

Advice for undergraduates

- Make the most of your academic choices, think long and hard. Seek advice from tutors, careers guidance advisors, former students, parents and mentors.
- Make the most of opportunities that present themselves, e.g. clubs representative roles, organising committees, planning excursions, Hey let's be radical what about even debating societies or church groups. Reason I suggest this is that when you start to go for interviews you'll be asked to give examples e.g. Tell us about a time when you've had difficulties in organising an event? Just refer back to the hill walking weekend you organised in Snowdonia last year.
- Make the most of your term breaks, don't waste that valuable time watching neighbours (am I showing my age) or lying on a beach. Get out there and get some work experience, paid or voluntary, home or away. Focus on building your competencies up. Don't scoff at that advert you saw in Tesco's, that's an opportunity to build some experience up and yes it will be relevant. Think seriously about work placements, summer placements or gap years.
- Okay, no one's perfect, learn from your mistakes and turn a negative into a positive.
- Do your research on the organisations you're applying for (check their website out or ask for an annual report), if offered an interview prove your knowledge.
- Don't be cocky? Don't pretend you know everything and are the best thing since sliced bread. Show willingness to learn and if that means the boring mundane jobs so be it.
- Have some questions prepared for the panel in advance, e.g. what development opportunities are available, why has the vacancy come up.
- Don't talk yourself out of an offer by bringing up the question of dosh, wait until an offer is made.
- Try and anticipate the competencies that you might be interviewed on and draw up your own interview questions (see footnote).
- Ok, you have no work experience; think laterally e.g. scouts, youth groups, clubs, family responsibilities.
- If you're not in you can't win, what have you got to lose from applying? an hour filling out an application form! Think about how many other punters don't have all the experience or requirements listed in the advert, there's a scarcity of skills out there, sell yourself.
- Get out of your comfort zone and start to get some interviews under your belt, the more you go to the more skilled and prepared you'll become.
- Get used to rejection; if you get a "Dear John" ask for feedback.

Competencies to think about

Working with others, creativity, cultural sensitivity, customer focus, decision making, drive and determination, flexibility, influence, interpersonal sensitivity, communication (oral & written), planning and organising, problem solving, environmental awareness, technical knowledge.