



Producing an effective vacancy advert

When trying to attract University of Sheffield students and graduates to opportunities offered by your organisation, it is easy to fall down at the first hurdle by putting together an ineffective vacancy advertisement. This guide is written to help you get the best possible response to your advert from candidates who have the skills, knowledge and qualifications which you are seeking. It will help you ensure that the information you provide is clear, concise and sufficient to enable jobseekers to decide whether or not they wish to apply to your organisation.

Where to advertise

Career Connect is a FREE online vacancy service for employers wishing to advertise graduate jobs, part-time, vacation and voluntary work, year-long and summer placements at the University of Sheffield. This system guides you through the fields to help you create quality adverts and enables you to manage your organisation's profile and previous adverts - particularly helpful if your recruitment runs on an annual cycle.

The screenshot shows the 'Career Connect' website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, Events, Vacancies, and Queries and mailings. Below this, there are two main sections: 'Email enquiries & mailings' and 'Current Vacancies'. The 'Email enquiries & mailings' section indicates 'You have no open Email enquiries'. The 'Current Vacancies' section lists two items: 'Published' (RAJ - Creative Intern) and 'Published' (Make the most of your Easter or summer work - Skills for Work Certificate Programme). To the right, there is a 'Quick Links' sidebar with options like View profile, Update profile, Post New Vacancy, Manage Vacancies, and Browse and Book Event. Below the sidebar is an 'Event bookings' section which states 'No event bookings found'.

To advertise visit: <https://careerconnect.sheffield.ac.uk>

The content of your entry

Job title

Clearly name the position available in a meaningful way and avoid using generic terms such as 'Graduate Trainee' or vague terms such as 'Project Worker' wherever possible. A more specific job title helps your advertisement stand out from others which may appear in search results, enabling jobseekers to easily identify that the post may be of interest to them. If unsure, search online for similar jobs for inspiration.

Information about your organisation

Company information is key and needs to be short and concise, accompanied by a link to your website for further information. Emphasise very briefly key activities your organisation undertakes, any unique features, awards, or aspects of work with which jobseekers may be familiar eg work on nationally recognised projects. You may also like to make reference to organisation growth, diversification of products or services, innovation, geographical spread of offices, sites or clients and the variety of markets in which the organisation operates. However, remember to keep it short so that you do not lose readers before they even get to information about the role. Make detailed background information part of the job description which applicants can either view via a URL link or request separately.

Signing up to the Disability Confident Scheme may help you to attract a wider pool of talent and help promote your organisation to students.

If you are a small to medium-sized organisation, it is worth highlighting the benefits of working for an organisation of your size eg hands-on experience from the start, on-the-job training, early responsibility etc. Many students and graduates are unaware of the benefits and may actually be more suited towards a smaller organisation.

Role information

Jobseekers are most interested in finding out about the job on offer, so use the majority of your advert copy to promote the position. Generate interest in your current opportunities with enthused content and be sure to include keywords from the 'desired' category in your 'person specification' throughout. Make sure you are clear which skills are "essential" and which are "desirable", and use unambiguous language. Elements that will attract candidates to your opportunities include:

- Career progression opportunities
- Graduate training scheme or other formal on-the-job training
- Health package/gym membership
- Flexible working hours
- Salary, performance related bonuses, company car or perks

When posting your advert, ensure that you only select the occupational areas that are relevant. Although you may feel you will receive a better response by selecting every category, you will in fact simply increase the number of irrelevant applications submitted.

Consider any reasonable adjustments that you could make in order for applicants to carry out their responsibilities - this will ensure that you receive applications from the widest pool of eligible candidates.

You can adapt your recruitment processes to accommodate students and graduates with disabilities.

Examples of this include:

- Allowing extra time in online tests
- Adapting interview location (e.g using a quieter room, or offering a face to face interview instead of a video interview)
- Providing interview questions in advance to candidates

Salary

Ideally you should provide an actual salary figure as opposed to 'Competitive' or 'Negotiable'. Jobseekers rarely have the time in their job search to research what they think is an appropriate salary for the job advertised. Even if the salary is below industry standards, your advert is more likely to receive a greater number of responses where a salary is quoted. If using a salary range, try to make it as narrow as possible to give applicants a realistic view of what they are likely to be paid. If you indicate an 'Up to £...' figure, most applicants will expect no less than 85-90% of the figure quoted. To maximise interest, you are better off stating the basic salary in addition to any on-target earnings (OTE). Refer to [Deciding on an appropriate salary](#) for further guidance.

Clear call to action

Ensure that an outline of the stages of application is supplied, including dates of any assessment centres. Include links to further information eg job description, person specification. Be clear about whether potential applicants need to apply online, complete your application form or submit a CV. Provide applicants with the contact details if they require any reasonable adjustments to your recruitment processes, for example extra time in assessments. Consider setting a closing date if you wish to generate applications by a certain date. A closing date can encourage potential applicants to apply sooner rather than later, but be realistic when setting one. You should allow a minimum of two weeks from the date an advert is posted. Some final year students begin applying for graduate roles early on in their final year, whilst others leave it much later. Some employers therefore find it helpful to set two or three closing dates throughout the academic year to ensure that they receive a steady flow of applications, whilst maintaining a year-round profile. Refer to our [Recruitment timeline](#) for guidance on when is a good time to advertise.

If you would like further assistance

Our staff do check every advert before making it live to students and we do reserve the right to make amendments, where we feel minor adjustments may more accurately reflect the work on offer and give it maximum appeal. If, however, you would like to speak to a member of staff for advice when putting your advert together, please contact us on tel: 0114 222 0900 or email: employers@sheffield.ac.uk