Graduate recruitment & careers terminology explained

Sometimes you may hear careers or graduate recruitment jargon with which you may not be familiar. Below are some of the terms or language specific to careers and graduate recruitment with a brief description of what they mean. If you find any terms that we’ve missed out, let us know by emailing careers@liverpool.ac.uk

Aptitude test – a test employers use to test your verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, diagrammatic reasoning or other specific abilities. Not all employers use them in their selection process.

Assessment centre – a series of tasks and activities that are structured usually around one (maybe two) days to assess your suitability for a job.

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) - the professional body for careers and employability professionals in UK Higher Education. AGCAS also provides some of the free booklets available on our website and contributes to the content published on the TARGETjobs website.

Blue chip company - name given to a company considered to be large, safe and prestigious.

Business games - specially designed business problems which are given to students to solve (in groups or individually) as part of a selection process.

CareerHub – the University of Liverpool Careers & Employability Service portal containing career-related information, job vacancies, details of recruitment events and workshops, and zones containing specific information by your degree subject.

Careers adviser - provides information, advice and guidance to help people make realistic choices about their education, training and work.

Careers fair - an event where you have the opportunity to meet potential employers face to face and market yourself to your chosen industry. Employers have exhibition stands, often with recent graduates on hand to tell you about their company, vacancies, and recruitment procedures.

Careers interview/appointment - booked appointment held in a confidential setting, allows you to get in-depth guidance from an adviser.

Case study - a practical example of a scenario based on a person's previous experience.

Competencies - a combination of skills, knowledge and other qualities defined by employers.

Competency based - a selection process where your skills, knowledge and other qualities will be “tested”

Covering letter - sent with a CV and/or an application form, a covering letter often summarises your reasons for applying and your key attributes and strengths.

CV - Curriculum Vitae. A written summary of your educational qualifications, employment history and personal details. Sometimes referred to as resume (American terminology).

Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) - information on what graduates do after leaving university - relating to employment and further study. We'll contact you 6-months after graduation about this – please reply!

Employability - a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Employer 1-2-1 - an opportunity to sit down for a short face-to-face meeting with a graduate recruiter and ask them anything you like about their organisation and recruitment process.

Employer masterclass - a session delivered on campus by an employer that will help you prepare for different stages of the recruitment process. Sessions usually focus on how to complete application forms or what to expect at an assessment centre.

Employer presentations - given by employers are an opportunity to tell you about themselves and the vacancies they offer. Recent graduate recruits often participate in the talk, and can include videos, small discussion groups or case studies.

E-tray exercise - a computer based simulation of an email inbox that lasts for, and must be completed within, a fixed amount of time. A paper version is called an in-tray exercise. Often used during an assessment centre.

Graduate directory - a book or magazine containing details of employers and their vacancies - mainly aimed at final year students, and second year students looking for placements. Usually free, many are available as digital editions and a selection are available in the careers information area.

Graduate internship - short or fixed term period of supervised work experience that is usually related to the graduate’s study and/or chosen career.
Graduate scheme - a training programme usually run by a large organisation. Employers take on a number of graduates in the autumn of their graduating year. Graduates are given a permanent, paid job and follow a structured training programme for the first 18 months to two years of their employment.

Graduate to Merseyside - provides a graduate placement and recruitment service for Merseyside businesses. Specifically targeting SMEs (see below) Graduate to Merseyside also supports large and public sector organisations in the region.

Group exercises - at an assessment centre, you may be asked to discuss a topic or undertake an activity with others, which will be observed and assessed.

Guidance interview - an interview lasting up to 40-minutes with a careers advisor at the Careers & Employability Service. Use this option to discuss your career ideas and plans with your subject specific careers adviser.

Hidden jobs - jobs which are not advertised, and which are found through contacts or by writing directly to an employer making a speculative application.

Internship - an American term for a period of work experience, lasting from a few weeks to a year. Can also be called a summer internship or work placement.

In-tray exercise - often encountered at assessment centres, in business games. You may be given a variety of written material and asked what action you would take with each item. You will be asked to do this within a set time. Similar to an E-tray exercise which is an electronic version. Often used during an assessment centre.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) - a three-way project between a graduate, an organisation and a university/research organisation/further education institution. Projects offered last from 6 months to three years, depending on the needs of the business.

Mentoring - professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person's professional and personal growth.

Milkround – old term used to describe employers who visit university campuses to recruit students for graduate schemes.

Mock interview – an opportunity to practice being interviewed for a job or course.

National Insurance Number - (sometimes called a NI number, NIC number or NINO) is issued to everyone in the UK and is a record of your National Insurance contributions you have paid out of your wages/salary.

National Minimum Wage (NMW) - the minimum hourly wage rate that is acceptable in law in the UK for paid work.

Networking - using your contacts - friends, relatives, lecturers - and developing and maintaining this wide range of contacts to help you to tap into the hidden job market.

Online application form - applying for a job through an employer's website by entering information into a predefined form.

OTE - On Target Earnings - used in recruitment consultant advertisements to suggest what actual earnings might be, including basic salary plus commission.

Personality profiling/questionnaire - sometimes used by employers to gain an insight into your working style and attitudes.

Placement - a period of work experience, paid or unpaid, usually part of your course.

Professional body - organisation that offers qualifications and professional examinations. Usually charges a fee for students to join.

Professional qualifications - courses leading to professional qualification, taken after graduation offered directly by professional bodies , mostly part time and undertaken alongside your job arranged by your employer.

Psychometric testing - tests to measure mental abilities and qualities. Employers use a variety of tests within a wider recruitment procedure (the most common tend to be numerical reasoning and verbal reasoning).

Quick query appointment – an interview lasting up to 15-minutes with a careers advisor at the Careers & Employability Service. Use this option for application form reviews, job or course application advice, interview tips, CV checks and to get brief information about a career related query.

Recruitment agency - agencies advertise vacancies and sometimes carry out initial selection on behalf of employers.

Second interview – a job interview, often with a more senior member of staff. May be held as part of an assessment centre.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - a company which employs less than 250 people.
**Speculative application** - sending a CV and covering letter to an employer asking whether they can offer jobs or work experience, without a job being advertised.

**TARGETJobs** – a major publisher of careers information in the UK.

**Technical interview** – an interview where technical questions may be asked (typically science and engineering jobs). Typical questions refer to course projects, special options or work placements. Separate technical interviews that test in-depth theoretical knowledge are mainly given to applicants for research posts.

**Telephone interviews** - sometimes used as pre-screening method. Successful interviewees are invited for face-to-face or second interview.

**Third sector** – a not for profit organisation.

**Transferable skills** - used to describe a range of skills ‘transferable’ between jobs (and also from your degree).

**Vacation work** - used to describe paid work during vacation periods usually during the summer, but can sometimes be during Christmas or Easter periods.

**Video interviews** - an interview format using a video questionnaire. Typically employers set questions or tasks and then use specialist video companies to conduct the virtual interview. All the candidates get asked the same questions, and the recruiters can replay or review anything that catches their eye. It’s like a face-to-face interview but without the feedback you’d expect from a person-to-person experience. Self-recorded and YouTube can be used for sales, media or marketing jobs. A candidate is invited to upload a five minute film to a password protected site to highlight certain aspects of their skills, e.g. presentation.

**Vocational course** - a course designed to train you for a specific job or career. These courses may be essential for entry.

**Voluntary work** - work undertaken for no pay. Can cover anything from a few days with a local organisation to a six month project for a charity.

**Webinar** - a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the internet.

**Work experience** - can be paid or unpaid work. Relevant work experience is essential for some jobs. Sometimes referred to as placements or internships.

**Work shadowing** - observing someone doing their job to gain an understanding of what they do.

**Workshop** - an interactive session run by careers advisers or employers. You will be expected to take part in activities and contribute ideas.

**Year in industry** – a period of work experience undertaken as part of a degree course. Also referred to as an industrial placement, sandwich year, or year placement.

**Year round / on-going recruitment** - term used to describe how employers recruit - such employers do not usually have closing dates for applications.

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**Careers & Employability Service**

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