

# Making the Most of your time at Imperial (careers)

Imperial College London and the Department of Computing (DoC) have well established links with local, national and international employers and organisations. An extensive range of presentations and workshops are organised by DoC and the Careers Service providing you with insights into employers, possible job options and how to apply effectively for internships and graduate roles. Obtaining a Computing degree from Imperial College will make you highly employable however you need to ensure you can evidence the skills employers seek and market yourself appropriately; the degree certificate is not a golden ticket to success on its own. This document will help plan your time here during your studies and ensure you are on track to a successful future.

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## Application Timeline:

Don't leave it too late to start planning your future. From the very beginning of your degree programme you should start reflecting on your skills, building evidence of your capabilities, researching your options and building networks.

<b>Autumn Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Attend as many <a href="#">Applications of Computing in Industry (ACI) Lectures</a> as possible to expand your networks and knowledge of sectors and available opportunities</li><li>- Register on <a href="#">DoC's Corporate Partnership Programme Portal (CPP)</a></li><li>- Set up your Careers Service <a href="#">JobsLive</a> profile to receive your preferred vacancies/alerts</li><li>- If you do not have a <a href="#">LinkedIn profile</a>, create one</li><li>- Begin to research career options and possible further study options</li><li>- Attend <a href="#">careers events, fairs and forums</a> (IT &amp; Technology Fair - 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015)</li><li>- Create a <a href="#">CV</a> and be prepared to tailor it for specific opportunities</li><li>- Prepare for <a href="#">interviews</a>, <a href="#">psychometric tests</a> and <a href="#">assessment centres</a></li><li>- <b>DON'T PANIC!</b> We know it can be hard to apply for jobs when you have only just commenced a programme of study (particularly if you are doing a conversion course). With our help you will be in a good position to put forward competitive applications to organisations of your choice</li></ul>
<b>Spring Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Carefully consider your choice of group and individual projects to ensure they enhance your CV as well as gaining you academic credit and enjoyment</li><li>- Continue to make applications for graduate jobs/further study</li></ul>
<b>Summer Term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue to make applications for graduate jobs/further study</li><li>- Book an <a href="#">appointment</a> with the Careers Service during their 'quiet season' (which extends into the Summer Vacation) to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ help you in your job search</li><li>○ help you decide which companies you would like to target</li><li>○ review your application documents (CVs, cover letters, application forms etc.)</li><li>○ prepare for interview or assessment centres</li></ul></li></ul>

## The Career Planning Cycle:

Throughout your degree programme it is important to set aside time to consider your future and to apply for opportunities as they become available. Career planning involves self-evaluation, opportunity exploration and decision making before you write targeted applications to employers. The career planning process should sit in parallel with your studies and will require you to reflect on your experiences to identify and evidence your skills and knowledge and to understand your values before taking action and embarking on a chosen pathway.



### Understand Who You Are:

Recruiters look for a range of technical and transferable skills so in order to be considered for a position you need to build evidence of how you meet those skills. Many employers seek graduates with evidence of:

- Communication
- Influence & Persuasion
- Creativity & Innovation
- Team Work
- Leadership Potential
- Problem Solving
- Planning & Organisation
- Analysis & Decision Making
- Project Management

These skills, and many more, will be developed throughout your academic programme however you should also look to seek opportunities alongside your studies to demonstrate a well-rounded character and personality. You could consider:

- Taking part in clubs and societies – [Imperial College Student Union](#) has hundreds that you can get involved in; it's also a great way to make new friends and settle in to College life
- Take on a committee position or become an [academic representative](#) - this will show leadership experience, plus planning an event or group meetings shows your organisational abilities and any challenges you face along the way will be great to demonstrate problem solving
- Volunteering - consider teaching with [Team-Up](#) and the [Imperial Hub](#)
- Limited part-time work, perhaps a Saturday job - find opportunities on [JobsLive](#) or other student jobs boards. Remember, your degree is extremely demanding, so we recommend carefully considering whether you can meet your academic obligations if you take on even a few hours of employment a week (take note of Imperial's [student employment during studies policy](#)).
- Start your own business – get help from [Imperial Create Lab](#)

Technical skills will also be developed through your course and any projects you undertake but many people also choose to further develop their technical skills outside of their course. You could consider:

- Finding out which programming languages are used in the particular company or sector you are considering and then teaching yourself any languages that you don't already know using websites like [Codecademy](#).
- Design your own apps/software – if there is commercial potential get help from [Imperial Create Lab](#)
- Take part in [competitions](#) and challenges

In addition to thinking about your skills you should also consider what you want from a career. What motivates you? What do you value in life? Do you want autonomy in your work or do you work better in a process orientated role? Is

work-life balance important to you? Consider what feels like a good fit for you as an individual as this will help you find the right role and organisation. The [Careers Service Know Yourself](#) webpages can assist with the above.

### **Research Your Options:**

Start to explore industry sectors and job roles early in your programme of studies so that you can choose to complete an internship in a sector that maximises the benefits for your career or better focus your time and effort in networking with those in employment.

Things to consider:

- Would you prefer to work for a small start-up or a large multi-national company?
- What sector would you be interested in gaining experience in? This could range from education, government, finance, consultancy, games, software companies and more. All [job sectors](#) require computing students.
- What job roles are you keen to explore? Job titles include software developer, applications developer, systems developer, analyst, IT consultant, games developer, data scientist. Find out more on the [Careers Service Information Technology page](#) or the [Prospects website](#)
- Have a look at what previous [DoC students have done after graduation](#) to give you some ideas
- Find out where previous DoC students have gone for their [6 month industrial placement](#)
- Seek out previous DoC students on [LinkedIn](#) and explore where they are now
- Attend [Applications of Computing in Industry \(ACI\)](#) lectures

### **Take Action & Apply:**

It's important to ensure that your application documents are tailored to each job role and employer. Your CV should provide evidence of your skills and knowledge that match those indicated within the job description and/or person specification. In addition a cover letter should showcase your motivation and interest in working for the organisation you are applying to and answers on an application form should make best use of the work count and again provide evidence of your skills and attributes from past experiences.

The [Careers Service website](#) hosts comprehensive resources covering all stages of the career planning cycle with specific webpages dedicated to each stage of the [application process](#). In addition a variety of workshops and appointments can be booked on [JobsLive](#).

#### ***Workshops:***

The Careers Service run daily afternoon seminars (16.15 – 17.15) to prepare you for all aspects of the application process including CVs, cover letters, application forms, interviews and assessment centres. In addition longer lunchtime workshops (12.30 – 14.00) provide a chance to put theory in to practice.

The Careers Service also deliver talks specifically for DoC students – look out for emails from the department with more details.

#### ***Appointments:***

The Careers Service run daily 20 minute appointments (bookable from 7am on the day) as well as weekly appointments within DoC. *(Longer appointments can be arranged at certain times of the year).*

An overview of the variety of career events hosted by the Careers Service can be found on their [Careers Events webpage](#) and full details and booking can be made via [JobsLive](#).

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## Finding Jobs:

As a graduate from DoC you can pursue successful careers in a wide range of occupations, some open to all graduates, and some particularly relevant to your degree. It pays to research job roles and industries as there are openings with every size of company from the small and specialist to the large multi-nationals.

- Sign up to the [CPP Portal](#) and make sure your profile displays you to full advantage and see what opportunities and events are listed within DoC.
- Visit [JobsLive](#) and ensure your profile is set to receive notifications of relevant new vacancies.
- Visit the [DoC webpage](#) detailing vacancies notified to the department
- Attend campus [career events and career fairs](#) to network with employers and discuss opportunities.
- There is a separate DoC website with [placement vacancies](#)
- There are many other internship jobs boards such as [Step](#) and a web search will uncover lots more! Don't forget to register your email address so that new vacancies are sent to you.
- If you're not sure what career is right for you, try using the career matching programmes [Prospects Planner](#) and [Careers Report](#) or visit the Careers Service to discuss your options.

For further advice on advertised and speculative approaches visit the [Careers Service Internships & Placements website](#).

In addition to sourcing employment opportunities via webportals and job boards consider networking and using social media to your advantage.

- **LinkedIn** is probably the most well-known professional social media platform. You can set up an online account for free, form connections with people working in various employment sectors and source companies you may not otherwise have heard of. LinkedIn also permits you to join groups which often feature discussion topics and job postings in addition to a reasonably intuitive job search function. Check out the [LinkedIn Student webpages](#) for more information.
- **Twitter** proves to be very popular in sharing short status updates and photos but if have you considered it for finding job opportunities? Here's our three top tips for using Twitter in the job search:
  1. Track down people that feature in your particular field and follow them to stream their tweets directly to you. You can explore who they follow and retweet to expand your network to make sure you never miss out on a piece of important news.
  2. If there's an organisation you're interested in working for check out their channel and follow them. You'll probably find they're tweeting things they're proud about or interested in. Some large organisations also tweet recruitment advice too and it will come direct to your feed making it easy to access and digest.
  3. The hashtag (#) is used to group posts and shows what's trending; use # to source posts relevant to your career. Try a few searches using terms like #job, #hiring or #intern etc. You can also get more focused by combining search terms e.g. #job #postdoc or #intern #C++ etc. Get creative and see what you uncover.

When networking and applying for vacancies you may need support in constructing a CV, filling out an Application Form, drafting a Cover Letter or preparing for Interview. The Careers Service offer support on all of these areas via their [Application Process webpages](#).

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## Resources:

### Options with your Degree:

Finding out more about different careers will help you decide whether they are appropriate options for you. A thorough understanding of your chosen career will also mean that you will be in a better position to work out what you need to do next to take your ideas forward.

- **[Careers Service - Careers, Occupation & Job Sectors](#)**  
Detailed information on a variety of job sectors, organisations and job roles.
- **[Prospects – Job Sectors](#)**  
Explore comprehensive careers resource including industry guides, news articles, recruitment information and practical information on job hunting in a range of employment sectors in this careers resource created by AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)
- **[TARGETjobs – Career Sectors](#)**  
Sector-by-sector advice covering graduate roles, applications, training and development, industry news and more in this resources created by GTI Media Ltd.
- **[Prospects – Types of Jobs](#)**  
Explore over 400 job profiles to gain a better understanding of what's involved and to help make informed decisions on your future in this careers resource created by AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)
- **[Prospects – Options with Computer Science / IT](#)**  
Explore typical job roles, employment sectors and further study options in this careers resource created by AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)
- **[Prospects – Option with Information Systems](#)**  
Explore typical job roles, employment sectors and further study options in this careers resource created by AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)
- **[Built in London](#)**  
A list of tech startups in London looking to recruit talented individuals to join their team
- **[Silicon Milkround](#)**  
London's tech job fair with over 175 exhibitors (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015)

### Key Occupation Information:

Professional bodies often offer student membership, careers information, news, jobs boards, professional accreditation and Chartership. Some have lists of member organisations while other may host careers events.

- **British Computer Society (BCS)** [www.bcs.org](http://www.bcs.org)  
Current issues, careers information, jobs and profiles.
- **e-skills UK** [www.e-skills.com](http://www.e-skills.com)  
Sector Skills Council for IT and Telecoms, industry market intelligence, skills issues.
- **Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)** [www.theiet.org](http://www.theiet.org)  
Combines the Institutions of Electrical and Incorporated Engineers
- **Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)** <http://ieee-ukri.org>  
Global professional association for technology professionals, current issues, jobs, advice
- **Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and Simulation Behaviour (AISB)** <http://www.aisb.org.uk>  
International learned society with interests in Artificial Intelligence, Cognitive Science and related areas.

- **Women in Technology** [www.womenintechology.co.uk](http://www.womenintechology.co.uk)  
Jobs board for organisations committed to increase the number of female technologists in their recruitment
- **Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)** <http://www.wisecampaign.org.uk>  
Campaign promoting women in STEM
- **Where Women Want 2 Work (WWW2W)** [www.wherewomenwanttowork.com/graduates](http://www.wherewomenwanttowork.com/graduates)  
Aimed to help talented women find their next career move, inclusive of a graduate jobs board.

### **Newspapers & Journals:**

It's important to maintain a good general knowledge about your industry and business environment; this is often referred to as your commercial awareness. A good knowledge of your industry and business may help you identify emerging opportunities and can help you to hold informed discussions with employers. The following are good starting points for business areas associated with DoC:

- **Guardian Technology Supplement:** <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/technology>  
News articles and emerging career opportunities
- **BBC Technology Supplement:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology>  
News articles and emerging career opportunities
- **The New Scientist:** <http://jobs.newscientist.com/en-gb/>  
Special reports (e.g. software, nanotechnology, robots), careers information and graduate jobs.

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### **Key Contacts:**

#### **Victoria Nicholl**

Industrial Liaison and Undergraduate Admissions Manager  
Department of Computing  
[placements@doc.ic.ac.uk](mailto:placements@doc.ic.ac.uk)

#### **Richard Carruthers**

Careers Consultant  
Careers Service  
[r.carruthers@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:r.carruthers@imperial.ac.uk)

#### **Barnaby Mollett**

Placement & Internship Officer  
Careers Service  
[b.mollett@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:b.mollett@imperial.ac.uk)

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