

FOCUS FOR  
SUCCESS IN  
CHALLENGING  
TIMES

PEOPLE ARE STILL  
BEING HIRED AND  
GRADUATES ARE  
FINDING JOBS.  
IT'S JUST MORE  
DIFFICULT THAN  
IT USED TO BE.

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DON'T DESPAIR. RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH. BE FLEXIBLE IN RELATION  
TO POTENTIAL JOBS, EMPLOYER CHOICE AND GEOGRAPHY. NETWORK EFFECTIVELY.  
JOB HUNTING TODAY IS NOT ABOUT YOU THE JOB SEEKER. IT'S ABOUT THE EMPLOYER.

## Introduction

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The Irish economy is clearly in a severe recession right now. The data that keeps coming in is getting worse and worse by the month. House values continue to drop at unprecedented levels, consumer confidence is hitting all time lows, and most significantly the job market is eroding quite quickly. But what does all this mean for current college students and soon to be graduates?

Whether first year or final year, as a student you will be aware of the current economic climate and associated reduction in graduate jobs. The true fact of the matter is the abundance of entry level jobs that there was a few years ago are no longer there. The reality is many of the companies that have been coming to college campuses in recent years to find new young talent are not hiring to the same level they did in the past. Indeed, the class of 2009/10 faces the biggest battle for jobs in two decades.

For students and soon to be graduates looking to launch their first careers, the future can appear quite gloomy. Perhaps because of this poor job market, an increasing number of college students are turning to their campus careers service for support and guidance on managing their careers in a dramatically changing job market.

In response and to support students during this downturn, Graduate Careers Ireland has put together this student handbook *'Focus for success in challenging times — the career navigation guide for Students'*. Drawing on the knowledge base and expertise of a team of colleagues including third level careers advisors, industry consultants and psychology/counselling professionals, we have collated relevant material and vital information for navigating the diminishing job market. Our aim is to provide students with a toolkit of realistic, personal, career and life coping skills and strategies to empower them to take more ownership and control of their careers in the coming years.

This is not your standard job hunt booklet. It will not list basic points like write a good cover letter or target your CV. Rather, its purpose is to educate students about the nature of recession, its impact on career paths and to serve as an action plan for students to achieve success in a time of diminishing employment prospects.

Whilst the jobs market is certainly contracting, it hasn't disappeared altogether so it's important for students not to panic and give up hope. People are still being hired and graduates are finding jobs. It's just more difficult than it used to be. What is vital is that students put time and effort into career planning at this stage to maximise their chances of success. If students are willing to make the effort to use available career resources, polish their job-hunting skills, find work experience and internships, and take other smart steps towards employment, they may just make the most of the recession and enter the work world with a solid advantage.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed to this handbook and to wish all of our students the best on their road to career success.

Mile buíochas

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## Executive Summary

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Getting a job after college is always a challenge for students, and it is even more so during an economic downturn. Although we cannot predict the impact the credit crunch will have on employment in the coming two or three years, now more than ever college graduates and students must be clear and focused on the steps they take to secure productive employment. Compiled by Graduate Careers Ireland and filled with advice, *Focus for success in challenging times — the career navigation guide for students* will help you to work out how best to tackle your job hunting in the current climate. Broken into eight articles, this guide offers positive and practical advice on conducting a job search when times are tight. It outlines ways to make yourself more 'marketable' to employers, and it presents some innovative suggestions as to where to focus your energies.

In the first of the articles **01** *'Owned or borrowed career — taking more personal ownership and control of our careers during a recession'* Elaine Browne advises on the importance of learning to take a step back from the ongoing external stimulus around the recession, how redirecting our energy back to ourselves, our interests and abilities would support us to take more personal ownership and control to assert the necessary changes needed in our lives and in our careers.

Máire Ryan, in her article **02** *'Playing your career — applying the lessons of the playing field to your career'* shows how you can apply the principles of sports—such as setting goals, competing to win, optimism, and stamina to achieve success in your career.

In his article **03** *'Work experience — creating a bridge to graduate employment'*, John Hannon highlights the importance of various types of work experience. Whether paid or voluntary, John suggests that internships and voluntary work experience are the most effective ways for current students and recent graduates to gain that competitive edge in today's graduate employment market.

Building on John's article, Sarah Morey suggests expanding on your experiences and tapping into your creative strengths by investigating the world of arts and culture. In her article **04** *'The art of graduating in a recession — enter the world of arts and culture'*, Sarah suggests that involvement in the arts not only affords the opportunity to develop personal passions, but it also improves your employability by enhancing your skills, experiences and contacts.

Also offering an alternative option for students is David Barrett in **05** *'Graduates — maximise your employability and attractiveness'*. In his article, David stresses that it is no longer an employee's market, and job seekers have to adapt accordingly. Even the basics of a job search — CVs, cover letters, interviews and negotiations — have changed and in a tough job market, new grads can find jobs, but they may have to use different and more creative job hunting methods.

In **06** *'Surviving the stresses of recession — managing your mental health'* Marie Murray spells out the risks that a tough job market and other forms of economic trouble can pose to your health. She offers advice on how to cope with the recession's repercussions and includes information on spotting the signs of mental distress.

In **07** *'Recruitment during a recession — the recruiters' own perspective'*, a number of employers including Commerzbank, Deloitte, ESB and Google share their perspectives on the graduate market place and offer students some valuable tips on how best to tackle today's troubled job market.

Finally, with media coverage of economic gloom hard to escape, it's easy to assume job prospects for graduates are bleak. In his article **08** *'Finding a good job in a bad economy — where are the jobs?'* Dave Kilmartin will help uncover the realities of today's graduate employment marketplace and most importantly point to industries that are growing and companies that are hiring despite the downturn.

## Owned or borrowed career — taking more personal ownership and control of our careers during a recession

It is part of human nature to be interested in and connected to what is happening in the world around us, be that in our homes, relationships, college/work, community, our country and globally. This connection with our surroundings provides us with valuable information and learning and contributes greatly to how we see and relate to ourselves, others and our environment.

As we go about our daily lives at the moment, we are surrounded by newspaper and media coverage of a national and global recession that is affecting governments, industries, workers, their families and of course our students. As part of my role as a third level careers advisor, I meet students daily who, as a result of the ongoing coverage and debates surrounding the recession, are naturally anxious about their future career prospects. Some students talk about feeling powerless to motivate themselves to study and to develop a career of interest. Others are worried about the high level of competition among final year students for fewer graduate positions and they indicate that this fear is affecting their interview performance. A number of other students believe that there are no jobs now in their chosen field and, as a result they feel they should convert to a different degree or postgraduate discipline.

This feedback from students clearly demonstrates how we can be affected by what is happening in our environment. While it is important to listen to and reflect on what is going on around us, it is even more important to come back and listen to ourselves. Times of uncertainty and change can be quite disorienting, and it is understandable that people feel apprehensive and are unsure about how to navigate the changing landscape. Often when faced with personal challenge, we have a tendency to look outside, and let what we hear and see dictate how we think, and feel and thus influence the decisions that we make. We forget about our own potential, our capacity to cope with change, and our ability to be innovative. We lose sight of our own interests and needs, and in that minute we do so, we just give our power away. We lose personal ownership and control for directing our careers.

I wonder how we would respond if we were able to take a step back, separate ourselves a little from the impact of these messages around the recession? Could this provide us with the space to look outside the box, to consider other options, to re-own our skills and abilities, to realise that we actually still have a say around our career? After all, who has the greatest control over the direction of our own career — the economy or ourselves?

While it's true that the economic environment is less than ideal at this point in time, each of us has a choice. We can worry about the current situation, or we can decide to take control of our career by taking steps to make sure that we are prepared to succeed — for now, and into the future.

### 4 ways to take control of your career in a difficult economy

#### 1. Focus on what you can control

In order to achieve the results you want i.e. a job in your chosen field, it's important to stop stressing about the factors you can't control — and instead channel that time, mental energy and creativity into what you can control and influence — namely your career path, your mindset, your networking activities, and the strength of your employability. Could this include putting in place a three to four year strategic plan for your career, developed parallel to your degree? Could you talk with a careers advisor to consider innovative ways of how best to use your college time and, in particular, your free time and summers to develop the necessary work experience, skills and references required by graduate employers? Could you take more accountability for your job search by getting out, building relationships, networking and treating your job search like a full time job rather than passively waiting for job sites and recruiters to bring you your next opportunity? By taking responsibility for how you think and how you act, you'll be far more successful in your career and far happier as an individual.

## **2. View yourself as a 'portfolio of skills'**

Instead of worrying about the competition and the state of the job market, focus on figuring out what value you bring to potential employers in your sector. By viewing yourself as a 'portfolio of skills', you can expand your career choices going forward and brainstorm new career options by aligning your skills with potential employer's needs. Without doubt, companies today face unprecedented challenges and now, more than ever, they want to ensure that they have the appropriate staff and skill set that will equip them to deal with ongoing change into the future. When recruiting, these companies want graduates with certain competencies or skills. They want graduates to demonstrate a certain level of maturity, a self-starter attitude, a versatile and innovative approach to business and customer solutions. In addition, they require graduates who display a heightened level of business awareness and a capacity to deal with change and diversity for example through teamwork and projects. When it comes to postgraduate study, employers pay particular attention to the students' choice of specialist study following their degree and how this choice fits in to their bigger career objectives. In other words employers want to know — is this graduate at the helm of their career, driving it forward or are they subject to environmental pressures and reacting accordingly?

## **3. Keep learning**

Even after you gain your qualification it is important that you keep investing in yourself and your own career development. After all, continued learning beyond your degree or diploma is vital in order to become a well-rounded person (and employee). You have numerous options available to you to ensure that you keep your skills and knowledge up to date and leading edge. We are living in a time when the world is at our fingertips and information is plentiful, so we should be taking full advantage of it. By reading books, blogs and websites, you can gain a lot of information on your target industry. Not only could you be able to impress potential employers with your wealth of current and relevant business and company information but you can also bolster up your CV with more acquired skills. For example, you could consider learning a new language, or become more web-savvy. If you are considering further study, think carefully about it and whether it is the right option for you and whether your choice of subject interests you enough to warrant your investment. Don't move into further study simply to stay in college to avoid entering the competitive jobs market or to bridge the gap until the recession is over. This is not a wise move. It is important to make these decisions not out of fear, but as part of a long-term career plan, bringing you closer to your chosen career.

## **4. Don't give up and stay positive**

It can be difficult and gloomy looking for work at the moment but you need to stay positive and keep your problems in perspective. You don't want any negativity spilling into your interviews with employers. There are opportunities out there and, as a graduate, if you have a strong qualification, have proven yourself capable of learning, combined with some relevant experience and job skills you have a lot to offer a prospective employer. So, become diligent and a problem-solver in how you manage your career. If you receive a rejection letter or fail at a job interview, it's important to again stand back and review what has happened. For example, if you are being called for interviews, clearly your CV or application is working for you. However, something is happening at the interview stage which you need support with. In the current market, there is no point in attending five or six interviews and being unsuccessful in each before getting support. Unfortunately, we just don't have that luxury any more. Here your career service will be invaluable at supporting you through the stages of your career search, interview and securing that all important job. So don't give up, keep looking and applying for jobs, and reach out for support to help you navigate your career. If you've always dreamed of being an investment banker, don't feel you have to give up the dream. It may just take longer to realise.

So while this process of self-reflection and self-awareness might seem like a lot of hard work on top of studying and preparing for exams, we must remember that it is work directed in the service of our career. It might not be easy and we may even have to negotiate obstacles along the way, but if we don't, we could be left destined to follow the ups and downs of our environment, feeling powerless to have any choice in the outcome. Ask yourself which course of action is more likely to help you? Surely it is a much better option to take more personal ownership and control of our own career development. I say enough of all the doom and gloom about the economy! It's time to take control of our own lives, our careers and our dreams.

## Playing your career — applying the lessons of the playing field to your career

As many successful business leaders know, competing in sports provides life lessons that transfer into the boardroom and indeed their own careers. Sport teaches skills like setting goals, competing to win, optimism, overcoming adversity, taking risks, and working with a team. These lessons from sports have broad application — beyond the playing field, court, or gymnasium — and into the business world, and personal career planning.

In the current economic climate, achieving a sense of control over your career is essential for success. This article will introduce some useful strategies that are extensively used in the sporting performance arena but that are easily applied to planning for your career.

### Where do I begin to plan my career path?

#### Clarify your goals and develop a playbook

Like athletes who set clear goals and then achieve them, and coaches who create and follow a playbook, successful leaders and executives develop personal and career strategic plans with clear and specific goals. Planning for our futures is very important even if those plans may change. Part of planning for a successful career involves setting goals. These goals should lead your development and challenge you, but they should also be realistic and attainable.

#### SMART goals

There are a few basic principles that you should follow when setting your goals for your future:

Specific	Goals should indicate precisely what is to be done, why and how it is to be done
Measurable	Make sure you can measure your goal
Attainable	A goal needs to stretch you but it has to be within reach
Realistic	Make sure the goal can be achieved given various current constraints
Timely	Make sure the goal can be achieved in a reasonable time

#### Types of goals

There are three different types of goals you should set for yourself:

#### Long term goals

You should set a few long term goals with a generous time frame, 1 — 5 years.

#### Medium term goals

By breaking down long term goals and setting medium term goals with time scales of weeks or months you can keep the 'fire' burning. Bridging the gap between short and long term goals doesn't make the journey seem so long and it provides a type of personal reward system so you will feel a sense of achievement as you tick each one off the list.

#### Short term goals

These are the smaller building blocks that will be used on a daily or weekly basis. They are essential to keep you on the path to achieving your long term goals.

## How do I remain optimistic about the future?

### Play to win

Like athletes who strive for victory and play to win, successful leaders and executives rise to a challenge and fight for their company's or organisation's interests, and indeed their careers. However, it's not the will to win, but the will to prepare to win that ultimately leads to success both on and off the playing field.

### Bounce back

Athletes know that they must bounce back from the inevitable defeats and setbacks. Successful leaders and executives recognise that some failures will occur but they do not give up. Recovering after a disappointment is one of the most critical lessons that we can learn from the sports field. Do not be afraid to learn from your defeats, as the old saying goes — *“If at first you don't succeed, try and try again”*.

Indeed, the way that we look at the causes of our successes and failures (i.e. how we explain both good and bad events) can determine our motivation and confidence to persevere in the endeavor to achieve our career goals.

**There are 3 P's which will determine whether we are optimistic or pessimistic:**

### Personalisation

We can strengthen our confidence by attributing our success to our ability and effort, thereby taking ownership of our success. We protect our confidence in the face of failure by attributing our setbacks either to factors outside our control, for example tough competition for a job, or to factors that are within our control, for example poor preparation for an interview (we have the power to change this in the future).

### Pervasiveness

Is the extent to which we believe that the causes of our successes and failures will generalise to all areas of our lives. For example, I was successful in an interview because I always handle pressure well rather than I just had a good interview. Similarly, optimists make specific attributions for their setbacks, for example attributing their failures to the unique circumstances associated with the present economic situation rather than to their overall ability.

### Permanence

Refers to the belief that the causes of events are either permanent or temporary. Optimists safeguard their confidence by believing that what caused their failure today is temporary and will not continue to affect them in the future e.g. *“Diets don't work when you eat out”* (optimistic) as opposed to *“Diets never work”* (pessimistic).

And finally — **practice, practice, practice**. Many athletes are born with natural talents but they still practice to hone and develop their skills and to gain confidence and prepare for specific competitions. Similarly, successful leaders and business executives carefully prepare and plan their careers, and you should do the same. These are just some basic strategies to help you to keep an optimistic mind-set, so be SMART and stay positive!

## Work experience — creating a bridge to graduate employment

The recession is clearly having an impact on the openings for new college graduates. Relevant qualifications, a good interview, solid CV and persistent effort are still necessary for most successful job applications, but in the current economic climate work experience is now more important than ever. The main disadvantages that recent graduates have in the job market are that they lack work experience or evidence that they have the 'know-how'. Work experience, whether paid or voluntary, is one of the most effective ways for current students and recent graduates to gain that competitive edge in the graduate employment market; it gives you the evidence that you have the skills and mind-set the employer wants. After all, you really don't want to be another college graduate with blank sections in your CV trying to find a job during a recession. Indeed, the importance of work experience was highlighted in the recent Supplementary Budget in April 2009 with the Government's announcement of their plans for a new work experience scheme for college graduates. The term 'work experience' covers a range of opportunities that enable you to experience the world of work. There are many options available including internships, placements, clinical/professional practice, summer work, voluntary work, project work within companies, international programmes and casual/part-time work. In this article we are going to focus on internships and voluntary work.

### Internships

The credit crunch, job losses and salary freezes have put the spotlight on the value of the internship. In the past many students have not been very enthusiastic about being an intern since internships are often unpaid. But with much fewer choices now, an internship without pay could be more valuable than ever before. Internships can be an excellent way for students to gain experience and new skills in a challenging jobs market. Indeed, a no-strings opportunity to try out experiences before committing to them would be welcome in most walks of life — buying a house, getting married or having children. It is no different with careers. Luckily, many large companies offer work placements or internships to third level students, enabling both potential employees and employers to *'try before they buy'*.

There is another significant practical advantage to pursuing an internship. Employers place a high value on relevant skills and work experience. Research shows that graduates who completed internships were offered higher starting salaries than those without internship experience. Even better still, many interns who perform well during their placement can be offered a full time position at the company.

In addition, unlike full time jobs, internships are often easier to find during a recession. Interns are far cheaper than permanent employees, so a company that is struggling may hire interns to tackle excess workload. Employers are also saying that in order for students to stand out in the graduate market place, they really need to do their research. And there is no better way of finding out what a company does than working for them. Internships should be a very positive experience in every possible way. There may not be a cast iron guarantee of it securing you a job with that employer, but worst case scenario and the company has no work for you, then you will at the very least be more employable, and have a solid reference on your CV.

### Benefits of internships

- An internship provides work experience that is necessary to develop your CV to graduate level
- It gives you a chance to develop a portfolio of industry projects and work practices
- It gives you an opportunity to build a network of contacts with quality professionals in your field
- It gives you a realistic perspective on what it is like to work within a given field. It can confirm your interest in a career area, or conversely, cause you to reassess your plan, i.e. a graduate recently reported that her internship in public relations helped her to clarify her preference for working directly in-house as opposed to working for a consultancy

## Voluntary work

According to Volunteer Ireland there has been a dramatic increase in the number of inquiries about volunteering opportunities this year. Indeed some volunteer centres are reporting a 100 percent increase in inquiries. But this should be no surprise, after all volunteerism offers many benefits and it is not only worthwhile and enjoyable but it also helps to provide useful experience for the future.

There are many different ways of getting involved in voluntary work, from helping out with a local fundraiser at midterm to spending a summer abroad volunteering with an international charity. There are opportunities for short and long-term involvement. Usually volunteers do not receive any payment. However, volunteering offers a great opportunity to gain valuable experience. You could be involved in very interesting projects alongside professionals who will provide you with support and may act as referees when you apply for employment.

## Benefits of voluntary work

- It provides work experience that develops one of the core areas of your CV
- It provides employers with evidence of maturity, self-reliance and determination
- It demonstrates key job skills like interpersonal skills and team work
- It allows you to 'give something back to society'
- It gives an enormous boost to self confidence
- It provides an opportunity to work with professionals in your field and build a network of contacts

## Your steps in getting a work placement

**So, how do you go about securing an internship or voluntary placement?**

### 1. Think local and see what is available in your area

Your own institution and careers service are the places to go to first; they will have a range of resources to help you identify work experience and voluntary opportunities in Ireland and abroad. Make an appointment with your college careers advisor for help identifying and applying for internships, or to create your own internship.

### 2. Networking can help

This is the process of exploiting contacts and other sources to find information, possibly work experience and maybe a job when you graduate. Remember that over half of jobs available are not advertised.

### 3. Use your lecturers

Many of your lecturers will be well connected in the field they teach. They may be able to assist you by directing you to possible opportunities or by connecting you to the right people in the industry.

### 4. Finally, remember to treat your work experience application as seriously as you would treat a search for a permanent job. Record everything that you do and have a store of evidence that you have the know-how, skills and attitude that make you more employable.

## The art of graduating in a recession — enter the world of arts and culture

By entering the world of arts and culture the learner has a wonderful opportunity to develop their personal passions whilst gaining some invaluable life and employment skills along the way. In this current economic climate when there is keen competition for jobs, graduates need to adequately equip themselves with skills that give them the edge over other candidates. What better way to improve your employability than by getting involved in the arts? You get to meet like-minded people, engage with your personal passion, decide what events you would like to do and have fun throughout the process.

There are a number of different ways to get involved in the arts at third level. You could, for example, set up an arts related society or join an existing group. Arts societies are very diverse and can include areas such as music, symphony appreciation, drama, dance, photography, dj, street circus, fashion design and choral singing. It is vital that extracurricular activities and learning opportunities remain integral parts of our educational ethos moving forward. Third level is a microcosm for the greater world we live in and it really is the last chance saloon to encourage autonomous thinking, volunteerism and active citizenship in the world we live in.

Student involvement with the arts and culture can take them on a number of different journeys. For the purpose of this article I will focus on a recent event organised by the Music Society at CIT. The event was the end of year Battle of the Bands. The organising committee, a group of students passionate about music, wanted to give young bands an opportunity to perform in a dedicated music venue, with a professional set up in front of a live audience. The live concert was the dream but the logistics required to realise this required planning, commitment, a dash of creative magic and the art of trouble shooting which calls for the ability to predict solutions to problems you may not have previously encountered.

The students involved in organising this concert were on an interesting learning journey to create their dream event. The organising committee booked the venue, negotiated a great deal on venue hire, designed posters and flyers, set up a facebook site, arranged sponsorship of the equipment for the gig, got a radio station involved in the promotion of the event and organised an impressive lineup of judges for the heats. They had a modest budget for the project but succeeded in organising a dynamic and very professional event.

The students learned invaluable skills by organising this project. I was particularly impressed with their attention to detail, professionalism, personal passion, and commitment to creating a positive experience for others. After the event a student asked me to write a reference for a summer job application because he had never worked in a 'real job' prior to this application. I reminded him of the skills he had learnt by organising the concert and encouraged him to include this on his CV. In order to ascertain the skills the student learnt by being involved in this arts project it was useful to break down the organisation of the event into different areas. This model could be used by students involved in other projects either in the arts or indeed other extra-curricular activities during college life. Below are a number of key tasks that result in skills that are relevant to almost any job application.

### Committee membership

- Agenda setting
- Writing minutes
- Negotiation skills
- Team work
- Conflict management
- Leadership

## Event planning

- Designate duties and tasks for members of the team
- Negotiate venue hire
- Organise production management
- Create a running schedule for the bands
- Get all information ahead of the event to create a script for the MC

## Marketing and promotion

- Design poster and flyers
- Arrange printing and distribution of poster and flyers
- Create a website to promote the event and profile bands
- Write and send out a press release and information to local press, radio stations and CIT publications

## Sponsorship

- Identify appropriate sponsors
- Prepare a sponsorship proposal
- Negotiate appropriate sponsorship deals

## Budget and finance

- Work within and manage a given budget
- Keep a record of all financial transactions
- Deal with cash
- Write a budget report

Completion of your college course, in my view, is no longer a free ticket into the workforce. Employers are looking for that 'something extra'. They want a well-rounded individual, with good grades, internship experience, and evidence of leadership roles, and extra-curricular involvement. Involvement in the arts enhances self esteem, confidence and autonomous learning. It teaches team work, flexibility, creativity and a wide range of critical questioning and negotiation skills. Students that get involved in the arts are developing as 'well rounded', vibrant active individuals. Indeed, the importance of the holistic development of an individual cannot be over emphasised. By pursuing our personal passions and interests we are acknowledging all aspects of our human psyche. We are not defining our existence in this world as 'Owen the accountant' or 'Nicola the road sweeper' but as unique individuals that have interests and roles outside of our profession. It may also be helpful to know that pursuing our personal passion makes psychological sense. Albert Bandura, a respected psychologist, highlights that the positive spin off from success in one area of your life can give you confidence to achieve better in other areas of your life.

So if you are a student worried about the future don't just hit the books and forget about your personal passions. Get involved in extra-curricular activities! It is not a self indulgent act but an invaluable part of your learning journey. Rather than view tough times as obstacles to career success, consider them as opportunities to tap into your creative strengths, and to expand on your experiences. I recognise that the arts may not be for everyone and many students get involved in sport and other areas that are equally valuable. However it would be remiss of me not to encourage you to get involved with the arts during your college life. You will not be disappointed! At the very least, keep in mind the mantra for the art of graduating in a recession: Unlock your potential — enter the world of arts and culture!

## Graduates — maximise your employability and attractiveness

As one graduate recently said to me 'It's like Keyser Söze in the movie *The Usual Suspects* — one minute he was there and now he is gone'. I think this aptly sums up the state of affairs in relation to graduates seeking good quality entry level career options with the *The Usual Suspects* in banking, consulting, professional services, FMCG, and manufacturing all rowing back on hiring this year.

Competition for available graduate placements is now fierce. We are seeing a massive increase in the number of applicants to companies that run dedicated graduate recruitment programmes. For example, in 2007 we saw an average of 12 applicants per vacancy. In 2008/09 that figure has jumped to 90 applicants for each vacancy. So, what does this mean for you and how should you navigate these choppy waters over the next two to three years? My suggestions are not a panacea for the world's ills but they just might enable you to get that vital start on your career ladder.

### Focus on export sales driven organisations

These companies are always growth and entrepreneurially oriented even in times of recession. If you have good written or verbal skills in a foreign language, this is a key selling point. So is having a technical degree in sciences, IT or engineering. Ireland is a major hub for European Operations Centres (EOCs) where these skills are in demand. You will find a list of all of the European operations centres in Ireland on [www.ida.ie](http://www.ida.ie). These EOCs are big multinational companies, so they will have formal application procedures in place.

Irish export oriented firms also value these skills, particularly as they focus on sales and marketing to international markets. For many employers in this area, a language will be much more important than your degree. Go online and find Irish and European firms that sell software, online services, ICT, life sciences, or environmental technologies. Target these firms directly and offer your expertise to marketing, sales and pre-sale and customer support type roles. All of these industries have industry association websites, where you will find a full listing of the companies operating under each industry e.g. [www.software.ie](http://www.software.ie).

In addition, Enterprise Ireland runs trade missions with clients in many international markets. Simply type the name of a country and 'Enterprise Ireland trade mission' into a main search engine and you will get the details of a number of progressive companies. Ring them up and offer to help them with their export markets. They will be interested and you will be surprised at how many of them there are!

### Offer to do a project that cuts costs — focus on technology

You are part of Generation Y and the children of web 2.0. Bring its benefits to employers and companies that may be using more traditional and costly methods. For example, are you confident using technologies such as Skype and JahJah on telecoms, SugarCRM on customer manager, or social networking sites and blogs such as Facebook and Bebo and even [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com), which allows you to build your own social networking site? Do you understand the potential benefits that such technologies offer companies? If so, make a proposal to firms outlining how you could save them money by sharing your knowledge of such technologies.

You also can offer to do more conventional cost cutting for companies by analysing supplier contracts, utility bills, travel, leases, routine product purchases, insurance etc. If you find cheaper alternates or solutions, you can create direct cost savings for the company — savings that will pay for your job! If you want you could ask them to hire you for a month and offer them a guarantee that you will save them more than you cost or they can let you go!

## Know how to get grant aid or R&D support for the company

The government is very focused on research and knowledge driven companies that will form the core of Ireland's future 'Smart Economy' and create export sales. Begin by researching sites such as IRCSET, ERCSET, Intertrade Ireland Fusion and Science Foundation Ireland. Try to identify a product or patent development opportunity for which you may be able to apply for research funding. If it links academic and business needs, it should allow you to propose undertaking this type of R&D work on behalf of a company. A research grant could help you to get a job on the strength of it covering part of the costs of your employment allowing the employer to pay you a lesser amount with neither them nor you losing out.

If you are more commercially focused you could go to an employer and explain schemes such as the IBEC Export Orientation Programme Fusion and the Northern Ireland Premiere Programme. Again these initiatives can help in part funding an employer to up to 50% of the cost of having you with them. By explaining the grant and financial aid available to the employer, and what you could do for them, you could try and get them to put you forward as a candidate.

## You need a 'business proposal' not just a 'CV'

All graduates need a good CV but realistically, in the current environment, there are not that many jobs out there, so sending in speculative CV based applications is unlikely to work. A better approach is to send a targeted graduate level CV and to include with it a one page business proposal.

### This proposal should include:

- Who you are
- What qualifications, skills and experience you have
- Why you want to work for the company
- What you specifically can do and how you will deliver a good return on investment in the near term
- Ask can you meet them for ten minutes to state your case and to find out what might help them

You need to reach the person in the company for whom you would be directly working. You can find these people very easily on online professional networks, search engines, professional directories or just simply by ringing up the reception of the company and asking for the details of the person in charge of the particular area you want to approach. You need to be enthusiastic and also polite as this type of proactive contact can reap positive rewards, but if done rudely or aggressively can lead to you being given short shrift.

## Be an entrepreneur — just sooner than you expected

A recent poll through the International Recruiters Network indicated that the most popular career choices amongst graduates in the USA were working as an entrepreneur and working as a 'slash worker'. If you are thinking that you would like to be an entrepreneur you firstly need a good idea, and the basis of a business plan. You should then go and speak with a business incubation unit or your County Enterprise Board. These should be able to help you with advice, support and potentially physical workspace and financial funding. The 'slash worker' is a new phenomenon of people with versatile skills doing multiple jobs. If, for example, you are good at IT, music and coaching, there is nothing wrong with spending part of your time building websites, another part promoting bands and venues and another offering music lessons to learners.

Overall, this changed world of work will belong to the versatile, proactive and imaginative who think about what useful skills they have and look to direct them in a way where they create value for others. The future is here and now. The tiger is nursing a severe hangover. It is time for a new generation of celtic chameleons.

## Surviving the stresses of recession — managing your mental health

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Yes, we are in an economic recession and for many that doesn't just hit the financial books. The economy's woes are taking their toll on more than just our job prospects and pockets. Difficult economic times can result in a whole host of negative health effects — both physical and mental, and as our economy proceeds downward, incidents of anxiety and depression are on the up.

There is no doubt that graduating students face an anxiety-provoking job market. The fact that it is becoming harder for anyone to find jobs has struck fear in many. Across Ireland, college counselling and career service staff have begun to see trends in student opinions on the economy and their futures. Students are feeling anxious about their job prospects after college and are worried about what might happen to them in the future.

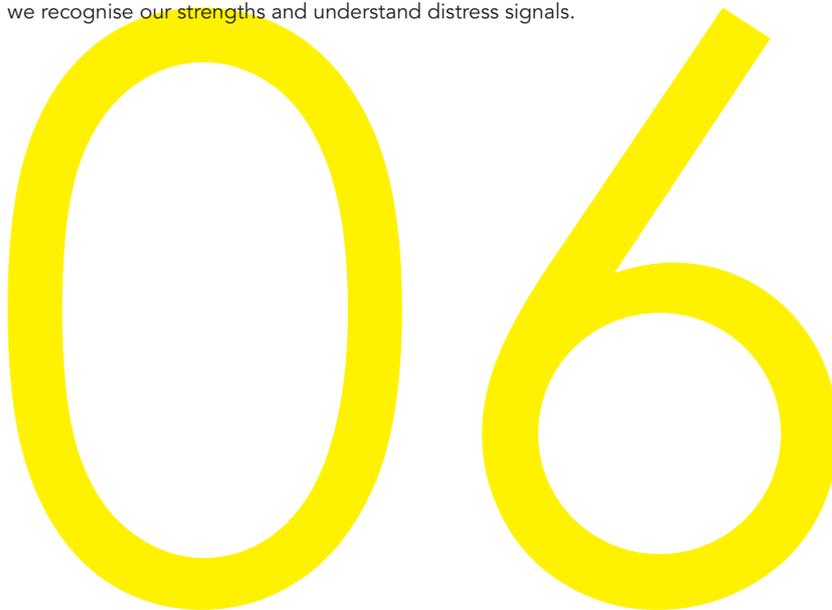
Experiencing stress from such uncertainty and change is normal. Transitions in life, even the positive ones, bring some element of stress: leaving school, going to college, finishing college, finding a job, beginning work. For students, some level of career anxiety is normal and can be healthy. However prolonged stress, that is left unattended, can lead to feelings of hopelessness, questions of self-worth, and even depression.

### Understanding depression

Depression is not an inevitable experience in life. It can happen to any person at any time. Statistics suggest that one in four people may encounter it at some stage in their lives. Nobody is invincible, and while many people may never encounter depression, all of us should be conscious of the possibility in ourselves and those around us, especially in times of recession when the challenges are even greater.

The good news is that you can take steps to ensure that your physical and mental health make it through a recession relatively unscathed. We all know that change is stressful so it is important to know our own particular capacity to manage change, to cope with stress and to pre-empt problems by being aware of them.

It is not pessimistic to be aware of depression. It is sensible, realistic and protective. We are less likely to be hit by what we are prepared for. We are more likely to overcome what confronts us if we recognise it at once. We are healthier mentally, more resilient, and more psychologically hardy when we plan ahead, when we acknowledge difficulties, when we recognise our strengths and understand distress signals.



## The warning signs of depression

**Common warning signs of emotional distress to look out for in ourselves and in others include:**

- Persistent change in appearance, in behaviour, in mood or in reactions
- Change in eating: either more or less
- Change in alcohol intake, in risk taking behaviour, in gambling, in mindless TV, DVD or Internet use or any 'addiction' that numbs the pain
- Change in sleep pattern: not able to sleep or just not wanting to get out of bed
- Poor concentration. Problems in decision-making
- Reduction in self-esteem. Heightened sensitivity, irritability and being more easily hurt
- Negative focus on appearance, body-size or shape
- Feeling sad, tearful, 'flat' and apathetic
- Avoidance of social situations and ruminating over imagined social gaffes
- Feeling immobilised, depleted and unable to 'get it together'. No energy
- Feelings of guilt, of worthlessness and self-blame, of pessimism and fatalism

The signs of depression are deceptive unless we know them. Depression can sneak up unawares. People may not realise they are depressed and they may feel worthless and guilty because they cannot do what everyone else seems to be doing. They can withdraw, opt out, not apply for jobs and become pessimistic, isolated, anxious and alone. It can be a vicious circle until it is unwound.

So, if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by stress when thinking about your educational or career plans, reach out to family, friends, or other support networks. Seek help from your campus counseling service. Unwinding misery is not difficult once it is recognised and help is sought. It is surprising how quickly people feel better when they think that they will never feel better again.

## Depression — what to say to a depressed friend

What if you have a friend or know someone who is showing the symptoms of depression?

**Well simple acts of concern can help:**

- Tell them that you have noticed a change in them, and explain these changes
- Say that you don't want to interfere but that you are concerned and that you care and would like to help
- Ask people who may be depressed directly and sympathetically if they think they are depressed and help them to seek help from their GP

Mental health is often affected by the economic climate and it's understandable that we can feel more depressed and anxious due to the current economic turbulence. However, a recession won't last forever, and with openness and support, depression doesn't either.

## Recruitment during a recession — the recruiters' own perspective

There is no denying that the current economy is impacting graduate recruitment. The true fact of the matter is that the wealth of entry level jobs that there were a few years ago are no longer there. The reality is many of the companies that have been coming to college campuses in recent years to find new young talent are not hiring to the same level they did in the past. Indeed, with fewer vacancies, and competition fierce, the graduate job market is without doubt the toughest we have seen in years.

Graduate prospects, however, are not all doom and gloom. While the economic downturn may have closed the door on graduate vacancies at some firms, even in a recession, many companies continue to hire. Indeed, third level careers services throughout Ireland have found that many graduate employers are still recruiting. They have even seen an increase in companies launching graduate programmes for the first time including the Central Bank, and global insurer AIG.

Even in a recession, most employers believe that it is important to maintain graduate recruitment to ensure a consistent flow of talent in their organisations. After all, many firms learned from their mistakes when they stopped recruiting graduates during the downturn in 2001 and ended up suffering huge gaps in their workforce.

### How graduates should best tackle today's troubled job market according to the employers

So while hiring might be down, what can graduates do to give themselves the best possible chance? Here are some tips from employers on how to tackle the troubled jobs market.

#### Tip 1: Avoid complacency

"There are still lots of graduate opportunities available but with a shorter, earlier window in which to apply."

"At the start of your final year be prepared for a fast take-off with your applications."

There is no time for complacency on the part of the job seeker in today's competitive market, and so the advice is apply early. When you see a job advertised, respond as quickly as you can. Even if a company doesn't specify a closing date, make sure your application reaches them as soon as possible. If you intend to apply speculatively to employers who appear not to be actively recruiting then do it at least three months before you want to start.

#### Tip 2: Research

"We're impressed when candidates have taken the time to do some research and learn about us."

"Candidates who have done thorough research come across as more enthusiastic and knowledgeable and therefore impress much more at interview."

The message coming through loud and clear for this year's graduates is research, research and more research. So, know your potential employer; their clients and services provided, show an awareness of current issues within a sector – emerging markets, growth patterns and get an edge by demonstrating you understand how the recession might be affecting them.

#### Tip 3: Enhance your experience

"Employers look for more than just academic qualifications when filling jobs. They value your outside interests, work experience, voluntary work."

"Any kind of experience a candidate can accumulate which will help distinguish them from other applicants is key."

A degree alone is no longer enough. Increased competition means that graduates now need to come equipped with more than just a solid academic record, with extracurricular activities and work experience among the desirable attributes. The more diverse your experience and background, the better. This could be through part time work, summer internships, volunteering and year placements. Through developing and enhancing work experience and skills set, the graduate can demonstrate to employers that they have actively put time and energy into directing their career rather than passively hoping any employer will recruit them at the end of their degree.

#### **Tip 4: Prepare yourself with skills companies are seeking**

“Employers take as a given that people will have certain qualifications, so they begin to look at things such as teamwork, those with problem solving abilities, interpersonal skills, people with enthusiasm and energy.”

Identifying the key job skills or competencies required by prospective employers is an essential part of the application and interview process. Why? Because each employer will have particular skills or competencies they require of new recruits. Graduates need to be prepared to give specific examples to demonstrate clearly how and where they developed these skills whether through team projects, voluntary work in the arts, internships etc.

#### **Tip 5: Sell yourself**

“We see potential in you, so be sure to sell yourself by promoting your skills and abilities.”

“Specific examples of how you’ve contributed to a project or learned something exciting are of interest to us.”

Your qualification got you in the door to an interview. Now, make sure you can market yourself successfully to employers. Demonstrate your well rounded background of good grades, extracurricular activities and community involvement. After all, you’ll have a hard time achieving your full potential unless others are aware of your expertise and accomplishments. In other words if you don’t bring your abilities, skills and experience out through your CV and interview, the employer cannot gauge the level to which they’ve been developed and would be of use to their company.

#### **Some final words of wisdom from recruiters**

“Be flexible in accepting jobs this year. Your first job is not a prison sentence but an opportunity to build your initial work experience and gain some money. This will ultimately assist you in securing your ideal job which in the current climate may take a little longer but will happen if you remain determined.” *Commerzbank Europe (Ireland) — John Bowden, MD*

“At Deloitte, we look for individuals who are creative and passionate about making an impact every day through meaningful value added work. When recruiting graduates to the firm we are interested in applicants who display a range of transferable skills that have the potential to quickly make a contribution. These skills include team working ability, communication skills, problem-solving ability, flexibility and motivation. Despite the challenges Ireland faces in the current economic environment, Deloitte view our annual graduate recruitment programme as an important long-term investment in our business. Maintaining a constant flow of new graduate talent is fundamental to Deloitte’s continued success in the professional services industry.” *Deloitte — Rose Mary O’Shea, Senior Recruiter*

“In its Strategic Framework to 2020 ESB set out its vision to be a leading commercially successful, environmentally responsible utility. ESB plans to deliver on this strategy through significant investments in wind, smart metering, smart networks, electric vehicles and new emerging technologies including clean coal, wave and tidal technologies, and other energy efficiency initiatives. Recently, ESB announced a series of initiatives which will lead to the creation of 3,700 new jobs in Ireland outside of the company. In addition, ESB will recruit 250 Engineers and 50 other professionals and train 800 apprentices over the next five years.” *ESB — Ronan Sheehy, Group Commercial & Corporate Risk Manager*

“If you are concerned with the economic climate and have not yet had the opportunity to secure a position on a graduate programme this year, use this time as an opportunity to try out different industries through temporary or part-time work. Voluntary work is a great way to develop new skill sets and makes an interesting talking point at interviews. If you do decide to take advantage of travel opportunities consider how this can add value to your skill set, perhaps take up a language course, teach English or volunteer with a local charity. At Google we love to hire well rounded individuals, now may be the chance to branch out and expand your skill set. In the meantime, do keep abreast of developments in the graduate recruitment market and challenge yourself with other activities that will add value to your profile until you find the role that is right for you.” *Google — Stephanie Hollywood, People Programmes Specialist*

## Finding a good job in a bad economy — Where are the jobs?

Concerns about the economy and the effect on recruitment are everywhere. Financial collapses, cutbacks and redundancies make headline news. If all you see is the headline, you could be forgiven for thinking there will be nothing for you when you graduate. While there is no denying that the job market is tough, and competition fierce, graduate recruitment has not stopped. Many employers are reporting that 'they will continue to recruit some graduates.' Despite a tough employment market companies still want bright young people and they are still looking for the capable well rounded graduate.

### Who's hiring?

While the number of vacancies is down overall there are still opportunities being advertised. There are presently over 150 companies advertising graduate opportunities on *gradireland.com*. In addition, all college careers services have opportunities on their online vacancy boards. At the time of writing there were over 200 companies advertising graduate positions on the other major recruitment websites. Recruitment agencies are also reporting graduate jobs on their books. Given the costs involved, many companies with opportunities don't advertise them. They interview and offer employment based on direct applications received and/or on recommendations. Job hunters need to be acutely aware of this.

So, despite the way things look, companies are still hiring. Indeed amongst the headlines of closures, job losses, doom and gloom, we can find some glimmers of good news on the jobs front. Over the last couple of months we've seen a number of companies announce new expansions and start ups.

### For example:

- **Hewlett-Packard (HP)** the world's biggest technology company is to create 500 jobs in Leixlip. The multi-lingual technical support centre will employ a range of people, including high-end graduates.
- **ESB** is set to create up to 3,700 contract jobs as part of a stimulus plan based around renewable energy. Among the new jobs are 750 smart networks, smart meters (750), electric vehicles (600), wind energy (300), construction, including the redevelopment of the Dublin headquarters (550) and an eco fund (350).
- **Big Fish Games** an online games company, has announced a new European Headquarters in Cork. The majority of the 100 new jobs will be in games testing and in customer support.
- **Teleperformance** a company that provides customer services contacts for firms in a range of sectors is creating over 600 positions at its Newry base.
- **Homefix Property Solutions** which is currently at the early start-up stage, aims to create 50 new roles in Carlow.
- **PayPal's** official opening of their new European Centre for Operational Excellence will result in the creation of up to 35 highly-skilled jobs.
- **Philips Healthcare Informatics** is expanding its operation in Belfast. This new investment will create 30 new graduate level jobs.
- **WhatsWhat**, an online business directory is creating 50 new jobs in Wicklow.
- **Helsinn Holding S.A.**, a pharmaceutical company, is to establish a Research and Development Centre for Oral Solid Dosage at Mulhuddart, Dublin. It is anticipated that this will create 10 high-value research positions.

So while some industries are being hit hard by the downturn e.g. the finance sector, construction, motor retailing, and property services, other sectors are proving better able to weather the current economic storm. Industry sectors that are recruiting ahead of the average include pharmaceuticals, medical devices, waste management, renewable energy, and technology and business services. Another sector that seems to be fairing well is food and drink or what we call fast moving consumer goods. There has also been increased demand for business analysts/project managers as companies look to maximise efficiencies. In addition, incidents of claims lodgment have increased with the current economic climate, which has pushed demand high for claims investigators and loss adjusters.

## **Six growth industries**

**Most of the job search engines, career sites and economists agree that the top growth industries include:**

### **IT Services/Computer Software/Hardware**

ICT is a key growth sector for Ireland and the availability of highly skilled IT professionals here has attracted many high profile companies that continue to reinvest. In addition, the IT outsourcing market could boom as employers increasingly look to third-party providers in order to cut costs.

### **Accounting and Auditing**

There is still some demand for qualified and part qualified accountants when all eyes are on the books at the moment. There is steady demand for compliance and risk professionals. Qualified and newly qualified accountants are required within the pharmaceutical, manufacturing and energy industries, as are candidates with insolvency and forensics experience.

### **Innovation and Intellectual Property Related Enterprises**

Even in an economic downturn, businesses that are focused on innovation and niche product development can continue to grow. The introduction by the Government of a new tax relief on capital expenditure incurred in the acquisition of intellectual property (IP) should act as a catalyst to attract further inward investment into Ireland and ultimately lead to the creation of new jobs.

### **Green Sector Jobs**

Employment in green sectors is on the rise according to recruitment agencies. Jobs in green areas such as renewable energy, environmental and energy-efficient technologies are forecast to continue to increase. Indeed, a joint report recently published by Forfás and Inter Trade Ireland showed that the environmental sector has the potential to become a valuable component of long-term economic development in Ireland. The creation of more and more companies in the green sector, such as wind farms and waste-water specialists has led to a strong demand for energy consultants, and electric engineers. We are also likely to see a massive demand for qualifications in environmental biology, renewable and electrical energy systems, environmental management and specialist fields within science and engineering. What's more, companies involved in the production of environmental goods and services need all the other traditional supporting business functions such as finance, HR and marketing.

### **Business Services**

During the recent months of relentlessly bad economic news it is notable that inward investment (through 'the IDA pipeline') has continued. Indeed the latest Services Trade statistics released by the Central Statistic Office show that Services exports were up by 3% valued at €67.59 billion. The rapid emergence of internationally traded services (e.g. computer and information services and insurance services) reflects the growing importance of our knowledge based industries. There is a huge potential for a wide range of indigenous companies to join multi-nationals in exporting services from Ireland. This will be fuelled, in no small part, by the availability of an educated, young and linguistically diverse workforce.

### **Medical/Health**

The medical recruitment industry is not reporting the same dismal problems seen in some sections of the recruitment industry. Because of the aging baby boomer population, many companies and organisations related to health care and other needs of the elderly are in a good position to weather the recession. While nursing is going through a difficult time in terms of recruitment, the increase in the number of private healthcare providers should see prospects look up in the medium term. The pharmaceutical industry is in a good position to see out the recession; people will always need medical care ensuring a continued demand for research, development and production of new drugs. Medical sales jobs offer opportunities at the moment while medicine and dentistry tend to be careers in which people can prosper despite general economic difficulties.

### **Final words of wisdom**

With media coverage about the tough job market invading our daily lives, it can be easy to lose confidence. Stay positive and work hard to get the best degree you can. Companies are still recruiting graduates but it takes hard work to dig out the hidden opportunities. Keep a close eye on the daily newspapers and search their websites for job announcements. Also, be sure to check the IDA and Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment websites for government supported jobs initiatives. Create a list or mind map of all your contacts and network with a purpose. Talk to people in the sector in which you are interested; tell the world that you are job hunting. Create a list of companies in your sector; your careers service can help you with this. The wider you spread your net the better the chances you have of getting a break. Be creative and versatile in how you search for jobs and consider diversifying and/or taking a stepping stone approach into the area you wish to work.

Don't let headline economic woes freeze you into inaction. You may not be able to control the economy, but you can control your response to the current situation, so develop a professional approach to your career planning and job search. Finally, take heart — graduate jobs are out there. This is not the first time the global economy has been hit with a downturn of this scale and our experience shows that businesses and employees come out of these situations far stronger and need skilled graduates to help them through. Be ready to take the opportunities when they arise.

## About Graduate Careers Ireland (GCI)

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Graduate Careers Ireland (formerly AGCSI) is the representative body for Careers Services in higher education in Ireland, north and south. Its mission is to be an effective association representing third level career services in Ireland by promoting and facilitating best practice and included amongst its members are 25 Universities, Higher Education Institutes and Institutes of Technology.

For the past 40 years Graduate Careers Ireland has led, supported and developed collaboration among higher education careers services in the development and delivery of high quality careers guidance for students and graduates.

In 2002 Graduate Careers Ireland entered into partnership with GroupGTI — one of the leading graduate career publishers in Europe. Together we produce a comprehensive range of high quality, up to date and relevant publications for students and graduates. The partnership also organises career fairs, work experience fairs, postgraduate study fairs together with seminars, presentations, discussion forums. Graduate Careers Ireland also undertakes collaborative activities involving employers, public bodies and academic staff. For further information on the work undertaken by Graduate Careers Ireland, please see our website: [www.graduatecareersireland.com](http://www.graduatecareersireland.com)

### Take advantage of your campus careers service

Students don't always utilise the career resources at their colleges and universities. That's a shame as your local Careers Service is there to help you! Careers Services aim to provide you the student with quality, up-to-date and relevant careers information and guidance to support you to develop a set of career management skills to turn your degree into a career. This support is offered throughout the duration of your undergraduate or postgraduate courses.

#### Careers services include:

- Individual one-to-one guidance with a careers adviser
- CV and application advice
- Mock interviews
- Practice ability test sessions — on paper and online
- A programme of talks and workshops including different career areas, further study, job-hunting
- Annual recruitment fairs and postgraduate fairs
- A library of information on different careers, further study, employers, applications and interviews
- Comprehensive listings of vacancies, work experience, internship and volunteer opportunities

**So contact your local careers service today and take the first step towards turning your degree into a career!**

## Your Campus Careers Services

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### All Hallows College

Grace Park Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9  
t. +353 (0)1 837 3745  
[www.allhallows.ie](http://www.allhallows.ie)

### Athlone Institute of Technology

Dublin Road, Athlone, Co Westmeath  
t. +353 (0)90 6424524  
[www.ait.ie](http://www.ait.ie)

### Cork Institute of Technology

Rossa Avenue, Bishopstown, Cork  
t. +353 (0)21 4326678  
[www.careersandcounselling.com](http://www.careersandcounselling.com)

### Dublin Institute of Technology

Room 2038, DIT Aungier Street, Dublin 2  
t. +353 (0)1 402 3084  
[www.dit.ie/careers](http://www.dit.ie/careers)

### Dublin City University (DCU)

Student Support & Development Centre  
Glasnevin, Dublin  
t. +353 (0)1 700 5162  
[www.dcu.ie/careers](http://www.dcu.ie/careers)

### Dundalk Institute of Technology

Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
t. +353 (0)42 938 1700  
[www2.dkit.ie/student\\_life/student\\_services/careers](http://www2.dkit.ie/student_life/student_services/careers)

### Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology

Kill Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin  
t. +353 (0)1 214 4670  
[www.iadt.ie](http://www.iadt.ie)

### Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

Dublin Road, Galway  
t. +353 (0)91 742 392  
[www.gmit.ie](http://www.gmit.ie)

### Institute of Technology Carlow

Kilkenny Road, Carlow  
t. +353 (0)59 917 0596  
[www.itcarlow.ie](http://www.itcarlow.ie)

### Institute of Technology Sligo

Ballinode, Sligo  
t. +353 (0)71 915 5403  
[www.itsligo.ie](http://www.itsligo.ie)

### Institute of Technology Tallaght

Tallaght, Dublin 24  
t. +353 (0)1 404 2561  
[www.ittdublin.ie/studentlife/careersservice](http://www.ittdublin.ie/studentlife/careersservice)

### Institute of Technology, Tralee

Clash Road, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
t. +353 (0)66 719 1783  
[www.ittralee.ie](http://www.ittralee.ie)

### Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Port Road, Letterkenny, County Donegal  
t. +353 (0)74 918 6812  
[www.lyit.ie/student/careers/index\\_careers.html](http://www.lyit.ie/student/careers/index_careers.html)

### Limerick Institute of Technology

Moylish Park, Limerick  
t. +353 (0)61 208 295  
[www.lit.ie/careers](http://www.lit.ie/careers)

### National College of Art & Design

100 Thomas Street, Dublin 8  
t. +353 (0)1 636 4313  
[www.ncad.ie](http://www.ncad.ie)

### National College of Ireland

Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1  
t. +353 (0)1 449 8526  
[www.ncirl.ie](http://www.ncirl.ie)

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**National University of Ireland, Galway**

Career Development Centre, University Road  
Galway  
t. +353 (0)91 493 589  
[www.nuigalway.ie/careers](http://www.nuigalway.ie/careers)

**University College Dublin**

Careers & Appointments Office, Library Building  
Belfield, Dublin 4  
t. +353 (0)1 716 7558  
[www.ucd.ie/careers](http://www.ucd.ie/careers)

**National University of Ireland, Maynooth**

Career Development Centre  
North Campus Maynooth, Co Kildare  
t. +353 (0)1 708 3592  
[www.careers.nuim.ie](http://www.careers.nuim.ie)

**University of Limerick**

Cooperative Education & Careers Division  
t. +353 (0)61 202 476  
[www.ul.ie/careers](http://www.ul.ie/careers)

**Open University**

Enquiry and Advice Centre, Holbrook House  
Holles Street, Dublin 2  
t. +353 (0)1 678 5399  
[www.open.ac.uk/careers](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers)

**University of Ulster**

Career Development Centre, Jordanstown Campus  
Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT37 0QB  
t. +44 (0)28 90368951  
[www.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.ulster.ac.uk)

**Queen's University Belfast**

Student Guidance Centre, University Road  
Belfast, BT7 1NN  
t: 028 9097 2727  
[www.qub.ac.uk/careers](http://www.qub.ac.uk/careers)

**Waterford Institute of Technology**

Careers Office, Main Building, Cork Road, Waterford  
t: +353 (0) 51 302038  
[www.wit.ie/careerscentre](http://www.wit.ie/careerscentre)

**St. Patrick's College**

Drumcondra, Dublin 9  
t. +353 (0)1 884 2280  
[www.spd.dcu.ie](http://www.spd.dcu.ie)

**Trinity College Dublin**

Careers Advisory Service 2nd Floor, East Chapel, Dublin 2  
t. +353 (0)1 896 1721/1705  
[www.tcd.ie/careers](http://www.tcd.ie/careers)

**University College Cork**

3/4 Brighton Villas, Western Road, Cork  
t. +353 (0)21 4902349  
[www.ucc.ie/careers](http://www.ucc.ie/careers)

## Useful Contacts and Links

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### Keep up to date

Make sure you keep yourself up to date and have an understanding of market conditions. While this will not get you a job, it will put you in a better position to judge what might be your best course of action:

[www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)  
[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)  
[www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)  
[www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com)  
[www.rte.ie](http://www.rte.ie)

### Be up with business

Whether you are looking for a job, or simply want to be in the know, you will find a wide range of information is available on who's who in business in Ireland:

[www.chambers.ie](http://www.chambers.ie)  
[www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie)  
[www.enterpriseboards.ie](http://www.enterpriseboards.ie)  
[www.ibec.ie](http://www.ibec.ie)  
[www.ida.ie](http://www.ida.ie)  
[www.irlgov.ie](http://www.irlgov.ie)  
[www.isme.ie](http://www.isme.ie)  
[www.kompass.ie](http://www.kompass.ie)  
[www.sfa.ie](http://www.sfa.ie)

### Search for jobs

In addition to contacting your local careers office and registering your CV with recruitment agencies, make sure to check out the vacancies listed on the web:

[www.adminjobs.ie](http://www.adminjobs.ie)  
[www.computerjobs.ie](http://www.computerjobs.ie)  
[www.educationposts.ie](http://www.educationposts.ie)  
[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)  
[www.greenjobs.ie](http://www.greenjobs.ie)  
[www.irishjobs.ie](http://www.irishjobs.ie)  
[www.jobfinder.ie](http://www.jobfinder.ie)  
[www.jobs.ie](http://www.jobs.ie)  
[www.jobsearch.ie](http://www.jobsearch.ie)  
[www.jobrapido.ie](http://www.jobrapido.ie)  
[www.jobweeder.com](http://www.jobweeder.com)  
[www.loadzajobs.ie](http://www.loadzajobs.ie)  
[www.monster.ie](http://www.monster.ie)  
[www.nijobs.ie](http://www.nijobs.ie)  
[www.nixers.com](http://www.nixers.com)  
[www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie)  
[www.recruitireland.com](http://www.recruitireland.com)  
[www.tenderme.ie](http://www.tenderme.ie)

### Use careers resources

There are a huge number of resources available to students and graduates who want to plan their career:

[www.careerdirections.ie](http://www.careerdirections.ie)  
[www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)  
[www.gradireland.com](http://www.gradireland.com)  
[www.graduatecareersireland.com](http://www.graduatecareersireland.com)  
[www.groupgti.com](http://www.groupgti.com)  
[www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com)  
[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

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## Volunteer

Find information and advice on a huge range of volunteering opportunities throughout Ireland and worldwide:

[www.activelink.ie](http://www.activelink.ie)  
[www.carmichaelcentre.ie](http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie)  
[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)  
[www.suas.ie](http://www.suas.ie)  
[www.usitnow.ie](http://www.usitnow.ie)  
[www.volunteeringireland.ie](http://www.volunteeringireland.ie)  
[www.vso.ie](http://www.vso.ie)  
[www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk)

## Investigate an internship

Find advice and information on internship opportunities across Ireland and overseas:

[www.enterprise-ireland.com/iip](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/iip)  
[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)  
[www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie](http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie)  
[www.gradireland.com](http://www.gradireland.com)  
[www.icfireland.ie](http://www.icfireland.ie)

## Further your education

From short courses and distance education to postgraduate or part time education, check out the numerous options available to you to further your learning:

[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)  
[www.daycourses.com](http://www.daycourses.com)  
[www.learningireland.ie](http://www.learningireland.ie)  
[www.nightcourses.com](http://www.nightcourses.com)  
[www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com)  
[www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)  
[wwwucas.com](http://wwwucas.com)

## Consider your creativity

Interested in exploiting and enhancing your creativity? There are lots of opportunities open to you. As a starting point, check out the following links:

[www.artscouncil.ie](http://www.artscouncil.ie)  
[www.artsmangement.ie](http://www.artsmangement.ie)  
[www.cmc.ie](http://www.cmc.ie)  
[www.creativecareers.ie](http://www.creativecareers.ie)  
[www.dancetheatreireland.com](http://www.dancetheatreireland.com)  
[www.iftn.ie](http://www.iftn.ie)  
[www.theatreforumireland.com](http://www.theatreforumireland.com)  
[www.visualartists.ie](http://www.visualartists.ie)  
[www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)  
[www.writerscentre.ie](http://www.writerscentre.ie)

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT EVEN IN A BAD ECONOMY, YOUR RESULTS AT COLLEGE DO MATTER. DON'T START SLACKING AND THINK IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW WELL YOU DO, BECAUSE THAT WILL NEVER BE THE CASE. A RECOGNISED AND RESPECTED QUALIFICATION WILL ALWAYS STAND TO YOU AND HARD WORK AND PROACTIVE JOB SEEKERS WILL STILL BE ABLE TO FIND A POSITION DOING SOMETHING THEY LOVE; IT JUST MIGHT TAKE SOME EXTRA PATIENCE IN THESE TOUGH TIMES.

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