicated to reducing reoffending rates in the UK by increasing the number of professional, empathetic and innovative prison officers that work within our prisons. I entered Unlocked via its graduate programme. As an Unlocked graduate I work day to day as a prison officer, face to face with prisoners, ensuring the smooth running of the system. I have been supported to undertake a Master's in Applied Custodial Leadership, as well as been given the opportunity to design and implement my own projects to help reform the prison I work in, and to rehabilitate those in our care.

Why: I didn't know what I wanted to do when I graduated. If I am completely honest, I'm still not sure! I did, however, know I wanted to do something that I was passionate about, and something that would have a real impact on people's lives. A year into the programme, I am on the fence about whether I want to stay in the service long term, but either way, I am so pleased that I made the decision to apply. The skills I have gained and the experiences that I have had stand me in good stead for whatever career move I make next.

Prison life: Working in a prison is about as far as you can get from studying in the Bodleian Library, but don't let that put you off! Yes, prisons can be dangerous places, but they can also be places of great innovation and potential. Unlocked fully supports you in getting to grips with the environment and, before you even start your training, you will be given the opportunity to go to a prison for the day to see for yourself what it's like.

Top tips: Make the most of every opportunity! You never know where something is going to take you, or who you might meet on that journey. If something sounds interesting to you, go and try it; if you don't like it you can always move on knowing you have gained a lot from the experience.



Katie Forsyth

Education and Employment Coordinator, Asylum Welcome
European and Middle Eastern Languages (German and Arabic), Wadham College, 2020



What: I'm now working for an Oxfordshire based charity called Asylum Welcome, after 18 months at student charity KEEN. At KEEN, I was the Inclusive Communities Manager, leading a movement for disability inclusion, and running a 1-1 buddying scheme for disabled young people. In my current role, I coordinate education and employment support for refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, and other countries. I have loved both roles, and find one of the joys of working for a small charity the amount of responsibility you are given so early on. I've learnt all sorts about strategy, partnership working, and the finer points involved in running a charity!

Why, and the challenges: What I love most about front line charity work is also what I find challenging: every day is so varied, and everything you do has a direct impact on someone else and their life. In my current role, there've been times when I've visited a family to do an English assessment and ended up accompanying them to A&E. My role isn't just a to-do list or set of tasks to get through in a day, it is a real person's life. It can be tricky to switch off at the end of the day knowing some problems remain unsolved, but it is great to see clients growing and settling into life, and

there certainly aren't boring afternoons sitting waiting for 5pm to come! I'm also learning to move away from the more traditional charity model of doing things for people, and moving towards solidarity, doing things together.

Top tips: At university, I was very involved with the student charity Jacari. Half my time with Jacari was spent seeing who could build the highest Jenga tower, reading stories, and building lego worlds in my role as English tutor to a refugee family with 3 young boys, and the other half of my time was spent as co-president, running the committee, fundraising events and keeping Jacari going. If you're thinking of going into the charity sector, my top piece of advice would be to find a charity you love and try out several different volunteering roles in that charity. You'll get a good picture of how a charity runs, develop a range of skills, and get an idea of what kind of paid roles might be a good starting point for you.








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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/micro

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CONSULTANCY

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Critical skills include teamwork and communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, business awareness and the ability to deliver results.

Consultants help client organisations improve their performance by, for example:

- assessing the business case for new products or expansion to new markets
- advising on scaling back, closing operations, reorganisations and cost-cutting, and
- all points in between, such as improving systems and processes, and building better teams.

Graduates are expected to be active and productive in projects from the start and can quickly gain experience across a wide range of industries. However, new entrants should also expect long hours, extensive travel and lots of time working on spreadsheet analyses and presentations.

Consulting firms range from large, multinational firms working across many fields, to niche consultancies that may focus on a specific sector (for example, healthcare, media or financial services) or specialist area (such as, IT, digital transformation, people and performance).

Broadly, firms work in two ways:

1. **Strategy consultancy:** Understanding and finding solutions to strategic problems faced by an organisation: for example, understanding competitors; the market; and/or future drivers of growth. Projects tend to be fairly short, and roles often involve significant travel.
2. **Implementation consultancy:** Developing a strategic idea or solution and making it a reality. Projects tend to be longer than in strategy consultancy and consultants are often based at the client organisation and ensure that all elements of a business – people, technology and processes – come together to deliver a successful outcome.

Getting in and entry points

Competition can be fierce and the assessment process is rigorous, typically including aptitude tests (online) and several rounds of interviews and/or an assessment centre, plus partner interview. Once the process starts it can move quickly, so prepare thoroughly in advance. Use individual firms' websites to understand their recruitment processes and timelines, and plan ahead.

For full-time positions, applications at most firms open in August or September and close in late October.

A few firms recruit all year round (for example, Accenture and Newton Europe) or on a 'rolling basis', reviewing candidates and filling positions as applications are received. Firms usually only allow one application a year, and when applying for consulting at the Big 4 professional service firms this means deciding whether to apply for their 'management consulting' or 'strategy consulting' practice.

Internships are not offered universally (application deadlines fall between November and January), but are becoming more common. Commercial work experience in any sector can help students acquire and display relevant skills and enhance business awareness.

Case study interviews are central to the process. 'Cases' challenge you to show you can think through business problems like a consultant. Generally, you will need to do a good job on every 'case' and an outstanding job on a couple of them:

- Read our guidance www.careers.ox.ac.uk/case-study-style-interviews.
- Attend case study workshops at the Careers Service, with student societies or run by companies.
- Practise a lot.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Become active in a student society, such as CapitOx, the Oxford Strategy Group, Oxford Women in Business or the Oxford Guild.
- Sign up for [Insight into Strategy and Management](#) to introduce you to core business concepts and enhance commercial awareness.
- Check out the [The Oxford Strategy Challenge \(TOSCA\)](#), a team-based, experiential learning event. TOSCA is a chance for you to gain hands-on experience with local organisations. You'll work in a team on a project that's important to the organisation.
- Work as a consultant with societies: for example, Oxford Strategy Group, Oxford Consulting Initiative, Oxford Development Consultancy, Enactus or 180 Degrees.
- Get involved with activities that provide business insight, teamwork and demonstrate impact, such as, leading on sponsorship for a student society, or participating in team sports or outdoor pursuits with different people, managing a recruitment drive for a society or improving an event or activity within your college.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/management-consultancy
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/management-consultancy-beyond-the-obvious

Runsen Ma

Innovation Consultant, Innovia Technology
 MEng Materials Science, St Catherine's College, 2020

What: Innovia is an innovation consultancy based in Cambridge that specialises in the front end of innovation. We work with companies to help them create, assess and test ideas for new products and services. Projects are done in multidisciplinary teams, so I get to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds, including natural scientists, engineers, designers and behavioural scientists. I've worked on projects from lots of different industries such as surgical implants, sustainable packaging, apparel and food. I'm always working on three to four projects at any given time and these change every few months. Work has never been boring!

Why: I wanted a role where I could use my materials science knowledge to solve real-life problems while also getting opportunities to learn about new areas and develop new skills.

I originally joined my company as a summer intern in 2019. At that stage I didn't know much about consulting – only what I'd picked up from conversations with friends and peers. Doing an internship allowed me to get some first-hand consultancy experience while also giving me the opportunity to figure out what was important to me in my future career. Working with

people that I genuinely get along with is very important to me and being a relatively small company, I got to know everyone quickly and felt very welcomed. In addition, I really appreciated the real responsibility given to me, even when I was an intern here. As the only materials scientist when I joined, I was given the freedom to spend time on the new offerings that I could bring to the company, rather than trying to fit into the system.

Advice: Don't be afraid to try new things. Every consultancy is different in what they do, how they do it, the opportunities that are available and the culture that they promote. Think about what is important to you and try to find a place that aligns with your aspirations and values. Reaching out to people who work at the firms that you are interested in for advice can be helpful for gathering information. Internships are also great for exploring different options and seeing what works for you and what doesn't.



Fred Hudson

Consultant (Economic and Financial Consulting), FTI Consulting
 Economics and Management, Keble College, 2020

What: I provide expert advice to clients, typically in the context of quantifying damages and valuing assets such as companies and patents in high-profile litigation and arbitration cases. A typical case begins with us familiarising ourselves with the case to better understand what has happened. We draw on skills in economics, accountancy, and finance to assess how the client has been affected and then construct an analysis which compares the actual position to a counterfactual position in which no legal breach has occurred, advising the court or tribunal on the scale of the difference in order to provide an assessment of damages.

Why: The breadth of projects I work on keeps the job exciting. In my first two years, I have worked on a case assessing the impact of banking fraud, a multi-million-pound divorce case, and a pro-bono education project. Alongside work, I am studying for the ICAEW Chartered Accountant (ACA) qualification which offers a great change of pace. This is fully sponsored by my firm, and I also receive regular study leave for tuition and exams. Throughout all of this I have

enjoyed a host of social events – from lunches with my coach, to team dinners and company away days!

Advice: Everyone knows the importance of preparation for interviews, but take time to consider why you think the job is a good fit for you. Being able to articulate how your experiences demonstrate different skills is vital to acing a consulting interview. Looking back at Oxford, my experiences outside of university work, such as with the Oxford University Air Squadron, were integral to my success, as I had a wealth of stories and ways to showcase my abilities during interviews.

Top tip: Don't be afraid to apply to a range of firms. Interviews are a two-way street and it's important to engage with the interviewer and ask questions to find out if the firm is for you.



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RBB Economics offers career opportunities for entry level economists

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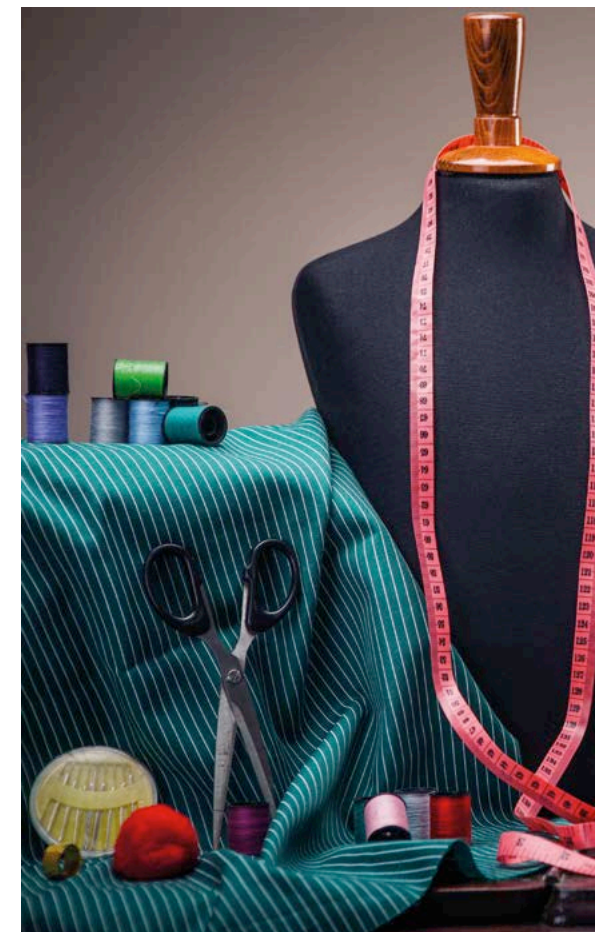
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Roles within the creative industries are extremely varied and encompass many sub-sections.

During this briefing we will focus on the most popular amongst our students; the Fashion Industry, Games Industry, Media and Journalism, Performing Arts and TV and Film.

Fashion – Roles within the fashion industry are extremely varied and it is important to remember that there is more to a career in the industry than fashion itself. Roles within the industry include everything from buying, merchandising, sourcing, finance, design and garment technology, retail management, photography, event planning and lots more.

Gaming – The aim of this industry is to develop, publish, and distribute video games and interactive experiences across all digital platforms. Roles can be found within, but not limited to, animation, audio, game design, production, programming, and quality control.



Media and Journalism – Journalists, broadcasters and directors form the public face of the sector, but there are many other roles. Researcher roles are popular entry points for Oxford graduates: these can involve fact checking content and finding people to appear in programmes. The impact of digital media is redefining both journalism and broadcast content, and having an awareness of multimedia platforms and tools is now crucial for graduates seeking to enter this sector.

Performing Arts – Roles within performing arts can be either performance (musician, actor, dancer etc.) or non-performance (set designer, sound technician, talent agent etc.) based. Whichever route you decide, you can be sure to use your creativity and technical ability. Most performance roles will be on a freelance or fixed term basis.

TV and Film – The number of different types of jobs is immense, spanning all parts of the production process from commissioning, development, production, post-production and through to distribution. Like the performing arts industry, roles within TV and Film are increasingly becoming "freelance" or fixed term contract opportunities.

Remember, creativity can take many forms, so you might also like to see information on working in Advertising or Culture and Heritage – or any of the many other sectors which employs creatives!

Further study

Further study may be needed for certain careers within the industry that require technical ability before you can undertake a particular role. Depending on the course, completing further study might present you with the opportunity to complete work experience as part of your studies, for example, the NCTJ for journalism, or the NFTS for people with some film and television experience. In addition, completing a final performance as part of further study within performing arts will expose you to leading talent agents within the industry, though this itself is not a guarantee that you will secure an agent. It is important to do research and weigh the costs and benefits for individual situations: some people recommend them as a way to gain contacts and experience, but others do not consider them as necessary.

Getting in and entry points

Competition for positions can be high, so relevant experience is vital. Most people need to start in an entry level position, often as an intern or a 'runner', for example. To gain this initial experience, think about advertised internships and short-term seasonal jobs which can provide you with great experience. In addition, both paid and unpaid roles such as work staffing festivals



and events; front-of-house or promotional work; game testing, support for tours; and summer work with children and young people can provide great experience.

Furthermore, it is important to establish and cultivate professional contacts because those interested in this sector will often need to find (or create) their own openings by contacting individuals and organisations directly. See our advice on networking and speculative approaches, and take steps to develop and cultivate your contacts – some great opportunities can arise this way.

For industry specific insights and roles see the below resources:

- Gaming, TV and Film – www.screenskills.com.
- Media and Journalism – www.journoresources.org.uk and www.theunitlist.com.
- Fashion – fashionunited.uk/career-centre.
- Performing Arts – See www.thestage.co.uk. For performance-based roles, you can attend open auditions that do not require an agent. Details can be found on the Stage. Should you wish to work as a professional actor, you will need an equity card (www.equity.org.uk).

For a regularly updated list of jobs and internships within the creative industries see creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk.

Extra-curricular ideas

Plan ahead to get an edge on the competition after graduation by accumulating experience whilst at Oxford.

- Join a relevant society, such as the Fashion Society, Film Making Foundation, OUDS or TAFF (for theatre designers and technicians).
- Write a blog and/or produce video or comment pieces for other websites/products on topics of interest. Document your work on your own webpage.
- Take every opportunity to contribute to all things creative at university: student newspapers, Oxide Radio, perform in showcases, open mic nights and productions.
- For graduate careers in both journalism and fashion, candidates will need to build a portfolio of samples of your published writing/work, and a good record of relevant work experience.
- Shoot your own documentary, short-film (on your smart phone), direct, produce, act, etc in a stage play.
- Design aspects of a game (demonstrating your ability in the area of gaming you wish to go into).

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/acting
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/creative-arts
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/journalism
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/music-and-radio
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/tv-film

Andy Laithwaite

Actor Ordinaire
 BA History & Politics, University College, 2014

What: I have fingers in many pies. First and foremost, I'm an actor. Alongside that, I run my own business, The Actor Inside, which provides workshops and training to help people feel more confident presenting themselves on camera. I'm also a writer, and I'm working on funding a London production of my new feature-length play. As well as this, I've performed as a singer-songwriter at the Edinburgh Fringe festival.

Two years after finishing my degree at Oxford, I trained at London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). Since then, I've been represented by a creative talent agency, The Production Exchange.

Why: I loved acting in plays while at Oxford. I loved acting in plays before university too, and had considered applying to acting schools instead, but I'm glad I ended up where I did. In any case, I decided while at Oxford that I wanted to become a professional actor and, after approaching some agents while still at university, thought that acting school would be the best door into the industry. Who knows if it was, but it was definitely a life changing experience.

Advice: One of the tricky things after leaving acting school was coming to terms with the open-endedness of it all. At first, the realisation that I didn't have some recipe for success to follow was terrifying, but it has all become a lot more fun since then. It has required me to develop my own self-management to a level unthinkable for me while studying. I don't mean that in the sense of self-discipline, but actually in the sense of letting myself be led more by joy and genuine interest, rather than simply cracking the whip to get on with whatever seems like I 'should' be doing. I think creativity flourishes when you can give yourself a lot of love (that's my cliché allowance).

I'm also hugely indebted to an incredibly supportive network of collaborators and friends, for whom I am very grateful. I first met some of them through acting here.



Paoula Sobanda

Narrative Designer, IGG Mobile Games
 MSt English (650-1550), St Hugh's College, 2016

What: Why do billions of people play video games on a daily basis? They want to be entertained and challenged, surprised and delighted, infuriated and overjoyed, all while being transported to another world. So that's what I deliver.

It's my responsibility to make every moment of the game unforgettable for the player. I create game stories that resonate with players' emotions, aspirations and dreams. As a narrative designer, I lead the full cycle of the story's development. I craft the storylines that drive the player experience, create the characters for players to adore or hate (or both), design the aesthetic direction, and direct the art development and worldbuilding. I write all the game dialogues and texts, from the romantic leads to the most minor Non-Player-Characters. Most recently I wrote and designed *The Perfect Storm*, a pirate game for women.

Why: Personal fit is crucial when choosing a career. Studying hundreds of years of the world's best literature at Oxford gave me the skills I needed to take the pen into my own hand and write impactful narratives for our players.

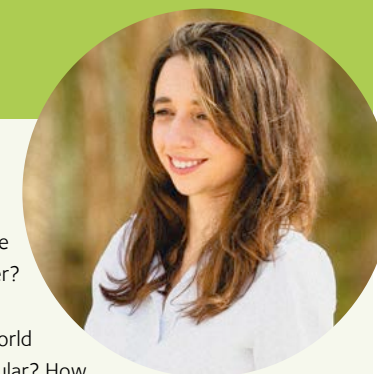
I also wanted a job that would make a positive impact. For me, games are more than just play. At their best, when crafted with real skill, creativity and care, games meet our deepest needs and fulfil our fantasies.

Top tips: In gaming you have to be bold and clear with your ideas. Take any idea, and think, how can we make this bigger and better? How do we make this level even more exciting, this world design even more spectacular? How can we get players to resonate deeply with this character? If you think something is exciting, it's likely others will react in the same way. The parts that feel too daring often turn out to be what players love the most.

I previously worked in management consultancy, so I came to gaming with the mindset of a cultural analyst as well as a writer. This means that whether I'm designing a historical fantasy role play game or a home renovation game, I connect it with the zeitgeist and player's motivations.

Game development is hugely collaborative, and having great working relationships with people across departments, from art to software to the producer, is crucial. Luckily, everyone is genuinely interested in creating the best experience for our players.

I'm always happy to meet others who are interested in the industry, so find me on LinkedIn if you'd like to connect.



Safa Dar

Script Editor, BBC
BA History, Mansfield College, 2018

What: I'm a Script Editor at the BBC, giving editorial input on dramas and comedies, including notes on scripts; having creative conversations with producers and creatives; and – of course – a whole lot of reading.

How: After graduating, I researched various careers and came across Creative Access, an organisation that aims to increase underrepresented talent in the creative sectors. On their website, I found a range of editorial jobs in the TV industry that I didn't know existed, and realised that drama / comedy development spoke to me. After applying for various roles, I secured an Office Runner job at a production company, where I helped with development and production tasks and got to ask the development team about what their jobs involved. A conversation with someone in the team led to my next gig – through a contact of theirs I managed to get a week's work experience. Then the pandemic arrived. I used this time to email production companies asking if they needed freelance script readers, or if they might be free for a 15 minute call. I signed up to be a reader for several script competitions. This built up my editorial experience (all paid of course). While I was doing this, and applying for full-time jobs, the Executive I'd done work experience with saw my current role advertised and

forwarded me the listing, and here we are!

Tips: Be curious and proactive – do your research, be curious about people and their jobs, don't be afraid to reach out to those whose work you enjoy. I felt awkward asking people who didn't know me for their time, but there are many people who are very happy to share their experience with newer talent, and keen to pay it forward because they know how inaccessible the industry can be. As long as you approach them considerably, rather than in a demanding way, there will be many people willing to talk to you. And, as my career journey hopefully illustrates, you never know where your next opportunity could come from.

My final (and underrated!) tip would be: start following creatives and companies you admire – Twitter can be a great place to hear about opportunities! I would recommend following 'The TV Collective' to learn about opportunities, particularly for underrepresented talent. Facebook groups such as 'People in TV: Runners' are also great.



CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Culture and heritage jobs can be found in museums, public and commercial galleries, archaeology organisations, auction houses, venues, historic sites – and many specialist organisations.

This sector covers a huge range of roles, from artistic (designers, performers, artists, writers) to 'arts management/administration', requiring organisational, operational and leadership skills. Other roles use research or academic skills ('curatorial, conservation and specialist' jobs), involve teaching or training ('arts education') or technical skills.

Employers in this sector often rely on candidates to seek them out, and there are very few graduate schemes.

- The vast majority of roles are advertised as individual opportunities – check organisations' websites, as well as sector-specific job sites such as Arts Jobs, Arts Professional, Museum Jobs, BAJR (for archaeology), Heritage Daily, Creative and Cultural skills, etc.
 - A handful of graduate schemes exist (for example, Sotheby's, Christie's, and the Arts Fundraising Fellowships), but these are really unusual in this sector.
 - Do not just consider the big names. There are hundreds of smaller organisations, which often attract less competition. If you love the work of a particular organisation, then sign up to their newsletter for up-to-date information.
 - Think about your local organisations and research within your region.
 - Consider gaining experience with organisations providing specialist services to the culture and heritage world: for example, art investment, specialist legal and insurance firms, marketing and PR firms, specialist IT or training companies, public sector bodies and charities.
 - Develop expertise and relevant skills in a different sector such as, accountancy, law, marketing, teaching, or in graduate leadership schemes, before moving to the arts later.
- See the Careers Service's briefing for more on specific roles**, ideas on how to build experience, and links to external resources.

Further study

Further study may be needed for certain careers (for example, curatorial or technically skilled roles) and it can

help when seeking roles that attract strong competition. It is important to research courses before signing up, so consider the following:

- Browse job adverts to understand which roles commonly require additional study and which qualifications are sought.
- Investigate career destinations of graduates, and tutors' backgrounds, for courses you are considering.
- Ask alumni and others working in your preferred field which courses they took and/or which are most respected.

Getting in and entry points

Competition for positions can be high, so relevant experience on your CV is vital. Consider:

- Volunteering with local culture and heritage organisations – seek out local museums (for example, www.museums.ox.ac.uk) and heritage organisations, such as Oxford Preservation Trust.
- Advertised internships and short-term seasonal jobs offer great experience, paid or unpaid (for example, paid work staffing festivals and events; front-of-house or promotional work; support for tours; summer work with children and young people).
- Asking directly about jobs, internships or volunteering by networking and speculative approaches to organisations, even if there is nothing on their website.
- Positions may not be advertised widely (or at all!) so check websites and approach individual organisations directly.
- Create your own professional portfolio/blog to document your creative work and interests.

Extra-curricular ideas

Take advantage of the rich cultural life of Oxford and the University to try things out. For example:

- Join community arts projects: for example, explore www.oxonarts.info
- Write a researched short article for Trusted Source on the National Trust's website – exclusive to Oxford University!
- Try arts production or marketing; run events as 'entz' officer for your college.
- Submit articles for arts, culture and heritage sections of student newspapers.
- Start something new: for example, establish a performance group; create a heritage-style 'audio guide' to your college; write a blog; curate a sale of student art.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/arts-heritage

Esme Ash

Freelance Assistant Producer
MSt in British and European History, 2017

What: I am an assistant producer, working freelance across observational and feature documentaries. My role involves research, finding contributors, filming on shoots, and working in the edit. I started out as a BBC production trainee in 2017 and went on to work in journalism and current affairs, before going freelance to work on documentary projects.

Why: I have always had a natural curiosity about other people's lives, and I love asking questions. In my job, I'm surrounded by people, constantly finding and building relationships with contributors, and working collaboratively and creatively to tell their stories. The variety and breadth of experience I get across different programmes is truly unparalleled, and I have met and worked with people from all walks of life.

Challenges: A key aspect of freelance work is the short-term nature of the jobs you take, usually three to six months at a time. While it means you're constantly on the lookout for the next contract, you can also design your own career trajectory, making

decisions about new roles and responsibilities. The nature of the industry also demands flexibility from you; long hours, frequent travelling or living on-location and fast turnaround projects often result in personal sacrifices. It's not as glamorous as you might think! That said, everyone makes their own path as there's no single route through the industry, offering freedom from a predictable future.

Top tips: Most of my roles have come from recommendations and prospective emails rather than formal applications, so be proactive and enthusiastic about reaching out to people and companies you admire. Keep in touch with everyone you work with — talent managers, producers, executives — so you're in the front of their mind when they're crewing up their next production.



Katie Ramsey

Policy Officer, National Trust
History, Brasenose College, 2019

What: I'm currently a Policy Officer at the National Trust, working particularly on climate change and nature restoration. This means I work with senior colleagues and experts to decide what the Trust thinks of new Government proposals, to prioritise what policies we should be asking for from Government, and to write persuasive arguments in favour of these changes. Before, I did a similar job for a small charity, The Heritage Alliance (THA), and previously for the Country, Land and Business Association (CLA), which represents farmers and land managers.

Why: At university, I knew I wanted to both use the skills I had learnt in my degree, and to work for a company that aligned with my beliefs, so a graduate scheme (and the exams that came with it) didn't appeal. I tried lots of work experience and internships, but was feeling pretty uncertain about my career. I then discovered the policy sector during an Oxford-sponsored internship at THA, and later went on to work there.

Policy allows me to work for organisations whose work I strongly support, whilst also being challenged to keep learning. Every few weeks, the Government will announce a new policy and I will have to apply my skills to a whole new area; I've worked on issues ranging from loneliness and ageing, to tree planting

and renewable energy. My History degree taught me to absorb information quickly, find clarity in a muddle of conflicting views, and present an argument in a clear, convincing way; these are the key skills of a policy professional.

Top tips:

- **Try everything!** I took up every opportunity (and there are so many at Oxford) to try new things. I didn't love most of them, but I had some great experiences, and each one taught me a little more about what I did want. I didn't know policy existed, nor that I cared strongly about biodiversity loss, or that archive work is definitely not for me, until I tried them out and got a taste!
- **Take initiative!** I only secured my policy internship because of previous work I had done for other heritage organisations. I found one of these by googling 'history internships' and pestering the top result – a small company called Historyworks – until they replied to me.



Isobel Cockburn

Project Coordinator, V&A Museum
History of Art, Wadham College, 2017

What: I'm a Project Coordinator at the V&A Museum, managing capital building works: these range from small redecorations to major multi-year projects and involve overseeing every element of a project.

How: I'm certain the internships I did while at university were the reason I got my first job, which was as an Executive Assistant (EA) on a heritage restoration project. Admin was not my long-term goal, but I was grateful to quickly find a role which was in the sector, and which enabled me to move to London. I was exposed to all elements of restoring and reopening a heritage site, and was able to learn what interested me (and what didn't) by mucking in at every point.

After a few years at my first job I felt disillusioned with the sector and wanted to see what a corporate role, with a higher salary and lower emotional investment, would be like. I ended up in recruitment, and while I knew early on that it wasn't for me, it helped me to shape my priorities and achieve a better balance in my current role, advocating for myself and creating professional boundaries while also not taking for granted the value of doing a job I'm genuinely interested in. Diverting your career path is always

an option and doesn't mean you can never go back – had I not left, I don't think I'd be working in a museum now. I was hesitant about becoming an EA again, but the V&A has always been a dream so when I saw a role come up I felt like I had to go for it. I started at the beginning of the first lockdown, which was an unusual time, but with everyone else on furlough I was able to work across the division and get heavily involved in capital projects, which led to me being promoted to Project Coordinator last year. My slightly roundabout route has led to a job I love that is underpinned by all my experiences, even the ones I thought were useless at the time.

Tips: Take advantage of everything Oxford has to offer by way of internships, work experience, lectures, events, exhibitions – the access and funding we are afforded as Oxford students should be utilised fully, particularly if you don't live in London and can't work unpaid.



EDUCATION

Education is one of the most popular sectors for Oxford graduates. Diverse areas including publishing, policy, administration, charities and NGOs, psychology, arts and heritage and academia may be relevant if you're interested in education. Here we look at teaching.

Teaching demands communication skills, energy and a commitment to inspire students. It offers an opportunity to make a difference, to use your subject and to advance your career in a variety of directions.

Teachers can rapidly specialise into managerial, pastoral or training roles in schools. Many also move into education roles in other areas.

Getting in and entry points

Teacher training options divide into two main types:

School-led: One- or two-year programmes based in school, some salaried, others funded by loans and bursaries. Examples are: Teach First, School Direct, Researchers in Schools, some School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), Premier Pathways, Engage Education, and some independent schools.

University-led: Usually one-year programmes based in university but with extended periods in partnership schools. For example, PGCE, PGDE, SCITT. Funded via bursaries (level varies with teaching subject) and tuition fee loans.

Whichever route you choose to follow, it is important to gain some relevant experience prior to application. Applications for most UK teacher training courses are via

Don't assume that you will simply be a good teacher because you have been to Oxford or that it will be a breeze because you know so much. Don't get me wrong, you will be an asset to any school you work in, but so much of what will make you excel is your ability to be humble and inspire.

Simon Davies, Head of History and PSHE Curriculum Design, Wheatley Park School, Oxford

the Department for Education Apply portal; others take direct applications.

There is no formal requirement for a teaching qualification in the independent sector and some will employ new graduates and offer on-the-job training. Others recruit recent graduates through graduate assistant roles, particularly in boarding schools. CareerConnect and the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) are good sources of vacancy listings for independent schools.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and private tutoring are popular short-term occupations on leaving Oxford, but can also be longer-term careers. A degree from Oxford may be the only qualification needed for some teaching jobs, but experience is always helpful for applications, and a TEFL qualification may make it easier to find work abroad.

There are a few graduate training programmes in education policy and administration, some are run by universities. For example, Imperial College has a long-standing graduate management and finance scheme. Education policy could form part of the Civil Service Fast Stream or local government schemes such as the National Graduate Development Programme. The *TES* and the *Guardian* are key publications for opportunities in the education sector.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Observe teachers at work in local schools. The government-run School Experience Programme offers time in schools. Alternatively, approach schools directly to ask if you can observe lessons, or help in other ways.
- Get international teaching experience in the summer vacation through [The Summer Internship Programme](#).
- Volunteer your time with local children through organisations such as Jacari, KEEN, Splash at Oxford or Oxford Hub's Schools Plus programmes.
- Develop pastoral skills by helping with Oxford University Scout & Guide Group, or volunteering with Sexpression Oxford to promote sexual health.
- Offer mentoring for UNIQ Summer School participants, volunteer with Oxford University Admissions or work with Target Schools to promote access to university, or with OxFizz to give interview practice, mentoring, or to run summer camps.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/tefl

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/teaching-in-schools

Imogen Hobby

Maths Teacher
BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Pembroke College, 2018

What: I'm a maths teacher at a comprehensive school in Cardiff. I trained through Teach First and am now in my third year of teaching.

Why: I chose teaching because I wanted a career with a clear positive impact that would challenge me intellectually and personally. You'll quickly learn that your role extends far beyond imparting your subject knowledge. Seeing young people learn from you, both academically and emotionally, and develop over time is a huge privilege. There are loads of training routes, but Teach First was the right choice for me because it's hands-on from the start and has a strong social justice focus.

To succeed as a teacher in challenging schools, you will need a combination of excellent interpersonal skills and a love of your subject. Passion for your subject is a huge asset and you'll find that genuine enthusiasm will catch on with your pupils. I've also really enjoyed the opportunity to embrace my silly side and have perfected the art of getting a smile out of even the grumpiest of teenagers with a cringe-worthy maths pun.

Best bits: The reluctant Year 11 student who began to take an interest in maths after we explored its importance for his chosen career; the Year 8 student who has started to talk through her emotions rather than lashing out; when a student spots your 'deliberate mistake' on the board.

Top tips: Make sure you do your research before embarking on teacher training. It's a good idea to spend as much time as possible observing experienced teachers to get a feel for the skills you'll need. Lots of trainees worry about their subject knowledge, but in my experience it's the classroom management skills that take longer to pick up; talking to or observing great teachers is well worth the investment of your time.



Joseph Drakeley

Trainee Secondary School Teacher (PGCE)
BA Physics, Oriel College, 2021

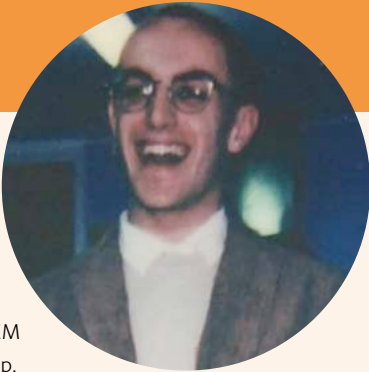
What is a PGCE?: A PGCE is a postgraduate certificate in education. I entered my PGCE at the University of Oxford straight out of graduating from my Physics degree here. There are quite a few different options for teacher training, but there were a couple of aspects that drew me to the Oxford course. The first was the opportunity to stay in Oxford for another year. More importantly, however, was the impression I got during my interview that the department would be a friendly and supportive environment.

Luckily, I was correct, and the department is indeed very supportive; both my mentor and other staff are always happy to chat, not only about the course, but also about life generally.

Why a PGCE?: When choosing a PGCE, the most important motivation is obviously wanting to become a teacher. The course is tough at times and does require long working hours, and it is always helpful to be able to keep that original motivation in mind. Those long nights are very worth the struggle when you get to

teach students a new concept and see them brighten up. Not only is the course super rewarding, but it has also helped me improve my written skills, which, as a STEM grad, were in dire need of help. Whilst the PGCE is far and away a more challenging workload than my undergraduate degree, the sense of success you get every time you step into a classroom makes it worthwhile.

Advice: Go into the PGCE with an open mind. I initially thought that I would only want to teach Sixth Form, but throughout the course I have found that I actually prefer to teach KS3 groups. Go into teaching being prepared that your plans might change and you will be setting yourself up for a much more enjoyable experience. When preparing for an interview, be aware of what you bring to the table. As a new graduate, for example, I focused on being the same generation as students and therefore being able to relate to them. Everyone can bring something to teaching. It is just about identifying what your 'thing' is.



The sense of success you get every time you step into a classroom makes it worthwhile.





The Summer Internship Programme

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sip

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www.education.ox.ac.uk/programmes/pgce

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Visa sponsorship: Applicants will need to evidence the right to work for the entire programme by 30 April in the year of starting the programme. Neither Teach First nor a school can sponsor visas so arrangements must be made independently.

Graduate salary: Competitive.

Vacation work: Boost your CV and develop leadership skills with one of our two-day undergraduate Taster Programmes (please see website for further details).

Application advice: Apply via our website

Email: recruitment@teachfirst.org.uk

www.teachfirst.org.uk/training-programme

ENERGY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

From global energy companies to specialist technology firms, regulatory bodies to think tanks, national power generation companies to micro-generation schemes, conservation charities to mining corporations, carbon consultancies to commodities traders: the range of opportunities in this sector is immense.

Students consider a career in sustainability, energy or the environment for a range of reasons. Many seek to make a positive impact and work for organisations whose values mirror their own.

Environmental-awareness is not limited to careers that are traditionally considered 'green'. Existing businesses are changing – consider the development of electric cars, or moves to increase sustainability in retail. Sustainability is an issue for all sectors; a new breed of firms exploiting the drive for business to operate in a more sustainable way has emerged, but in-house opportunities also exist in large established organisations. This diversity means that well-defined career paths in sustainability can be hard to find. Roles may have sustainability as the core focus, a main responsibility or just a small aspect.

Getting in and entry points

The diverse nature of this sector is reflected in the wide range of possible entry points. Graduate schemes offered by large companies and multidisciplinary consultancies tend to recruit students from any

discipline, with closing dates towards the end of Michaelmas term or early in Hilary term. Many also offer internships to students in their penultimate year at Oxford. Look beyond the job title to establish if sustainability is incorporated into a role.

The renewable energy and environmental industries are dominated by small or medium-sized organisations with only occasional vacancies, and may require relevant expertise (perhaps gained through a relevant postgraduate qualification). It is important, therefore, that you take a proactive approach. Research firms that match your interests and connect with alumni working in relevant roles to learn more and build your network.

Build relevant experience to develop skills, showcase motivation and increase your knowledge of the sector and issues affecting it through student societies, volunteering, attending talks and completing internships. The [Micro-Internship and Summer Internship Programmes](#) often offer opportunities relevant to this sector and are open to students of all year groups.

Employers' responses to questions about their approach to environmental sustainability are available through CareerConnect.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Take an active role in relevant student organisations such as the Nature Conservation Society, the Energy Society, or Oxford SU's Environment and Ethics campaign.
- Stand for election for your college JCR committee, many colleges have an environment and ethics rep.
- Volunteer with charities such as the Oxford Conservation Volunteers, the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, or with sustainability charities that work with Oxford Hub.
- See relevant sectors of this Guide for ideas to develop skills for roles in engineering, finance and marketing. If you are interested in a graduate scheme with a large energy company, see the [Developing Core Skills' advice](#) for ideas on how to develop leadership and organisational skills for project management.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/energy
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sustainability-environment

“Industry and businesses are increasingly required and motivated to engage with their impact on the environment, and there is huge potential for innovation – so it's an amazing time to be exploring roles in this area.

— Dr Alice Carrington-Windo, Policy Adviser (EU and Environment), Water UK

Josefin Malmberg

Sustainability Consultant, 3Keel LLP

MSc Nature, Society and Environmental Governance, St John's College, 2019



What: As a sustainability consultant, I assess the impact of organisations and systems on the environment and create solutions for a more resilient and sustainable future. Specialising in circular economy, I conduct carbon impact assessments for individual products or entire companies, facilitate collaborations for preventing and managing waste, and carry out research and analysis to develop roadmaps for entire sector transitions to circularity. One day I'm processing data on a retailer's packaging portfolio; the next I'm working on a survey exploring product consumption and user behaviours.

Why: I wanted a job dedicated to solving socioenvironmental challenges in a practical and tangible way. With this as a starting point, I was drawn to specialist sustainability consultancies where I could apply the principles and insights of my MSc research. I found out that being part of a smaller, rapidly growing and mission-driven team also can be an incredible opportunity for professional and personal growth, as you can get stuck in from

the get-go and work directly with both senior team members and clients.

Advice: Sustainability is an attractive and competitive field. Identify an issue of interest that differentiates you and seek out organisations and placements that allow you to explore that issue from different angles. Exposure to additional topics will come along the way as environmental challenges often are related to one another.

Top tips: You are at Oxford; there are thousands of experts, innovators, and change-makers to learn from. Make the most out of this by reaching out to the people that inspire you. Ask how they got to where they are and what advice they would have for you, and keep a notebook with insights.



Alistair Duffey

Low-carbon Energy Consultant, Element Energy

MPhys Physics, Hertford College, 2019



What: Together with my colleagues at Element Energy, I work to provide clients with in-depth understanding on the future of low carbon energy. My work focuses on the alternatives to fossil-fuel heating in buildings. In my time here, I have worked on projects for local and national government, the energy industry, and a leading university. Most of my work is quantitative modelling and analysis, using a combination of Python, Excel and QGIS. However, the consultant role is a generalist position, so I also write reports and do more qualitative research, as well as handling project management tasks like running meetings with clients.

Why: I wanted a job where I could make a positive impact on climate change, while being challenged and using skills I had developed through my degree. I also saw consultancy as a great way to gain experience and knowledge of the low carbon space, since I tend to be working on a new project dealing with a different topic every few months.

Advice:

- The low carbon energy sector is full of people motivated to help solve climate change. It's important that you can demonstrate in your application that you are on board with that mission.

- Be ambitious and apply widely. While this sector is competitive to get into, it's also expanding rapidly as more industries, organisations and policymakers begin to accept the need for deep emissions reductions in the near-term.

Consultancy: My experience is that job titles like 'consultant' hide a lot of variety in roles and responsibilities across different companies. Before applying, it's worth putting some effort into understanding the following:

- What does a typical project look like for this company?
- What would my role be in delivering those projects?

This should help in understanding whether you really want the position, and what skills and experiences you would need to highlight in an application. A chat with someone at the company before you apply is invaluable for this, but looking in detail through some recent reports on their website is also useful.



In-person OXFORD UNIVERSITY CAREERS FAIR



📅 Thursday, 6 October 2022 | 11:00-15:00

📍 Examination Schools, OX1 4BG

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ENGINEERING

Engineering and skilled engineers make a significant contribution to UK productivity as well as working towards mitigating the grand global challenges of climate change, food security, clean water and energy, artificial intelligence and robotics.

The engineering sector contributes 26% of GDP to the UK economy which is more than the retail, wholesale, financial and insurance sectors combined, with 5.7 million people employed in the sector across over 600,000 engineering companies.

These companies are projected to have 265,000 annual job openings between now and 2024, and there is currently a shortage of qualified engineers graduating in the country.

The engineering sector includes a wide range of organisations. This includes vast, multinational corporations right down to small, independent engineering companies and start-ups; for example, 58% of engineers are in SMEs with fewer than 250 employees. Some of the biggest recruiters of Oxford engineers are Arup, Atkins, Mott MacDonald, Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems and Jaguar Land Rover.

Getting in and entry points

For technical engineering roles, a degree in engineering (or sometimes a related subject, such as physics, materials science or mathematics) is usually required, and the average graduate starting salary is around £30.5k. Non-engineering roles in these firms tend to offer similar starting salaries to their competitors in other corporate sectors. Roles are offered year-round, but many of the larger graduate schemes have deadlines closing each year around December/January.

“ More than 40% of UK electricity is from renewable sources. Energy consumption in the UK peaked in 2005 and is now down to 1994 levels due to energy efficiency. We need Oxford engineers to drive us towards a sustainable future.

— Dr Mike Moss, Career Adviser,
The Careers Service, University of
Oxford

Work experience is important, and it is worth bearing in mind that the Engineering Science course at Oxford is unusual in not having a built-in period of six or twelve months spent in industry. However, larger firms (many of which will attend the Science, Engineering & Technology Fair in Michaelmas term) often offer internships that will fit into a long vacation. Smaller organisations are often willing to offer work experience or internships – check on CareerConnect or contact particular firms speculatively to enquire. Internship opportunities are usually advertised a little later than graduate jobs, with deadlines tending to fall from December to February.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Join Oxford's Engineering Society, Biomedical Engineering Society or OxWEST (for women).
- Join UKSEDS (UK Students for the Exploration and Development of Space).
- Volunteer with Engineers Without Borders during your vacations to build your skills and take part in development projects. A branch has recently been started at the University.
- Take part in Oxford University Racing, run by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, to find the best race car. See info@oxforduniracing.com
- Read, and write a guest post for, *Developing Engineers*, a blog written by young engineers.
- Share your passion for engineering with schoolchildren to also showcase your enthusiasm to future employers. There are a number of outreach programmes organised by professional bodies and the UK government, such as STEMNET.
- Join a professional engineering body as a young member – or represent students on their board.
- Enter the Institution of Civil Engineers' Communications Competition.



More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/engineering
www.engineeringuk.com/news-media/2017-engineering-uk-the-state-of-engineering-published

Dr Markus Wulfmeier

Research Scientist, DeepMind (Machine Learning and Robotics)
DPhil Engineering Science, New College, 2017

What: Together with my colleagues at DeepMind, I work to improve our understanding, as well as our ability to build intelligent systems. My work focuses on the intersection of machine learning (ML) and robotics, which means that not all of my work is done sitting in front of a computer. My average week is made up of: reading and writing publications; designing algorithms and programming; testing ideas in simulations and on real hardware; and many discussions with extremely smart and talented colleagues – the most enjoyable part.

Why: I did not spend my undergraduate degree planning to move into fundamental research. However, I rounded off the degree with a stint as a visiting researcher at MIT. Experiencing the responsibilities of a project related to NASA's MER missions and the creative work connected to it changed my mind in under six months. There are two main perspectives that make my field particularly interesting:

1. Robots acting in the physical world can greatly benefit from ML to handle the complexity of real-world data.
2. The embodiment provided by robotics and the connected access to rich and complex data can strengthen current ML models, which rely on breadth and richness of data.

When choosing an employer, I was motivated by the possibility to create a positive impact, and the incredible team of colleagues and friends at DeepMind.

Advice: Motivation is key for many aspects of life, and curiosity can be an excellent source thereof. Every model gets improved (or replaced) over time. Take some time to question the most basic concepts in your field and follow the line of reasoning that established them. There is a good chance that – depending on your field – some of the core ideas will considerably change in the next 5, 10 or 20 years.

Academia and industry: Academic and industrial research positions will always differ in some aspects and you should get informed about which perspectives suit you the most. However, we're living in an incredibly privileged time where the additional benefits (such as, work stability) of industrial research in artificial intelligence come with very similar work.



Dr Lakshmi Manjoosha Adapa

IT Consultant, Accenture
MEng Engineering Science, Jesus College, 2008; DPhil Engineering Science, St Edmund Hall, 2012

What: Based in Amsterdam, I work as an IT consultant at Accenture as part of the service management team. We constantly design, deliver, manage, and improve the way information technology is used within an organisation to ensure the right processes, people, and technology are in place to help our clients. My job often involves conveying complex technical concepts from the development team to clients' business process owners, and acting as a facilitator to design and implement processes to improve and achieve client's business goals.

Why: After completing an MEng and DPhil in Engineering Science, I started working as a water technology market analyst at BlueTech Research, a leading think tank in water research. I was responsible for researching, analysing and formulating data into strategic reports to help the company's clients to make informed decisions on water technology market opportunities. Having developed strong technical and analytical skills, I then decided to pursue a career in the IT industry to improve my techno-commercial skills, to gain exposure to different industries, and to understand how organisations work. This was a career change for me, but I really enjoy the variety in the roles I undertake, and the multi-disciplinary teams that I work with.

Advice: After completing your PhD, don't limit yourself to academia or feel demotivated by the number of rejections. There will be very few opportunities related to your doctorate but there are plenty of other career paths where the skills gained during your doctorate will be valued. Sometimes a little change in career might open new doors, taking you to new heights that you would have never imagined. Grab the opportunity and seek advice from the Careers Service from an early stage.

Top tips: Despite the challenging academic workloads, make time for extracurricular activities because the skills you learn here will be invaluable and help you later with your job interviews. Recruiters appreciate the extra effort and time that goes in these activities and enjoy listening to competency examples from outside of academia.



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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The UK health and social care sector employs over 3 million people, of whom over 1.7 million work for the National Health Service, and the rest for public sector employers (such as local authorities), the private sector or for voluntary organisations.

The actual array of roles in the sector is vast, ranging from doctors and NHS managers, to social workers. The allied health professions alone include a huge range of roles such as art/music/drama therapists, dietitians, physiotherapists, radiographers, and speech and language therapists.

Getting in and entry points

A significant number of Oxford graduates each year study medicine as a second degree. Four-year 'fast track' medical degrees for graduates are offered at several UK universities, with some funding available. Applications for these courses are made through UCAS and close in October, and entry requirements vary: some only accept applicants with a degree in life sciences, some specify certain subjects at A-level. Most use admission tests as part of the application process. Alternatively, you could apply for a second, full degree in medicine through UCAS. These have much more limited funding and therefore tend to be less competitive.

Many of the allied health professions can be entered by undertaking a two-year postgraduate qualification. Use the course finder on the NHS Health Careers website to check entry requirements and available funding. A science degree is normally required, with some exceptions. An alternative option for scientists is the NHS Scientist

“ In looking for other clinical applications of psychology I came across the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme and immediately realised I had found a viable alternative career path. Active listening is a real skill and it can be harder than you realise to sit with another person's distress. Volunteering for a mental health or social support charity can be a great way to get experience.

— Bethany Doran, Trainee, IAPT

Training Programme (STP). Workplace-based and salaried, the scheme trains people to become specialists in various disciplines from microbiology to medical physics. Closing dates are normally early in Hilary term.

Social workers can qualify via either an undergraduate degree or a postgraduate qualification. Frontline's graduate programme (www.thefrontline.org.uk) offers a new route into children's social work by providing a paid, work-based course in which participants simultaneously complete a master's in social work. Likewise, Think Ahead (www.wethinkahead.org) have launched a similar course in adult mental health social work.

Students wishing to train as psychologists in the UK need first to obtain the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) from the British Psychology Society (BPS). This may be done either through an undergraduate degree in psychology or through a conversion course. Relevant work experience is then required before embarking on a doctorate in clinical psychology (currently funded by the NHS), or a doctorate or qualification in counselling psychology (normally self-funded).

The sector also has graduate management training programmes, which are open to graduates of any degree subject. The NHS programme allows specialism in general management, HR management, finance management and health informatics. Administrative roles are plentiful, and may be found alongside clinical roles at www.jobs.nhs.uk, or through many private sector websites.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Volunteer with local charities and community organisations to help the vulnerable or disadvantaged. Pastoral experience is useful for all roles in the sector. You could initially do voluntary work on a hospital ward, through student-run community groups, or through Oxfordshire volunteering organisations.
- Get involved in Oxford SU Mind Your Head campaign to promote mental health awareness.
- Become a Student Peer Supporter, a JCR Welfare Rep, or volunteer for Nightline.
- Arrange some work-shadowing in a hospital or health centre if you are thinking about graduate entry medicine.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/medicine-as-a-second-degree
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/psychology
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/public-health
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/social-care

Eleanor Sharpe

Newly Qualified Speech and Language Therapist, Barts Health NHS Trust
BA Cell and Systems Biology, Exeter College, 2013

What: Speech and Language Therapy is an allied health profession which supports people of all ages who have problems with communication and/or swallowing. You need a specialised degree to be a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), but if you've already got a first degree, you can do an accelerated master's. I did the 2-year MSc in Speech and Language Sciences at UCL, and since September 2021, I've been working as an SLT. I work with adults in a split post, meaning I spend part of my week with adults who have had a stroke recently (acute stroke unit), and part of my week with any adult currently in hospital with a communication or swallowing disorder (acute inpatients). I assess their communication/swallowing impairments and then form a treatment plan which could include strategies to compensate for the difficulties, or therapy to try to improve the underlying impairment.

Why: I'm fascinated by how the body and brain work, but after doing my undergraduate degree, I knew I wanted to work with people day-to-day, rather than in a lab. I came across the SLT role somewhat by accident, and after spending time reading about it and doing some work experience/volunteering, I realised it was for me. I love my career because every day I support people with

things that really matter to them; communication, eating and drinking are such fundamental parts of our lives as humans! The breadth within speech and language therapy means it's impossible to get bored – from infants born too early to know how to swallow yet, to deaf children, to teenagers learning to live with a stutter, to adults who've lost their ability to talk after a stroke. There are also lots of different options for career progression: clinical specialism, teaching, research and service management to name a few.

Advice: If you're interested, I'd recommend having a look at [the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists \(RCSLT\) website](#) for more information. I'd also recommend getting some experience of working with people with communication disorders – I volunteered for the [Stroke Association](#), with [KEEN](#), and got some work experience in a specialist school. For a very close-up experience of the work, try getting a job as an SLT assistant.



INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Working in this sector involves developing policy, coupled with practical implementation, that empowers people across the globe to improve their lives.

Practice areas are diverse and they encompass governance, healthcare, education, gender, disaster preparedness, infrastructure, economics, livelihoods, human rights, and other associated issues.

You could be working in a think tank that seeks to address issues of global concern; in your country's foreign service to formulate and implement international policy; in the civil service of a regional organisation such as the EU; as a researcher in a political risk or international development consultancy; or in an international organisation (IO) such as the UN or World Bank. Alternatively, you could work for a global charity (see the [charity sector briefing for relevant advice](#)). As this is a popular sector, competition for employment can be intense, but it offers rewarding careers for those who persevere.

Getting in and entry points

Entry straight from an undergraduate degree can be difficult, as most organisations value specific expertise or transferable experience – whether in the private, public, or charitable sector. However, there are some graduate schemes available, such as the UK's Diplomatic Service Fast Stream.

Direct recruitment into a permanent role is also possible into NGOs and think tanks, but most require at least a master's qualification, and sometimes one or two

A thesis project or one or two longer internships are a great way to set foot into the sector and show how you can add value to an organisation. Top skills required are: empathy; curiosity; creativity; flexibility; frustration; tolerance; and humility.

Janita Bartell, Hygiene Specialist,
UNICEF

years' work experience. The precise master's course title doesn't always matter, but the course content/modules do. When making applications it's important to highlight the most relevant modules taken and to illustrate that you have very good knowledge of the subject, research techniques, technical skills, geographical regions, and relevant languages. Research-driven organisations and many think tanks may require that you have undertaken further study to the level of a doctorate, as well as having several years of professional experience.

You can spend time at Oxford building up insights into the sector and its range of organisations – both to increase your chances of securing a job and to help you work out which areas and employers are for you. Most think tanks are open to students undertaking short internships with them. These are not always paid, so you may need to try to set up shorter traineeships that you can combine with other paid work. The EU offers longer five-month paid traineeships to recent graduates. Internship schemes with larger international organisations are normally reserved for postgraduate students. Masters' or DPhil students may also be able to find paid part-time consultancy work within international development, or political risk consultancies and think tanks – especially those students with sector-specific knowledge, expertise, and language skills.

You can enhance your 'insider' knowledge of the sector and hear of upcoming opportunities by [following our networking advice](#). Talk to speakers and employers at careers events and seminars, and network through LinkedIn, or college development offices.

Extra-curricular ideas

Spend as much time as you can gaining international experience and knowledge. Spend a summer on the [Careers Service's Summer Internship Programme](#) working on a relevant project, building your language skills, and getting to know a region. Also:

- Write relevant articles for student newspapers, journals or blogs, to demonstrate that you can use research to inform and influence opinion.
- Take a course at the Oxford University Language Centre, to develop or improve a second language.
- Join university societies related to development.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/international-development
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/international-law
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/international-organisations

Alicia Graham

Trainee Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner, South London and Maudsley NHS
BA Experimental Psychology, Brasenose College, 2019

What: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services were created to address the lack of treatment options available for people who experience common mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression. Psychological wellbeing practitioners (PWWs) work in these services following one year as a trainee. I am trained through University College London (UCL), as well as working in an IAPT service, and will gain a PGCert in Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Interventions following completion of the course. My day-to-day role involves triaging, assessing and treating patients with common mental health difficulties using evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Why: In my final year at Oxford I decided to pursue a career in clinical psychology and therefore needed to gain some clinical experience. I first heard about the role during my MSc, and decided to apply as it seemed like a good opportunity to gain clinical experience but with more job security (and marginally fewer applicants) than assistant psychologist positions.

Pros and cons: The role is demanding and you quickly begin seeing a high number of patients per week. I currently treat over

30 patients each week through a range of group, one-to-one, and online therapy programmes, so make sure you can provide good evidence of time-management skills and working to targets! It can be daunting to manage the safety of patients who present with risk, and working with people who are distressed makes the role rewarding, but also stressful and emotionally demanding. There is a high turnover of PWWs, in part due to the intense nature of the role, and in part due to the very useful stepping stone that the role offers to becoming a cognitive behavioural therapist and getting onto the clinical doctorate course.

Advice: Make sure you understand what the role really entails and the type of patients you would be treating. Also, think of practical examples of when you have managed your workload well (thank you Oxford). Any experience working as a support worker, a crisis line volunteer or in a primary care service would be of great value.



Emile Rolland

Junior Policy Analyst, OECD

MSc Modern South Asian Studies, St Antony's College, 2016

What: My work is shared between the Governance Network (GovNet) of the OECD, which brings together governance practitioners and experts to explore and promote more effective governance in developing countries, and the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP), an alliance of over 60 countries/organisations that focuses on evidence-based policy dialogue, knowledge sharing, and peer-to-peer learning on public sector management and institutional reform.

Trajectory: After an internship with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), headquartered in Kenya, I settled in Nairobi for three and a half years, working first in the housing unit of UN-Habitat on normative issues around the right to housing and housing finance. Subsequently, I worked with Altai Consulting on the Monitoring and Learning System of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for the Horn of Africa. The latter focused on migration, with the company being responsible for monitoring the outputs and outcomes of different projects as well as conducting different lessons learned exercises to inform future programming in the region. This allowed me to travel in different countries (such as, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya

and Sudan) to conduct key informant interviews for our qualitative studies and to meet our partners implementing projects on the ground.

Tips: Specialise in either a particular subject matter or a specific skill set to gain comparative advantage and transferability. Transferable skill sets in demand include being able to conduct advanced quantitative and qualitative research, notably through the use of software (for example, Stata, SPSS, Python). Sectoral skill sets are related to different thematic areas in development (for example, climate finance, urban development), and will provide you the entry point in the domain of your choice. Gaining experience in a developing country is crucial to better comprehend how international development project cycles function, as well as better apprehending ground realities. Finally, working in the private sector for development consulting firms is likely to equip you with a broader skill set due to quick turnaround and fast-paced work.



Debasmita Boral

Consultant (Climate Finance and Gender Mainstreaming), E Co.

MPhil Modern South Asian Studies, St. Antony's College, 2017

What: I am a Consultant with E Co, a company focused on delivering low-carbon climate-resilient solutions. I work primarily on adaptation and mitigation projects which range from delivering climate-resilient WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) infrastructure to small island developing states in the Pacific islands, to scaling up investment vehicles which finance the delinking of major commodity supply chains from deforestation.

Why: The climate emergency is here and has been for some time, and has a particularly disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities whose carbon emissions are negligible and who are dependent on natural capital for livelihoods and subsistence. We are dealing with a threat multiplier that has the potential to undo developmental achievements while exacerbating energy, food and water insecurity and gender inequalities. Justice and inclusion have to be a key part of climate change adaptation, and this is what motivates me every day.

Trajectory: I began my career as an intern with UN Environment's Gender and Safeguards Unit at their headquarters in Nairobi in August 2017. This position was advertised through the Careers

website, which, alongside Devex, Inspira and UNDP Jobs, is an important resource. I was fortunate to be guided by a great mentor and to work alongside project development and implementation teams. Due to having built this network, I had the confidence to continue independently after completion and stay in Nairobi, which is a hub for environmental and climate change-related international organisations and NGOs.

Tips: Sectoral knowledge is important, but transferable skills will give you mobility.

Being at Oxford will help you develop a strong foundation for methodologies and research skills – add on to it by picking up sectoral knowledge, relevant languages, and professional experience where your impact is clear and grassroots.

The litmus test of your flexibility, skill and experience will always happen outside of your comfort zone.



LAW

Intellectual challenge, a constantly changing environment and the opportunity to effect change are just some of the characteristics of the roles available within the UK legal sector. Opportunities are many and varied; you could be supporting a vulnerable child, advising a government minister or managing a newsworthy commercial deal.

Solicitors

The majority (65%) of the UK's 143,000 practising solicitors work in private practice law firms; these vary enormously in size and specialisation. There tends to be a division between firms that serve the needs of commerce and those that deal with clients with personal legal dilemmas. The remaining solicitors work outside private practice partnerships in a whole variety of different businesses and organisations.

Getting in and entry points

A new system for qualification as a solicitor began in September 2021. The aim of this new system is to open up access to the profession and reduce the costs of qualification. In the new system you will need to:

- Hold a degree (or equivalent) – law or non-law.
- Pass two sets of centralised exams – the Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) 1 and 2.
- Complete 24 months of qualifying work experience (QWE).

Employers and legal education providers and others are just beginning to integrate these changes into their academic, recruitment and training programmes. You are advised to keep up-to-date with developments by visiting the Solicitors Regulation Authority website and asking law firms for their latest updates.

Careful research into whether this option is the right career for you is vital. Wherever your final destination you are likely to be investing many hours and considerable dedication to further study and additional qualifications after leaving Oxford. Historically there have been approximately 5,000 training contracts available each year; 90+% offered by private practice law firms. The remaining positions are to be found in the Government Legal Department, local government, legal departments in industry and the Crown Prosecution Service. This landscape may change with the increased flexibility on QWE afforded by the new qualification route. Short periods of paid work experience, known as vacation schemes, are available at law firms during the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays, as well as

opportunities to attend 'Open Days'. Increasingly, free to access online 'internships' are being offered by law firms too. In many firms the formal vacation scheme also forms a vital part of the recruitment process for a training contract.

Barristers

There are approximately 13,400 barristers at the independent (or self-employed) Bar, practising in 400 sets of chambers across England and Wales. A further 3,000 work in an employed capacity for numerous organisations, including the Government Legal Department and the Crown Prosecution Service, as well as in commerce and industry. Barristers practise in a wide variety of legal areas such as family, criminal, intellectual property and international border disputes. There can be considerable differences in the nature and lifestyle of a barrister's work; some almost never appear in court whilst others are in most days. Others may spend the majority of their time drafting pleadings and opinions. However, advocacy remains a vital skill for the barrister, and it is one of the most distinctive elements of this role.

Getting in and entry points

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) have also completed a full review of education and training. This has resulted in some changes to the qualification elements which are designed to improve access, flexibility and affordability. There are three components involved in qualification:

- The academic component. You must have a degree and, if this is not in law, you need to take a law conversion course (such as the Graduate Diploma in Law), which covers the seven foundations of legal knowledge.



- The vocational component. This is to provide you with the specialist knowledge required for practice at the Bar. Previously known as the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), there is now a greater choice of 'Bar' courses; some are available at significantly lower cost than before.
- Pupillage/work-based component. This is your period of recognised training where you are supervised by a qualified barrister. The majority of pupillages are undertaken with chambers and are divided into two parts ('sixes'): the non-practising six months, during which pupils shadow a supervisor, followed by six months of practice when pupils undertake advocacy and other legal services. After this final stage of pupillage, a barrister can either apply for a permanent position as a tenant within chambers, or seek a role at the 'Employed Bar' (such as the Crown Prosecution Service or CPS) or elsewhere. At every stage of qualification, competition for places is intense. Approximately one in five students who apply for one of the Bar training courses will successfully complete through to pupillage. Careful assessment of your skills, motivations, and academic credentials, combined with detailed research on the role will help you to decide whether this is the right option for you. Many chambers offer a few days of work shadowing in the form of a mini-pupillage, which can be extremely valuable.



Other options in law

Many Oxford law students decide not to go on to take the professional qualifications to become a solicitor or barrister, but are still keen to utilise their degree and do so through different sorts of legally related work. If, for example, you are interested in compliance or corporate governance, the role of company secretary might appeal. Secretaries are responsible for ensuring that an organisation complies with standard financial and legal practice, so must have a thorough understanding of the laws that affect their work. If working with individuals or causes is more suited to you, there are options working as campaigners, policy writers or case workers within the third sector, NGOs and government organisations working in areas such as immigration, housing, and many other social welfare and human rights related areas. Perhaps life in academia has caught your attention? If it has, there will be options for you, with the addition of further study, to work in teaching and research within higher education or other legal education providers or research institutes. These are just some of the possible options!

Extra-curricular ideas

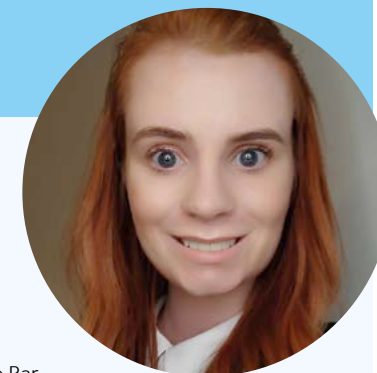
- Join relevant student societies, such as the Oxford Law Society, the Bar Society or the Oxford Women Lawyers Student Society.
- Get involved with mooted competitions or join a debating society.
- Join the [Oxford Law Faculty's careers mailing list](#) to hear about events, mooted competitions and work experience. Law and non-law students can sign up.
- Volunteer for a not-for-profit organisation to help individuals, such as Citizens Advice or Asylum Welcome.
- If you are a law student, consider the Bonavero Institute Student Fellowships to contribute to a variety of legal organisations or engage with the Pro Bono Publico programme.
- Improve your commercial skills – get involved in one of the Careers Service employability programmes such as The Oxford Strategy Challenge (TOSCA), or Insight into Strategy and Management, or apply for an internship.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/barristers
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/solicitors
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/international-law
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/human-rights-public-interest-law

Courtney Step-Marsden

Barrister, Outer Temple Chambers
 LLB Law (Jurisprudence), Somerville College, 2018



What: I am a barrister specialising in civil law, in particular, employment law and personal injury law. After graduating from Oxford, I undertook the Bar Professional Training Course at The University of Law, and then completed pupillage at Outer Temple Chambers. I started tenancy in September 2020. I appear in the Employment Tribunal approximately once a week and advise on a wide range of different matters.

Why: Throughout my degree, I enjoyed examining legal problems and undertaking legal research. I also enjoy the self-motivation that is required for a career at the self-employed Bar.

Top tips:

- **Academics:** While at university, focus on your studies to ensure that you get a high 2:1 or a first-class degree.
- **Extra-curricular:** Consider mooted or debating at the Oxford Union to build up your advocacy experience. Start looking at mini-pupillages to learn about life at the Bar. Do something that makes you unique and that you are passionate about –

be it a sport, drama or charity work. This will give you something to talk about in interviews and help you evidence relevant soft-skills for the Bar.

- **Funding:** Training for the Bar can be expensive (although recently the fees have been reduced). Look at applying for scholarships at the Inns of Court or advocacy scholarships at the Bar course providers. The scholarships from the Inns can be very generous, covering the cost of the Bar course. Also, consider taking a gap year after graduation to save some money and perhaps gain some relevant experience, such as through working as a paralegal.
- **Resilience:** Getting pupillage is hard. It is very competitive and you are likely to receive a lot of rejections. It can be demoralising, but persistence is key. Continue to build on your CV, network and apply for opportunities.

Larissa Wilson

Company Secretary, Janus Henderson Investors
 Jurisprudence, Brasenose, 2011



What: I'm a Company Secretary at Janus Henderson Investors ("JHI"), which is a global active asset management company. The role of a Company Secretary really varies depending on the type of organisation and sector that you work in, but is always focussed on the Governance of the organisation – the system of rules, practices and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled.

In general, company secretaries help boards to deliver good governance and to meet compliance obligations. I've been lucky enough to undertake a variety of company secretarial roles at a variety of different organisations during my career so far – the ability to easily move between sectors is a perk of the profession!

My current role is focussed on supporting JHI's UK regulated boards, overseeing Governance processes and driving improvements to Governance at JHI. In comparison, my previous role at HSBC was focussed on Shareholder Governance, which included ensuring that HSBC met its obligations in the jurisdictions it was listed, and supporting shareholder relations, various corporate events and annual reporting.

Career journey: I had no idea what I wanted to do when I left university – I fell into the profession when I was asked to perform the role at the start-up I was working for at the time. I went on

to train at Lloyds Banking Group before moving to the Post Office, HSBC and finally JHI.

I was also able to study for my professional qualification at the same time as working, which whilst not without its challenges allowed me to get stuck into my career sooner rather than later.

Advice: If you're interested in finding out more about a career in Governance, take a look at the Chartered Governance Institute's website and attend a Governance Insight Day. The Institute also advertises internship and trainee opportunities.

Having a strong soft skill set is just as important as your technical skill set, if not more so, especially given that you often have exposure to the most senior individuals at an organisation from the very start of your career. Most roles will want someone who can show that they can work well in a team, have good communication and influencing skills, strong organisational skills and attention to detail – so try and include evidence of that in your applications and interviews!

Olivia Phelan

Lawyer, Government Legal Department
Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Lady Margaret Hall, 2016

What: The Government Legal Department (GLD) provides legal services to many central government departments. Our work includes defending the government in judicial reviews, providing legal advice to ministers on new policy development, drafting new legislation, advising on commercial contracts, and negotiating international trade deals. This involves public law, human rights law, international law, data protection, equalities, procurement, employment, trade law, and much more.

Trainee solicitors and pupil barristers embark on two years of training courtesy of the Government Legal Profession Legal Trainee Scheme. Departments involved in the scheme include GLD, HM Revenue and Customs, and the National Crime Agency. You can also join GLD after training elsewhere.

Career path: The law has always interested me but a career in corporate law never appealed and so I looked into other options. Before starting a training contract with GLD, I worked for a legal start-up and for the House of Commons Library. Over the course of two years I worked for the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, and Home Office. I was even lucky enough to be posted to the British Overseas Territory in Cyprus for six months. I now work as an advisory lawyer at the Home Office in London.

Unlike private law firms, GLD encourages lawyers to move subject area and department throughout their career. A stint as a

government lawyer opens up lots of opportunities: former Director of Liberty Shami Chakrabarti and Supreme Court judge Lady Justice Rose are former government lawyers.

Advice:

- The selection panel won't have a copy of your CV, and they won't know which university or school you went to, or what your grades are. The key is preparing for the online tests and assessment day.
- Having *any* sort of paid job beforehand helps, whether that's working as a paralegal or as a shop assistant in Tesco. Understanding how to work with colleagues, when to ask for help, and responding well to feedback will get you a long way in the application process. You can't learn those skills in a textbook!
- Persevere. It often takes more than one attempt to get onto the Government Legal Profession Legal Trainee Scheme, and not all come straight from university.
- Understand GLD's work. Read about judicial review cases and pay attention to new legislation. Our work is often in the news, so it's a good idea to start familiarising yourself with legal press and cases.



Ewan Fraser

Trainee Solicitor, Clyde & Co
BA Jurisprudence, Somerville College, 2019

What: I attended a vacation scheme at Clyde & Co while studying for finals between Hilary and Trinity of my final year at Oxford and was lucky enough to receive my offer a few weeks before my first exam. I moved to London the following year to complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC) before starting my training contract.

Why: One thing which I have come to appreciate after leaving Oxford is the breadth of work that firms can specialise in. It is easy to fall into the trap of seeing all law firms as the same: dry paperwork that requires you to 'sell your soul'. The reality couldn't be further from the truth. There are hundreds of firms in the country specialising in everything from sport to intellectual property, family to real estate.

Having failed to find a training contract in my second year I didn't know what to do with myself entering third year. I took the Oxford International Trade module, however, and adored the course. It was case law heavy and, with that, a far cry from the corporate work I had been led to expect from my subject.

This led me to look more specifically at firms with a reputable commercial practice, and I came across my current firm. I was pleasantly surprised a few months later to find my old International Trade tutor talking to the firm as a guest lecturer. I half expected him to start asking me questions!

Top tips: I was incredibly lucky to find a training contract before graduating, but this isn't always the case. The nature of university life does instil a sense of urgency which is undue and often harmful. When you enter the LPC you will note that there are people of all ages and at different stages in their career. There is no rush: focus on passing your exams before you go sacrificing time studying to find a training contract.



VANTAGE

Vantage is an online portal that connects you with top legal employers.



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www.careers.ox.ac.uk/lawf



NATIONAL POLICY AND GOVERNMENT

Working in national policy and government offers variety, new challenges, and opportunities to do something that has a big impact on the public. This page concentrates on the sector in the UK, but much of the advice can be extended to careers across the world.

A career in this sector appeals to those interested in making a social or legislative impact in their home country – working for a political party or think tank or becoming a civil servant at local or national level.

There are currently almost half a million people in the UK Civil Service, working in 250+ departments, services, agencies. Local government is an even bigger employer in the UK, with 1.2 million staff in over 350 local authorities.

Civil servants are officially apolitical, informing and implementing policies of elected representatives. Graduates may also work directly for elected representatives as advisers, researchers and assistants, which can be an effective route into a political career. You could even stand for election as a councillor or MP.

Think tanks are more concerned with policy than politics, but are sometimes aligned with a particular position on the political spectrum. They seek to influence public policy and debate through their research, the media, and via direct contact with politicians and organisations. For more about think tanks see [the 'International Policy and Development' section in this Guide](#).

Getting in and entry points

The Civil Service primarily recruits graduates through its 'Fast Stream' – in fact 15 'streams' ranging from Generalist, Diplomatic Service, Houses of Parliament, Science and Engineering, to Analytics, or Project Management and the Government Economic Service. The deadline for this falls in early Michaelmas term.

Fast Streamers usually gain experience in more than one government department and in more than one part of the UK and can have opportunities for secondment into the private sector, charities, and other public sector organisations.

Some departments and agencies also run separate direct recruitment schemes, including the Economic Service, Government Legal Profession, HM Treasury, the FCA, ONS, Security Services and GCHQ.

Individual, graduate-level vacancies in departments will be advertised on the Civil Service website as they arise. Other routes include temping and short-term project roles.

Internships are not generally offered, apart from the Summer Diversity Internship Programme (deadline in October) and Early Diversity Internship Programme. Some specialist programmes also advertise internships from January to March. For example, Government Economic Service, Communications, and Operational Research.

In local councils, the Local Government Association runs a two-year graduate scheme: The National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). This programme aims to provide local government with high calibre managers, training graduates through a series of placements within councils. Participants can gain experience in policy and strategy, customer-facing roles, and finance and operational positions. Since 2002, over 1,000 graduates have completed the programme, and many now hold influential managerial and policy roles. Direct entry positions can be found on council websites.

The website www.w4MP.org is the primary jobs board for positions working with MPs, political parties and campaigning organisations. There are also internships, and speculative applications can also work, but many are London-based and may be unpaid.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Stand for your JCR/MCR committee or the Oxford SU executive – or get involved in Oxford SU's campaigns.
- Enter debate competitions in societies or the Oxford Union to sharpen your communication skills.
- Get involved with your local political party or student society branches and politics-related student societies.
- Join [The Oxford Strategy Challenge \(TOSCA\)](#): Oxford City Council is a frequent client.
- Get involved with student societies and volunteering through OxHub.

Note: With the Government planning a 21% reduction in civil servant numbers, the Civil Service Fast Stream recruitment programme is not recruiting in 2022–23, although the Diversity Internship Programmes are being run.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/government-public-services
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/think-tanks

Sam Banks

Graduate Training Scheme, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
 MMaths, Merton College, 2018



What: I am on the graduate scheme at the FCA, which regulates the provision of most financial services in the UK. As I'm on the market oversight stream, my main focus is on the UK's stock markets, but graduates are involved in everything from preventing financial crime through to making pensions policy.

My job has varied a lot across my different rotations. My current role involves programming and data analysis to help detect unlawful stock market activity, using the data we receive as the regulator. But in the past, I have worked on investigations into public companies' behaviour, internal strategy pieces, and thematic work on companies' reporting and governance.

How: I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after university but I knew I wanted to do something with more practical impact than pure mathematics (not too difficult!). I found out about the FCA's summer internship at the Oxford Careers Service Finance Fair, decided to apply and was successful. I really enjoyed it and was offered a place on the graduate scheme after the internship.

I really value the overview of particular industries that I get working at the regulator – in front line roles, you get to see how different companies go about their business. I also enjoy the different rotations on the scheme, which provide an opportunity to try different things out and learn new technical knowledge.

Pros and cons: Graduates are given a lot of trust and responsibility. I have helped to interview company directors as part of our investigations, and worked to develop the FCA's approach in new areas.

The scrutiny we are under as a regulator means that it sometimes takes a little while to make decisions. This can be frustrating at times, but it's better than making the wrong decision quickly. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the never-ending amount of work that the regulator could do, the organisation is really supportive of everyone having a good work-life balance.

Top tips: I would definitely recommend applying for summer internships – they're a good way to get to know an organisation, and can take the pressure off applications in your final year.

I think being up front about my motivations really helped me – working in public life is about considering the right principles and the people affected, as well as being technically good.



Nicholas Linfoot

Policy Lead, Ministry of Justice
 BA History, Lincoln College, 2019



What: I am a Policy Lead in the Ministry of Justice. I lead a team responsible for designing and delivering a range of pilots, policies and strategies covering health and wellbeing for prisoners and prison leavers. Before that I was a Prison Officer and manager in male and female prisons.

How: I had an unconventional route, first completing a placement as a Prison Officer through the Unlocked Graduates programme. I had a Fast Stream offer but didn't take it because I wanted to develop a frontline perspective and I valued the geographic flexibility that prisons provided i.e., not only being based in London! I then advanced through the ranks before transitioning to the Ministry of Justice headquarters in late 2021.

Pros and cons: Frontline work is fundamentally people-focussed, which means you build fantastic relationships, but it requires a high degree of resilience. It allows you to gain a lot of experience early on that many in central policy simply don't have; whether that be in security, mental health, or working with women or children. There is also a significant range of promotional

opportunities, giving you a lot of responsibility early on and deepening your knowledge. Lots of frontline work is challenging and complex but gives you real resilience and plenty of good stories! If you make the transition to the central Civil Service, it is rewarding to bring your experience to shaping national policy.

Top tips: There are several programmes like Unlocked, such as, Police Now, which provide frontline experience, and policy teams are increasingly filled by those who've completed these programmes, recognising their specialist knowledge. Keep an eye out for taster programmes or events and spend time thinking about your values and how they align with the areas you want to work in.



PUBLISHING

Do you have a creative mind, a proactive and resourceful nature, good organisational skills and a passion for creating content? If so a career in publishing may be an interesting option for you.

The UK publishing industry employs 29,000 people directly in the UK and is the largest exporter of books in the world. It divides into three main fields, with academic publishing being the biggest of the three:

- **Trade or consumer publishing:** fiction and non-fiction books that are published through the book trade to a general audience.
- **Academic publishing** makes scholarly research available via texts and journals.
- **Education publishing** produces school textbooks and English Language Teaching (ELT) materials.

There are a huge number of publishing companies in the UK, with the three largest companies (Penguin Random House, Hachette Livre, HarperCollins) taking around half of total UK customers sales. Other large employers include Macmillan, Pearson Education, Oxford University Press (OUP), Bloomsbury, Simon & Schuster, and Wiley, with many other smaller independent publishers.

Generally, the processes of publishing are divided into editorial, design and production, sales and marketing, distribution, contracts and rights, and finance. Specific job functions range from commissioning editor to content editor and marketing assistant to web developer as the rapid growth of online and digital publishing drives change across the industry.

There are also literary agencies, which act as intermediaries between trade publishers and writers. Normally working in small firms, agents have exposure to the whole publishing process: editing books with authors, convincing publishers to buy them, and dealing with contracts and media enquiries.

“ Try to get some work experience. As well as formal internships, publishers may also offer work experience on an ad hoc basis. There are also many different areas that work together to make a successful publishing company so consider all your career options, such as marketing and finance as well as editorial.

Naomi Crookston, Publisher,
Oxford University Press

Getting in and entry points

A few of the larger publishers run formal graduate schemes. Most, however, recruit graduates for specific entry-level jobs such as marketing or rights assistant, and the majority of people in publishing start in administrative positions and work their way upwards.

For any job, a demonstrated interest in the sector is extremely important, and having relevant work experience can be a real advantage. A few large players offer formal internship schemes, but outside of these, you can make speculative approaches to seek work experience at any publisher.

CareerConnect is a useful source of vacancies for jobs and work experience in the sector. Key external job sites include The Bookseller, Oxford Brookes' list of publishing jobs and internships (they run three publishing masters' degrees), and the Independent Publishers Guild (IPG) job board. Many companies, particularly smaller publishing companies and literary agencies, do not formally advertise vacancies, which means you need to get in touch speculatively to enquire and follow their social media pages.

The Publishers Association website www.publishers.org.uk provides lots of information on the industry, roles and careers.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Join the Society of Young Publishers (Oxford). Run by professionals in the sector, it holds regular networking nights and careers events.
- Demonstrate interest by joining other related student societies, such as the Oxford University Society of Bibliophiles.
- Gain experience by working for a student publication, such as, *The Oxford Student*, *Cherwell*, *Isis*, *The Oxford Scientist*, *The Oxford Blue* and so on. Many offer experience in editorial and technical roles.
- Choose a topic you are interested in and blog about it. Developing a regular blog is a good way to demonstrate relevant publishing skills.
- Offer to help in your department or college, for example, to support the production of conference materials and reports, internal documents or promotional material.
- **Sign up for the Careers Service's Insight into Publishing programme.**
- Working in a bookshop will give you useful insights into the consumer market.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/publishing

April Peake

Commissioning Editor, Penguin Random House (PRH) and UK Chair, Society of Young Publishers (SYP)
English Language and Literature, Lady Margaret Hall, 2015

“ What: I'm responsible for commissioning new audiobooks that are based on BBC radio material. I identify potential audio collections, prepare detailed proposals for commercially viable projects, pitch these audiobooks at internal board meetings, and cost out approved projects for sign-off. Additionally, I support the publishing process by briefing covers, proofreading copy, and working closely with producers, agents, readers, and colleagues to produce the very best end products.

Why: I enjoy market research, project management, building relationships with stakeholders, and working in a team, which are all key parts of a career in editorial. The most fulfilling element of my role is the list-building. My specific areas of responsibility are the factual and comedy releases. In order to identify commercial opportunities for each genre, I have to understand the needs of our listeners.

Career path: I got involved in student journalism during my time at Oxford and then I served on the board of Oxford Student Publications Limited in my final year. After a placement at Oxford University Press (OUP), I decided on publishing and applied for jobs in the academic sector. I started out as an assistant at

Cambridge University Press before progressing into academic-trade acquisitions roles at Oxford University Press (humanities), Routledge (social sciences), and Bloomsbury (visual arts).

Advice: Publishing is competitive, so it's rare to land a first role which aligns to your degree subject or personal interests. When applying for entry-level positions, go for roles in any department that can give you an understanding of the business side of books. Try to spend your early career refining a broad skill set, as that way you'll be better placed to apply for your ideal position. Once you're in the industry, though, you might be surprised at how many different paths there are!

Top tips: Internships are a super way to get relevant experience onto your CV. If you don't manage to get an internship, you can learn about publishing by joining the SYP for free entry to their events and by subscribing to *The Bookseller* for industry news.



Tallulah Griffith

Editorial Assistant, Osprey (part of Bloomsbury Publishing)
MSt English and American Studies, Wadham College, 2020

“ What: At Osprey, my role is both administrative and editorial. I support the editorial team with a number of checks on covers, ebook editions and blog posts; sending out freelancer contracts and complimentary copies of upcoming publications; and compiling new book proposals for the publishing meeting. Editorial tasks include proofreading and project managing a small number of titles, as well as image research and licensing.

Why: I am a part-time writer, and my job offers valuable editorial experience in addition to an insight into the processes behind getting work published. Long term, I would like to work in commissioning and take a lead role in list-building and working with authors to develop their manuscripts.

How: During my master's, I gained experience writing and editing for student publications like the *Oxford Review of Books* and the *Broad Street Humanities Review*. I then went on to do an internship with *Persuasion* magazine, which I found through the Oxford Careers Service. I had also previously worked in an administrative position as a programme coordinator at Sotheby's Institute of Art. This variety of experience meant that although I had not

undertaken an internship or training within publishing specifically, I could demonstrate an attention to detail, organisational skills, and an ability to manage a complex workload.

Advice: Be realistic, both about the difficulty of securing an entry-level job in publishing and about what the job will entail. A passion for reading is a good starting point; you will also need to have an awareness of publishing as a business. *The Bookseller*, BookMachine and the Society of Young Publishers are all great resources. As a cheaper alternative, the Oxford Careers Service offers an Insight into Publishing programme, as well as the possibility of a mock interview session, which I found really helpful in my application process. Be aware that your first job in publishing might not directly align with your interests, but also that you may well surprise yourself – many people set their sights on editorial roles on trade lists and later find themselves exposed to so many more options. Most importantly, expect rejection, and roll with the punches.





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SCIENCE

There are many opportunities in this sector, including careers in research, creating new technologies, developing or refining manufacturing processes, or innovating medical solutions. So make sure you quiz Oxford scientists about the options while you're here, as many have connections outside academia.

Scientists are likely to be involved in research, development and analysis. Opportunities in industry range from the research divisions of global companies to niche technology firms. Other options include government- or charity-funded research institutes, hospitals, and university research.

Science and technology span diverse disciplines and so too does the range of opportunities in the science sector. Roles for hands-on scientists exist in manufacturing, energy, medicine, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, environment, defence, aerospace, transport, electronics, space technology, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), and many more areas.

The sector also needs science literate graduates who can use their knowledge in other ways: for example, making scientific ideas a commercially viable reality, or communicating research to investors or the general public.

You may primarily be driven by your subject interest, but you should also consider the environment that would most suit you. For example, working in a small startup technology company is likely to give a very different experience from joining a large graduate scheme with an established employer.

Getting in and entry points

The first step for many scientists wanting to pursue a career in science is a PhD (DPhil in Oxford). Do not be put off if a PhD is not for you at this stage; many organisations offer science roles that do not require a PhD.



Make the most of expertise around you. Quiz Oxford researchers and lecturers about their career and collaborations – many have connections that reach far beyond academic research labs.

— Dr Abby Evans, Careers Adviser,
Oxford University Careers Service

In general, only major companies have graduate schemes. The earliest deadlines are before Christmas, but many recruit on a rolling basis. Gaining employment with well-known firms can be highly competitive (particularly in the pharmaceutical sector) and relevant industry experience is always useful.

Many large firms offer internships to penultimate year students. More opportunities exist with smaller, less well-known companies, which usually recruit for specific vacancies – either directly or through specialist recruitment agencies. Small scientific companies are often clustered on science parks. Check their websites for vacancies, register with relevant recruitment agencies, and also make speculative applications for jobs and for getting work experience.

The availability of work in government agencies and independent research institutes varies according to subject. DSTL (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory) runs a graduate scheme across most scientific disciplines. DESG (Defence Engineering and Science Group) is focused mainly on physical scientists and engineers. Independently funded research institutes – such as those operated by Cancer Research UK and the Wellcome Trust – are more common in life science disciplines. For some jobs it can be an advantage to have a relevant PhD, and some roles will require them.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Join subject-based student societies, and others such as the Scientific Society, OxWEST (for women) or the Energy Society.
- Volunteer to do outreach work, for example, with your department, Science Oxford or Oxford Hands-On Science (OxHOS).
- Seek a summer research assistant position at your department or through your tutors' contacts.
- Write for *The Oxford Scientist*, Oxford's science magazine.
- Become a student member of a relevant professional scientific society – many offer networking opportunities.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/pharmaceuticals-biotechnology
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/science-alternatives
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/science-rd

Phoebe Hobbs

Senior Medical Writer, Fishawack Health
MBiochem in Biochemistry, University College, 2019

What: When I'm asked what medical writers do, my simplest explanation is that we take data from clinical trials of drugs and convert it into written materials to help doctors decide what to prescribe...but we do much more than that! One day you could be working on an abstract, poster, or review article; the next you could be meeting with global experts, writing text for a website, speaking to patients to gain their perspectives, or developing training slides to support your pharmaceutical clients. This job is highly rewarding if you want to continue learning beyond academia, become a disease expert, and make a difference to patients. During my time in the industry, I've worked on a range of therapy areas including haematology, rare autoimmune diseases, neurology, oncology, and pulmonology. My involvement in disseminating COVID-19 research during the pandemic made me especially aware of the importance of my role.

Why: Love research but don't want to pipette colourless liquids for the rest of your days? Want to keep learning but can't choose just one subject to specialise in? Enjoy analysing data but also want to be creative? Passionate about advancing medicine? Keen to have a global impact and opportunities to travel? Liked rather than loathed writing your thesis? Interested in the

fast-paced pharmaceutical industry? Appreciate working in a team while having ownership over your projects? These are all reasons I've heard for people starting careers in medical writing.

Advice: People come into medical writing from various scientific backgrounds; medical knowledge and a PhD are beneficial, but not required. The most important thing is that you enjoy writing and research. To get in, you'll need to pass a writing test; it is key to check carefully for errors, be scientifically rigorous, and create a clear story flow. Once you have experience, your skills will be highly in demand. For more information on the medical communications industry, the different agencies, and tips for applying, I recommend visiting firstmedcommsjob.com. Most agencies provide tailored training and career development opportunities, and some, including Fishawack Health, offer internships and graduate programmes, so look out for these if you'd like a taster of a particular role.



Sam Hatfield

Scientist, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts
DPhil Environmental Research, Jesus College, 2020

What: I conduct research into different methods of simulating the Earth's atmosphere and oceans on computers in order to improve the quality of weather forecasts. In particular, I study the interface between meteorological science and supercomputing, a burgeoning area of computational science that will have real importance in attempting to adapt to climate change. My day-to-day work involves computer programming and data analysis, but also plenty of communication with colleagues and at conferences. This makes for a good balance all round, similar to that of a postdoctoral researcher in a university but without so much pressure to obtain funding and write papers.

Career path: I wanted an application for my physics and computing experience with a demonstrable benefit to society, and chose the field of weather and climate prediction. Over the four years of my DPhil I made sure to conduct research that wasn't just interesting to me but also topical, keeping in mind my future career prospects. In tandem, I started to make connections with researchers at my current workplace. As I was

finishing up, I was very lucky that my current position, which is closely related to my DPhil research, became available, so I applied and was accepted.

Advice: Firstly, remember that graduation is not the end of the learning process. In many ways I learned more about "how things work" in the first year of my post-graduation job than the previous eight years of higher education. Secondly, it's perfectly okay if you don't know if the job you start with is right for you – it's not a lifelong commitment. You will have plenty of other things on your mind when finishing your degree, so to begin with just try to find something that broadly suits you. Finally, when approaching recruiters, try to have a clear example to demonstrate each of the skills that you are marketing. For example, a school outreach talk to demonstrate communication skills, or perhaps an open dataset you help maintain to demonstrate data analytics skills.



Dr Lisa Rodermund

Trainee Patent Attorney in Chemical and Life Sciences, Haseltine Lake Kempner LLP
DPhil Biochemistry, St Anne's College, 2020

What: A patent attorney helps clients protect their inventions and intellectual property by obtaining a patent. Patent attorneys are scientists by training, qualified to at least undergraduate level, with additional qualifications in intellectual property law. I am a trainee patent attorney in Chemical and Life Sciences at Haseltine Lake Kempner LLP. My role involves assisting qualified patent attorneys in understanding exciting new technologies such as cancer and gene therapies, as well as drafting and prosecuting patents. Whilst I am learning a lot "on the job", I am also studying for exams to become a UK and European qualified patent attorney myself.

Why: I have always been enthusiastic about a wide range of technologies, and during my PhD, I found that I have a special interest in communication and science outreach. Work as a trainee patent attorney is extremely varied – each day is different from the next. After focusing on a single project for almost 5 years during my graduate studies, I really enjoy learning about different research areas and inventions every week, whilst at the same time using my communication skills daily.

Top skills for success: You have an eye for detail, great communication skills and love learning more about innovative technologies? You are a problem solver and good at time management? Then a job as a patent attorney might be the perfect fit for you!

Top tips: Pursuing a career outside of academia can seem a bit daunting at first, but don't be afraid to take the plunge! Talk openly about it to your peers and teachers, and make full use of the great career services offered to you by the university. If you are interested in patent law, contact current trainees through LinkedIn or email to chat about their experience. Taking the exams to qualify as a UK and European patent attorney takes at least 4 years. That's why I would strongly recommend having a look at the training programmes and study support that different firms provide before you commit to training at one.



Ulrike Künzel

Senior Research Scientist, AstraZeneca
DPhil in Pathology, Lincoln College, 2017

What: As a scientist in early research and development in the pharmaceutical industry, I work on the very early steps of the drug discovery process: the identification of new drug targets for a variety of diseases. The diseases I work on can vary depending on the project, and range from cancer to metabolic diseases. Therefore, I research a variety of different cell types and disease phenotypes which are analysed with high-throughput fluorescent microscopes. My day-to-day job involves planning, performing and analysing experiments, meetings with my project team (which includes experts from other departments), group or departmental meetings, as well as operational tasks such as writing risk assessments. My work is very collaborative, and I interact frequently with scientists from other disciplines that are involved in the data analysis or experimental design. We also collaborate with academia and attend and present at scientific conferences.

Why: I chose a career in the pharmaceutical industry because I wanted to apply the scientific skills that I had acquired at university to projects that have an impact on patients. I also wanted to learn about the process of drug discovery and be involved in novel exciting science applied to a variety of diseases.

Career path: After my PhD I secured Medical Research Council funding which allowed me to stay in my PhD lab for an additional six months, before moving into my first industry position as a scientist in a contract research organisation (CRO). CROs perform research and development for other companies, so I contributed to several projects for different pharmaceutical companies. The insight into the industry, as well as the research and project management skills I gained, helped me to secure my current position in a pharmaceutical company.

Advice: Successfully applying for the first position outside of academia is often difficult. It helps to be flexible as there are many ways into industry positions. Consider taking a transition step to reach your desired job, for example, through a CRO or start-up company, to acquire more skills that are applicable for your next career steps. Use your network to learn more about the day-to-day work, as well as open positions in the companies you are applying for.





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START-UPS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Becoming an entrepreneur is a popular aspiration for an increasing number of students, as is founding or working for a start-up or spin-out.

The priority when it comes to a career search is to get round pegs in round holes, and nowhere is this more true than in start-ups and spin-outs. The adventurous opportunists who will thrive in this activity are passionate and committed, and work to be not just commercially aware but business savvy.

There are many things to consider when starting a business. A **good way to understand all the business elements is to complete a Lean Canvas**, which helps you to plan out what problem you are trying to solve, what your solution is, who your customers are, how you will be sustainable, and who your competition is. This provides a strong foundation to develop your business further.

This will give a good first step for anyone thinking about starting a business.

Working for yourself

There are many different ways to set up and run your business, depending on whether you want to have a traditional for-profit business, a social enterprise, or a non-profit, or something in between. Whether you want to operate as a sole trader, limited liability partnership (LLP), or private limited company (PLC), there are plenty of resources in the University and beyond to help you get started. You will need to think

about market research, funding, recruitment, and who your customers will be. As a self-employed person, you will have flexibility and independence, but in addition to delivering your service, you will need to do business development (sales) to obtain new customers. This is why many people choose to go freelance later in life when they already have a network of contacts that acts as a readily available customer base. In this respect you will need to consider how you market yourself, your business name, website, brand equity, competitive edge, etc.

More information

Ideas

Enterprising Oxford: www.eship.ox.ac.uk
Oxford Hub: www.oxfordhub.org
Oxford Entrepreneurs:
www.oxfordentrepreneurs.co.uk

Hands-on

Oxford University Innovation Startup Incubator:
innovation.ox.ac.uk/startupincubator
OX1 Start-Up Incubator Programme:
www.ox1incubator.com
Student Entrepreneurs Programme (StEP):
unistep.org

Spin-outs, space and support

Oxford University Innovation: innovation.ox.ac.uk
Begbroke Science Park: www.begbroke.ox.ac.uk
OSEP: www.osep.org.uk
OxLEP Business:
www.oxfordshirelep.com/business

Oxford University Careers Service run The Student Consultancy Programme (now known as TOSCA) that provides student consultancy to local businesses. As a student, I joined the programme and worked with the Story Museum on opening up their coffee shop.

Agne Milukaite, Founder,
cycle.land

Hone your persuasion skills. This often comes down to being a good storyteller. Whether it's applying for a job, or motivating people to join your team, many important decisions are made through compelling stories. Being a good listener is equally important – to be able to mirror back people's desires in ways that align with yours.

Sultan Murad Saidov, Co-founder,
Beamery

Danny Parrott and Richard Lloyd

Co-founders, Gotoco TEFL Adventures. Pembroke College, Oriental Studies (Chinese and Tibetan), 2015 (Richard) / St Anne's College, Oriental Studies (Chinese and Modern Chinese Literature), 2015 (Danny)

What: We run a travel and education social enterprise together called Gotoco; linking university students with funded education sector internships around the world.

How/career path: We met studying Chinese and cemented our friendship and interest in China during our year abroad in Beijing in 2012. Oxford Summer Internship funding allowed us to return to China and teach English on summer camps during our university holidays, and Gotoco was soon born. After graduating in 2015, we were keen to explore options that would bring us

back to China. Through Oxford, Danny arranged funding to do an MBA at Tsinghua University and Richard joined a policy research advisory in Beijing, working principally with the EU, UN and embassies in China.

Danny's tip: While studying is an important part of the Oxford experience, you really shouldn't miss out on the truly unique and diverse world of opportunities on offer here.

One of the highlights of my time at Oxford was the summer internship programme. There is nothing quite like it anywhere in the world.

Richard's tip: I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do after university, except that I wanted to use my Mandarin and didn't want to go straight into a corporate role. An internship grant in my final year allowed me to spend my summer teaching in China. This led me to founding my own social enterprise, Gotoco, with my two best friends.



While studying is an important part of the Oxford experience, you really shouldn't miss out on the truly unique and diverse world of opportunities on offer here.

One of the highlights of my time at Oxford was the summer internship programme. There is nothing quite like it anywhere in the world.

Mehak Mumtaz

Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, iLoF
MSc Biochem, St. Hilda's College, 2012, DPhil Pathology, St. Edmund Hall, 2017

What: iLoF is a healthtech company which uses photonics and AI to develop next-generation digital biomarkers to provide screening and stratification tools for complex heterogeneous diseases. Our mission is to democratise personalised medicine through rapid, cost-effective and patient-centric solutions.

How: I was always passionate about scientific discovery, which led me to pursue a DPhil. Towards the end of it, I found myself drawn towards the intersection between technological and life sciences, and was fascinated by the myriad of start-ups and scale-ups spun out of the Oxford ecosystem. I ended up exploring this space as a health innovation fellow at Oxford, aiming to bridge the gap between technology providers, hospital systems, research institutes, and patient organisations to improve care for rare cancer patients. This was a turning point for me and provided a first taste of innovation and entrepreneurship. Driven by the desire to gain commercial acumen, I spent some time as a strategy consultant at EY-Parthenon, which opened my eyes to a different world. Soon after, I gained a place on a ten-week EIT Health 'Wild Card' programme, a European accelerator for health companies, where I met my co-founders, validated an idea, and

secured investment from EIT Health. The decision to leave consulting and commit to the venture full-time was not a difficult one to make, and despite the roller coaster journey, I have not regretted it since.

Top tips: Make use of the Oxford ecosystem. There are many opportunities to find out what different careers actually entail; work on diverse projects; meet like-minded people; or gain additional skills. Step out of your comfort zone, stretch yourself, explore and enjoy!

Network – find and talk to different people, discover what their jobs are like, and most importantly develop authentic relationships. These will last you well beyond your first few jobs.

Don't be afraid of failure. Often, fear of failure can hold budding entrepreneurs back. However, think of the worst that can happen if you fail; you move on with some incredibly useful transferable skills, a bunch of friends, and lots of interesting stories for your resume.



TECH: IT, DATA, AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

Computing and IT jobs exist in all sectors and all types of organisations – in fact, more than 40% of all IT professionals work outside the sector.

Demand for people is high and growing quickly, with many entry opportunities open not only to those with proven IT skills, but also to anyone with the right interests and potential.

Within the IT sector there is a huge range of jobs, roles and job titles – from software engineering, to website production; cloud computing and systems development to cyber security specialists. The rapid expansion of AI, data analyst and data science roles is adding to demand. The sector also employs people across the full variety of non-technical roles – for example, sales and marketing, legal services, HR, and finance.

Outside the IT industry, technical roles exist across all industries because computing, IT and data underpin critical processes in nearly all organisations. Some sectors recruit particularly heavily into IT roles, notably in advertising and marketing, banking and financial services, games development, consultancy, manufacturing, retail and public sectors. In parallel, the growth in tech start-ups is creating significant extra demand for technically skilled graduates and, at Oxford, hiring is increasing in rapidly expanding fields such as ‘data analytics’ and ‘FinTech’.

The volume of employment opportunities for IT professionals is growing fast, and firms can struggle to fill positions. As a result, people with proven programming and analytical skills are highly sought after, and many companies actively recruit people without technical skills who have the potential to learn and develop quickly once in post. Companies provide excellent training and support

“ Try to understand what you’ve enjoyed about your studies so far. In my case, programming was a by-product of my research but turned out to be the basis of the rest of my career.

— Dr Francis Newson, Scientific Software Analyst, Tessella

for new graduates, from an initial intensive ‘bootcamp’ to on-the-job development. Starting salaries, even for those without technical skills, often exceed £30,000.

The IT consultancy industry is also growing fast. Some major players operate globally, offering strategic advice, systems development and implementation. New recruits can expect high quality training before being embedded with clients to work on projects. But tread carefully and understand the contract! Some firms offer ‘free training’ linked to a contracted 2-year period as a consultant, but if you leave earlier they can demand very large repayments (up to £20,000) for the training.

Getting in and entry points

Companies visit Oxford throughout the autumn to run events and attend our SET Fair, Careers in Computing, and Jobs for Mathematicians Fair. Deadlines tend to fall either side of Christmas, running into late January/February. However, jobs continue to be advertised year-round to fill empty seats.

Whilst computer science graduates are in high demand, many opportunities are open to anyone who demonstrates potential and a keen interest in the field. Having technical experience is very useful, whether acquired through your degree, self-taught or from your extra-curricular experience, so consider how you can provide evidence of your interest and, if you struggle with this, find opportunities to get involved now to gain some experience.

Extra-curricular ideas

- Join societies and attend events: try CompSoc, Oxford Women in Computer Science (OxWoCS) and AI Society.
- Enter competitions or attend a hackathon, including the annual Oxford Hackathon.
- Attend free courses run by societies and CodeFirst: Girls.
- **IT Services offers free access to LinkedIn Learning’s** vast online library of video-based courses.
- Try free, open source self-directed learning at www.codecademy.com and similar sites. Popular languages include C, C++, HTML, Java, NET, Python and SQL.
- Showcase your programming skills on open-source platforms such as GitHub or take part in competitions run by companies and via [Kaggle.com](https://www.kaggle.com).
- Volunteer for an IT-related project/responsibility with your JCR/society/club or local charity.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/technology-data-machine-learning-ai

Matthew Noble

Data Scientist, Beamery
DPhil in Materials Science, Oriel College, 2017

“ **What:** I’m a data scientist at Beamery, a tech start-up headquartered in London. We help teams to identify, recruit, and retain talent using our AI-powered platform. The AI and data science team researches and builds the AI models used by the platform. Using cutting edge machine learning, deep learning and graph learning, we are able to tackle issues such as ‘candidate matching to job vacancies’, ‘entity reconciliation’, ‘workforce planning’, and ‘likelihood to move’.

Why: After my DPhil, I wanted to keep researching and investigating new problems with real impact. Data science was at the intersection of mathematics and computer coding, my ‘transferable skills’. I taught myself the gaps in my knowledge by enrolling in online courses at DataCamp and becoming an active member of online communities such as Kaggle and Reddit.

Challenges and experiences: When I first joined, there wasn’t an AI and data science team – I wasn’t ‘a’ data scientist at Beamery, I was ‘the’ data scientist at Beamery! However, I rolled up my sleeves and wore my many hats as I built the solutions that were

needed. The mentorship of my colleagues meant I had the support to grow, learn, develop and, most importantly, to fail in a supportive environment.

Joining a start-up was a risk, the honest truth is more start-ups fail than succeed; but with that risk came reward. I’ve learnt and been exposed to so much since joining in March 2018; Beamery has truly spring-boarded my career by several years whilst giving me the opportunity to make a positive impact on the world.

Advice: Not knowing the answer immediately is par for the course. Trust in your ability to research the unknown and absorb new concepts quickly – you have learned to do this at Oxford. Build proof-of-concepts, iterate, and stop once a minimum viable product solves your current problem.



Jasper Hajonides

Research Data Scientist, dunnhumby
DPhil Experimental Psychology, New College, 2022

“ **Shifting focus:** During my DPhil, I became increasingly interested in pursuing a position in industry. I enjoyed my empirical neuroscientific research but was uncertain about continuing down this path. Industry seemed to offer much better job prospects and conditions than academia and to still allow me to do what I liked best: solving complex problems using large collections of data.

What: My work in data science at dunnhumby revolves around using data to generate actionable insights for clients in the retail sector. Creating computational tools makes it possible to optimise product assortments, adjust prices, forecast product sales, recommend products, and much more. As a research data scientist in my first year, I am predominantly involved with developing new scientific approaches to existing problems. At any given time, I work on a number of projects that have quick turn-over times (compared to spending 2 years on a single project during my DPhil), which keeps work exciting and stimulates learning on new computational methods, as well as allowing me to build my knowledge of the retail sector.

Why: I wanted to move into data science because it was a good extension of all the skills I had learnt during my DPhil and prior

studies. The critical and creative way of thinking when it comes to data-related problems readily transfers from academia to industry positions. It is also great to see that my data science work can bring about noticeable changes in shops around me.

Tips: Data science is a broad and rapidly evolving field. Make yourself aware of a wide variety of different methods and when best to apply them.

More generally, I recommend reaching out to people that do the type of work you would be interested in doing after graduating. This can help flag critical skills for your future job and set the right learning goals.

Make yourself aware of a variety of different methods and when best to apply them.





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Other careers

Beyond the industry sectors listed on the previous pages, there are many more opportunities – some of them are quite niche, and some are in rapidly expanding fields at the edge of current knowledge.

Do not feel restricted by the range of graduate jobs that normally get promoted, and think creatively about what would best suit you. Jobs exist now that were not around a decade ago; from YouTube content creator to drone operator. Sometimes it can feel as though everyone at Oxford ends up working in ‘the City’ but graduates go into a whole range of job sectors such as acting; emergency services; religion (particularly from Oxford’s Permanent Private Halls); fine art conservation; managing clubs and music venues; executive search; libraries; translation; and many more.

Other options

If you are aiming for a route less travelled you may need to think more widely and be more creative in how you source information, find contacts, and build and develop your network. If you are interested in a career that does not get much exposure around Oxford, the Careers Service is very happy to help: careers advisers will be happy to work with you on a one-to-one basis to provide support and ideas to help you move forwards.

Even within the core sectors covered on previous pages there are unusual individual roles. For example, if you are passionately interested in the world of online gaming but do not fancy a technical or coding type role, leading UK companies also employ historical researchers, writers and storytellers, artists, technical support for live motion capture, as well as the full range of business managers such as sales and marketing, HR and finance functions.

Finding out more

- There are a number of strategies you can follow to find out more about any role or industry. In some ways, the more niche your specific interests are the more focused you can be. If you can find a good starting point – especially a supportive contact or mentor – they might help you to make a lot of progress quickly; for example, by helping you to identify and contact leaders in your chosen field.
- There are some 400 different job profiles covered by www.prospects.ac.uk for roles as diverse as glass blower/designer, toxicologist, youth worker,

patent attorney, hydrologist, animator and company secretary. Each profile offers links to professional bodies, sources for vacancies and suggested courses, and professional development.

- Identify the professional body or society for your field of interest.
 - Their website is likely to include masses of useful information, including industry news, company and event listings, and job vacancies.
 - Professional bodies frequently also publish an industry magazine (often with vacancies), and run industry or sector awards which you can use to find leading practitioners.
- Examine vacancies to understand the common requirements such as key skills, qualifications and experience sought, as well as industry norms and terms (jargon).
- Find websites for your niche, for example, working for an MP: www.w4mp.org; Space Internships Network (SpIN) via the Catapult Programme: www.catapult.org.uk.
- Use social networks to the full – follow bloggers and experts on Twitter and ask to join specialist groups on Facebook and LinkedIn to see who is part of the conversation and who the opinion leaders are.
- Make yourself visible online: start your own blog or website; showcase your portfolio; make sure your LinkedIn page reflects your goals and relevant experience; comment in discussions, ask for advice and make contacts.
- Specialist recruitment agencies can be another route to finding out information about particular sectors and sourcing vacancies.

More information

www.careers.ox.ac.uk/other-sectors
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/library-information-work
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/business-management
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/translating-interpreting
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/networking



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