



Recession survival – top tips for graduates

What can students and graduates do to improve their chances of success in a recession? Here are our top tips for recession survival:

1. Stay Calm

There are a lot of misleading and exaggerated press headlines around the state of the graduate job market at the moment - but it is vital that you don't panic. Yes things are not as good as they could be but there are still lots of jobs out there. Why not try reading our **latest news** section for a clearer picture of the situation. Although we don't want you to panic, now is not the time for complacency. Make sure you are the best equipped you can be, so you can stand out from the crowd when you apply for jobs.

2. Stand out from the crowd!

Cut backs and redundancies mean less jobs and this in turn means more competition for the jobs that are out there. There are jobs there – but it's just going to be more competitive than ever to secure them! So one of our top pieces of advice would be to concentrate on **making yourself stand out from the crowd and become more employable**. Here's one way you can do this.....

Go that extra mile and demonstrate those all important skills employers are looking for by achieving our **WoW® or World of Work certificate**. Our certificate is accredited by a range of employers from multi-nationals such as Sony and Marks and Spencer to public sector organisations and smaller regional businesses – imagine talking about that at interview! By achieving the **WoW® certificate** you will increase your self awareness, organisational and sector awareness and your ability to present yourself effectively and successfully to employers – you'll even be interviewed by a real employer at the end. For more information visit <http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/WoW/students/>.

The WoW certificate will also help you to build on your strengths and seek ways to address your weaknesses. This means really **reflecting** on what you're good at and what you're not so good at. Further study, work experience or talking to those with relevant expertise may all help you to **maximise your potential** – which is critical for success in a very competitive job market.

3. It's your future!

Take an interest in your own career development. If you don't, who will? Make an appointment to see a **Careers Advisor** to talk through your possibilities or attend our **'Ready for Work'** career essentials workshops.....Don't be scared...be prepared!

4. Do something

Don't just do nothing and wait for the recession to end. Someone with an extended period of unemployment, even during a recession, will not be a good prospect for most companies after the recession; they'd prefer someone who got **useful experience**. So get work experience, do further study, voluntary work, or any job that can build on your skills or give you the opportunity to shine. If you don't take action then you may struggle to find a job.

Here are just a few things you could do to get started:

- Make an action plan.
- Achieve our **WoW® certificate** before you graduate
- Attend our **Ready for Work** careers events
- Speak with a Careers Adviser.
- Use any contacts you have to find out about opportunities.
- Update your CV.



5. Know Yourself

Self awareness is crucial if you are going to make good career decisions.

Picture the scene: you are at an interview and the employer has just given you a brief synopsis of the position and the organisation. She then leans forward and asks.. ‘So tell me about yourself – what kind of person are you?’ By being aware of your strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities – you will be much better able to provide an appropriate answer. So to be in the best position before you start searching for jobs and making applications make sure you:

- Know what skills you can offer to potential employers.
- Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses. Take steps to develop areas that need to be improved.
- Think about the kind of work that will motivate you
- Understand where your interests lie.

If you are unsure of where to begin then why not attend our [‘Career planning for Beginners workshop’](#) to give you a head start!

You can also generate some options by using ‘Prospects Planner’ via www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner. This is a career planning tool that will help you think about your skills and motivations and match these with some job profiles. You are also welcome to discuss your ideas with a Careers Advisor.

6. Shine your applications and prepare thoroughly

Now is not the time to be half hearted about your job applications. Don’t underestimate the importance of well researched, carefully put together and error free applications. When employers are inundated, they need no excuse to dump sloppy forms, CVs and letters on the reject pile. Present yourself well at every stage of the recruitment process. Do your homework, know what the employer wants, sell your relevant skills and experience from all aspects of your life: education, work and social.

Need help? - The Graduate Development Centre runs a variety of short career essentials workshops. Our **‘Ready for Work’** workshops have been designed to help you with all aspects of looking and applying for jobs and/or further study. The range of topics covered is diverse - from how to succeed at interview to exploring self-employment options - there’s something for everyone!

Our sessions have been designed, with the input of employers, to give you an advantage over the competition. For more information and to book your place [click here](#)

6. Get Networking!

Network with people who may be able to offer you your first break into the graduate labour market or a step up to something more suitable. Networking is about making the most of the contacts you have through university, family, social networks and work you’ve done. It’s about building up relationships and understanding what will help you to market yourself and identify relevant opportunities. It’s not about meeting people with a ‘gissajob’ approach – it’s more about trying to meet with someone for a short chat – so you can find out about their job, the sector, what it’s like etc. An excellent place to do this is at **Careers Fairs and Employer Presentations** – here you can get advice from recruiters at first hand. For more information about Liverpool’s next Graduate Recruitment Fair, check out our [events page](#).

7. Research your ideas

Make sure you research the different types of jobs you are interested in. It is important to be aware of what each job involves. The more you know about yourself, and the job you are interested in, the easier it will be to make a decision as to whether it will suit you or not. We run a useful workshop designed to help you research future employers called [‘Career Essentials – how to research an employer’](#) – book your place today.



8. Be flexible – have a plan B

The recession may mean your ideal job is just not a realistic option at the moment. If you can't get the job you want straight away, spend time getting the right skills and experience to put you in the best possible position for the future. Being flexible in terms of your location may also help you get the job you want. In today's fast paced society it is likely that you will have a variety of different jobs throughout your life!

9. Get Experience

Make sure you get some [work experience](#). This could be a part-time job, summer job, placement, internship or volunteering. Work Experience, either paid or unpaid, is one of the most effective ways to develop your skills and it can give you an insight into possible careers and sectors. If this experience is relevant to the area you are going into it will be highly valued by potential employers. For example if you want to work for a charity make sure you get involved through paid or unpaid experience.

10. Seek help and don't forget to celebrate your successes!

Don't struggle to cope on your own. There are many people who can help you whether it's friends and family, professional careers staff, academics or business contacts. If you would like to book a **careers interview** [click here](#), or attend one of our 'Ready for Work' careers workshops.

Also don't forget to be positive and celebrate your achievements! Many graduates are reluctant to celebrate their successes through a lack of self-confidence or a fear of others thinking that they are boasting. In a competitive market employers will recruit the individuals who can provide the most convincing evidence of their potential so this is no time for modesty.

11. Be prepared for interviews

If you have been invited to an interview then your application has been effective and you now have the chance to talk directly to your prospective employers or their agents. **Preparation is now essential!!** A successful interviewee demonstrates planning, focus and enthusiasm. Researching the job and the company, and thinking in advance about possible questions and answers, will help prepare you to perform well in any interview.

Discover how to market yourself effectively and what to expect from an interview by coming to our **interactive session**. We'll tell you everything you need to know about interview preparation, awkward questions and successful interview etiquette in our 1 hour session. For more details, please visit <http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/WoW/students/events>