"Opening Doors"
Internships & work experience

Year 2, MEng/BEng Computing

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Careers Adviser

Agenda

- Importance of relevant experience
- What are employers looking for?
- Developing your skills
- How to find internships/placements
- Producing an effective CV
- How to write a covering letter
- How the Careers Service can help you further

What is work experience?

- Part-time jobs
- Summer jobs
- Volunteering
- Working for yourself
- Internships
- Placement schemes and programmes, e.g. Shell Step, IAESTE, UROP, AIESEC

Why do it?

- To earn money
- To develop your CV
- Have interesting things to talk about at interview / become more confident
- Chance to observe/test out career ideas
- Making contacts for the future
- Setting yourself apart from other applicants
- Possible job offer after graduation
- Improving your <u>employability</u>!

What does employability mean?

- <u>Employability</u> refers to "a person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required." (Hillage and Pollard, 1998)

- In a nutshell: employability is about being capable of getting and keeping satisfying work!

Relevance of work experience

Helps you demonstrate to an employer that you have

- Applied your skills in a practical setting
- Learnt new skills
- Gained new knowledge
- Worked in teams (projects)
- Tackled work related problems
- Presented your findings
- Liaised with others in the organisation
- Taken initiative/ responsibility

Making a start

- Reflect on your skills, knowledge and motivation and what you have to offer already
- Research your options
  - Options folder for Computing in Careers Service
  - Careers website
  - www.prospects.ac.uk – Prospects Planner / options with your degree / sector information
  - Careers publications – take away and reference
- Update your CV, draft covering letter

Where to find internships

- *JobsLive* – careers website, check employer listings & get vacancies emailed to you
- *Publications* – sector & job specific information about deadlines and vacancies
- *Work Experience Schemes* - follow links from Careers Service work experience pages *(e.g. UROP, AISEC, SEO, Shell Step Programme)*
- *Departmental intranet* – careers section
- *Contacts* – networking (more later)

Working abroad

- **IAESTE** (International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience) **www.iaeste.org.uk**
- **AIESEC** (international exchange programme, for leadership, business and team skills) **www.aiesec.co.uk**
- **ISTPLUS** (exchange programmes for USA +) **www.istplus.com** & **www.ciee.org**
- **Prospects.ac.uk; goinglobal.com**

Other schemes

- **UROP**
  Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme – at Imperial
  www.imperial.ac.uk/urop
- **SEO** – Investment banking and technical placements (ethnic minority background) **www.seo-london.com**
- **Shell Step Programme** – SME placements **www.stepplacements.co.uk**

Non-advertised opportunities

- Network… Network…. Network….
- What contacts do you have already?
- Talk to tutors, alumni, friends and family (and their friends and family)
- Attend employer talks, seminars, workshops and career events at Imperial
- Update your CV
- Draft speculative covering letter – ideally addressed to a named contact

Use your initiative …

- Investigate organisations on the web, social networking, professional bodies, careers service information
- Telephone and ask if they have suitable vacancies
- Be ready to explain what your interests are and what you have to offer, i.e. what you can do for them

Resources - Computing

- www.intellectuk.org.uk (The Technology Trade Association)
- Target IT and Engineering Guides
- Inside Careers – IT and Engineering & Technology www.insidecareers.co.uk

Examples of professional bodies:
- The Chartered Institute for IT www.bcs.org
- Institution of Engineering and Technology Website www.theiet.org

Creating a professional CV

Creating a professional CV

Key points
- Chronological format, reverse chron. order
- 1 or 2 pages, well-balanced
- KISS (keep it short and simple) – clear font, concise statements, phrases only, avoiding 'I'
- Use of effective headings, making these stand out clearly by using bold and capitals
- Display dates consistently (either on the right or on the left)

Key points

- **Include 'soft' skills** throughout your CV where you have used them (e.g. team working, problem solving, commercial awareness, communication, taking initiative, leadership)

- **Avoid using negative language** (only, had to, was asked to …/ was given the task to … etc.)

Action verbs

- **Make use of action verbs** as appropriate, e.g.

analysed	negotiated
contributed	organised
designed	presented
developed	produced
liaised	programmed
managed	researched

Main structure

- Name and contact details
- Education and Qualifications
- IT skills
- Work Experience
- Additional Skills
- Interests and Achievements
- References

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Contact details - example

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name:	Benjamin Jones
Address:	123 Park Road
	Lewisham
	London SE5 8TA
Tel:	020 7654 3210
Mob:	07712 345678
Email:	bennsy@gmail.com
D.o.B.:	2 May 1990
Nationality:	British

Benjamin Jones
123 Park Road, Lewisham,
London SE5 8TA
07712 345678
ben.jones@gmail.ac.uk

Education

2009 – 2013 MEng Computing (expected....)
            Imperial College London
- Modules include ....
- Information about project work / skills gained

2004 – 2009 Secondary school
- A-Levels, GCSE's can be summarised; provide equivalent if not UK
- Award gained (separate section if two or more)

IT skills / technical skills

- Programming languages ...
- Operating systems ...
- General ... (Microsoft packages etc.)

- Give indicator of level of expertise/ability

Work Experience section

- Date (month/year), job title, employer, place
- Responsibilities / tasks, skills developed
- Be succinct / use bullet points, make it relevant, using action verbs and appropriate business language

7/2009 – 8/2009   Bar Assistant
                The Red Lion, London
- Responsible for taking customers' orders and payments
- Maintained hygiene according to regulations
- Designed leaflet to promote new lunchtime snacks
- Developed good interpersonal skills and worked well under pressure during peak opening times

Additional Skills

- IT skills: general / programming
  (if not used as earlier heading)
- Languages - indicate level;
  IELTS score if English is not your mother tongue (or equivalent)
- Driving licence
- Any other training courses (e.g. first aid, health and safety training)

Interests and Achievements

- Emphasise team or group activities (sports, music, student societies)
- Student society / responsibilities, contributions
- Travel – cultural insights, flexibility/adaptability
- Avoid one word lists: reading, music, football, travel
- Other headings: Additional Information, Interests and Responsibilities (as you wish)

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References

- Taken up towards the end of the recruitment process
- Normally two references (your tutor and someone from your last work experience, or someone who knows you outside college
- Full contact details (often taken up in writing)

- *References available on request.*

Make your CV work for you

- Make the most of your work experiences you have already by using effective headings:
  - Technical Skills / IT Skills / Programming Skills …
  - Commercial Experience
  - Industry Experience
  - IT Experience
- For technical and subject-related roles, provide as much detail as you can
- For working abroad use relevant/expected format (e.g. one page résumé for US)

The covering letter
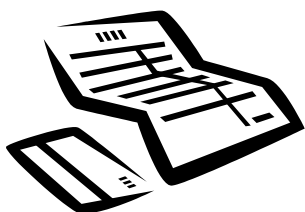
Key points

- Your marketing document.
- Structured, formal, one A4 page, 5 sections:

(1) Why are you writing?
(currently studying for an MEng/BEng in Computing, would like to enquire whether you have any opportunities for work experience during next summer / stating availability / or: apply for internship … as advertised …)

(2) Your motivation

Why do you want this internship/job?

- What is your main motivation for this career area / for this role? Are you clear about what's involved?

- Short paragraph, showing that you have researched this role

(3) Matching yourself to the role

- Can you do the job? What makes you suitable?
- Information about your degree, projects, any topics you enjoy in particular / specific interests
- What experience do you have already? – work experience and extra curricular activities
- What skills have you started to develop that fit in with what you're applying for? Provide specific examples for your skills evidence!

(4) Why do you want to work there?

- What do you know about the organisation?
- Short paragraph, demonstrating that you have researched them.

(5) Ending
- Could be a short summary / statement that you can make an immediate contribution to their team / department or organisation
- State that you attach your CV – add any information about interview availability

Formalities

Your name and
Contact details
Date

Dear Mr / Ms Smith, ... Yours sincerely,
Dear Sir or Madam, ... Yours faithfully,

- If sending by email, put covering letter in text box and attach CV

The Careers Service – where we are

- Level 5, Sherfield Building
- Opening hours: Mon-Fri
  10:00 – 17:15
- Tel: 020 7594 8024

www.imperial.ac.uk/careers

What we do …

- discuss career options / help with identifying what might suit you best
- check CVs, covering letters, application answers
- help employers advertise internships/jobs
- organise events (fairs, talks, forums, workshops)
- provide careers information (free information to take away, reference information and online)
- help you for up to 3 years after graduation

What we do not do…

- tell you what internship you should do
- find you an internship or work experience
- make applications on your behalf or match you up with employers
- write a CV for you
- correct your grammar and spelling
- recommend individual students to employers
- write references for employment

Forthcoming events 2011/12

- **Imperial College Union Careers Fair: 26 October**
- **IT & Technology Fair: 17 November**
- **IT & Technology Forum: 1 December**

- Also:
- Energy Industry Forum: 13 October
- Engineering Fair: 20 October
- Accountancy & Consulting Forum: 27 October
- Science Forum: 3 November
- Career Women's Forum: 9 February
  Focus on Management course: spring term
- Employer talks and presentations (see Career Choice) throughout autumn and spring terms
- All on *JobsLive*!
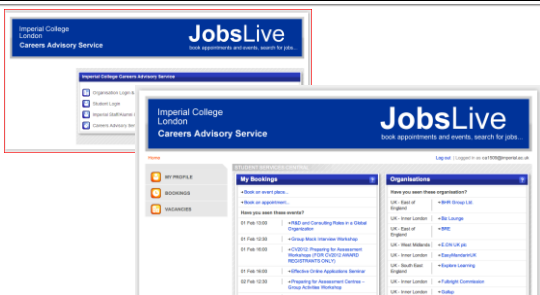
JobsLive

How to get help

- **20-minute discussion**
  - online via *JobsLive* (careers website)
  - book on the day
  - Irena Jennings: **Tuesday & Wednesday pm**
- **40-minute discussion**
  - telephone 020 7594 8024
- **Skype or telephone**
  (if not in London)

Come and see us!