

Where to Apply for Work If You Have Missed Out on a Graduate Program

Hundreds of thousands of students graduate with a university degree in each year, but among them not all students can apply and be accepted into an official graduate program. Graduates may come from business, law, commerce, marketing, HR, health, medicine, engineering and many many other areas, however despite a high GPA, it will mean minimal, when competition is tough for graduate jobs and what sets you apart is how you network and find other opportunities besides traditional graduate programs.

According to the trend, many graduate students are rejected or delayed and miss the opportunity to practice and work through an official graduate program. This can be disheartening for some jobseekers especially if you had your heart set on your first job. However if you are in this group, these tips will surely help you find alternative employment options as a graduate and help you feel more confident about starting your career as a new graduate.

- **Become proactive in finding employment opportunities**

If you missed opportunities to apply to initial graduate programs, do not hesitate to contact the administrators or HR managers who are mentioned on the job advertisement or who published the graduate programs. These people could be helpful in referring you to similar programs or entry level employment opportunities that are also suitable for you as a new graduate. There are always alternative options and pathways to gain experience, just keep searching and applying for any possible programs, placements, or jobs which are in the organization (if your heart is set on the company). Keep these people in your contacts, add them on LinkedIn and feel free to email or message them in 6 months time after a graduate program has closed to check if any other opportunities have opened. The key is to stay fresh in the mind of the recruiter, to keep your interest known and to show perseverance.

- **Accept working in less populated areas such as small towns**

There are generally more opportunities to practice and work in areas outside of major cities, as these rural areas are in higher demand when compared to metro areas. While this means moving and living in another place, it could greatly increase your chances of finding employment or any valuable work experience as a new graduate. After being employed in a rural area, it would be easier to receive job offers in a bigger city in the future as it is highly competitive in the big city.

Two important things to note are, it is perfectly acceptable to not be willing to relocate yourself just for employment. Many people are willing to, but it is reasonable to want to stay where you are if you are already surrounded by friends and family. Also, it is important to only relocate if you are offered a job opportunity. Do not pack up and move to a small town and only ask for employment after you move there. This could quite possibly lead to disappointment and large financial costs. It is best to take your time to think about these big decisions before taking action. As a new graduate be willing to travel and be flexible but make your decision very

carefully and have a second source of income to help support you, if you consider moving to a new location, in particular rural.

- **Do not be too picky when searching for your first job**

The pickier you are, the less likely you will be to gain any valuable work experience as a graduate. It is ok to apply to or accept a job that you know you don't want to work in forever. Every graduate has to start somewhere, and it takes time to achieve any long-term career goals you have set for yourself. It can be a good idea to apply to any local opportunities, apply to small businesses, agencies that hire graduates and any other non-corporate company as long as you feel you can handle the work involved in the opportunity being advertised. You should focus as a graduate on getting different experiences, working in a variety of environments and building your skillset. Once you become more experienced, the more formal employment opportunities will arise. Also consider accepting casual employment or a contractor arrangement in order to just gain some paid or unpaid experience in your field as a new graduate. Your skills are the most important for development at this time. Do not be picky as a new graduate.

- **Seek supportive environments**

After you are accepted for any kind of graduate work experience, try to recognise if your work environment is treating you fairly. For example, it would be great if you have lots of friendly and helpful coworkers who make the job less stressful, and that would suggest a good working environment where you could possibly keep working for a long time. On the other hand, it should not be acceptable if your coworkers or superiors bully you in any way or treat you unfairly. If this ever happens, it might be advisable to see if you can make a formal complaint or see if you can find another graduate / entry level opportunity where you would be treated better. It is also useful to see if you can find a personal mentor who you can speak to openly about your career, learn from them and be of value. As you grow as a graduate, the work opportunities will present themselves, however you must seek to learn and grow yourself and become of both strength academically and professionally in your career.

- **Maximise on LinkedIn**

As a new graduate don't be afraid to really put yourself out. Use LinkedIn to add in as many HR managers, recruiters and business owners who are specifically in your industry. Add them as contacts so that you can be the first to know of job opportunities if they post them online. Also like their posts, post your own materials when you need to and job hunt like crazy, as this is an untapped location for graduate and entry level roles. Make sure your LinkedIn is beautifully written in order to stand out. LinkedIn is a gold mine and a place to be recommended or introduced to potential contacts who may see you as value in the future. You can also apply directly for jobs on LinkedIn via the jobs section. Make sure you also check your LinkedIn settings so that you are "Open to Recruiters".

Overall, missing out on a graduate program is not the end of the world. Treat it as merely a chance to improve, find alternative work options and grow as a new graduate.