



Your Graduate Job Search: A Practical Toolkit



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**How does your job
Search feel right
now?**

The UK Graduate Market Right Now



89

average applications per
graduate vacancy in
2024/25 — up 13% year-
on-year

140

applications per vacancy
at many large employers
— a record high

8%

fall in graduate hiring in
2024/25 — the weakest
year since 2021

**The honest headline: it's a genuinely competitive market.
But that's exactly why a targeted strategy matters more than ever.**

57%

of employers hire
international students —
down from 61% last year

Wherever you are in your search, there's a next step



1

Just getting started

We'll cover where to look, how to build a target list, and how to structure your first applications.

2

Already applying

We'll sharpen your targeting, tighten your tailoring, and build a system so nothing falls through the cracks.

Why a strategy, not just application

You don't have time to apply randomly anymore



With around 8 weeks left, applying to everything you see is the slowest way to find a job.

A focused strategy gets you more relevant interviews from fewer, better applications.

Scattergun approach

Dozens of generic applications, low response rate, no system to learn from

Strategic approach

A defined set of targets, tailored applications, and a weekly rhythm you can sustain

Today's goal: leave with a target list, a weekly search rhythm, and a plan for your final 8 weeks



There are three ways jobs get filled — use all three

1 Advertised roles

Job boards, LinkedIn Jobs, employer career pages (visible but highly competitive)

2 Hidden market

Roles filled through referrals and networks before or without ever being advertised

3 Direct approach

Speculative applications to organisations you'd like to work for, even without a live vacancy

The 2-Hour Job Search (Steve Dalton)



Dalton's core argument:

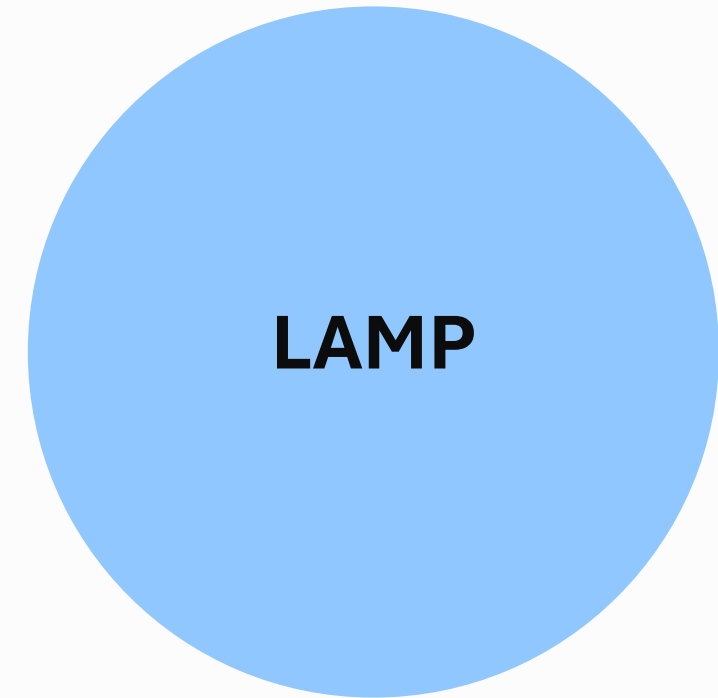
- Job boards put you in competition with everyone.
- A targeted list of companies puts you ahead of almost no one because most candidates never build one.

The job board approach

Apply widely, compete with hundreds, wait to hear back

The LAMP List approach

Build a realistic target list, reach out directly, get ahead of the posting



List, Advocacy, Motivation, Posting

The LAMP List



List

40+ companies that realistically employ people in your target role and location



Advocacy

Does this company have Warwick alumni or people you can find a way in through?



Motivation

Would you accept an offer here tomorrow? If not, it doesn't belong on the list



Posting

Do they actively post relevant graduate/entry-level roles? (Nice to have, not essential)

Target employer research

Turning your LAMP List into a well-researched shortlist you can act on.



LinkedIn

Find people, roles, recent hires, and Warwick alumni at the company



Company website & values

Understand what they say about themselves and what they're hiring for



Recent news & press

Know what's happening now — funding, launches, restructuring



Glassdoor / Companies House

Sense-check culture, interview process, and financial stability

Build your LAMP list



- **Individually:** list at least 5 companies you would realistically accept an offer from tomorrow
- **For each, note:** location, why it's on your list, and one Warwick alumni connection if you know of one
- **Pair up:** share one company and why it made your list

Rejection is data, not a verdict on you

A tough job market means even strong candidates hear "no" often.
How you process that shapes whether you keep applying well.



Unhelpful Thoughts

"I'm not good enough for any of this"

"Everyone else is finding jobs but me"

"I should have heard back by now"

More Useful Reframe

This employer/this role/this time — its one data point (not a pattern)

Most job searches include far more rejections than offers — that's the process

Recruitment timelines are often slow and say nothing about my chances

If job search stress is building up, Wellbeing Support Services and your Careers Consultant/Coaches are both here to help — you don't have to carry this alone.



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Networking

Building Real Connections for Your Graduate Job Search



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Wherever you're starting from, there's a next step



1

New to networking

We'll cover the basics: what to say, where to start, and how to get past the fear of reaching out to strangers.

2

Already networking

We'll sharpen your approach: better targeting, stronger messages, and a follow-up system so contacts don't go cold.

Why networking actually works



Granovetter's "Strength of Weak Ties" (1973)

Loose acquaintances — not close friends — are disproportionately valuable for job leads, because they connect you to different information networks than the ones you already move in.

In practice:

- a course-mate from a different programme,
- a Warwick alumnus one connection away,
- or someone you met briefly at an event

is often more useful than your closest friend in the same course.

It's not schmoozing. It's structured curiosity.



Myth

Reality

"I'm being fake or transactional"



You're asking real questions about work you're genuinely trying to understand

"I don't have anything to offer"



You bring a fresh perspective, energy, and your own academic expertise

"I have to be extroverted"



One thoughtful question beats ten minutes of small talk — quality over volume

"It only counts if it leads to a job"



Most conversations won't — but each one builds knowledge and confidence

Build a focused target list before you reach out

Random networking wastes your limited time.

Start with a short, specific list — you can always expand it later.



Sectors & roles

2–3 industries or job types that fit your degree and interests — not twenty

Organisations

10–15 companies of varying size, including ones that sponsor visas where relevant

People

Warwick alumni, course contacts, event speakers, LinkedIn 2nd-degree connections

In-person networking: before, during, after



B

Before

Check the attendee or speaker list. Pick 2–3 people to speak with.
Prepare one open question per person.

D

During

Aim for quality over quantity — 3 good conversations beat 15 rushed ones. Ask, then genuinely listen.

A

After

Note something specific from the chat. Connect on LinkedIn within 48 hours referencing that detail.

Digital networking: LinkedIn & cold outreach

Your profile, in 3 checks

- Photo, headline, and location are current
- About section explains what you're looking for
- Course, projects, and skills are up to date

A message that gets replies

- Personalise the opener — mention something specific
- Say who you are in one line
- Ask one small, easy-to-answer question
- Keep it under 100 words

Temple

Hi [Name],
I'm a postgraduate [course] student at Warwick, finishing this September. I came across your work on [specific project/post] and it connected directly with [your interest].

Would you have 15 minutes in the next couple of weeks for a short call? I'd love to hear how you got into [field] and what you'd suggest for someone in my position.

No worries at all if not — thank you for considering it.

Phone or video call

A short, low-pressure message designed to get a 15-20 mins conversation — not a job!
It works precisely because it asks for so little.

Goal: a brief, friendly conversation with someone at your target company

Ask: for 15-20 minutes of their time and advice — never for a job

Why it works: small, specific, low-effort requests are easy for people to say yes to

A Simple Structure for 15-20 Minutes

1-2 min

Thank them and confirm time available

10-12 min

Ask open questions about their path, role, and industry

3-4 min

Ask what they'd recommend for someone in your position

1-2 min

Thank them again — ask if there's anyone else worth speaking to



The Six Point Email



1 Flattering opener

Reference something specific about them (their role, a talk, a shared connection)

2 Your 2-part identity

Who you are + one credible detail (course, university, relevant interest)

3 Your 2-part hook

Why this company / this kind of role, briefly and genuinely

4 Proof of homework

Show you've researched them specifically — not a generic template

5 The low-pressure ask

15-20 minutes for advice — never "do you have any jobs?"

6 A specific call to action

Suggest 2-3 concrete time slots, don't leave it open-ended

Draft Your 6-Point Email



- Pick one company from your LAMP List and, if possible, one named contact (Warwick alumni via LinkedIn, or a role title)
- Draft all 6 points — it's fine to write rough notes, not full sentences yet
- Swap with a partner: does their message ask for advice, not a job? Is the ask specific?



Most networking fails at follow-up — don't let yours

One conversation rarely leads anywhere on its own.

It's the follow-up over weeks that turns a contact into an opportunity.

24–48 hrs

Send a thank-you or connection note referencing something specific from your chat

2–3 weeks

Share something relevant — an article, a question, an update on your job search

Ongoing

Keep a simple tracker: name, company, date contacted, next step, follow-up date

Your background is an asset, not a barrier



Hesitant to reach out to strangers?

UK professionals expect a short, polite, low-pressure message — you're not imposing, you're asking for 15 minutes

Worried about accent or small talk?

Employers hire for clarity of thinking, not native phrasing — prepare your key points, not a script

Not sure your visa status is relevant?

Mention it briefly and factually if asked; focus conversations on your skills and interest first

What you bring

- A genuinely international perspective employers value
- Language skills and cross-cultural fluency
- Resilience from studying and living abroad
- A specific academic expertise
UK grads may lack



Action plan



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The Careers Chat

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Guest include Warwick Students and Graduates

UK Labour Market – Guest Charlie Ball

The Art of Saying No

UK Government Immigration White Paper

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myAdvantage is your online careers and skills portal where you can:

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- Book appointments
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