

# Get your career on the right path

Don't panic if you're one of the thousands of graduates entering the job market in these troubled times — Graduate Prospects can show you the way with advice and direction

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**W**HILE the recent bank bail-outs and mergers have prevented the economy from slipping into full-scale crisis, what is clear is that we are living in a period of economic uncertainty that, for most people just out of higher education, will be unprecedented.

Until now, the fantastic sums of money we hear talked about in the press have meant little to the average graduate. But very soon, if not already, they will feel the pinch. One area sure to be affected is the job market, and in particular graduate recruitment. It is as yet unclear what effect this year of turmoil will have on graduate recruitment over the next few years but for some it may seem that that dream job has become more elusive than ever.

In London, the difficulties facing graduates trying to find a suitable job are extreme. It is estimated that up to 65,000 have poured out of London's varied educational institutions this year. This significant number now find themselves joining the largest regional labour force in Europe during the most troubled of times.

In this uncertain climate, it is essential that graduates make the right decisions in order to maximise their potential. While figures suggest that graduate recruitment may escape the clutches of the "credit crunch" for this year at least, the fact remains that competition is as fierce as it comes. It is wise to take a look at what is going on in the world of work so that you are prepared for the challenges you may face.

At a time when most of the country is keeping a careful eye on its outgoings in relation to its earnings, it is logical that a primary concern of a graduate seeking employment will be salary. This concern will be felt more keenly by graduates in the capital. London is easily one of Europe's most expensive cities to live in, and doing so without the safety net of a decent salary can often make life extremely difficult. The problem with gauging what your starting salary may be is that it is dependent upon a number of factors. The industry of the employer, the size of the company, the location of the job and, of course, the recent wider economic trends all play a part in what you can expect to earn.

Depending on what information you choose to consult, the figure you can expect varies greatly. The annual Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) poll, which records the salaries of all UK university graduates within a given year regardless of what they go on to do, places the figure at around £18,500. The Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) survey comes to a more optimistic conclusion. It believes its members offer new

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recruits an average salary of £24,000. With a huge amount of variance in starting salary, it would perhaps seem logical for the capital's graduates to decide what they want to do before they get the calculators out to work out what they might earn.

With this in mind, what are the most popular jobs for graduates? According to What Do Graduates Do? becoming health professionals, associate professionals or commercial, industrial and public-sector managers are among the more popular career choices. But are there the jobs out there to satisfy the demand as it continues to grow?

On the face of it, the outlook for graduate recruitment this year is more positive than other areas of the employment market. AGR also surveyed its members on the number of positions its companies would be in a position to offer graduates this year. Surprisingly, the overall view was that the number of graduate vacancies was set to rise again, with the prediction that the final figure would be as much as 16.4 per cent higher than in 2007. This predicted growth would be the highest in a decade and would represent the fifth year of continual growth for the sector.

With the graduate jobs market, at this stage, seemingly unaffected by the uncertain economic climate, it would seem that this year is far from a bad

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time to be graduating. While it seems that there are jobs out there to be grasped, it is also true that many students are left with a head full of questions upon graduation about what to do with themselves. A helping hand, coupled with good advice, is surely something all graduates looking to take their place on the employment ladder, would feel the benefit of.

It is lucky, then, that Graduate Prospects is here to provide just these things. Its website, [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk), has everything graduates could want to help them find what they are looking for. On it, you will find a whole section devoted to "What jobs would suit me?" The Prospects Planner will help identify your skills, motivations and interests so that you can match your personal profile with jobs that are relevant to you.

If you feel the need for a more personalised approach, you can email a careers consultant or book a one-to-one online chat for help

and advice. If you think Graduate Prospects is in a position to help you, why not attend one of its careers fairs? The beauty of a Graduate Prospects careers fair is that you can attend without even having to leave the house.

It is hosting a series of virtual fairs throughout November where users can search for jobs, view the profiles of employees exhibiting and even upload your CV for the exhibitors to view.

While Graduate Prospects can help you choose the path you want, it also offers advice to those who know what they want to do but just don't know how to go out there and get it.

Graduate Prospects can provide everything job-seekers need to beat the competition. Whether it is the hottest new vacancies, tips on how to handle that all-important interview, or simply careers advice for those unsure of the best route to take. It's sure to help you get that dream job.

■ [www.jobsite.co.uk](http://www.jobsite.co.uk)



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