

Employability guide



*The opportunity
of a lifetime*



Make the most of your employability skills

Whether you're a school or college leaver, in the middle of your university studies, about to graduate or looking to change career, we have lots of top tips as to how you can make the most of your employability skills. You'll find all this really useful information towards the front of this brochure.

And then, whilst we've got your attention, we've also taken the opportunity to explain what it is we look for as an employer. Found towards the back, it gives you a taste – no matter what your background – of the career paths and work experience we have to offer. But for more details, visit ***[pwc.com/uk/careers](https://www.pwc.com/uk/careers)***

You might not know it, but there's a good chance that every day you're developing the skills employers look for. This employability guide will help you identify situations where you may have used them – most likely in your academic studies, extra-curricular activities, hobbies or sporting achievements. Perhaps you can even draw upon all these areas. Or maybe this guide will inspire you to think of other situations. What's important is that you reflect on your experiences and use well thought-out examples, both in your online applications and at interview.

You should also think about your personal brand, and how you can make the most impact when you interact with employers. There are so many ways employers might connect with you – from emails, application forms and social media, through to meeting you face-to-face – so you always need to make sure you create the best possible impression. Through this guide, you'll start to see how you can differentiate yourself, and make the right sort of impact and career choice. Because your career is just that; yours. You choose it. You live it. You make it happen. To get the best from it, you need the best opportunities.

Take the opportunity of a lifetime

Develop yourself and others

You're the kind of person who always wants to improve. So you'll be able to show employers how much you've done to personally develop yourself – and to help others do better too. Think about the things you've done well and not so well. Think about the times you've given other people constructive feedback that made a difference, or received your own feedback from others and actioned this to develop a certain skill.

Skills like these could come from a whole host of different areas. You might have mentored a student at your local school. Maybe you've set yourself standards that go above and beyond the demands of your studies, part-time job or voluntary work. No matter what, you'll be passionate about developing yourself – and able to prove it.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey knit beanie, a dark grey jacket, and tan cargo pants, is sitting on a large grey rock. She has a large backpack on her back and is smiling at the camera. Her hands are clasped in her lap. She is wearing brown hiking boots with green laces. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery and a bright sky.

*It's about
always
striving
to improve
yourself*



Have you pushed yourself to achieve things that go above and beyond?



Have you ever changed the way you did something after getting feedback?



Have you developed new skills outside of your studies?



Have you done any work experience, voluntary work or developed a new skill?



Have you taken time to feed back to others?

Be a strong communicator

Wherever you end up working, you'll be in contact with all sorts of people. So you'll need to be able to get your point across and bring others round to your way of thinking. And you should be just as happy to listen to other people's ideas and opinions. You'll have no problem expressing yourself clearly in person and in writing, and that includes your CV or application form – two of the best ways to demonstrate your communication skills. Perhaps you already have the confidence to present to an audience. Or you might have persuaded an organisation to sponsor a sports team or society. You might even have been a class or course representative. What's important is that you have plenty of examples to draw on – and that you know how to bring those examples to life.

It's about being influential and communicating confidently





Have you created something simple for others to follow, such as instructions or a project plan?



Have you made a point of taking on board different opinions, or persuade people to your way of thinking?



Have you written speeches, manifestos or business cases?



Have you ever spoken in front of an audience, sports team or at a family event?



Have you presented to your class, club or society?



Have you used your powers of persuasion to get funding or agreement for a proposal?

Share and innovate

Do you like coming up with new ways of doing things? Well, being creative in the workplace is a vital skill. You need to be ready to learn new skills, think of new ideas and share these with the right people. So think about how you've made the most of different opportunities to learn – especially those that fall outside your studies. You might have passed on your know-how to people you worked or studied with. Or maybe you suggested a way to make something more efficient. Perhaps you came up with an idea for a new kind of fundraising event. Or took up an evening class. Think about how you can build on these qualities when you join the working world.

It's about bringing a different perspective





Have you ever come up with a new and better way of doing something?



Have you shared your knowledge with other people?



When have you applied something new you've learnt to achieve a goal?



Do you go to school, college or university events that encourage knowledge sharing?



Have you made time to learn something new outside of your studies?



Have you been to employer presentations or skills sessions to explore your career options and learn what employers look for?

Be a team player

Being able to work well in a team is vital. The better you can do it, the further you'll go (you'll also do well to recognise when this means playing a supporting role or when you need to step-up and take the lead). You could have picked up the skills to do this in many different ways: the most obvious being as part of a sports team, club or society. Or you might have tackled a course-related project as part of a group or fitted into a new team at work. Just as importantly, you'll need to think about the skills you brought to the team. Did you negotiate to achieve a common goal? Motivate other team members? Adapt your communication style? Resolve any group disputes? Think about how you could apply this to the workplace.

A man with short brown hair and a beard is sitting on a rock face, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored jacket and dark pants. He is equipped with climbing gear, including a harness and a rope. The background is a large, textured rock wall.

***It's about
giving your
best***



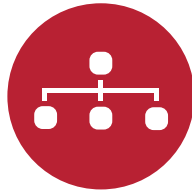
Have you taken part in a voluntary project that relied on everyone pulling together?



Do you belong to a sports team, club or society?



Can you think of a time when you worked in a team to achieve a common goal?



Have you led a group or team?



Have you been adaptable in order to work better with others?

Build your networks

If you can build relationships, you'll be better placed to achieve results and establish good rapport with others. Not only are clients more likely to come back to you again and again, there's also a bigger chance they'll recommend you to other contacts. So naturally your ability to inspire loyalty and get on well with others can make a big difference to your career. There are lots of ways to show potential employers that you've built and maintained strong relationships with all sorts of different people – from keeping in touch with contacts you've made on work experience, through to getting to know people on rival teams or clubs.



It's about making connections count



Did you take the time to get to know a customer, colleague, or even your boss, really well?



Are you a strong contributor at your local club or society?



Have you built good relationships with others? If so, how do you know?



Have you networked with people from other courses, schools, colleges or universities?



Did you make and maintain useful contacts on a work experience placement?

“ Much has changed since I joined PwC as a graduate trainee but the DNA of the business is still the same – the best people with the right blend of skills drive us to be number one, by delivering a better and distinctive client experience. By attracting, developing and motivating the best people we’ll achieve our goal of becoming the ‘iconic’ professional services network of firms.”

***Ian Powell, Chairman and Senior Partner
PwC UK LLP***

“ Academic study gets your foot in the door; employability skills push it open to a far wider range of opportunities. They make your potential contribution to our business unique. Consider these skills and experiences your personal brand.”

Charles Macleod, Talent Leader

PwC UK LLP

Be open and honest

Honesty and integrity are absolutely vital in business. They'll help you to be open with your clients and the people you work with. And to deliver the best standards, adopt the right procedures and maintain the highest levels of confidentiality. What's more, they mean if something's not right, you won't be afraid to say so. How can you show employers you have these qualities? Perhaps you used tact and diplomacy to calm a difficult situation. Or you're the kind of person who isn't afraid to speak up if you think something's not right.

*It's about
doing the
right thing*





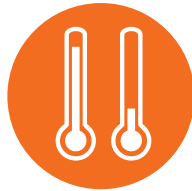
Do you put 100% into every application form or task you're asked to perform?



Can you think of a time when you've had to keep something confidential?



Have you handled conflicts or differences of opinion well?



Have you kept your cool when dealing with a difficult customer?



Have you ever spoken up about something you thought wasn't the right thing to do?

Be organised

You need to make sure that standards never slip. That means you could well find yourself juggling quite a few different priorities or turning to a back-up plan if a project doesn't go quite as you expected. So you'll need to be able to communicate how you've managed your workload, made sure you met deadlines or stuck to a budget, and how you've used your initiative to deal with the unexpected. How might have you developed those skills? Certainly through your studies. But it could be that you managed your finances to fund a trip. Looked after the funds for a club or society. Or organised a big social event for your sports team, halls of residence or year group.

***It's about
always being
prepared***





Have you looked after an organisation's finances, such as being your club's treasurer or been involved in Young Enterprise?



Have you handled lots of different pieces of coursework and deadlines at the same time?



Have you managed your money to achieve a long-term goal, such as a gap year?



Have you ever adapted a plan as a result of a significant change?

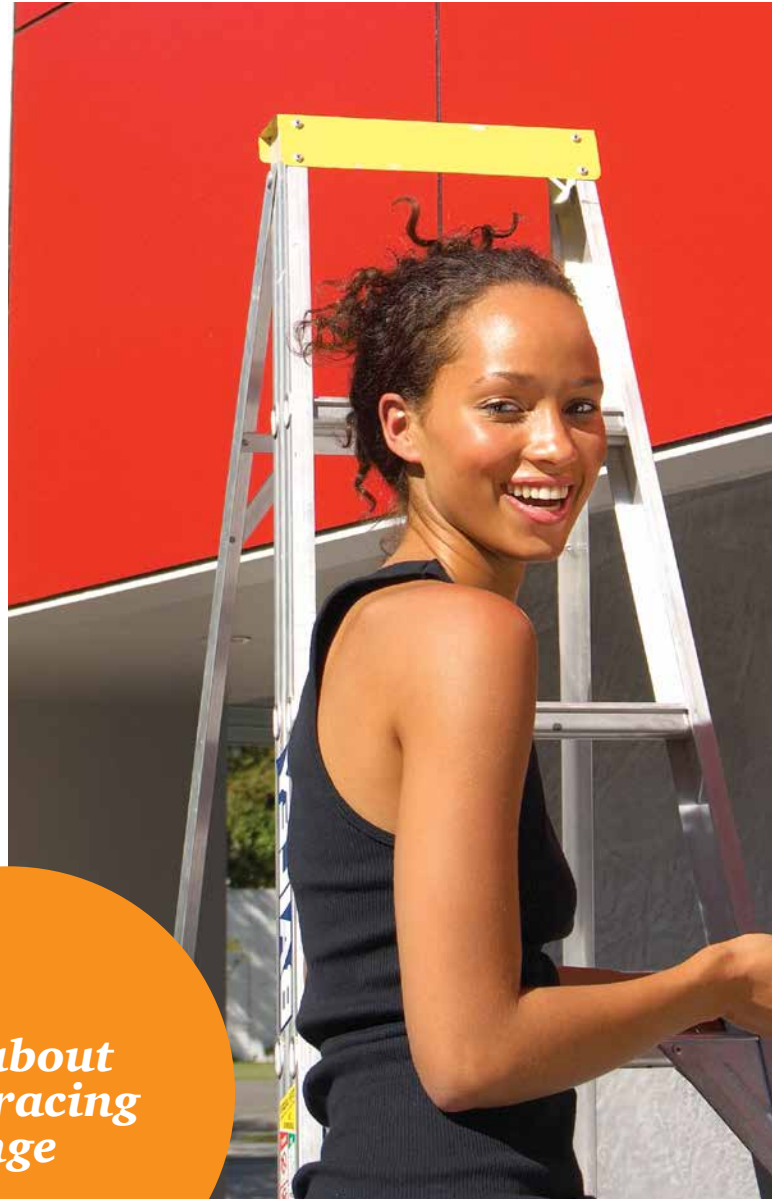


Have you juggled different priorities to meet an important deadline?

Prepare for the unexpected

Businesses change all the time. You may have to adapt to different ways of working no matter what industry you join or what career path you follow. And through it all, you'll need to keep focused and committed to delivering the highest quality work. So you must be able to think on your feet and adjust to lots of different situations – without compromising on standards. You'll always keep an open mind and be logical enough to work out the best way forward if you meet a last minute hurdle. The proof? Maybe you've covered for a work colleague at short notice or coped well with an unexpected change in coursework or deadlines. Or taken part in a scheme like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award that put you in a completely new environment.

*It's about
embracing
change*





Have you picked up a shift at work, at short notice?



Have you tried new things that are outside your comfort zone?



Have you taken on increased work or responsibility to help a co-worker or teammate?



Have you adapted to changes at work or in your studies?



Have you solved a problem that arose as a result of something going wrong?

Keep developing your knowledge

When you start your first job, you'll constantly be building your commercial and technical skills – through on-the-job learning and formal structured training. You'll also look for opportunities to develop your know-how, and think about where you could use it. So it's good to show you're interested by doing your research. Find out everything you can about the company you're applying to and how you could add value.

It's about being curious about business

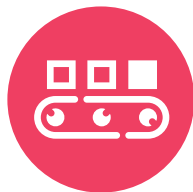




Do you take an interest in business and current affairs?



Have you thought about who your dream client would be, or what it would be like to be a CEO?



Have you taken extra time to understand how a company or industry operates?



Have you spoken to people working in business about what they do to help inform your career choice?



Have you taken time to learn something new or keep your knowledge up-to-date?

Be passionate in what you do

Being passionate about what you do will help you deliver results. Find out what sort of skills and experience employers look for so you can share examples of how you've demonstrated these to deliver results. You might have gone above and beyond expectations in a part-time or voluntary job – developing a real understanding of the company for instance, who its target customers are and who it competes with. Or perhaps you've had some ideas on how to make it more successful. Maybe you were just as professional on a routine task as you were on a big project. You could've made a big contribution to a society or sports club – maybe you organised an event no one else wanted to? The key thing to remember is that your examples should demonstrate that you'll always go the extra mile for clients.

*It's about
going that
bit further
every time*





Do you take a real interest in your part-time job (paid or voluntary) and how the company works?



Have you ever gone out of your way to do something positive for others?



Have you spent longer on a piece of work to make sure it's of a high standard?



Ever taken on a mundane task with real enthusiasm?

The opportunity to give your best

We realise everyone is different. What's important is being able to use your unique skills as effectively as possible. It's not about how you compare to someone else, it's about being determined to give your best. And if you focus on doing this, you'll end up standing out from the crowd.

We believe your personal brand can be a powerful tool for professional success. So over the next few pages we share some of our top **personal branding** tips. If you put them into action every day, you'll soon start to see the benefits.

Build your network

Use your network

Never wait until you need a network to build one. Networking isn't something to do when you need a new job or promotion. If you're ambitious and motivated it needs to be a regular part of your life. Just like friendships, the best professional relationships evolve naturally over time and need to be invested in.

So think about the people you'd like to meet and talk to – whether for general advice or about specific job opportunities. Do you know any friends currently on a graduate or school and college leaver programme? Have you got any family working in companies or industries you're interested in? Make a list, get in touch and get their advice. Have a think about how you can show you're a self-starter. You could email people you haven't seen in a while and ask if there's anything you could do to help them; or go to a workshop, presentation or networking event and introduce yourself to the speaker. Think about the value of having a strong presence on social media – particularly on LinkedIn. When you meet people, ask if they'd mind if you connected with them on LinkedIn or sent them an email – it's a great way to stay in touch and for people to see what you're all about.

Remember, after your meeting, be sure to follow up. Try sending a personalised LinkedIn connection request (not the generic message) within 24 hours of meeting someone. Or forward an article, link or information that relates to what you discussed when you met. And never underestimate the power of a simple 'thank you' whether that's in an email or a handwritten note.



Consider your written communication

Even in these days of instant messaging, texting and Twitter, written communication is still vital. Be sure to use proper grammar, capitalisation and spelling in all professional communications (that means no LOL, BTW, TBH). Sending an email? Decide whether it's the best channel to use. Sometimes a phone call or face-to-face meeting is more appropriate. If you do decide on an email, check you've spelt the name of the person you're emailing correctly. Avoid writing only about yourself. Too many "I's" can turn a reader off. Don't share too much personal information either. Always be concise and to the point. Professional people are busy people so put the purpose of your email in the subject line and first paragraph. And remember that long sentences and long paragraphs are hard to read (especially on a computer or mobile screen). So, break your thoughts up into short sections. Add a signature line at the bottom of your emails that includes your contact details and the URL of your professional LinkedIn profile. Finally, don't trust spellcheck. Before clicking send, always re-read what you've written for professionalism and accuracy.

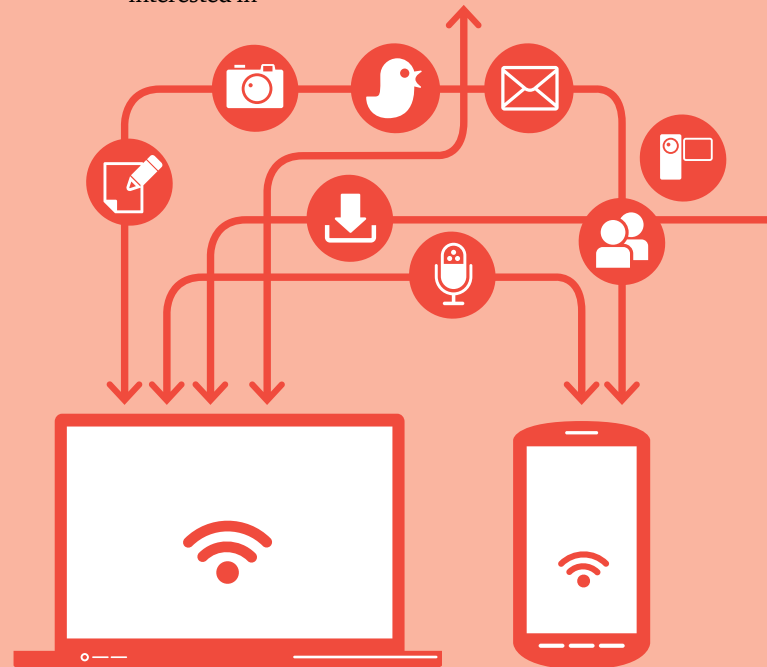


Give your online image a makeover

In this digital age your online image is incredibly important and your web-based networking activities could help you land your dream job. So make your online presence work for you. On LinkedIn, create a strong profile headline that includes your career aspirations, any leadership position and the industry you plan to enter. Fill the 'Skills & Expertise' section with keywords that relate to the type of job or internship you're seeking. Fill the 'Experience' section with internships, voluntary work, freelancing and part-time work you might have done. It's not just for full-time or paid positions. Use LinkedIn apps to show off your professional work and interests. And collect at least two recommendations. Add your current work information to your Facebook profile – and 'Like' pages that relate to your professional interests. RSVP to professional events on Facebook and LinkedIn so you can show you're out there networking. And, as always, keep your Facebook profile free of anything that might damage the personal brand you're working so hard to build. Set your privacy to the max and remember to check it regularly. Use Twitter to follow companies and people you admire, and occasionally reply or retweet their messages. You might just get noticed. Tweet about events you're going to, books you're reading and articles you find interesting. Include your Twitter name or profile URL on your LinkedIn profile and your email signature line. And don't tweet anything inappropriate or too personal.

Increase your online profile

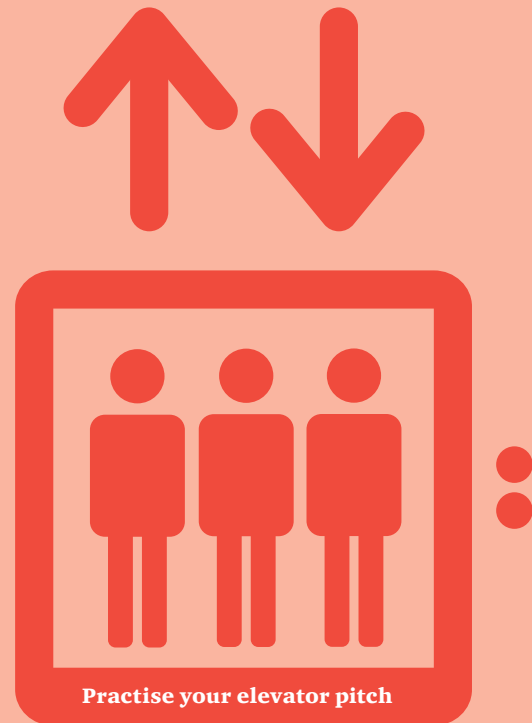
- **Twitter:** follow companies and people you admire
- **LinkedIn:** create a strong profile headline and collect at least two recommendations
- **Facebook:** add current work information to your profile and 'Like' the pages of any employers you're interested in



Perfect your pitch

You'll rarely have the time to tell someone your life story or list your every achievement. That's why your elevator pitch is so important. 'Elevator pitch' is a popular term for a quick summary of who you are and what you're looking for – it should last about the same length of time it takes to take a trip in an elevator. You can use it everywhere from networking events and career fairs, to cover letters and formal interviews. If it's good, it'll convey enough information and passion to convince the other person they want to carry on talking to you. Be clear and concise, but most importantly, tailor your pitch each time to your audience to make it relevant.

Highlight the most important aspects of your personal brand – such as what you're studying, your key experience and what you hope to do in the future. And once you're happy with the content, work on the delivery. Practise, practise, practise – if possible, in front of a friend, family member, teacher or career services professional. You could record yourself to see how you come across. Make the best impression, and dress professionally. Smile. Make direct eye contact and say your name clearly. It's one of the most important things you want your listener to remember. Stop talking after about 20 to 30 seconds and let the other person speak. After all, listening skills are important too and don't be afraid to ask questions. Above all, be enthusiastic. Recruiters consistently say that enthusiasm stands out so make sure yours shines through.



Practise your elevator pitch

Make first impressions count

You never get a second chance for a first impression so make sure you check the dress code before you go and think about the environment you'll be in. If you're not sure, wear something which is a bit more formal. As well as your personal appearance, a firm handshake, good eye contact and a smile all help make those first impressions count. Research the organisation whose event or interview you're attending and work out why your skill set is a good fit. Then prepare at least three questions to show you've done your homework and are genuinely interested in learning more.

Tools to help you

Preparation is important, which is why you should also try to practise being interviewed. We've created an **interview e-learn tool** to help you do just that. It will help you understand what's involved in an interview and show you how you can prepare – all in under one hour.



Know why your skills are a good fit for the job

Thoroughly research the company

Prepare questions as well as answers

Check the dress code

Before you get to the interview stage, you may have to take an online psychometric test, which will contain a combination of numerical, verbal and inductive reasoning tests, as well as a work style preference questionnaire for some programmes. We've created a **psychometric e-learn tool** to help you prepare for this stage of the process too. Together, these tools will help you make the right impression with your first impression.

Try our e-learning tools at pwc.com/uk/careers/elearn

What do we look for?

Now that we've shared some of our employability knowledge, it might help to see what an employer looks for in real terms. So we thought we'd take this opportunity to show what we look for in an employee.

Have you looked into the kind of professional qualifications you might study towards?

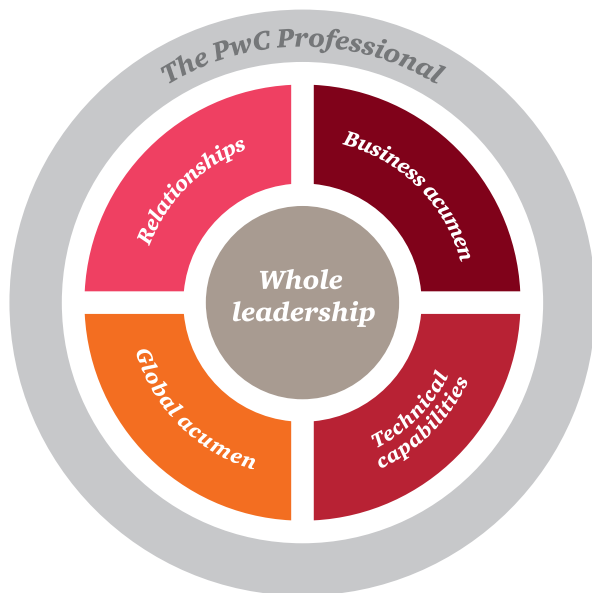
Do you understand the business area you're applying for?

Have you looked into how PwC operates as a business?

Do you have examples of what the business area you want to work in does?

The PwC Professional

All our people need to demonstrate the skills and behaviours that support us in delivering our business strategy. This is important to the work we do for our business and our clients. These skills and behaviours make up our global leadership framework, otherwise known as 'The PwC Professional'. The PwC Professional focuses on five core attributes: **whole leadership**, **business acumen**, **technical capabilities**, **global acumen** and **relationships**. We use this framework to recruit, develop and assess our people at all grades and in all areas of our business, because we expect all of our people to be leaders.



School and College leaver opportunities

Gain experience on our Business Insight Week or start work straight away on one of our School and College leaver programmes. On our programmes you'll earn a competitive salary while you study towards a professional qualification designed by employers and professional bodies from across the sector. Just like our graduate joiners, you'll work on client or internal projects, learn on-the-job and build the in-depth knowledge you need to progress through our business. At the same time, thanks to our study support, you won't need to worry about paying for course and exam fees, textbooks or revision materials. Plus we even give you paid study leave.

Find out more at [pwc.com/uk/schools](https://www.pwc.com/uk/schools)

Flying Start degree programmes

If you want to go to university but also know you're interested in accountancy, our Flying Start degree programme offers the best of both worlds. It gives you a flying start towards becoming an ICAEW Chartered Accountant (ACA) – plus the opportunity to secure a job offer with us once you graduate. You get a traditional university experience as a full-time student, alongside paid work placements with our Assurance practice across years two, three and four, and exposure to our world-class clients. On the four-year course you'll gain a degree, complete most of the ICAEW exams and could secure a graduate job – all while still at university. You can join the degree programme at Newcastle University, Henley Business School (University of Reading) or Nottingham University Business School.

Find out more at [pwc.com/uk/flying-start](https://www.pwc.com/uk/flying-start)



Work experience opportunities

From your very first day on campus, there are a number of different ways to experience working with us. Each one offers you the opportunity to discover what a career with us is really all about, and gain a deeper insight into our culture as well as boost your employability.

Career open day – spend a highly interactive day with us and learn about the work we do. It will help you decide which of our graduate career opportunities is right for you.

Talent academy – develop your employability skills, take part in an interactive business challenge and spend time with PwC staff and Partners – who will share their experiences and career progression. A great way to learn about PwC and develop your business skills, and it could lead to an offer to join our summer internship or undergraduate work placement programme.

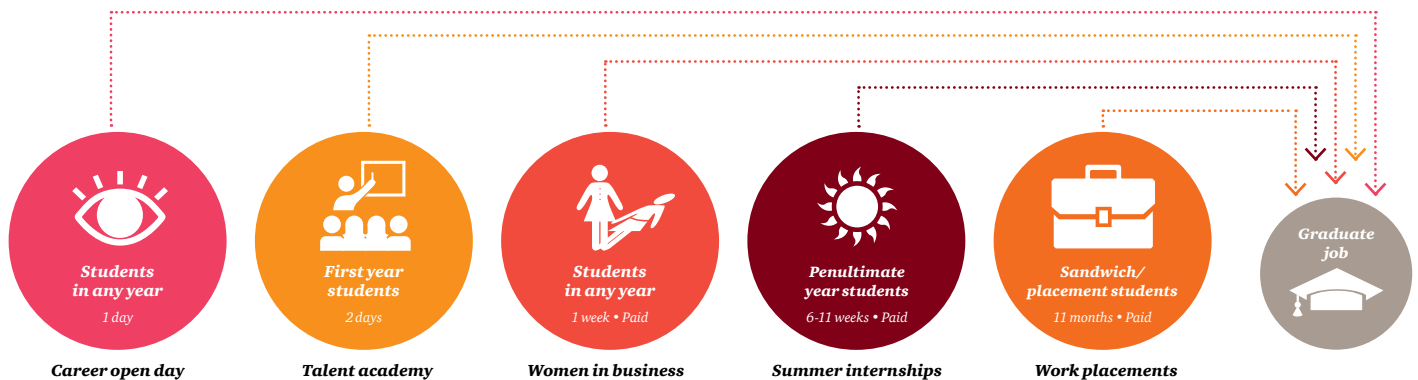
Women in business – see what it takes to make it to the very top of PwC from the perspective of one of our female leaders. Do well and you could get a place on our summer internship, or a graduate job offer.

Summer internships – work alongside specialists in one of our business areas. You'll work on real client projects for six to eleven weeks, gaining a thorough understanding of our work. Do well and you could go back to university with a graduate job offer.

Undergraduate work placement – gain a deep insight into our business and develop your technical skills by studying towards your professional qualification. This opportunity is ideal if you need to complete a placement as part of your degree, and could lead to a graduate job offer plus the opportunity to qualify faster once you've joined us.

Or do real client work in our London office on our six-month **Graduate work placements** in Tax. Get good feedback from your work experience and you can then choose to join us on the graduate programme with the option to take six months out before starting.

Find out more at pwc.com/uk/work-experience



Knowing your options

We're the world's leading professional services network with expertise in lots of different areas, and we tackle a wide range of business issues and complex commercial challenges. Our ideas boost the performance of all sorts of organisations. So it's not surprising that we offer a huge variety of career options. And as there are so many to choose from, you're bound to discover something that fits you perfectly.

Graduate programmes

We have seven different business areas, so where do you start? Here's a brief outline:



Actuarial



Actuaries work with uncertainty. Join us and you'll help clients analyse how future events – anything from a corporate takeover to a major natural disaster – could affect them. You might be calculating the impact of changing demographics or legislation on pension schemes; the effects that changes in financial markets have on different organisations; or how likely a business is to be hit by an earthquake.

Assurance



Join our leading Assurance practice and you'll be part of the team that gets to grips with every aspect of clients' activities, understanding their business to identify where our high-quality audit can add insight and value. It's critical work that enhances corporate governance and plays an important role in ensuring the reliability and relevance of business information.

Consulting



You'll get to work closely with the best in industry, finance and government in the UK and abroad, bringing fresh insights and motivation to the problems they face. Our clients might want us to help them enter new markets; address the challenges created by organisational change; or draw up a sustainability strategy that aligns their commercial objectives with broader environmental and social concerns.

Find out more at [pwc.com/uk/careers](https://www.pwc.com/uk/careers)

Deals



Our Deals business is made up of Business Recovery Services, Corporate Finance, Forensics, Transaction Services and Valuations. Help put together major mergers and acquisitions and sort out business crises. You could work on anything from international take-over bids to economic crime investigations and cases of insolvency. And whichever part of Deals you join, you'll strengthen our aim to lead the transactions and crisis markets.

Technology



90% of technology CEOs believe that technology advances will transform their business the most over the next five years*. We recognise that to bring value to our clients, we need to provide the best advice around technological innovation as it's so critical to our clients' growth. If you're passionate about technology, you'll get expert training and the opportunity to specialise in a sought-after discipline.

**PwC's 17th Annual Global CEO Survey*

Tax



Learn everything the UK's leading tax practice with the leading reputation can teach you. Our Tax practice deals with clients of all sizes and finds innovative ways to help those organisations reduce their tax burdens. By keeping pace with the regularly changing tax regimes – at home and overseas – we help multinationals, UK companies, privately-owned organisations and family businesses manage their affairs efficiently.

PwC Legal



With more than 2,000 lawyers in over 80 countries, we have the most extensive legal services network in the world. What's more, although we're independent, our services are embedded within the powerful, multi-disciplinary capabilities and broad geographic footprint of a global professional services leader and our links to PwC mean we can offer our clients rounded solutions incorporating multi-disciplinary advice.

It's deciding where you want to shine

Our people make us stand out. In fact, enthusiastic, switched-on, personable people are our biggest business asset. They reinforce our reputation and cement our client relationships.

And it's a two-way deal; what they put into PwC, they get back in kind. For example, we ask that our people are resilient, willing to work hard and deliver the highest quality work that adds insight and value to our clients. In return, they receive stimulating and challenging work for leading clients. We look for people that have a thirst for learning and developing, and in return offer an unrivalled environment in which people can shape their career and fulfil their potential. So we recruit the very best and invest heavily in them.

But we also want you to be sure we're the right choice for you. So have a good look around our website. And once you've found a business area you think you'll thrive in, apply online – making sure you highlight all those employability skills we're so interested in.

Take the opportunity of a lifetime



pwc.com/uk/employability
pwc.com/uk/careers/elearn

Create value through diversity. Be yourself, be different.



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/CareersPwC

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Please see pwc.com/structure for further details.