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How to WORK ABROAD



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Introduction

More and more of our readers are showing interest in working abroad, either so they can supplement their finances during their studies, or because they wish to take advantage of their study destination's strong employment prospects by staying after graduation. Some are even interested in staying in their study destination permanently – a sure sign they've had a good time while at uni.

If this is something you're also interested in, your employability will certainly be enhanced by working abroad, whatever your reasons. This is doubly true if working abroad means working in a foreign language environment.

In this guide, we'll explain how you can work abroad before or after your studies in popular study destinations such as the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, including easy-to-understand advice on how to navigate the sometimes confusing world of work visas. All that will be left for you to sort out is where to work. Good luck with the job hunt!

All the information in this guide is accurate as of July 2017. You can find up-to-date information on work visas via official government websites.

Working abroad in the US

Working during your studies

If you want to work during or after your studies, it's important to be aware of the rules and regulations regarding when and how much international students can work in the US, which vary depending on what **student visa** you're using to be in the country.

If, like the vast majority of international students in the US you're studying on an **F-1 student visa**, this allows you to work **on-campus** for up to 20 hours per week without needing special authorization. F-1 visa holders can't work off-campus in their first academic year, but you may be able to work offcampus after your first year via pre-completion **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**. This allows you to gain part-time work for up to 20 hours per week when your course is in session and full-time during semester breaks. This work must be related to your field of study.

To work in the US via OPT, you'll need permission from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

To apply for OPT, you should:

- 1. Request the required forms from the international department of your university.
- 2. Ask your designated school official (DSO) at your university to endorse your Form I-20 and make the appropriate notation in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).
- 3. Complete and file the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization with USCIS, including the required fee and supporting documents.
- After the USCIS has approved your Form I-765, you will be sent Form I-766, "Employment Authorization Document" (EAD). You should only start work after receiving your EAD.

Severe Economic Hardship Employment for F-1 Students

Hopefully you'll never need to apply for a work permit via this method, but F-1 students can also apply for off-campus employment based on severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control, such as a loss of financial aid. To apply for this, you must have first made a 'good faith' effort to find on-campus work. Applications





for this work permit are made by the USCIS on a case-by-case basis and you'll need to explain your economic hardship (and, if possible, attach backup documents).

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

The other type of practical training you might take part in during your course is Curricular Practical Training (CPT), which is defined as employment which is integral to completing your course. You should ask your designated school official for full details in relation to your situation. You can still complete optional practical training as long as your curricular practical training was part-time.

Working in the US after your studies

When you complete your degree, you'll have a grace period which gives you time to prepare for departure or apply for a new visa. If you intend to stay and seek work in the US, be sure to apply for a change in visa status as soon as possible.

The length of your grace period depends on which US student visa you have. F-1 visa holders are allowed to stay for up to 60 days following the completion of their course. During this period they can apply for a **change of visa status** to stay in the country for one year to complete **post-graduation practical training**.

M-1 and J-1 visa holders can only remain in the country for an additional 30 days after completing their course. If you're a student with an M-1 visa (for vocational courses) you can also take part in practical training, but can only do so after you have finished your studies.

Max, 24, says:

"I applied for post-study OPT so that I could work in the US for a year after my master's was done. This includes the laborious process of applying for a work authorization card and a social security card, which almost derailed my plan when I was eventually hired for a great job but my work authorization was still being processed. So I'd absolutely make sure if you know you want to work in the US after study that you apply for those things ASAP".

You can apply for OPT as early as 90 days before your course completion date, and can begin employment between one and 60 days after graduation. You don't need a job offer to apply. If accepted, you'll be given a Employment Authorization Document (EAD) – you can't start work until you have received this.

Most students can only complete their optional practical training for up to 12 months. If you worked in the US during your studies through pre-completion optional practical training, the period you spent working is deducted from your available period of post-completion OPT.

However, if you're a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) student, you might be eligible to **extend your practical training period by an additional 24 months**, meaning you can stay to work in the US on OPT for up to three years.

Applying for a US work visa after completing OPT

After your OPT period expires, a common way to continue working in the US is to apply for the **H-1B visa**. This is a non-immigrant US visa available for graduates with at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent to work in a specialty occupation that requires the theoretical or practical application of highly specialized knowledge. Roles in engineering, mathematics and business generally qualify as specialty occupations.

Co-ordinate with your potential sponsors as soon as possible, to ensure your application is submitted in good time

Co-ordinate with your potential sponsors as soon as possible, to ensure your application is submitted in good time. You should begin the application process in early March and submit your application on or shortly after April 1.

There is an annual cap of 65,000 on the number of H-1B visas granted each year (20,000 for the advanced degree exemption cap, for applicants with a US-obtained master's degree). Over 236,000 applications for the H-1B visa were received during the 2017 filing period, so a lottery is used to decide which applications are successful. If your H-1B visa petition is approved, it will not be valid until October 1 of the same year.

As long as your H-1B application is filed before your OPT expires, you can remain in the country while your H-1B petition is pending. Assuming the application is approved, you'll be able to remain in F-1/OPT status until October 1, when your immigration status will automatically change to H-1B. This automatic extension of OPT until October 1 is known as the **cap gap**.





Some employers are excused from the H-1B cap gap, such as universities, school districts, and hospitals which are associated with medical schools. These employers may file requests to sponsor a graduate for a working visa at any time of year, and the graduate can begin employment with H-1B status instantly upon approval.

If your H-1B application has been approved and you've received your Employment Authorization Document, you're allowed to travel abroad and seek re-entry to the US with your original US F-1 visa status during the cap-gap period. However, you should not leave while your application is still pending.

Other non-immigrant US work visas

O-1 visa

One alternative to the H-1B option is the O-1 visa, which is for those with extraordinary skill or ability in their field. You may require an employer sponsor, but in certain circumstances you can self-sponsor. The standard of exceptional ability required is extremely high, so most graduates will need several years of experience in their chosen field.

E-2 Investor Visa

This US visa is available for graduates who are interested in running their own business. If you start or buy a business in the US and make a substantial financial investment in it, you might be able to obtain immigration status in order to run it. The required investment amount depends on the type of business. Investor visas are only available to citizens of **selected treaty countries**.

Obtaining permanent resident (green card) status

If you'd like to live and work in the US as a permanent resident, you can apply for green card status. This can be obtained in a number of ways, including **via an offer of permanent employment**, with approximately 140,000 employment-based immigration visas granted every fiscal year. The process will normally involve your employer acquiring a **labor certification** and then a **Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker** for you.

Obtaining the labor certification is often a difficult and lengthy process, designed to ensure that your employment "will not adversely affect the job opportunities, wages and working conditions of US workers" and that there are no US citizens in the area who are able, willing, qualified and available to accept the job opportunity.

Working abroad in the UK

Working in the UK during your studies

If you'd like to find part-time work while studying in the UK, you'll need to be aware of the requirements and restrictions that apply to students from your country:

Students from the EU, EEA, or Switzerland

If you're from a country within the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you can currently work in the UK while studying, without any restrictions or permissions. However, if you're from Croatia, you might be subject to the **Worker Authorisation Scheme** and will need to obtain the applicable registration certificate before you start work. You should be prepared to show your passport or identity card to your employer to prove you're an EU national, and should apply for a National Insurance number (see the end of this article for details).

Students from outside the EU

If you're a student from outside the EU, you'll most likely be in the UK on a **Tier 4 (General) student visa**, which will tell you the number of hours you can work during term-time. If you're attending a publicly-funded UK university at degree level or above, or taking part in a study abroad program at an overseas higher education institution, you can work for up to 20 hours per week during term-time and full-time during the Christmas and Easter breaks.

However, you can't work if you're attending a private university (of which there are only five in the country) or a publicly-funded college. If you're aged 16 or 17, or studying below degree level, you are only permitted to work for up to 10 hours per week during term-time.

You can have more than one employer as long as you don't go beyond the 10/20 hours per week limit.

Time spent completing a permitted work placement as part of your studies will not count as part of your 10 or 20 hours. However, any work placements must not take up more than a third of your total study time – or half if you're studying at an overseas higher education institute or on a Tier 4 (Child) visa (for under-18-year-olds).



11 You can take up most types of employment, but there are some restrictions:

- You can't be self-employed or work in business activity
- You can't work as an entertainer or professional sportsperson (including sports coach)
- You can't work in any permanent full-time position, unless it's on a recognized foundation program or as a students' union sabbatical officer

You can work full-time after finishing your degree as long as your visa status is still valid and you don't work in a permanent position, self-employed, as a doctor, or any of the other prohibited roles mentioned above.

Mathilde, 24, says:

"I studied English literature at university, so it made sense to me to try and stay in an English-speaking country where I could continue to write in English. As an EU citizen, the process of applying to jobs in the UK was a breeze, but it did take me nearly four months to land my first graduate job. The best tip I would give to anyone starting out in London would be to organize their days job-hunting as if they were working a normal nineto-five. That way, you'll have structure and get things done, even on bad days."

Working in the UK after graduation

Students from the EU, EEA, or Switzerland

Students from the EU/EEA and Switzerland are entitled to work and stay in the UK without the need for a visa – so far there have been **no changes** to this following the **UK's referendum on membership of the EU**, but it's worth checking the news for updates if you're concerned. If the UK withdraws from the existing freedom of movement agreement, future EU students may need to apply for visas for study and post-graduation employment.

Students from outside the EU/EEA

There are various visa schemes open for non-EU students to remain and work in the UK after completing their studies.

The most common route is through the **Tier 2** (General) visa. This allows skilled workers from outside the EEA and Switzerland to work in the UK. To be eligible, you'll need a job offer, which usually needs to have a salary of at least £30,000 (~US\$39,000) per year, although some roles are exempt. To switch from the Tier 4 Student Visa to the Tier 2 visa, you'll need to have successfully gained a degree from a licensed **Tier 4 sponsor**. You must be applying from inside the UK and apply before your current visa expires.

Other eligibility requirements and documents needed include:

- Evidence that you can support yourself financially – you must prove with bank statements that you have at least £945 (~US\$1,200) in your account for 90 days before you apply, or a certificate of sponsorship if applicable
- A certificate of sponsorship from a licensed sponsor
- Proof that you can speak English to the required level, unless you're from a country where this is not required (list here)
- Biometric information (fingerprints and a photograph)
- Current passport
- Tuberculosis test results if you're from a **country where this is required**

To apply, you'll need to pay the appropriate visa charge and healthcare surcharge for yourself and any dependants. If your application is successful, you can stay in the UK with a Tier 2 (General) visa for a maximum of 5 years and 14 days, or the time given on your certificate of sponsorship plus one month, whichever is shorter. Your stay must start no more than 14 days before





the start date on your certificate of sponsorship. After five years, you can apply for a **permanent residency** card.

If you'd prefer to work in the UK for a shorter period, you could apply for the **Tier 5 (Temporary Worker -Government Authorised Exchange) visa**, which is for those undertaking work experience or training programs. The requirements for this are similar – you'll need £945 in savings and a certificate of sponsorship from your UK sponsor (your employer). This UK work visa allows you to stay in the country for 12 or 24 months, depending on which scheme you apply for.

Another option is the **Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa scheme**, which accepts 2,000 graduates each year and is aimed at entrepreneurial graduates who wish to remain in the UK and start their own businesses. To apply, you'll need to be endorsed by a UK institution, which doesn't necessarily need to be the college or university where you studied. You could also be endorsed by the **Sirius Programme**. You'll need to pay a fee for this visa, as well as the healthcare surcharge to access the National Health Service (NHS). If your application is successful, you can stay in the UK for a year and apply to extend it by another year.

National Insurance numbers

Everyone who wants to work in the UK will need a National Insurance (NI) number, a unique code which is used to track your tax payments and contributions to the UK's social security system. This is free to obtain – you'll need to **apply by phone** as soon as possible, and can only do so in the UK. You should have your passport/visa information to hand when you call.

The NI number takes around four weeks to be issued, and depending on your visa status, you might be asked to attend an interview. You can start work without a NI number but will need to prove to your employer that you've applied for it and give them the number once it's issued. If you have a **biometric residence permit (BRP)**, you may already have a NI number printed on the back, so you won't need to apply for another one.

Working abroad in Canada

Working in Canada during your studies

As an international student, you can work in Canada on- or off-campus for up to 20 hours per week during term time (and full-time during semester breaks) without the need for a work permit, as long as you meet the following criteria:

- You have a valid study permit
- You're a full-time student
- You're enrolled at a designated learning institution at the post-secondary level or, in Quebec, a vocational program at the secondary level
- You're studying in an academic, vocational or professional training program which is at least six months in duration and leads to a degree, diploma or certificate
- You have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN) (read more on this below)

You must stop working as soon as you no longer meet any of these requirements, for example if you stop being a full-time student.

Working as a co-op student or intern

You'll need a work permit as well as a study permit if you're studying an academic, professional or vocational training program at a designated learning institution and it involves work experience such as a co-op program or internship. To apply for this work permit, you'll need to prove that your work experience is crucial for completing your program (this proof could be in the form of a letter from your university or a copy of the curriculum). The work experience cannot take up more than 50% of your total study program. You're not eligible to apply for the co-op work permit if you're studying English or French as a second language (ESL/FSL), or taking part in general interest or preparatory courses.

Working in Canada after graduating

Your Canadian study permit will expire 90 days after graduation, so if you'd like to stay and seek work in Canada after graduating, you'll need to apply for a work permit under the **Post-Graduation Work Permit Program** (**PGWPP**) within this time. This allows you to gain post-graduation work experience that can help you qualify for permanent residence through





Express Entry. You can apply for this if you studied continuously full-time for at least eight months.

If you've studied in Canada for more than eight months but less than two years, your work permit will be valid for the same length of time as your studies. If you studied for two years or more, your work permit will be valid for three years.

The other eligibility requirements of the PGWPP are:

- You must be 18 or over
- You must have a valid study permit before applying

• You must have completed and passed your study program and have a written confirmation, such as a transcript, that proves you're eligible to be awarded your degree, diploma or certificate

• You graduated from a public or private postsecondary institution

To apply for the post-graduation work permit, you should first read the guide and documents checklist. You can apply online or via mail, answering all the questions carefully and truthfully and paying the application fees. Your passport must be valid for longer than the duration of the work permit you are applying for.

Becoming a Canadian permanent resident with Express Entry

If you'd like to stay to work in Canada as a permanent resident, you may be able to immigrate as a skilled worker through the **Express Entry** program. International students who have graduated in Canada are likely to already have many of the qualities required for permanent residency – including English and/or French proficiency, familiarity with Canadian society, and qualifying work experience. You can check your eligibility for the Express Entry program **here**.

To apply, you'll need to complete an **Express Entry profile**, providing information about your identity, employment skill level, language test results, work

experience and any family members who would join you in Canada. If you don't already have a job offer or a nomination from a province or territory at this stage, you could apply for the Government of Canada's **Job Bank**, an online job search tool which connects eligible skilled candidates with Canadian employers and jobs.

You should update your Express Entry profile if your situation changes, for example if you get a different language test result or there are changes to your work experience/education.

After you've applied for Express Entry, your profile will be ranked against others, using the points-based Comprehensive Ranking System. Points are given for factors such as a valid job offer, previous study in Canada, French/ English language skills and nominations by a province or territory. You can view more details **here**.

The highest-ranking candidates receive an **invitation to apply** for permanent residence within 90 days. If you do not receive this invitation, you can stay in the pool of applicants for up to 12 months, and can re-enter the pool with a new profile after this time.

Your job offer may require a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). This is acquired by Canadian employers to support your job offer by showing that no Canadian worker is available for the role. However, some job offers are **exempt** from this.



Social Insurance Number (SIN)

The Social Insurance Number (SIN) is a nine-digit number you'll need in order to work in Canada or receive benefits and services from government programs. To apply, international students need to provide their original study permit, which must state that they "may accept employment" or "may work" in Canada. If your study permit doesn't have any of these conditions or remarks, you must contact Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to find out if you are eligible to apply for an amended study permit.

If your study permit clearly states that you are not permitted to work in Canada, this may change if you change your program of study. In this case, you must **apply to change the conditions** of your study permit and pay the appropriate fee.



Working abroad in Australia

To work in Australia during your studies

If you'd like to find part-time work in Australia while studying, your **student visa** generally entitles you to work for up to 40 hours per fortnight during term time and unlimited hours during scheduled semester breaks. If you're completing a master's by research or a PhD, you do not have any work restrictions. However, it's important to note that you can't start work until you've commenced your course.

Work that you're required to undertake as part of your course is not counted towards the 40-hour limit. Voluntary work is also not included as long as it's genuinely voluntary (unpaid), of benefit to the community and for a non-profit organization. However, if your voluntary work could have been undertaken by an Australian resident who would have earned a wage, it is included in the 40 hours.

While earnings from part-time work can be a helpful extra, you shouldn't rely on this to cover your living costs. Your student visa was granted based on your confirmation that you have sufficient funds to cover your living and tuition costs during your stay in Australia.

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You, your employer or your education provider can view your visa online for free using the **Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO)**, where you can check all the applicable conditions.

You must obtain a **Tax File Number (TFN)** in order to work in Australia. You can apply for this online from the **Australian Taxation Office**. The TFN is your personal reference number in the Australian tax system, so you should keep it secure.

Your earnings will probably be below the tax-free threshold of AU\$18,200 (~US\$14,400). However, you should nonetheless complete a tax return at the end of the Australian income year (30 June), reporting

the income you've earned in Australia (as well as any income from work based overseas while you are a temporary resident of Australia) and what tax you paid. You'll receive a notice of assessment and possibly a tax refund.

Working in Australia after graduating

If you'd like to stay in Australia to work after graduating, you'll need to apply for an Australian work visa. You can normally hold only one visa at a time, unless you have a **bridging visa**, so your new visa will come into effect as soon as it's granted, replacing any older visas.

The most likely visa you'll be applying for as an international graduate in Australia is the **Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485)**. This lets those who've recently graduated from an Australian higher education institution stay in the country temporarily for work, travel or study.

This visa has two streams:

- Graduate work stream For international students who graduate with an eligible qualification that relates to an occupation considered in-demand in the Australian labor market, according to the Skilled Occupation List (SOL). A visa in this stream is granted for 18 months.
- Post-study work stream This is for graduates of all other disciplines. The length of this visa depends on your qualification. If you have a bachelor's degree or master's (extended) degree, your visa is valid for two years. If you have a master's by research, the visa length is three years, while visas for PhD graduates are valid for four years.

If you have a No Further Stay condition attached to your visa, you can still apply for this visa using **Form 1409**, which includes an application for the condition to be waived.





The requirements for the Temporary Graduate visa are:

- You must currently hold an eligible visa
- You meet the health and character requirements
- Valid health insurance
- Valid passport
- You must meet the specific requirements of the visa stream you're applying to
- Evidence that you meet the English requirement if you're from a non-English speaking country you'll need to have reached a certain score in an English language test such as IELTS. You must have taken the test within the three years before you apply, and include the results in your visa application.
- You meet the **Australian study requirement** in the last six months

To apply, you'll first need to **prepare your documents**, proving that you meet all the requirements. These documents include your birth certificate, passport photos, letter from your health insurance provider, completion letters and course transcripts from your university, and more depending on your circumstances.

You should then lodge your application by post or online via your ImmiAccount, providing all your supporting documents and paying the visa application charge, which is currently AU\$1,500 (~US\$1,200) for you, plus extra for any accompanying family members. During the visa processing time, you may be eligible for a bridging visa, which allows you to stay in Australia while your visa application is processed. You might be asked to provide more information or attend a visa interview.

If you're interested in staying in Australia and becoming a permanent resident, you can do so via visas such as the **Skilled Nominated visa** (subclass 190) or the **Skilled Independent visa** (subclass 189) – check the www.border.gov.au site for more details on these and other visas.

Working abroad in other study destinations

Europe

If you want to study in Europe, how much you can work and what visas/permits you might need will often depend on whether you're from the European Union (EU).

Generally, EU citizens can work in other **EU member state countries** with the same rights, restrictions and access to the country's job market as home students, without needing to apply for a work permit.

However, some EU citizens still need a work permit to become an employee in EU countries. This only concerns Croatian citizens in some EU countries, and some EU citizens in Croatia. Nationals from Austria, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK may need work permits to work in Croatia, while Croatian nations may likewise need work permits to work in these countries.

Switzerland is not a member of the EU but under the EU-Switzerland Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons, Swiss nationals are free to live and work in the EU, and likewise other EU citizens can live and work in Switzerland. Likewise, nationals of non-EU nations Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway can work in the EU in the same footing as EU nationals, since these countries are in the European Economic Area (EEA).

If you want to study in Europe, how much you can work and what visas/permits you might need will often depend on whether you're from the European Union (EU)

Non-EU students

The work permits/visas that non-EU students need vary between countries. Some non-EU nationals' countries may have agreements with EU countries which mean that non-EU nationals can work in the host EU country on the same footing as EU nationals.



You could also consider applying for the **European Blue Card**, which is a work-and-residence permit for skilled non-EU/EEA nationals, similar to the US Green Card. The UK, Ireland and Denmark do not participate in this. The requirements for this include a higher education qualification, a work contract in an EU country for at least one year, and a high annual salary which is at least one and a half times the average national salary of the EU country - except when the lower salary threshold applies.

To give you an example of work visa requirements for non-EU nationals in an EU country, in **Germany** non-EU students can work during their studies for a maximum of 120 full days or 240 half days per year. After graduating, non-EU citizens can extend their residence permit for a further 18 months to find work relating to their studies. You can read more about the requirements and restrictions for working in Germany during or after your studies **here**.

New Zealand

Similarly to other nations, many international students can work in New Zealand for up to 20 hours per week during term time and full-time during semester breaks. Like Australia, PhD and research master's students are not restricted in the number of hours they can work.

To work in New Zealand after your studies, you can apply for either the **Post Study Work Visa (Open)**, which allows you to stay for up to 12 months and work for almost any employer in New Zealand. Alternatively there is the **Post Study Work Visa (Employer Assisted)**, which allows you to stay in New Zealand and work for a specific employer for a further two years, if the job is relevant to your degree.

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How to get a part-time job at university

Finding part-time work during your studies is a great way to make some extra cash, learn valuable skills and improve your CV – but with a fair amount of competition, it's important to stand out. Follow our tips below for success...

Search for vacancies

This should be fairly straightforward – your university's careers team would be a good place to start, either by looking for vacancies listed on their careers service website, or by visiting in person. More broadly, you can use all kinds of job-listing websites to search for opportunities in your local area.

Finding part-time work during your studies is a great way to make some extra cash, learn valuable skills and improve your CV

Prepare your CV/resume and cover letter

The key here is to tailor your CV and cover letter for each role to respond directly to the job advert and explain exactly why you're the perfect candidate. You should re-read the job description and assess how well you meet what the employer is looking for. This may take up a fair amount of time, but it's worth putting in the effort as employers will be impressed by candidates who can demonstrate that they match well with this specific role, rather than sending something that seems generic.





Impress at the job interview

When you get an interview offer, it's a good idea to go back to your CV and cover letter to re-read it in preparation for any questions you might get asked. You should also research the company, which will help you answer a question like "Why do you want to work here?". You can read more about how to answer common job interview questions **here**, but also don't forget to prepare some questions of your own, for example, asking what a typical day is like in the role. Depending on your personal situation, it might be worth disclosing your university schedule or any other commitments to your prospective employer at this time.

Also, if you're studying abroad in a country with different main language/s to your native language, it will significantly increase your chances if you can offer a strong knowledge of your study destination's language.

No experience? No problem!

Don't worry if you don't have any work experience – for many roles this is not required as you'll be trained on the job. Employers are interested in students with transferable skills such as good organization, teamwork, initiative and communication – most of which you will have already developed during your studies.

You can still create a strong CV by listing your most impressive skills and qualities, as well as extracurricular activities and any achievements that will make you memorable to employers.

What about finding a job *after* university?

Are you graduating soon and looking for advice on how to get that graduate job? Read our guide on **how to find a job after university**, with advice on perfecting your CV, finding internships, maximizing your social media profiles, preparing for job interviews and more.