Recruitment Agencies – How to use them

Graduates use recruitment agencies for both permanent, contract and temporary employment. Recruitment agencies are either ‘multi-discipline’ agencies – where they recruit for a wide range of business areas, or are specialist – where they recruit for specific sectors.

Top Tips:

- Act professionally – create a good impression – treat the agency like a potential employer – if you impress them they will be keen to help you!
- Research the agency before using them – are they registered with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation? Do they advertise graduate jobs? Do they have any advice for graduates on their websites? Do they have any testimonials on their website?
- Keep in touch with the agency – don’t expect them to always contact you.
- Register with enough agencies to give yourself the best exposure to jobs but not too many to lose track of your applications and prevent you from developing good relationships with the recruitment consultants trying to help you. We suggest 3 or 4 maximum.
- Most graduates work for small and medium sized employers. Recruitment agencies can help you find a job with a small or medium sized employer, though don’t just rely on agencies as the only way to find jobs with these types of organisations.
- Avoid giving specific information about applications you may have made directly yourself or through other agencies – it is part of a recruitment consultant’s job to find out about new jobs they can advertise.
- Keep track of your applications – where each agency has sent your CV and progress with each application. It can be easy to forget who is representing you for what and which companies have seen your CV!
- Do bear in mind that agencies are paid by employers, not candidates. Their focus is on finding the right candidates for the employers they are working for and they may represent several candidates for one job, so it is down to you to market yourself effectively to the agency as well as to the employer.
- If you don’t live far away try to meet your recruitment consultant(s) – this helps you develop a good relationship with them and helps them gain a better insight into you and your aspirations.
Some agencies are "multi-discipline" agencies, which recruit for a wide range of business areas, while some are specialist, recruiting for specific sectors. It is important to register with the right type of agency for your needs – if you have a specialist interest / aspirations to work in a particular type of occupation, make sure you register with an agency that focuses on recruitment in that industry / sector.

Many recruitment agencies will require a minimum of 6 months experience (particularly accountancy, finance and legal work).

Always follow up online registrations with a phone call – show your commitment to the application.

Respond quickly to any contact from an agency – they may be competing to get their candidates considered by an employer ahead of those from another agency.

Be brave enough to say no when agencies contact you about jobs you don’t think are appropriate for you – recruitment consultants can be very persuasive. It is important that you keep focused on what you are looking for, though do have a degree of flexibility to ensure that you don’t miss out on roles that could help lead you in the right direction.

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