

QUESTION:

Hi! I graduated 2002 in Engineering Design (BSc). I got a 2:2. The degree was mechanically based and I enjoyed it a lot. I was particularly interested in the design engineer role, using computer packages such as autoCAD to work with. I am having problems as to where to start as all CAD positions seem to require 2 years experience. I haven't got a clue how to even find somewhere for this experience. I have been to several recruitment agencies yet they only advertise with the experience essentials. I am looking for work around Sheffield/Manchester, and haven't really found anything. I have applied for graduate programmes which won't start till September and for the time being need a job. so really, I need to know how to start on my experience

REPLIES THAT HAVE BEEN SENT:

Hello Richard

This can be a problem but often it is a matter of making sure that you have not got a measure of the experience required. For example, did your course cover the use of AutoCad software? If it did then the demonstration of some of the work you have done as part of your studies may enhance your CV in terms of the required experience. Remember that a CV is a selling document and it is important to identify and maximise the skills that you have.

Look at the other skills that the employer wants and make sure that you can articulate your own skills effectively. What do employers want? The Association of Graduate Recruiters quote:

"The skills most valued by AGR members in their graduate employees are motivation and enthusiasm, team working, oral communication, flexibility and adaptability and initiative/proactivity, which are rated highly across all industries. The largest skill shortages, ie where supply fails to meet demand, are interpersonal skills, initiative/proactivity, managing own development, business awareness, oral communication and problem solving. Based on the skills most prized by employers and the skill shortages reported, there is a real business need for graduates to offer interpersonal skills, initiative/proactivity and oral communication skills as they enter the labour market."

These skills can be gained through a variety of work that is undertaken while at university but it has to be "sold" on your CV. You have to identify the skills and relate it to the target market.

This may not fill all the gaps but the better you can sell yourself then the more likely you are to get that all important interview.

Look at the many smaller or newer companies who can often need graduate skills in specific areas, but won't be using traditional recruitment methods. Identify and research likely companies from the business pages of local newspapers or take a look at the small companies based on the many science parks that grow up adjacent to universities and on the edges of towns and cities.

Consider offering to do project work for companies who cannot afford to hire graduate staff under normal circumstance. Often HE Career Services have links to companies through schemes that offer work experience. Contact your local service to find out whether possibilities exist in your region. Find contact details at:

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/CareersServices>

Check out the work experience pages on our site – these are primarily aimed at undergraduates, but as a graduate there may be leads that you can follow up on a speculative basis. Don't be afraid of calling to talk about opportunities.

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/workexperience>

I hope this information proves useful. If you need further advice, please contact us again.

Good luck, Graduate Questiontime

**QUESTION:**

I graduated from the University of Bath back in July with a 1st class honours degree in Biology. I do not want to work in a laboratory, but do not have much idea of what I do want to do. My long term partner will soon be moving to Exeter, so I would like to relocate there. I have tried unsuccessfully to obtain a business directory for this area and have sent my CV to recruitment agencies, of which only one has shown an interest. I seem to spend hours searching the web with no luck. Please could you advise me on any other ways to find a job which has career prospects? Thank you, Victoria

REPLIES THAT HAVE BEEN SENT:

Hello Victoria

Thanks for getting in touch with us.

1. First things first - you say you have no real idea what you want to do! In my experience this sort of lack of focus often comes through on CVs so it might be one reason why you are not having much luck with recruitment agencies. One thing that you might do to give yourself some direction is to use our Prospects Planner resource (<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner>) to gain more insight into where you would like to go and to get some information on job areas which might be relevant to you. Your CV might then be adjusted accordingly.

2. Yes business directories are often hard to come by - I suggest trying the local Learning Skills Council for the Exeter area. You might also focus your search on specific sorts of firms (eg pharmaceuticals) once you have carried out step one above. You can get UK wide directories for almost any profession at a good large reference library. Also the Prospects Planner facility will give you links to useful websites. If you are still in the Bath area are you still able to use the University Careers service there? (They may charge, this varies from university to university!). They are likely to have relevant directories and vacancy lists.

3. You can also have your CV reviewed with Prospects Professional along with a covering letter to complete your applications. Once your CV is up to date you can apply to vacancies on the prospects website (<http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/jobvac>)

4. Professional societies and associations often publish vacancies and also link members with other professionals working in the same geographical area. The Institute of Biology on www.iob.org may be a useful contact and there are other similar organisations covering different aspects of sciences.

I hope that all the above proves useful Victoria and that your move to Exeter goes well - I'm told that it's a lovely city.

Best wishes, Graduate Questiontime Adviser

