

Just graduated, what now? - Ways to a successful career start

To stand out from the multitude of applications, you have to use your own initiative. As many companies do not advertise their jobs publicly, but rather prefer to fill their positions with former trainees and with the help of recommendations, applicants must make use of unsolicited applications in order to draw attention to themselves. Obviously, an unsolicited application with an equally motivated cover letter shows a significant enthusiasm. The first jobs after finishing your university studies are often temporary, but they are still a good start. They provide the opportunity to gain practical experience and in the long term there is the prospect of getting a permanent job. The goal is also not to have any gaps in your CV. Even contracts for services or small jobs connected with your profession are useful to gain an insight into the future working environment. In addition to this, they also offer better pay to cover your living costs than you would otherwise receive as a trainee.

Career Guidance

Before you start work it is important to find out what you expect from a future job. In particular, it is worthwhile to know your own strengths. Trainee positions whilst studying are a good opportunity to gain initial experience and a relevant picture of your future career. Trainee positions will give you the chance to network and will also offer you a general impression of the line of work. Industrial sectors' associations, unions and the career service at universities can provide more information.

Trainee

A trainee is a university graduate, who gains practical skills and experience by working within an organisation. They are young professionals who can be placed in different positions and go through a systematic training programme with coordinated tasks in various sections, seminars and network events. They work their way through all company departments and get a comprehensive overview of the business. A trainee is an apprentice and therefore earns less than a full time member of staff. When you apply for a trainee position, you should be aware as to what the content for the programme will be, which departments you can gain insight into and if the contract is temporary or permanent. There are two forms of trainee programmes. One is comprehensive and the other is subject specific. The comprehensive trainee programme involves broad insight into all departments which is accompanied by training in business leadership and management. This should enable graduates to qualify as junior managers. The subject specific programme focuses on the training of highly qualified leadership roles with specialist



knowledge. These trainees go through various steps which are specifically related to their specialist subject. It is worthwhile to show initiative here too. Make use of networking and show your motivation by sending unsolicited applications to suitable companies.

Practical Training

This option is not always available in all industrial sectors. However, if you would like to work in the media sector or journalism, for example, then some businesses offer the opportunity for practical training. This is particularly suitable for graduates of arts and humanities with the aspiration to become an editor. The training usually lasts 1-2 years and is similar to a trainee or apprenticeship. However, the length of it of course depends on the company and is not set in stone. The payment for this type of training is also not standardised. Practical training can also take place on a volunteer basis i.e. without payment. Support and sector-specific information can be obtained from the Deutsche Public Relations Gesellschaft (German Public Relations Society), Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (German Journalist Association) and the Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (German Journalists' Union). Of course there are other useful sources such as unions and associations.

Contracts for Services

Contracts for services are used when a service is provided for a fixed fee. As a student you are free to take on contracts for services, provided you do not exceed 20 hours of work per week. Since workers on these contracts are considered to be so-called freelancers, the fee payable can be freely negotiated, as long as it does not go below the minimum wage. When entering into a contract of this kind, it is important to stipulate an agreement over the notice period. If this does not happen, the contract can be terminated at any time by either party. Students who already know their final grades may no longer enter into a contract for services. At this point, their right to work under a contract for services expires and not just at the time when they are removed from the register of graduate students. This prevents students from being hired as working students for longer than necessary.



Final Thesis in a Company

Another way to start a career path is to write your thesis within a company. This offers many students the chance to get a foot in the door of their desired company. With the agreement of the university, they can work on a theme or a problem in a company while establishing practical experience within their subject of specialisation. If you are particularly successful with this, there is often the oppor-

tunity to start your career directly in the company. This should also be clarified in advance, as it provides an important chance for a successful career start.

Temporary Work

Working for a temporary employment agency can provide the chance to improve basic skills within different sectors and can kick-start your career. 89% of temporary employees work full time and 99% receive standard wages under the terms of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB).

Prospective all-rounders can train their skills here and use temporary work as career guidance. The Interessenverband Deutscher Zeitarbeitsunternehmen e.V. (Association of German Temporary Work Agencies) unites 3500 companies as members and establishes general conditions for temporary work, thus it uses, for example, the collective agreement package agreed for the trade unions under the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB).



The Bundesverband Zeitarbeit-Personaldienstleistungen (Federal Association for Temporary Human Resource Services) is also a tariff-partner of the DGB Collective Bargaining Association and supports the adherence to ethical treatment of temporary employees.

Job Fairs

You can gather more information about your desired career path at job fairs and with the right attitude, put you in touch with the right people. Generally speaking, it is important to make contacts relevant to your subject during your studies. This will give graduates the chance to find a job through recommendations.

Sources

<https://karrierebibel.de/berufseinstieg/#Berufseinstieg-Jobs-Aktuelle-Angebote-auf-Karrieresprung>

<https://www.absolventa.de/karrieregude/experten-interview/experten-interview-his-keine-praktika-nach-dem-studium>

<https://karrierebibel.de/trainee/>

<https://mobil.djv.de/djv-mobil.html>

<https://dju.verdi.de/>

<https://dprg-online.de/>

<https://www.ig-zeitarbeit.de/>

<https://www.personaldienstleister.de/der-bap/satzung-kodex.html>



Do you still have questions?

We are happy to provide personal advice:

<http://www.uni-due.de/abz/career.php>

Good luck with your application!