



# Job Search Guide



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Want more help? (CVs & Interviews)

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# Intro to Job Searching

**Searching for a job is hard work** and involves both highs and lows.

The process can be exhausting and emotional, especially dealing with rejections or a lack of responses after you've worked so hard on applying.

However, you can do a lot to set yourself up for success, including being clear about your goals, understanding your skills, getting your CV and other paperwork organised and asking others for help!

It's important to also be kind to yourself. Build in some down time and don't beat yourself up if things don't go to plan.

## During the process you need to:

- Be clear about what you're looking for and realistic about what's possible.
- Be proactive about searching and applying. Make sure to build and use your professional network.
- Consider how your existing skills and experience match jobs you're interested in applying for.
- Find a rhythm that's manageable for you. The quantity of applications is important but don't sacrifice on quality, it's a false economy.
- Be organised and responsive. Track your submissions, keep your phone on and check emails regularly.

# Setting yourself up for success (1)

## Set your job goals

It's important to keep an open mind when job searching, but you also need some focus to be successful.

Is your focus on a permanent job, or do you need immediate short-term work to keep you going?

If you want/need short-term work, will you apply for roles in the same sector you want to work in long-term? In all cases do your skills and experience support your goals?

## Identify your skills

Your skills are one of the key things an employer will use to determine if you are a good candidate for a job.

So, it's vital that you understand your own skills and think about whether these are a good fit for a role before applying. See page 5 to 6.

When you do apply you also need to be able to articulate your skills on your CV and during potential interviews.

## Sort your Master CV

Your CV is one of the most important tools when job searching. If your CV is poorly presented or badly written you're going to have trouble getting the job, let alone an interview.

We recommend creating a "master CV" that can be easily tailored for each application.

**Ask for our separate, detailed CV guide.**

## Build // use your network

Never underestimate the power of your networks – they can let you know about job opportunities and recommend you to potential employers.

Use your existing network, and create a **LinkedIn\*** profile to engage with people working in sectors you're interested in.

Like, comment and share their posts, and **don't be scared to ask them for help/advice.**

**\*Ask for our separate, Role/Career Guide for info on LinkedIn**

# Setting yourself up for success (2)

## Get to know job search platforms

Consider signing up to:

GetMyFirstJob // CV Library  
// Adzuna // Glassdoor //  
LinkedIn // Monster //  
Indeed // Reed

Familiarise yourself with how to use them and set job alerts to get automatic emails about jobs that match your criteria. If your criteria change, remember to tweak your job alerts to reflect this.

## Search and apply

Keep a regular eye on job sites and your job alerts, talk to your networks, look for hiring notices when out.

Create a spreadsheet to keep track of jobs you're interested in, closing dates, contact names, emails etc. Also track jobs you've applied for in case they call you back!

Find a manageable rhythm in applying. It is a numbers game but don't sacrifice quality for quantity.

## Get your documents organised

Depending on the jobs your applying for employers may need copies of your ID, exam results, proof of address, bank statements and more.

You may not need these until you receive an offer, but you don't want to miss out when it happens. So be prepared! Consider creating e-copies you can store online for easy access.

## Prepare for interviews

Research the employer and role, practice common interview questions and dress appropriately. This will give you the confidence to showcase your strengths and minimise any weaknesses.

Think about how your past experiences in work, volunteering or other settings relate to the what the employer needs.

**Ask for our separate, detailed interview guide.**

## Be Kind to Yourself

Job searching can be exhausting and emotional. So, build time in your schedule to spend with family and friends. Rejections or no responses are difficult to deal with. So, while it's important to learn from the process it's also important to take time to heal and accept that sometimes things aren't fully within your control. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a few application deadlines or get close only to miss out at interview. Lean on your support network – this includes Talent RISE and your job coach, we're to help in anyway we can.

# Set your job and/or career goals

## Want vs need?

It's brilliant if you have a clear long-term career goal and can afford to wait to find the perfect entry-level role to get started in.

However, this often just isn't possible. People often need to find a short-term role to keep them going.

There's nothing wrong with this!

Temporary work can help you to build your skills and experience while providing some breathing space while you search for a long-term job.

## Research options

The internet is a great place to find out more about different industries and career paths that could suit you.

For example, **use job website** as a research tool: type keywords relating to an industry or your interests into a job search portal and see what kind of job titles and employers come up. This can give you an understanding of the types of opportunities you could consider.

## Talk to people.

Draw on the expertise of your networks and discuss your job/career ideas with friends, peers, colleagues or tutors.

If you know someone who does the kind of work you think you would enjoy, ask if you can meet with them to pick their brain.

Don't be scared to engage people on **LinkedIn** and ask for help/advice. You'd be surprised how many people will be happy to help and the worst that can happen is a no.

## Try volunteering.

Once you have some career ideas, look for opportunities to gain experience within the workplace through work experience, internships or volunteering,

For example, if you're interested in photography and/or writing, offer to help a small business or charity with their social media.

We know not everyone can afford to volunteer, but even if you only have an hour or two spare, it's worth trying to!

# Identify your skills

## Why do this?

Your skills are one of the key things an employer will use to determine if you are a good candidate for a job.

So, it's vital that you understand your own skills. This will help you to decide if a job is worth applying for. It will also help you to write an effective CV and/or application that demonstrates you're a good candidate.

Understanding your own skills will also give you confidence and help you understand areas for development.

## How to do this?

Talk to your family, friends, colleagues and tutors – ask them to help you brainstorm what you're good at.

Write down a list of any previous jobs or volunteering roles. Academic work and sports are also good to draw from. Think about the skills you needed and used.

Look for keywords in job adverts to see what employers need. This might jog your memory.

## Soft skills vs hard skills

Soft-skills are about how you approach challenges and work with others. They are important to many jobs and can be developed and demonstrated in non-work settings, including volunteering, study and sports. They are often also known as **transferable** skills as a result.

Hard skills are often technical skills that are specific to a job, career or industry.

Both are important! See the next page for examples.

## Be specific and offer examples

Once you have an outline of your skills, drill down and make them more specific. For example, don't just say "I'm good with Microsoft Office", name specific products like Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook.

Think about examples when you used your skills. For example, "I showed good communication skills when dealing with customers in my job at Tesco"

# Soft skills vs hard skills

## Example soft skills

Listening (communication)  
Speaking (communication)  
Problem Solving  
Creativity  
Staying Positive  
Aiming High  
Leadership  
Teamwork

**For more info / to build:**

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/>

## Example hard skills

Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, etc)  
Copywriting / Proof-reading  
Computer hardware / networks  
Accounting and finance  
Coding (Python, Java, etc)  
Databases & CRM (Salesforce, Razors Edge, etc)

There are many, many more!

**To build: Ask us about Skillsoft!**



# Applying: things to consider

**It's good to be ambitious, but you also need to be realistic and not set yourself up to fail.**

**Before applying, read the job ad / description and ask yourself:**

Can I offer concrete examples of how my skills match this role?  
Does my existing experience match this role?  
Could I do 70% of this role without drastic help?  
Is this role within reach or am I grasping at straws here?

If your skills and experience don't match the role it may be better to spend your time on another application.

If you're determined to pursue a certain career then consider other routes, such as apprenticeships, online learning or related jobs that could act as a stepping-stone.

Be prepared to get out of your comfort zone!

Many jobs will require you to learn new skills or have some parts you don't enjoy.

Consider what training is provided and what parts of a job you can put up with in order to do the bits you like.

If you think a job is within reach, then think about how you can demonstrate that you meet the criteria, and how you might address any weaknesses.

Tailor your CV and application to reflect this.

Be organised and responsive.

Create a spreadsheet to track what you've applied for and what CV and other information you've submitted.

Keep your phone on and check your emails regularly. Employers can move very quickly.

# Want more help?

Thank you so much for talking to Talent RISE. We hope this is just the first step on your journey with us.

We have separate guides available to help you with writing your CV, preparing for interviews or exploring your career options.

The Talent RISE team are always happy to talk you through these too, so don't be shy about asking!

In the UK you can email our Director:

[andy.chaggarr@talentrise.org](mailto:andy.chaggarr@talentrise.org)

You can also visit:

<https://talentrise.org/>

