

CRIMINOLOGY CAREERS GUIDE

HELPING YOU TO FULFIL
YOUR POTENTIAL

WE SUPPORT

YOUR AMBITION



Employability
Service

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to outline the employment opportunities traditionally sought by those who have studied a criminology degree. It ensures that you are aware of the very broad range of short and long term possibilities so that you can effectively plan your career. Alongside some advice and insight on some of the current market trends, we also highlight how best to utilise support from the Employability Service whilst studying at the University of Law.

Designed by practising criminologists, this three year degree programme will enable you to develop an understanding of contemporary criminology concepts and theories, looking at areas such as drugs, cybercrime, migration, mass incarceration, terrorism, and trafficking. Different perspectives of criminology will be explored, including feminism, race and cultural approaches.

Aimed at students looking to work in the criminal justice sector or associated fields, this course benefits from both a theoretical basis as well as a vocational and applied

nature. This will enable you to develop a comprehensive understanding of criminology and apply this to current socio-economic policies and conditions.

You will learn through a variety of group sessions, workshops, digital media and a wide range of learning resources, completing a dissertation in your final year or a research project and research methods module. In addition to your knowledge of criminology, you will gain a wide range of analytical, research, problem-solving and communication skills, which are in high demand by employers.

CONTENTS

- 4** Your Career
- 6** Assessing your Starting Point
- 8** Employers
- 9** Careers open to those with a Criminology Degree
- 14** Laying the Foundations
- 16** Skills Development
- 22** Digital Footprint
- 26** Interviews
- 33** Professional Employability Programme
- 34** Financial Awareness



YOUR CAREER

A University degree is not just about securing employment, although that will be a major consideration for many. The survey to ascertain employment status now takes place approximately 15 months (formerly 6 months) after completion of studies, and it also asks:

To what extent do you agree or disagree:

- My current activity fits with my future plans
- My current activity is meaningful and important to me
- I am using what I learned during my studies in my current activity

At the University of Law we will contextualise the career journey with reference to the lifewide, personal elements which intertwine with a professional role. We encourage you to explore more than just your career ambitions and to consider what will bring you satisfaction and define what fulfilling potential means to you as an individual.

CAREERS PURSUED BY THOSE WITH A CRIMINOLOGY DEGREE

As a criminology graduate with critical thinking, analytical and communications skills, you're attractive to employers both inside and outside the criminal justice sector. Our Employability Service is here to help you every step of the way, whatever your starting point.

Step 1 Consider all your options and determine whether you know enough to commit to looking for a job in a specific area

Step 2 Apply for jobs using cv, cover letter, application form

Step 3 Complete online tests, interviews, assessment centres

Step 4 Constantly develop the skills which will make you most likely to succeed when you are in the workplace

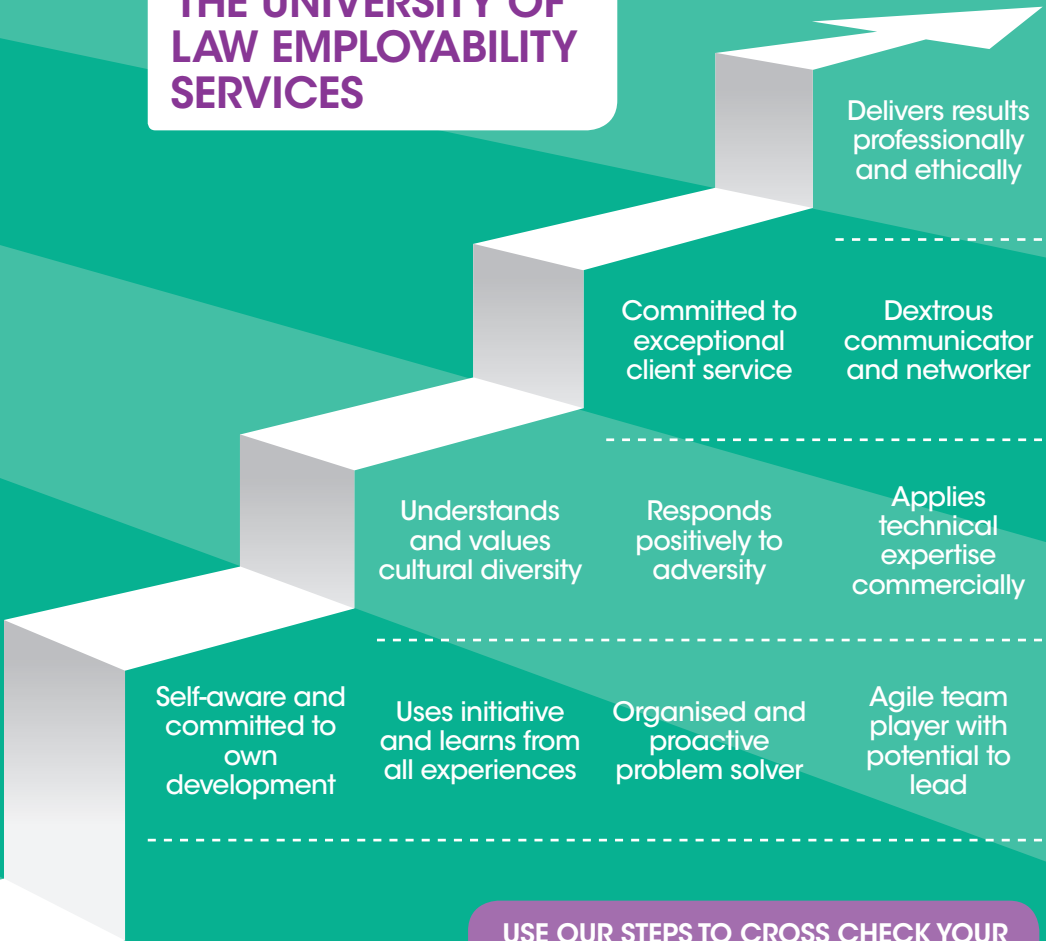
Employers do not have a uniform approach to recruitment. The cultural fit is often important and this can mean that the same candidate appeals to one organisation but is not attractive to others.

In simple terms, though, the following are always of relevance:

- Academic record; a test of intellectual capability (as well as a way of reducing the field of candidates). Historic achievements are relevant as well as current performance to allow differentiation
- Work experience; depth and relevance as well as an appreciation of transferable skills. Employers will often base their final recruitment decisions on evidence of your ability to navigate every day practicalities rather than exam excellence
- Employability skills; the ability to deal with the challenges of the workplace, generally not directly related to the technical capability but best illustrated through evidence of use in a work capacity

In the short term, technical skills are likely to be key to securing a role as junior staff will be heavily involved in the detailed work. However, very quickly a range of other attributes become important and they are often the differentiators when it comes to advancement. Employers may look for potential as well as immediate capability, so understanding why these skills and behaviours are valued is important. Early development can be rewarded even at entry level.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES



USE OUR STEPS TO CROSS CHECK YOUR
READINESS FOR THE WORKPLACE

ASSESSING YOUR STARTING POINT

The CBI has defined employability skills as constituting nine elements, as shown below:

1. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.



2. TEAMWORKING

Respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.



3. BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER AWARENESS

Basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.



4. PROBLEM SOLVING

Analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.



5. COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY

Application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structural written work and oral literacy - including listening and questioning.



6. APPLICATION OF NUMERACY

Manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae).



7. POSITIVE ATTITUDE

A 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.



8. APPLICATION OF IT

Basic IT Skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.



9. ENTREPRENEURSHIP ENTERPRISE

An ability to demonstrate an innovative approach, creativity, collaboration and risk taking.



All of these skills are relevant to all jobs, but some are particularly crucial at entry level and others for longer-term success.

Based on a robust self-assessment, you can identify where your relative strengths lie and any areas where you can take steps to develop.

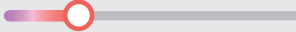
Those roles where a relevant qualification may be advantageous are comprehensively covered by Prospects - <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/> - but some of the most common examples are considered below.



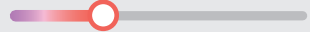
Use the emoji sliders to identify where your relative strengths lie and areas where you can take steps to develop the skills required by employers



SELF MANAGEMENT



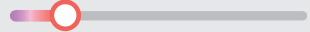
NUMERACY



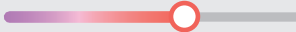
TEAMWORKING



POSITIVE ATTITUDE



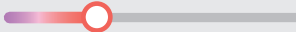
COMMERCIAL AWARENESS



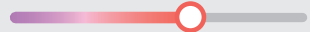
BUSINESS IT SKILLS



PROBLEM SOLVING



**ENTREPRENEURSHIP/
ENTERPRISE**



COMMUNICATION



EMPLOYERS

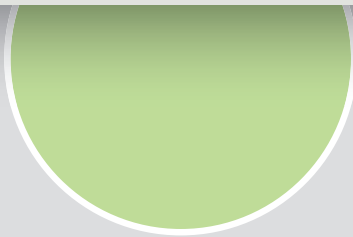


Employers do not have a uniform approach to recruitment. The cultural fit is often important and this can mean that the same candidate appeals to one organisation but is less attractive to others. In simple terms, though, the following are always of relevance:

Academic record ✓

Work Experience ✓

Employability Skills ✓





CAREERS OPEN TO THOSE WITH A CRIMINOLOGY DEGREE

- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER
- PRISON OFFICER
- SOCIAL WORKER
- SOLICITOR
- PROBATION OFFICER
- YOUTH WORKER
- PARALEGAL
- NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS





OVERVIEW OF ROLES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Community development brings people together. This role requires selfless individuals who are passionate about assisting others. As a community development worker, you'll help communities to bring about social change and improve the quality of life in their local area. You might work with individuals, families or whole communities, empowering them to:

- identify their assets, needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- plan what they want to achieve and take appropriate action
- develop activities and services to generate aspiration and confidence.

Community development workers act as the link between communities and a range of other local authority and voluntary sector providers, such as the police, social workers and teachers.

PRISON OFFICER

As a prison officer, you'll have responsibility for the security, supervision, training and rehabilitation of people committed to prison by the courts. This includes motivating prisoners to do what is best for themselves and others around them within a safe and healthy environment.

In addition to your custodial duties, you must be able to establish and maintain positive working relationships with prisoners, balancing authority with a large amount of understanding and compassion in order to effect rehabilitation.

The nature of the role demands the ability to think on your feet, make quick decisions and deal effectively with unexpected situations.

SOCIAL WORKER

Social workers support individuals and their families through difficult times and ensure that vulnerable people, including children and adults, are safeguarded from harm. Their role is to help improve outcomes in people's lives.

They maintain professional relationships and act as guides and advocates. They sometimes need to use their professional judgment to make tough decisions that might not always be well received by those they are trying to help. Social workers tend to specialise in supporting children and families, or vulnerable adults.

In a statutory position, your role is to adhere to the laws that exist to protect the vulnerable clients that they work with. Social workers have a duty to abide by the legislation and the power to enforce it. In non-statutory roles, social workers still work with a similar client group but are not specifically responsible for enforcing the law. You'll be employed in the charity sector or in specialist roles, such as providing support for drug and alcohol users, homeless people and people with mental health issues. You may also work in early intervention roles, aiming to prevent the escalation of problems in society where statutory services are required.

SOLICITOR

Solicitors take instructions from clients and advise on necessary courses of legal action. Clients can be individuals, groups, public sector organisations or private companies. Depending on your area of expertise, you can advise on a range of issues, including:

- personal issues: buying and selling residential property, landlord and tenant agreements, wills and probate, divorce and family matters, personal injury claims and criminal litigation
- commercial work: helping new enterprises get established, advising on complex corporate transactions (including mergers and acquisitions) and business-related disputes
- protecting rights: making sure individuals receive compensation if unfairly treated by public or private bodies.

Once qualified, you can work in private practice, in-house for commercial or industrial organisations, in local or central government or in the court service. The actual work carried out varies depending on the setting, your specialist area and the nature of the case.

You may use some of your time to give free help to clients who are unable to pay for legal services themselves. This is known as pro bono work.

PROBATION OFFICER

As a probation officer, you'll manage offenders in order to protect the public and reduce the incidence of reoffending. You'll work with offenders in courts, in the community and in custody to make communities safer.

Probation officers interact with offenders, victims, police and prison service colleagues on a regular basis. You'll work closely with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies and may also manage approved residential premises for offenders and ex-prisoners. In addition, you'll also manage and enforce the conditions of community orders, which are an alternative to a prison sentence.

Probation officers work only in England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate criminal justice systems and different arrangements for the provision of probation services.

YOUTH WORKER

As a youth worker, you'll guide and support young people in their personal, social and educational development to help them reach their full potential in society. You will help to assess the needs of young people to correctly plan and deliver programmes related to areas such as health, fitness, smoking, drugs, gangs, violence, relationships and bullying.

You will work in partnership with professionals from other organisations that support young people such as social care, health, police, education, youth offending teams and local authorities. Attendance at and contributions to multi-agency meetings will be important, bringing together practitioners from different sectors as part of a 'team around the family' (TAF) approach.

You'll generally work with young people aged between 11 and 25 in a variety of settings.



PARALEGAL

Paralegals provide support to solicitors and barristers in a variety of law firms, chambers and in private, public sector and not-for-profit organisations. They play an important role within a legal team and their tasks often mirror the work of a trainee - or at times even a recently qualified solicitor.

Job titles can vary depending on the organisation and legal practice area and you may see roles advertised seeking clerks, legal executives, legal assistants or caseworkers. Depending on the role, paralegals can be involved with a range of tasks and activities; some are specialists in their field while others carry out non-legal tasks or have less status. Types of paralegal work:

Areas of specialisation include advocacy, conveyancing, contracts/dispute resolution, crime, employment, family, litigation, personal injury, wills, probate and administration of estates.

VARIETY OF ROLES IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. There are many job opportunities within such organisations which draw upon a range of skills and knowledge gained from a Criminology degree.

Where individuals have particular areas of interests or passions, they can become involved in NGOs that are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health.

OTHER JOBS WHERE YOUR DEGREE WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL INCLUDE:

- Adult guidance worker
- Charity officer
- Community safety officer
- Data scientist
- Emergency planning officer
- Forensic computer analyst
- Fraud investigator
- Housing manager/officer
- Local government officer
- Social researcher
- Teaching

For more information on job profiles please visit some of the most widely used sites for careers support which provide greater detail than this overview.

PROSPECTS
prospects.ac.uk

TARGET JOBS
targetjobs.co.uk

THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

It is very difficult to determine the ideal job that will suit you. Here are a few of the reasons:

- You will change as a person over time; there is an immediate transition from the educational environment to the workplace as well as subsequent movement in professional and personal priorities
- Many jobs change as you gain more experience and progress; initially the focus will be on the detailed technical requirements but steadily the emphasis changes to managing and motivating other people as they undertake the work
- The job market evolves; technology, international dimensions, society, politics, the economy all impact on the nature of the labour market with a constant need to evaluate opportunities and threats

WORK EXPERIENCE

Any form of exposure to the workplace is useful. You can use family, friends, contacts, apply for advertised roles or speculatively ask/write for an opportunity.

Whilst inevitably the main beneficiary is you, it is really useful to present requests from the viewpoint of the recipient. So rather than 'Do you have any jobs going?' where the honest answer may be no, consider 'I can see that you appear to be short-staffed at the moment and I wondered whether I could help to sort documents/serve customers/produce some materials/deliver items etc etc'

Roles may be paid or unpaid and still yield benefit. Many unpaid jobs turn into paid ones when you prove your value.

The best way to understand the workplace is to gain exposure to it. You may not be able to replicate the exact role that you might one day apply for but you can gain a personal insight which is of far greater value than simply relying on websites or promotional literature.

VOLUNTEERING

The opportunity to do something for the enjoyment or to give benefits to others is entirely laudable and often brings as much satisfaction as paid work. It shows commitment and develops as many skills as paid opportunities for the same challenges often need to be overcome. Positions of responsibility are often valuable and you may find that there is less competition than in a paid environment.

STUDENT SOCIETIES

The ability to influence peers is important whether engaging in society activities or running for positions of responsibility within them. Social relationships form which are akin to the development of a more professional network which will be so important as you progress your career. The handover requirements necessitate really important skills that are tested in the workplace and creating a new society shows enterprise and determination.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

You can consciously seek the development of skills or simply enjoy the experience and reflect afterwards. However through exposure to one or more of the above, it would be surprising if you were unable to enhance at least a few skills, thus improving your awareness, confidence and ultimately your chances of success.



CURRICULUM VITAE

The curriculum vitae (CV) is the traditional method of application, and is widely used throughout graduate and other recruitment. You will still need a CV, even if you are applying to organisations that use application forms, for two main reasons. Firstly, the information on your CV forms the basis of many of the answers you will need to give on application forms and is therefore a helpful resource; and secondly, having an up to date CV to hand is useful when applying for work experience or to pass to a useful contact.

BEFORE YOU START DRAFTING

To write a good CV, do not just launch in.

1. Think about the type of organisation (or ideally the organisation itself): what are they likely to be looking for in a candidate?
2. Know exactly what you have to offer a prospective employer.
3. Know what you are hoping to use the CV for. Is it to apply for work experience, internship, graduate role? Is it for an advertised opportunity or a speculative application?

TIPS FOR A GOOD CV

1. Target your CV: you need to adapt your CV to each individual recruiter, so that they can see an obvious 'fit' with their organisation.
2. Get the length right: keep it to two sides of A4.
3. Make it easy to read: leave enough white space, make good use of formatting and headings, and follow a clear structure.
4. Emphasize your key selling points: draw the reader's attention to key information by judicious use of bold, underlining, and bullet points.
5. Be professional: use plain white paper, a standard font (eg Arial or Times New Roman) and size (11). Avoid gimmicks, photos, exclamation marks and the like.
6. Get your spelling and grammar right: it needs to be one hundred percent error free.
7. Be honest at all times, but ensure you are making the most of what you have to offer – now is the moment to blow your own trumpet.
8. Ensure your covering letter is not an 'afterthought' but an integral part of the CV 'package.'

STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

There is no single 'right' way to lay out a CV: numerous variations are possible, and you will have to play around with different structures, layouts and headings to see which works best for you. However, a traditional structure will contain the following:

- Personal details: Your name and contact details (as a heading: you do not need to put the words 'Curriculum Vitae' on a CV).
- Education and training: Usually arranged in reverse chronological order, most recent first, with the name of the institution, subjects, dates and grades.
- Employment and work experience: Depending on how much experience you have, you might want to include some sub-divisions to separate out and highlight relevant, other or voluntary experience.
- Other skills: A brief mention of other relevant skills you have to offer (such as languages, or IT) but ideally you can include reference of actual use within your employment or education.
- Non-employment experience, extra-curricular activities: Your chance to mention the things you do outside the work place or classroom: what makes you into a rounded and interesting person whose out of work activity complements/reinforces their workplace role?
- Referees: The contact details (telephone, email, address, and capacity in which they know you) of two referees: ideally one academic, and one employer.



COVERING LETTERS

You will often be asked to accompany your submission of a CV with a covering letter.

1. Keep it to a maximum of one side of A4, on the same type of paper (if printing) and using the same font as your CV. Double check to avoid mistakes in your spelling and grammar.
2. Find out the name of the recipient if at all possible (and sign off 'Yours sincerely'). Try to avoid resorting to Dear Sir or Madam (but if you do remember to use 'Yours faithfully').
3. Aim for a professional, polite and personable tone.
4. Structure your letter to cover 3 key elements:
 - a. the purpose of your application (the vacancy you are applying for, where you saw it)
 - b. why they are interested in their organisation
 - c. why you are what you have to offer that is immediately relevant to them/their vacancy (eg your degree or your recent work experience).
5. Sign off politely: say thank you, and that you look forward to hearing from them.

APPLICATION FORMS

These are very often standardised documents designed to elicit the key information required by an employer to assist with their initial sift of interested applicants. This may effectively allow content of the CV to be transferred, but perhaps in greater detail than is often the case with the bullet points commonly used on a 2 page summary.

There tend to be word limits and guidance on what is required and expected.

Ensure that you reflect the requirements and understand that the rationale for the question is that the reader will be looking to gauge inherent suitability to their organisation and the culture therein.

TYPICAL SECTIONS OF AN APPLICATION FORM

A typical application form will be divided into a number of different sections, usually dealing with:

1. factual information (your name, contact details, education and qualifications)
2. competencies and qualities
3. motivation questions (exploring your choices and the reasoning behind them)
4. technical, commercial and hypothetical questions.





TIPS FOR A GOOD APPLICATION

1. Follow instructions and complete all sections. If a section is truly irrelevant to you, mark it as 'non-applicable' - do not just leave a section blank. Do not be tempted to submit a CV or additional pages unless the instructions permit you to do so.
2. Target your application: you need to answer every question on the form with the individual recruiter in mind.
3. Plan and draft your answers: copy the form and make initial rough drafts to all sections so that you see where your information fits best.
4. Be succinct: aim for a form that is quick and easy to read, while still getting across all the salient information.
5. Spelling and grammar must be perfect. Do not be tempted to abbreviate or lapse into informal wording – your application is a professional document.
6. Make your sentences interesting: focus on what you gained from a particular experience; use active verbs to emphasise your point.
7. Choose your examples well: those which are relevant to the job, demonstrating skills or qualities sought and are fairly recent and interesting.
8. Structure your answers: try using the 'STAR' approach to describe the Situation or context; Task or problem you faced; Action you took to solve the problem and the Result.
9. Plan your time: writing the perfect application can take days so give yourself time and do not leave submission until the deadline
10. Save a copy of the completed form so that you can refresh your memory before your interview.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

Many recruiters use online application systems. While the points already mentioned still apply, online forms raise other issues you need to bear in mind:

1. **Cut and paste:** it is best not to cut and paste but, if you do, be very careful. Make sure that your cut and pasted answer:
 - a. answers the question actually being asked
 - b. is targeted to the organisation you are applying to
 - c. does not exceed the word count.
2. **Automatic word limits:** most online application systems contain these – be concise and relevant in your answers, even if the word limit is very generous.
3. **Security:** if you are using a shared computer, be careful with your registration details, and always log off and close down the browser. Keep a note of your password (and make sure it is one you would be happy to share if you lose or forget it).
4. **Automatic time-out:** some application sites have an automatic time-out – if you have not saved any amendments to your form within a certain time, you could lose any changes made.
5. **Submit your form early in case of technical glitches.**



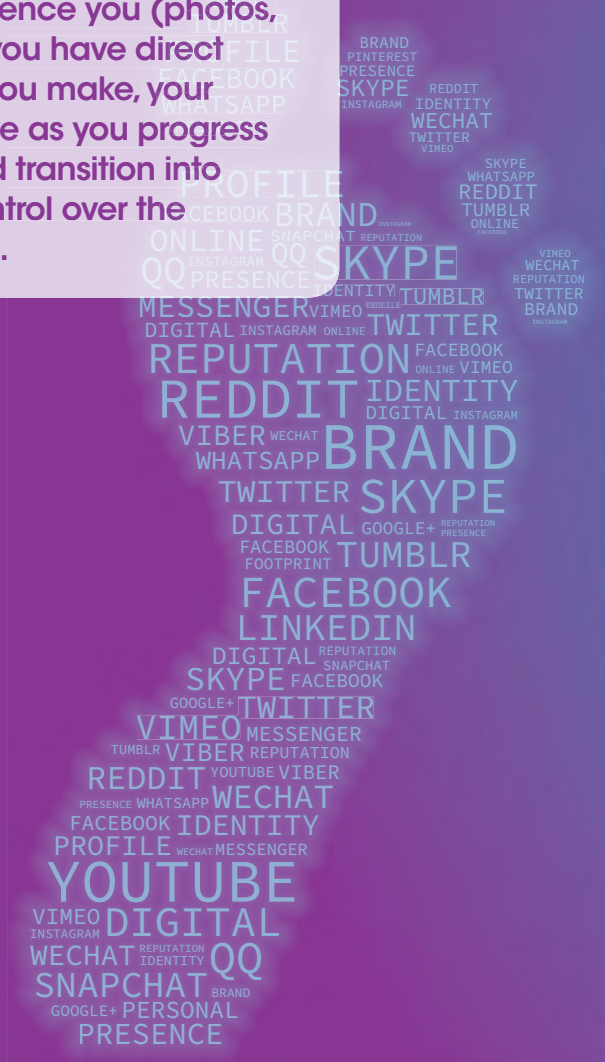
DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Each of us has an online history derived from our own and others online activities. This ranges from your conscious postings, actions related to postings of others (likes, comments etc) and the actions of others which explicitly or implicitly reference you (photos, group events etc). Whilst you have direct control over the choices you make, your approach is likely to evolve as you progress through adolescence and transition into work. You do not have control over the decisions made by others.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

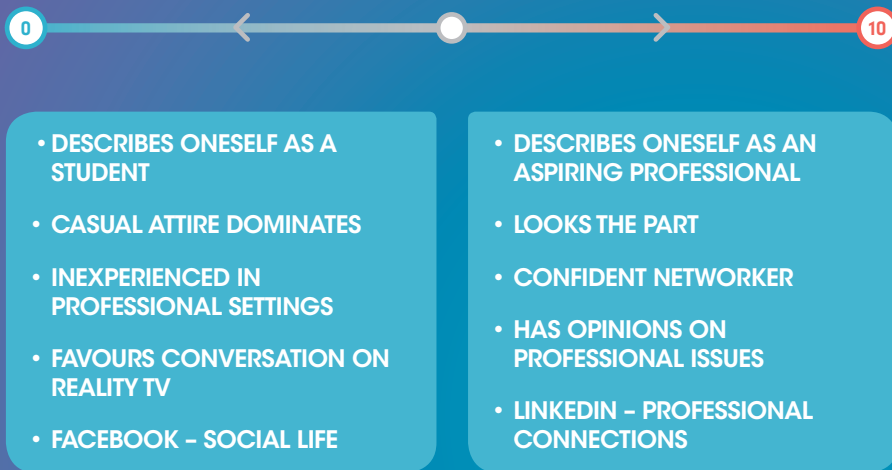
Your digital footprint conveys an impression of you to those who come across you through casual or intentional searching. In simple terms, you want this to be as positive an assessment as possible and certainly not one that conveys a negative impression.

Over 50% of employers take pro-active steps to scrutinise the digital footprint of candidates; the logic being that they want to know what their clients/customers could see and protect their corporate brand from any damage by association. Whilst a significant minority regard this as intrusion or too time consuming, few will publicly declare their approach and thus the assumption must be that your footprint will be checked by at least some prospective employers and you need to actively manage it.



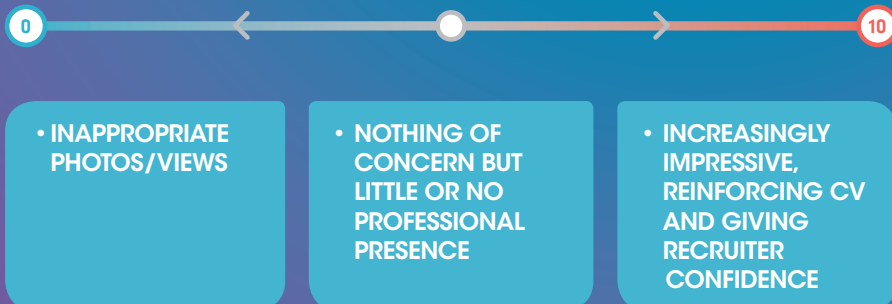
THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

The scale below depicts the transition from education to employment at a very high level and includes the digital element of the journey:



Employers may engage with students and accept that they are on this journey. However, they concentrate their efforts on those further up the scale or capable of swift acceleration along it. In short, they are less interested in students, more focussed on prospective employees.

In respect of the digital footprint, they may adopt a similar scale:



CREATING A STRONG LINKEDIN PROFILE

Many employers will look at LinkedIn as a key element of your digital footprint and links are increasingly common on CVs – it is a public version of your career history and attributes without the space restrictions of the 2 page document.

It is the social media platform where you build and engage with a professional network and can manage your professional identity. It has more than 500 million members and is a powerful source of knowledge, insights and opportunities.

Thus having a LinkedIn profile is non-negotiable for most professionals. However there is no standard advice and recommendations on what a profile should look like. There are lots of opinions – just like with a CV – from which much of a profile will be derived.

LinkedIn is a publicly visible platform by its very design. It is not a site where you restrict access as you might with other forms of social media. Therefore your profile can be

viewed by a diverse mix of people, looking at it for a wide variety of reasons, with very different preferences for what they would like to see and in what format.

There is therefore merit in being true to yourself and not worrying unduly about potential critics. Thus if you prefer full sentences to bullet points and consider your literacy to be worthy of paragraphs, then write accordingly – most jobs require strong written communication skills and a proportion of your audience will value your style. If you are punchier in style and lean towards bullet points, then rest assured that time pressured individuals will appreciate your brevity. In both cases, though, make sure content reflects well on you as a constantly developing professional.

“LINKEDIN IS A STRATEGIC TOOL ALLOWING INDIRECT OBSERVATION AND LEARNING FROM CAREER JOURNEYS. IN TIME THE ASPIRATION MUST BE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS THAT ALLOWS DIRECT CONTACT AND THUS THE POTENTIALLY GREATER BENEFITS DERIVED FROM PROFESSIONAL INTERACTION.”



TOP TIPS

1
Build your network strategically – plan carefully who you would like to connect with to advance your legal career. It is about quality not quantity

2
Review your connections periodically – decide which ones are weak and need to be strengthened as well as those that don't need attention as the relationship is not likely to yield benefits or is currently in a sufficiently healthy state

Determine a strategy for posts – will you push a particular theme/ agenda, comment regularly on others, opt for a non-participative approach? In part this comes down to personal ethos but also an understanding of how others will react. In some cases future aspirations may encourage drawing attention to yourself and proudly articulating opinions but for others a lower key, non-controversial approach is optimal.

4
Professional v Personal – LinkedIn is a professional site but some features of one's personal life can have relevance and even strengthen a profile. There is very varied practice but you do need to judge where to draw the line – personal posts attract criticism from the 'purist' professionals, particularly when predicated by 'Apologies for using a professional forum, but...'

3
Digital footprint – your online profile matters in the modern world and you cannot unpost. Think carefully about the impression you make.

5

INTERVIEWS

Interviews follow from a successful initial application and offer the opportunity for both parties to engage formally with each other to bring to life the realities of the candidate's CV and the employers' website/brochure.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

As soon as you are invited to interview you need to get organised.

1. Check the invitation – is there a requirement to do preparatory work?
2. Research the recruiter, its competitors, the market, industry news, and current affairs
3. Re-read your CV or application form: are there any questions waiting to be asked (blips, gaps?). Think about what you have to offer the recruiter, and what your main 'selling points' are
4. Plan what to wear: keep it formal and conservative with a dark suit, polished shoes, unobtrusive shirt/tie and, if relevant, subtle jewellery and make-up.
5. Book a mock interview with a careers adviser and check whether your service has any further information on the employer.

GENERAL TIPS FOR INTERVIEW SUCCESS

1. Speak clearly and slowly (if you are nervous, you are likely to speed up).
2. Do not speak in a monotone; break down what you say into convenient chunks (some questions can lead to lengthy answers).
3. Provide a logical structure ("I think there are three main issues... Firstly... Secondly... and finally...").
4. Think before you speak: it is perfectly acceptable to pause before answering in order to collect your thoughts.
5. Although you need to prepare for possible questions, remember that you are likely to need to 'think on your feet' and it is good to show that you are not over-rehearsed.
6. Be interested and engaged: show you are listening by referring back to something an interviewer has said.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

1. **Friendly, starter questions:** you may not realise that these 'icebreakers' ('How was your journey?' 'Did you find us OK?') are part of the interview, but they are opportunities for you to show you can build rapport and observe the social niceties.
2. **Biographical questions:** based on your application ('What did you enjoy best about your course?'). When formulating an answer, consider why the question is being asked. If it is to clarify a point, provide a succinct explanation. If you think the interviewer is reading something negative into your experience, offer an explanation in positive terms. If your motivation is being questioned, talk about the grounds on which you based your decisions.
3. **Probing and funnelling questions:** the interviewer may ask a general question, and then build on your answer to pursue a line of enquiry. Do not be put off, answer as fully and openly as you can, and do not get defensive.
4. **Challenging you and your opinions:** you will be challenged in the workplace on a regular basis, and interviewers may test your ability to respond appropriately. Again, do not get defensive, be prepared to defend yourself and stand your ground, but also be willing to gracefully concede a valid point.
5. **Competency questions:** ask you to discuss examples from your experience which show that you have particular skills or attributes sought by the recruiter. Consider using the STAR mnemonic (Situation - Task - Action - Result)
6. **Strength based questions:** interviewers assess what you enjoy doing. If you are good at something and perform well at it then this augurs well for your commitment to the role and productivity.
7. **Your career motivation:** this can range from general questions ('Why this industry?') to more specific questions ('Why this organisation?' 'Why do you want to work with our clients?'). Show that you have based your choices on thorough research and/or practical work experience.
8. **Technical questions:** you may be asked questions to test your technical knowledge. Interviewers will be aware of your level of education and will know the likely depth of your knowledge. It is fine to have only an awareness if you haven't studied something in depth but you need to show that you understand the field you are going into.
9. **Sector questions:** you have to understand the industry you are applying to join and where your role will fit within the business model.
10. **Hypothetical and situational questions:** these are often used to test how you approach decisions or problems, and often revolve around a 'dilemma' type situation, or an 'ethical' type question. Identify the key issues, and give a structured and considered response addressing them.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

You are likely to have the opportunity to ask some questions: avoid questions you could have found the answer to if you had undertaken proper research. You might want to refer back to something an interviewer mentioned earlier (to show you are interested and listening) or ask about something intangible such as the 'culture' of the organisation.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

These are comparable in terms of the content of the interview but have some notable differences:

- No need to travel or to dress smartly; nonetheless you may wish to adopt the latter to make sure you don't take the situation lightly - it is a hurdle you must clear and you will be caught out if you underestimate it
- Absence of body language; the most important form of communication is not in play. You cannot read the interviewer and judge whether something has been interpreted as intended and they can't read you. Generally body language conveys enthusiasm so you have to compensate by using words that demonstrate your commitment

VIDEO INTERVIEWS

In order to maximise efficiency at the employer end and to recognise the commitment of time spent travelling by busy students, recorded interviews have become a fast growing trend - particularly for the larger recruiters.

There are versions where a 'live exchange' takes place but by far the most common are those for completion in your own time which are then sent to the employer to review. There will generally be helpful guidance and examples before launching in.

The questions tend to be no different to a standard interview but clearly you have no one to give an immediate response - therefore you have to give a clear and complete answer that does not require follow up for it to be understood.

A timer is on screen to show you how long remains (90 seconds is a common length but there is no hard and fast rule). This can be distracting and a bit disconcerting but practice helps and there is no prize for talking right to the last second (although clearly you don't want to leave more than say 15-20 seconds as this is a missed opportunity to show off your credentials).

HERE ARE OUR TIPS:

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE

You should prepare for a video interview in exactly the same way you would a regular interview. But instead of planning your journey or working out timings, take time to make sure you are familiar with the video conferencing application you will be using. This includes checking that you can be seen and heard clearly over video. Generally, only your upper body should be visible so position your camera accordingly, facing you straight on. Technical glitches during your interview could fluster you, so if you are not familiar with video conferencing, try to get a few practice calls with friends and family in first. Once you are comfortable with the video conferencing application, you can concentrate on honing your video interview technique.

FOLLOW VIDEO INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE

Normal interview rules apply, but there are a couple of additional things to consider for video interviews. Turn off your mobile phone. It's easy to forget, especially if your video interview is at home. It's best to keep your mobile well away so you are not distracted. The same applies for email, if you are likely to get a notification that will distract you, close the program for the duration of the video interview call.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO INSTRUCTIONS

LOOK YOUR BEST

Looking good on a video call is easy if you follow a couple of simple rules. Wear formal clothing, just as you would for a regular interview, and steer clear of busy prints and patterns or oranges and reds that might cause glare. Don't forget body language. Sit up straight and keep a check on what your hands are doing, keep them away from your face so as not to make it difficult to see you or hear what you are saying. Find your light. Unnecessary shadows may make it difficult to see you. A common piece of advice is just to face your screen, be natural and relaxed while keeping your head and body facing forwards at all times.

AFTERMATH

At the end of any interview you should be told about the likely timing of the decision-making process. You should not chase but are quite within your rights to follow up if the answer is not forthcoming in line with the timetable outlined.



ASSESSMENT CENTRES

The modern day student no longer sees their University Careers or Employability Service as a form of support if and when they need it. For many it is a vital part of the decision-making process as they value securing a job as the key outcome from their higher education. Universities have responded with enlarged teams, including experts with graduate recruitment experience, more prominent office space and increasingly an invitation to be part of the curriculum rather than an optional extra.

The sum of these developments is that students are better prepared than ever before for the demanding challenges of getting a job. Whilst cvs do still contain the occasional typo, many have had intense scrutiny, not only to spot these errors, but to present the very best possible impression of their credentials in applications. Interview preparation follows and candidates engage in this stage of the recruitment process confident that they can convince as well in person as they did on paper, even coping with unusual and bizarre questions as well as that old chestnut about their greatest weakness.

The modern day employer is very lucky – lots of high calibre applicants showcasing cvs packed with work experience and their employability skills shining forth alongside academic achievements. They turn up on time for interviews and most give a strong account of themselves.

However, the modern day employer has a problem – how to decide who to offer employment to from amongst these comparable candidates. One option is not to worry for whoever they choose, they can't go wrong, the other is to add in further layers to the recruitment process – an additional critical insight that identifies the optimum candidate(s).





Assessment Centres have been used for some time, becoming an Assessment Day or even days as this element continually evolves to challenge even the best prepared candidates. And it works – proven to be an effective method of assessing likely success, superior to judging a carefully crafted document or evaluating on the basis of a structured 1-1 conversation.

Generally an employer will build in a range of exercises – some solo eg e-tray/ in-tray or written, some interactive eg role-play/team based tasks/presentations – to assess suitability and to observe skills and behaviours when interacting with people. Observers keep careful watch, noting who participates, how and when. Although a little disconcerting at first, they soon fade into the background as task focus takes over and the realisation dawns that you can't 'play to the camera' for a prolonged period of time. At some point in the day there may be a formal interview and it is not uncommon for candidates to be extracted from an exercise for a more informal conversation. This allows specific questions to be asked and replicates the workplace where team members will be coming and going as they juggle multiple demands on their time.

By putting participants into a new environment, with people they don't know, setting tasks that are unfamiliar and need to be completed within a tight timescale, you create the perfect recipe for people to reveal their true selves. There is no right or wrong approach, it really is about behaving as you would do in the workplace and then allowing assessors to determine whether you are the right fit.



TOP TIPS:

1. In reaching an assessment centre you will have successfully navigated earlier stages of the recruitment process and have impressed the recruiter. It is important to remain true to yourself and bring to life the qualities that have been admired earlier.
2. It is an intense experience where you may be continually watched for some time. This means that there are no periods where you can switch off as such lapses can undermine the triumphs when you know the spotlight is on you.
3. Practice whenever you can and seek feedback after real assessment centres. As you might expect, being observed for a prolonged period of time will allow someone to see you in a way that few others do. The insight can be extremely revealing and allow enhancements which might make all the difference.
4. Fellow candidates are definitely rivals in the sense that you are competing for one or more jobs but remember that an assessment centre is trying to re-create something similar to the real workplace where collaboration and teamwork are vital qualities.

This is often the last element of the recruitment process (a final interview is commonly woven in to the assessment day) and you then have to await the outcome on whether or not you will receive a job offer.

Where unsuccessful you can ask for feedback which may or may not be given but don't dismiss the idea of asking when successful too - you will need to deliver on what they saw in you.

Where you have another offer that you must decide upon, you can ask the other employer for an extension. This conveys a potential preference elsewhere and you must be ready for them to reject the request. Employers recognise the nature of the recruitment process and should be understanding but they have to follow processes and have pressures of their own.

If you accept an offer you should follow this through. Clearly an employer will not want to hold on to someone who is keen to take an offer elsewhere and rescind their acceptance but they could hold you to it and that would make subsequent employment awkward. Even if they release you they will be wary of any future approach as this behaviour doesn't reflect well on you - and beware it can prove to be quite a small world when it comes to reputations!

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

Success in securing an entry opportunity often marks the start of a potentially long career, especially with the retirement age edging closer to 70. So in many ways, the hard part is still ahead.

This Professional Employability Programme is designed to explore some of the challenging aspects of the workplace, offer some insights on why these arise and encourage reflection and planning so you can respond positively to these challenges.

10 USEFUL STEPS TO HELP YOU DEVELOP YOUR CAREER:



FINANCIAL AWARENESS

Banks or other lenders (eg providers of contracted services such as mobile phones) use your credit history to assess the risk of lending to you (often giving you a 'credit score').

Many companies will choose not to lend to you if you haven't always managed your credit well and don't have a good credit rating, while others might lend but charge you a higher rate of interest or offer you a smaller amount of credit.

It only relates to your activity – if parents have paid your bills on time for many years that has no impact on your credit rating (likewise if they have missed payments!).

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Be aware of the importance of financial discipline. Primarily it is about living within your means and being disciplined and well organised in settling debts. However, consider also other tactics, including:

- Put things into your name so that timely payments are benefitting your credit history
- Register on the electoral roll as you'll find it much harder to get credit if not
- Bear in mind that lenders feel more comfortable if they see evidence that you have lived at one address for a considerable period
- Cancel unused credit cards

For more detailed information visit: <https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/how-to-check-your-credit-report>

PENSION

Your career may not yet have even begun, but it is never too early to be proactive and take time to fully assess your strategy.

Clearly the greater the 'sacrifice' for the longer-term the lower the disposable income available in the short-term.

For more detailed information visit:

www.gov.uk/plan-retirement-income

