

# Personal Tutor Toolkit

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# How do I make my application form stand out?

- Many applications are discarded simply because of bad spelling or grammar or because the questions have not been answered properly. Often people tend to be less careful with digital correspondence so don't fall into this trap.
- Attend Careers Centre events on applications and look at the information on our website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>) under 'CVs, Applications and Interviews'.
- Look at the job description for the vacancy and highlight the skills and experience the role requires. Think about scenarios in which you've shown the competencies needed.
- As you tackle each question always remember the skills they're looking for and incorporate them into your answers. It is a good idea to download your answers so you can save your work until you are happy to submit it.
- Read each question thoroughly and answer clearly and concisely.
- When writing about work experience ensure the job title is meaningful or think of one that describes your position well. Describe your responsibilities and achievements in the role.
- In competency-based questions use the formula 'context, action, results' (CAR) making sure you don't stray from the question. Original but relevant examples particularly impress recruiters.
- When asked about your interests and achievements the employer is looking for you to give evidence of the skills they are looking for so don't worry about thinking up an amazing achievement.
- Questions about career choice should show you are committed to the job role and are motivated to work for that particular company. Demonstrate that you have a true picture of the career and the organisation and how your skills and qualities would make you an excellent candidate.
- In the additional information section look back at your previous answers and check them against the requirements of the job. If any of the skills the employer is looking for have not been included this is your chance to strengthen your application.
- Read through your completed form to check you have answered the questions correctly. If you need any advice you can bring it into the Careers Centre for our Frontline Advice team to review for you.

# I have an assessment centre but I don't know what to expect.

- The Careers Centre runs workshops to help you perform better at assessment centres. Keep a regular check on our online events database (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>).
- If you have psychometric tests you could use some of our ebooks to prepare. You can see them all in the 'CVs, Applications and Interviews/Assessment Centres' section.
- The Careers Centre subscribes to free online psychometric tests from 2 different organisations. You can request the logon details by visiting us in person or by emailing us via the link on the Psychometric Testing page under 'CVs, Applications and Interviews/Assessment Centres' on our website.
- Our website has several ebooks that give you an insight into assessment centres and some of the activities they include like psychometric tests and presentations.
- Watch the DVD 'Making an Impact' which is available online from the 'CVs, Applications and Interviews' section of our website.
- Come and have a chat with one of our Frontline Advice team or book an appointment with your Faculty Consultant.
- Our website has information on assessment centres and examples of some of the activities you might be involved in. Look in the 'CVs, Applications and Interviews' section.
- Download the leaflet 'Taking the Stress out of Presentations' from the 'Assessment Centres' section of our website.
- Look at the information on assessment centres and psychometric tests on our website under 'Applying and Competing'.
- You can use our eBooks, which you can access from the 'Assessment Centres' section our website.

# I'm graduating this year and I've got no idea what I want to do after I leave university.

- Have a chat with one of our Frontline Advice team or book an appointment with your Faculty Consultant. You don't need to have made up your mind before you contact us.
- Think about what skills you have to offer.
- Think about what you like doing and what tasks you dislike.
- Look at Prospects – Options with your degree in ... ([www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options) ) to help you think about the skills you have to offer and for some suggestions about careers which might interest you.
- Look at 'What next?' on our website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk> ). The School Resources on the 'Where might your degree lead' page has information written specifically for students from your course, looking at the skills you've gained on your University of Leeds course and helping you decide on your options.
- Use Prospects Planner ([www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner) ) to give you some ideas about careers which would suit your interests and motivations.
- Use the Career Resources directory on our website under 'What next?' 'You can access it from the 'Where might your degree lead?' page. Find out what the work involves, the entry requirements, good sources of vacancies and further information.
- Use the 'Occupations Resources' section of our Pearltrees account to research possible roles. It has extensive information about what different jobs involve and advice to help you gain entry into each profession. You can access it from the Career Resources directory on our website.
- Look for a mentor on the Leeds Network ([www.leedsnetwork.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leedsnetwork.leeds.ac.uk) ) and talk to people who have first-hand experience of the work that interests you.
- Attend Careers Centre events to give you an insight into different careers and job sectors.

# How do I write a CV?

- Look at the information in the 'CVs, Applications and Interviews' section of our website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>). Don't forget you need to target your CV to each job you apply for.
- Download a copy of 'How to write a CV and covering letter' from our website.
- Download our eBooks on CVs from the 'CVs' section of our website
- Attend Careers Centre events on applications.
- Look at the example CVs we have in the 'CVs' section of our website for ideas on how to construct your own .
- Look at the job description for the vacancy and highlight the skills and experience they require. Think about ways in which you've shown the skills they need.
- Construct your CV so that they can see the most relevant information easily. Make the experience that particularly emphasises how you meet their requirements the highest priority so the employer doesn't miss something that makes you a strong candidate.
- Bring your CV and cover letter with the job description of the advertised vacancy to the Careers Centre. Attend a Drop in duty session so one of our Frontline Advice team can review it for you.
- Book a short appointment at a time convenient to you through our website. Just select the 'Book an Appointment' icon on the home page.

# How can I find out about employers and their opportunities?

- Check our online database (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>) to find current vacancies or look at the organisations database there to search for employers that recruit in specific work areas.
- Attend our fairs and speak to company representatives about their opportunities. We run several fairs a year, some with a wide range of companies such as the Graduate Jobs and Internships Fair and others aimed at particular faculties. See the events section of our website for further details.
- Come to some employer presentations. Here, company representatives talk about their company and will be able to answer your questions about the opportunities available.
- Collect employer directories from the Careers Centre Information Zone. Each year we get a range of directories which you can use to find companies who recruit for particular career areas.
- Check individual employer websites. You can find out more about their opportunities and company culture. Don't forget to look at case histories of recent graduates as they can tell you about possible career paths.
- Look at the Employer hub section of TARGETjobs (<https://targetjobs.co.uk/employer-hubs>) to get useful insights into individual companies.
- If you're looking for an employer in the Yorkshire region, have a look at the Yorkshire Graduates ([www.yorkshiregraduates.com](http://www.yorkshiregraduates.com)) website which concentrates on local employers and has information on different employment sectors.

# What activities can I take part in at university that will impress employers?

Most employers expect you to have work experience. Come along to the Careers Centre and check out the Careers Centre website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>) for the different opportunities available.

Look at the Leeds for Life information on the Portal to find out about the numerous activities you can take part in which will develop particular skills and attributes. For instance:

- You can gain a wide range of experience working as a volunteer. For some people it is entirely altruistic but there are also plenty of benefits which will appeal to a future employer. You can take part in community volunteering with LUU.
- If you get involved in student clubs and societies not only will you have fun and meet new people but you have the opportunity to be involved in activities such as team building, organising social events, fund raising which will develop skills which will help you when you leave university.
- Many students undertake part-time work to help financially but at the same time you will gain useful experience that will enhance your CV. If you register with Joblink in LUU they will help you find a suitable job and the Careers Centre will help you to understand and present the skills that you develop.
- You could take part in the business start-up workshops run by Spark at the Careers Centre. If you already have a business idea you could enter the annual University of Leeds Business Plan Competition where you will have the chance to pitch it to a panel of judges. These activities will develop commercial awareness for application in the workplace or in business start-up.

## I'm an international student: how do I make the most of my time in the UK?

- Most employers expect you to have work experience. Look at 'Making the Most of your Time in Leeds' in the International Students section of our website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>) to get an overview of opportunities to build upon your skills.
- Keep up to date with labour market information for different countries by using Goinglobal (<http://online.goinglobal.com/default.aspx>), a database subscribed to by the Careers Centre. The site also allows you to search for specific vacancies and employers in different sectors. If you create a personal account using a computer in an ISS cluster you will be able to access it away from campus too.
- Don't forget to develop your networks in your home country as they can prove important when you are seeking employment after graduation. Business networking sites such as LinkedIn and Brijj are particularly useful.
- Make the most of the support available through Skills@Library (<http://library.leeds.ac.uk/skills>) who can help you develop skills which will help you throughout your studies and when you come to apply for jobs later on.
- Look at the Leeds for Life information on the Portal to find out about the numerous activities you can take part in which will develop particular skills and attributes. For instance:
  - You can gain a wide range of experience working as a volunteer. For some people it is entirely altruistic but there are also plenty of benefits which will appeal to a future employer. You can take part in community volunteering with LUU.
  - If you get involved in student clubs and societies not only will you have fun and meet new people but you have the opportunity to be involved in activities such as team building, organising social events, fund raising which will develop skills which will help you when you leave university.
  - Many students undertake part-time work to help financially but at the same time you will gain useful experience that will enhance your CV. If you register with Joblink in LUU they will help you find a suitable job and the Careers Centre will help you to understand and present the skills that you develop.
- Don't forget to make the most of the services offered by the Careers Centre. We organise lots of events where you can meet employers, you can discuss your career plans with us, we can help you make effective applications ... and so much more.

# I've got an interview. How should I prepare?

- Download the booklet 'Interview Tips' from our website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>). Think of what you would say if you were asked the questions.
- Watch the DVD 'Making an Impact' in the 'CVs, Applications and Interviews' section of our website.
- Use the eBooks for interviews that you can access from the 'Interviews' section of our website or look at the books in the Starting Points section of our Careers Information Room.
- Book a mock interview.
- Attend Careers Centre events like mock interviews and interview workshops.
- Look at the interview techniques section of our website under 'CVs, Applications and Interviews'.
- Research the company. Look at their website and brochures. Read recent stories or press releases which have mentioned them and be aware of their competitors and current issues affecting their business sector.
- Read through your application and the job description to remind yourself of their requirements and how you showed you have the skills they are looking for.
- If you can think of any additional scenarios where you showed you have the competencies they're looking for, make a note of them.
- Think of at least 5 reasons why you want to work for the company. This helps you to come across positively at the interview.
- If you have any other concerns or would like to talk it through, just see one of our Frontline Advice team or book an appointment with your Faculty Consultant.

# How do I find a job?

- Check our online database for current opportunities (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk> ). If you want to make the most of the system you can register and save search criteria so that you will be emailed when a suitable job is entered.
- Attend our fairs and speak to company representatives about their opportunities. We run several fairs a year, some with a wide range of companies and others aimed at particular faculties. See the events section of our website for further details.
- Look at the 'Finding Jobs and Work Experience' section of our website for further advice about job searching strategy.
- Look at the school resources on our website under 'Where might your degree lead?' for information aimed specifically for students from your faculty. You will be able to download our career resources sheets which give vacancy sources that are particularly relevant to the careers choices most popular with students from your course.
- Don't forget to check the Career Resources directory from the 'Where might your degree lead?' page in the 'What next?' section of our website. You will find vacancy sources for particular job roles.
- Many vacancies are not advertised but are filled through speculative applications. Use social media to help you make useful contacts and uncover hidden jobs. See how to do this effectively from the 'How to find jobs' page in the 'Finding jobs and work experience' section of our website.
- Refer to the 'How to find a job' section of the Prospects website ([www.prospects.ac.uk/how\\_to\\_find\\_a\\_job.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/how_to_find_a_job.htm) ).
- If you're looking for a job in the Yorkshire region, have a look at the Yorkshire Graduates ([www.yorkshiregraduates.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiregraduates.co.uk)) website which concentrates on local employers and their vacancies.
- If you would like to work overseas look at Goinglobal, a web resource subscribed to by the Careers Centre, which has vacancies and lots of valuable information about working in different countries (<http://online.goinglobal.com/default.aspx> ).

# Why do people keep telling me I should get work experience?

- Most graduate employers expect you to have work experience.
- Employers sometimes offer successful placement students permanent employment.
- You can gain a good reference.
- You will develop new skills even if you don't pursue that line of work.
- You can apply your academic knowledge in a business setting and gain commercial awareness.
- It can help with your career planning as you can experience different work sectors before making a commitment and learn more about yourself.
- You can develop useful networks which can help further your career plans.
- Look at the 'Work Experience' part of the Careers Centre website (<http://careerweb.leeds.ac.uk>) under 'Finding Jobs and Work Experience' for more detailed information about how we can support your work experience activity.
- Discuss your ideas with our Frontline Advice team or book an appointment with your Faculty Consultant.
- All University of Leeds students have the opportunity to do a placement through their school or by taking the Careers Centre module CSER8000.
- The Careers Centre work placement module (CSER8000) is designed to make sure you have the opportunity to take a placement year. See 'Career modules' under 'How the Careers Centre can help you' on our website for more details.